

## Chapter one:

### Summary:

Buck, who lives at Judge Miller's place is suddenly taken away from the only place he knows. Thrown into a brutal world Buck is tossed between people like everyday cargo, from one pair of hands to another and is forced into submission by harsh beatings.

Buck finally finds himself in somewhat kinder hands and travels by boat for an unknown amount of time and the disembarking only presaged by the increasingly cold temperatures. Buck finally sees bright of day as he steps out of the dark confines of the cargo hold and is greeted by his first sight of snow.

### word list:

**Recess** -Verb: Suspension of a formal or official meeting (e.g. parliament is in recess)

- Noun: Small indent or space, making a corner of sorts

- Noun: Secluded place (e.g. The recesses of the world)

"They came and went, resided in the populous kennels, or lived obscurely in the recesses of the house after the fashion of Toots, the Japanese pug, or Ysabel, the Mexican hairless, strange creatures that rarely put nose out of doors or set foot to ground."

**Vile** - despicable, wretched, bad.

"Never in all his life had he been so vilely treated, and never in all his life had he been so angry."

**Surcharge** - Overflowing (e.g. Surcharged with rage)

- Additional charge or payment.

"Straight at the man he launched his one hundred and forty pounds of fury, surcharged with the pent passion of two days and nights."

**Cow** - Verb: Scare someone into submission (e.g. I cowed at his rage)

"The facts of life took on a fiercer aspect; and while he faced that aspect uncowed."

**Morose** - of a person in a sullen and bad mood

"He was a gloomy, morose fellow, and he showed Curly plainly that all he desired was to be left alone, and further, that there would be trouble if he were not left alone."

### Thoughts:

Having read many books in English before, the language is familiar enough, with words here and there that need clarification as to their meaning.

The way the story is told, particularly in the beginning, with small details that to us may seem irrelevant, compared to the big questions usually asked. This is a style I am quite sure, I have read before and it tells us a story from the perspective of the dog and like I noted earlier focuses on different aspects of the story which in my opinion is a nice touch from Mr. London.

**Point 5:**

"A new day, a new dog" he thought. That was his job. He bought dogs of various breeds and places and made sure they would do as he said, or as anyone said for that matter. Every dog struggled at first, but they were all cowed sooner or later, one by one. His most recent addition was a half Saint Bernard half Scotch Collie, this one was somewhat different from the rest, the new dog didn't want to give up as easily as some of the other dogs did, of course he would break in due time, but he certainly wasn't as easy, one of the stronger dogs he'd had.

**Chapter two:****Summary:**

Landing on the beach of Yae, Buck is thrown into a brutal lifestyle with savage people and even more so, savage dogs. From a cushioned lifestyle to a harsh cold and unforgiving environment.

Francois, his caretaker straps on a harness and is forced to pull his owner through the cold wasteland that is the north. Buck draws the sled along with his mates Spitz and Dave, who at the smallest mistake berate him with fangs to show him where he faults, but Buck is a quick learner and soon learns how to survive the cold of night. On top of that he has to learn his place among the primordial dogs with their vicious tricks.

**Wordlist:**

**Primordial** - Existing since the beginning of time or is from the beginning of time

"He had been suddenly jerked from the heart of civilization and flung into the heart of things primordial."

**Imperative** - Something of great importance, can also be used as a substitute for commanding.

"There was imperative need to be constantly alert; for these dogs and men were not town dogs and men."

**Vicarious** - Can mean second-hand, as in a "second-hand experience" can also mean to take the place of another person.

"it is true, it was a vicarious experience."

**Swart** - of either Swarth or Swarthy, meaning old and archaic or dark of complexion respectively.

"But she lay there limp and lifeless in the bloody, trampled snow, almost literally torn to pieces, the swart half-breed standing over her and cursing horribly."

**Appeasing** - Give in to someone's demands to make peace, (pacify)

"Billie wagged his tail appeasingly, turned to run when he saw that appeasement was of no avail, and cried (still appeasingly) when Spitz's sharp teeth scored his flank."

**Ravenous** - Extremely or very hungry

"Buck was ravenous."

**Retrogression** - returning to an earlier state, usually not a good thing

"His development (or retrogression) was rapid."

**Thoughts:**

To me, this is a real adventure story, with emphasis on the “real”. It’s brutal and honest in the way it shows our favourite character Buck. It has this realism paired an element of romance, the kind where Buck despite all odds stacked against him manages to learn the tricks of his new trade, creates a great adventure vibe. Another thing that I really like, is the fast pace, it moves along with its story rapidly and doesn’t slow down, this does impair the character depth of the story, but I don’t really mind, I am personally inclined to pick up a book that is faster paced rather than something like any of the books from the Lord of the Rings trilogy as it is not a personal favourite for the very reason.

