

# THE CALL OF THE WILD and WHITE FANG

JACK LONDON

## LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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### SYNOPSIS: CALL OF THE WILD

Buck is a crossbreed Saint Bernard and Scottish shepherd dog which has lived for four years on Judge Miller's large California estate. On the estate Buck enjoys a very comfortable life. His size and his intelligence give him the opportunity to be the "master" over all other animals on the estate. However, it is the time in history of the 1890's gold rush, and therefore dogs are in demand for pulling sleds over the frozen snow—especially large and intelligent dogs. A man by the name of Manuel, an assistant gardener on the estate, kidnaps and takes Buck to the railroad station, where the dog is sold for shipment north. The buyer places a rope around Buck's neck, and forces him into submissiveness by twisting the rope until Buck's air supply is gone. When the dog loses consciousness, Buck is thrown into a cage and shipped to Seattle—again to be resold for use as a sled-dog in the Alaskan/Yukon gold rush.

In Seattle, Buck immediately learns the "law of the club"—that is: a man with a club is a lawgiver, a master to be obeyed. Two French Canadians, Perrault and Francois, purchase both Buck and another dog named Curly. The Canadians board a ship bound for the Yukon.

In this new land, Buck finds life to be harsh and cruel, completely different from life on Judge Miller's estate. The dogs in the north are savage; they live from day to day according to the law of the survival of the fittest. Buck watches as Curly gets into a fight, and he sees Curly easily killed and eaten by other, more fierce dogs. Watching Curly's death teaches Buck his first lesson of the law of the north: "dog eat dog" and "the devil take the hindmost."

Perrault puts Buck to work as a sled dog. Buck's intelligence helps him to learn quickly. The other dogs on the sled, Sol-leks and Dave, teach Buck the proper ways of being a good sled dog. At the same time, the lead dog, Spitz, treats Buck so harshly that Buck develops a hatred for him. Buck not only learns the skills needed to be a good sled dog, but he also learns the skills necessary for survival, including the stealing of meat. These skills begin to manifest in Buck his inherited primitive instincts. The wild wolf, buried in the domesticated dog, begins to surface. The "call of the wild" begins to grow strong.

The animosity between Buck and Spitz also grows. Buck leads the other dogs of the sled team into rebellion, and, when chance presents itself, Buck kills Spitz and takes over position as leader of the sled team.

Even after Perrault and Francois sell the team to a Scotch half-breed, Buck leads the team to a record-breaking successful run, covering thousands of miles in less than six

months. However, this run exhausts the team, and it is sold again—this time to amateurs: Hal and Charles. Because he is inexperienced, Charles mistreats the dogs and starves them. One by one the dogs die. When Buck gives up pulling due to complete exhaustion, Hal attempts to kill the dog, but he is stopped by a man named John Thornton. John and Buck watch as Hal and Charles break through the thawing trail and sink in the icy waters, dogs, sled, and all.

Thornton nurses Buck back to health, and is the first to teach the dog loyalty and love. Buck had never before experienced love. Not even before on Judge Miller's estate. As Buck lives with John Thornton in loyalty and peace, he is also given the freedom to wander in the woods. This freedom reawakens the call of the wild, and more and more Buck is increasingly drawn to his primitive instincts.

After one journey into the woods, Buck returns to Thornton's camp and finds his master dead—slaughtered by the Yeehat Indians. Buck takes revenge by killing the Indians, and then, with no one to love, submits to the call. He joins a wolf pack and eventually becomes the leader of it.

### SYNOPSIS: WHITE FANG

The first three chapters of *White Fang* set the environment in which the "gray cub" is born. The story starts as Henry and Bill are making a desperate attempt to flee a pursuing wolf pack. Their lives, along with the lives of their sled dogs, are in jeopardy. One by one, a she-wolf lures the sled dogs away from the camp. As each dog is lured away—the other wolves devour it. Eventually, all the dogs are gone, Bill is killed, and only Henry is rescued by a search team.

This she-wolf had at one time been an Indian camp dog. She mates with another wolf and has a litter, all of which die of hunger except one cub. The remainder of the first chapters of the novel is a narration of the cub's growth in the wild. His experiences with various wild animals teach him the law of survival, the law of the fang. He realizes that life exists according to the maxim: "eat or be eaten."

One day the cub and the she-wolf happen upon the same Indians who had once owned the she-wolf. They had named her Kiche. When the she-wolf submits to the Indian commands once again, the young cub follows her into the camp. The Indians name the little cub "white fang".

White Fang is trained as a sled dog by his Indian owner, Gray Beaver. The wolf is cuffed into obedience and submission. At the same time White Fang learns to hate not only man, but also other dogs. In the Indian camp the cub is constantly terrorized by another older dog, Lip-lip.

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Eventually, all the persecution serves to strengthen White Fang's character, and his sense of independence. White Fang develops mental processes, becomes cunning, full of trickery and craft. He defeats Lip-lip and becomes leader of the camp dogs and the Indian Gray Beaver's sled team.

When Gray Beaver travels to the white man's Fort Yukon, the powerful and cunning White Fang impresses everyone. An ugly, evil man by the name of Beauty Smith buys White Fang from Gray Beaver. Beauty Smith persecutes and mistreats White Fang to the extent that the animal becomes a ferocious danger to all other living things. This terror and madness in the dog are fostered by Beauty Smith, because it is the man's plan to use White Fang for his own profit. He plans to use White Fang as a fighting dog. Because White Fang is mostly wolf, and because he has developed skills and cunning above any other dog, and because he has been made so ferocious by receiving so many beatings from Beauty Smith—White Fang easily defeats every other animal pitted against him. The exception to this happens one day with the first bulldog that ever entered the Klondike. Because the bulldog fights in an entirely different manner from which White Fang is accustomed, the bulldog's clinging grip almost kills White Fang. However, a stranger, Weedon Scott, happens by. He stops the fight and takes the dying White Fang away from Beauty Smith.

With patience, training, and love, Weedon Scott nurses White Fang back to health, and sets out to tame the "fighting wolf". Scott takes White Fang to the Southland, the family estate called Sierra Vista, located in Santa Clara Valley of California. White Fang slowly learns the role of a domesticated dog, and wins the affection of the whole Scott family.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jack London was born in San Francisco in 1876. He was born illegitimate, and took the surname of his stepfather. This fact of his birth bothered him for his whole life, and caused a great deal of negative feelings for himself, and insecurity about himself. Jack was poor; worked in factories, canneries, and mills. He grew up fast—