**Point 7 (written from the perspective of early 20th century critic):**

Having heard of Mr. London's writing before I decided to indulge in a bit of reading. I finished the first chapter and I'm quite appalled, this book is certainly not for the faint of heart. Though I must say that it has the pacing of a great book. However if I may be candid, it is absolutely brutal and all too barbaric. I cannot for the world of me think of any remotely sound reason to besmirch the good reputation of American gentlemen. The brave men who've traversed the ice cold wilds of the north are men of the highest order, and I hope for all of us that Mr. London refrain from writing so crudely in the future.

**Chapter three:****Summary:**

Closing in on the settlement of Dawson, Buck starts to stir trouble in the camp, defying Spitz and contending for the leadership. He makes sure to show Spitz who the real alpha is at any chance given and encouraging the other dogs to rise in revolt. The tension grows and the deciding fight grows near, but arrival at Dawson creates a break for all participants.

Leaving Dawson, the team travels with high speed and puts many miles behind them, but the final night of either Buck or Spitz closes in and the tension culminates during the hunt of a fleeing snowshoe rabbit. Buck is at the head of the pack, but Spitz reaches the game first, and Buck knows that the time has come. With bared fangs and insidious tactics the two beasts fight, Spitz seems like the clear winner but with a deciding bite he turns the tide and comes out on top, standing as the champion.

**Word list:**

**Travail** - Painful effort

“...with long-drawn wailings and half-sobs, and was more the pleading of life, the articulate travail of existence.”

**Insidious** - in a quiet/subtle manner that has harmful effects.

“The insidious revolt led by Buck had destroyed the solidarity of the team.”

**Swagger** - Doing something (often walking) in a grandiose and self-important way

“In fact, his conduct approached that of a bully, and he was given to swaggering up and down before Spitz's very nose.”

**Precipitate** - throw violently, Hurl, can also mean to bring about something quite abruptly'

“He worked faithfully in the harness, for the toil had become a delight to him; yet it was a greater delight slyly to precipitate a fight amongst his mates and tangle the traces.”

**Muzzle** - the protruding (nose) part of an animals face, usually of a dog or horse

“He was ranging at the head of the pack, running the wild thing down, the living meat, to kill with his own teeth and wash his muzzle to the eyes in warm blood.”

**Inexorable** - of something that is impossible to prevent

“There was no hope for him. Buck was inexorable.”

### Thoughts:

One thing I've come to love about this story, is how seamlessly Mr.London weaves in new characters into the story. For example, the huskies from the police camp that join the team for the hunt of the snowshoe rabbit, they are introduced in the first sentence and then they are apart of the group the second like they were always meant to be apart of the story.

I think that the reason for this seamless weaving is the fact that he does this all throughout the book, from the very beginning we are told of people that don't appear at all in the next paragraph, making sure that you don't expect them to. It might also be due to him never telling us about the characters thoughts too deeply, the only thoughts we are told of, are Bucks, the rest is just what happens to his surroundings.

### Point 9:

Buck the great  
Buck the wise  
He can't wait  
To win the prize

Buck the vicious  
Buck the cruel  
Can be surreptitious  
In a duel

A call from ere time  
In due time, you must answer  
The call of the wild

### Chapter four:

### Summary:

With Spitz nowhere to be found, Francois and Perrault suspect Buck for his disappearance. But to Bucks great disappointment, Francois decides that with the lead dog gone, Sol-leks should fill the spot upsetting Buck greatly. Buck proceeds to attack Sol-leks to show him his place. Francois and Perrault tries to have their way using clubs and words, but Buck stays out of their range dodging whatever they throw at him. After going at it for about an hour, the men tire and give in to Bucks demands for the position of lead dog. Francois and Perrault soon see that this was no mistake, thanks to Bucks new leadership they make record time.

### Word list:

**Fivescore and odd-** being one hundred in numbers plus a few mor (one score is twenty)

“...or an hour or so with the other dogs, of which there were fivescore and odd.”

**Lugubriously** - sad, gloomy, unhappy.

“Then he fell, and lay where he fell, howling lugubriously as the long train of sleds churned by.”

**Floundered** - struggle or stagger in mud or water

“When the sled started, he floundered in the soft snow alongside the beaten trail”

**Churned** - move in a vigorous way (though mostly of water). You can also churn butter cream and other dairy products.

“Then he fell, and lay where he fell, howling lugubriously as the long train of sleds churned by.”

**Covet** - wanting something, often that someone else has.

“...but Francois, not noticing him, brought Sol-leks to the coveted position.”

### Thoughts:

Reaching the end of the chapter, I was almost a bit disappointed that the time had come for the mail to be delivered. There was real action and intense moments in the previous chapters that made everything feel alive and on the edge. But when London tells us that the adventure is over and that a normal dreary life is what awaits Buck, the story reaches a down-point, however, knowing that there are three chapters left and great writing in them makes me feel that beyond the horizon lies a place of new adventures.

### Point 8:

Using dogs as a pack animal may seem strange, but in the right circumstances they may very well be the best choice. Using a few outside sources i found that the landscape in Alaska and north-west Canada aren't exactly flat, in fact they are full of mountains. With the mountains as the major hindrance to inland travel and no roads to speak of, light travel was the only choice, meaning you couldn't bring horses that need large amounts of fodder and whose hooves aren't exactly build for snow. The best choice were big and strong dogs, an advantage were their loyalty. Some may see the use of dogs as cruel and uncivilized, but I believe that that is a topic for another time.

## Chapter five:

### Summary:

After toiling for months, Buck and the others are finally done working, or so they thought. They are quickly brought into the ownership of two men and a woman trying to make it to Dawson, another run down the track perhaps, but still much different. The two men and woman know next to nothing about traveling in the arctic wasteland, they pack too heavily forcing the dogs to draw something they couldn't, they give either too much food or too little, and for all their new owners faults, they think they have lazy dogs in their reins and not incompetent people in the driver's seat. Almost out of food, and any will to continue there is a fateful meeting in the woods, a new face for the spotlight to shine upon.

### Word list:

**Callow** - of a young person who is inexperienced and immature.

"It advertised his callowness--a callowness sheer and unutterable."

**Chaffer** - to haggle about a price or agreement.

"Buck heard the chaffering, saw the money pass between the man and the Government agent"

**Tucker** - food, or the lace of a bodice or exhaust, which is the case this time

"Plum tuckered out, that's what's the matter. They need a rest."

**Clannish** - of a group that exclude outsiders.

"But she was a clannish creature, and rushed at once to the defense of her brother."

**Quoth** - said (in first and third person only)

"Blankets for a hotel," quoth one of the men who laughed and helped.

**Forlorn** - Sad alone and abandoned-

"With the newcomers hopeless and forlorn, and the old team worn out..."

**Terse** - Abrupt in the context of a statement.

"...gave monosyllabic replies, and when it was asked, terse advice."

**Innocuous** - not harmful or offensive

"...Hal swearing innocuously, and Charles eyes wistfully watering..."

**Monosyllabic** - A word of only one syllable, or a person who using short and brief words shows their disinterest in conversation.

"He whittled and listened, gave monosyllabic replies, and when it was asked..."

### Thgouths:

Like I thought, the story would pick up it's previous pace, following Buck in the same way, however, it went in a way I didn't see coming, I thought we were going to get a new story of Bucks greatness and a new tale of adventure. Recalling that the book was written during a time of naturalistic writing, perhaps this turn of events make all the sense in the world. Instead of a romantic continuation we follow Buck and his owners in their great demise, perhaps the harsh reality of dying when you don't have the adequate knowledge of the world around you. Though I might be wrong. Maybe the next chapter stars Buck as the saviour of the team or something similar, or perhaps something quite different.

### Point 11:

A strong point in London's writing and perhaps the strongest, is the pacing, it is quick at times and the detailed in a most meticulous way. A great example of this is the beginning of

chapter seven, which begins by clearing up the last chapters questions in a single sentence. As you may recall, the previous chapter ended with Buck making his master a small fortune. The question then was, where would that money go,

“When Buck earned sixteen hundred dollars in five minutes for John Thornton, he made it possible for his master to pay off certain debts and to journey with his partners into the East after a fabled lost mine...”

This is the very first sentence of the final chapter, which clears all questions of where the money goes, and also introduces a new part of the story, namely the “lost cabin”, which is described in full the following two hundred words or so, and then we are suddenly thrown into the search of the cabin, without any middle bit that tells the story of how they got there.

## **Chapter six:**

### **Summary:**

The man from the previous chapter turns out to be more than Bucks saviour, he shows him love like he has never known before, and Buck loves him back. Buck is given time to heal his wounds, and meets a few new friends, but none compare to the love he feels for the man called John Thornton. Buck is now as strong as ever and only follows Thornton, he even gets to save him and make his luck. First he saves Thornton from drowning in coursing river, in a most daring attempt. Later that same year, Thornton finds himself in bet of dogs, a bet he thinks he will lose. But Buck shows up big time and earns his saviour a grand total of sixteen thousand dollars.

### **Word list:**

#### **Ere** - before (time)

“and ere they swung the raft into the big eddy by the saw-mill at Dawson, they understood Buck and his ways, and did not insist upon an intimacy such as obtained with Skeet and Nig”.

#### **Apprehension** - fear of something

“ere the year was out, that Pete's apprehensions were realized.”

#### **Largeness** - breadth, and extension

“They seemed to share the kindliness and largeness of John Thornton.”

#### **Expediency** - something convenient and practical, and can at the same time be improper.

“Other men saw to the welfare of their dogs from a sense of duty and business expediency,”

#### **Wont** - someones wont is their everyday behaviour.

“who was wont to shove her nose under Thornton's hand and nudge and nudge till petted”

### **Thoughts:**

The stories I love the most are ones where there is a happy ending, but not too happy or perfect, there needs to be trial and loss along the way making the end much sweeter, and I think that som far it really has that element. We have the core building of Buck as a character in the first Four chapters, and then there is a low point that is followed by a highpoint.

### **Point 24:**

The book is quite harsh and quite brutal, especially when it comes to the violence, it is graphically portrayed real and not sugar coated. Though I have to say that as far as the naturalist and realism style of writing goes it still has that air of romance in it.

The most prominent way you can see this is in Buck himself, he is the strongest dog, starts from nothing and becomes the greatest,

## **Chapter seven:**

### **Summary:**

In the last and final chapter of the Call of the Wild, Buck travels with Thornton into the east, to find the lost "lost cabin" in search for gold. After arriving Buck feels more and more drawn to something, he cannot place it, but decides to search for it anyway. In his endless wandering of the wild forests, drawn to this unknown thing, and at the height of it he meets a wolf, after a long pursuit Buck tires him out, they get friendly and his newfound brother tries to take him to the pack, but Buck's love for John Thornton takes him back to the camp.

Buck comes and goes in the camp and on one of his outings, he finds a challenge in an enraged elk, a prey he enjoys hunting. However returning to camp, something is different, he finds one of the dogs dead, Hans one of Thornton's friends riddled with feathered shafts. Buck finds a group of Yeehats scavenging whilst dancing and singing in the camp. A Buck, surcharged with uncontrollable rage dashes through the Yeehats tearing throat after throat out, killing unlike any beast of the wild. With the enemies dead, Buck searches the camp for John Thornton and concludes in despair that his beloved friend is no longer live.

With no ties left to his old world he finds the uncanny call that is the wild even stronger. Emerging out of the woods, a pack of wolves enter the camp, standing with head held high he doesn't show any of those who attack him a shred of mercy, clipping their throats like a butcher's knife, but in the pack he finds his wolf brother, they show their intimacy and so the rest of the pack follow thus concluding the story with Buck answering the call of the wild.

### **Wordlist:**

**Gnats** - Small fly, smaller than a mosquito (knott)

"dropped into summer valleys amid swarming gnats and flies,"

**Fowl** - A domestic bird that is kept for the eggs or the meat. Can be game birds though.

"where wild fowl had been"

**Tangible** - Something that you can feel with your touch.

"looking for it as though it were a tangible thing"

**Haunches** - The behind and thigh of animal or human.



“erect on haunches”

**Pellmell** - disorderly haste, hurrying in a reckless manner

“This was sufficient to fling the whole pack forward, pellmell, crowded together”

### **Thoughts:**

As far as endings go, I can't say that this one sits as well as I would have hoped, it ended in a romantic way, but I suppose that, that was sort of the point. I figure that it being written when it was, is the reason for it ending in such a way, with Buck returning back to the wilds, instead of the kind of ending I originally thought would take place.

### **Point 10:**

I personally can't find myself thinking that the violence is even a bit over the top, I think that it just a way to create intensity in a moment, however I do suppose that when the story was first released it was considered quite bloody and having grown up in the twenty first century I guess I am so used to all the gore and violence in stories from movies, tv-shows and modern books that I have read on my own.

“...hurling himself upon them in a frenzy to destroy. He sprang at the foremost man--it was the chief of the Yeehats--ripping the throat wide open till the rent jugular spouted a fountain of blood. He did not pause to worry the victim, but ripped in passing, with the next bound tearing wide the throat of a second man.”

This excerpt from the end of the seventh chapter, is quite a vivid description of how Buck kills the Yeehats. I think one of the reasons I don't think it is too violent is due to it only being words on a paper to me and very far from real.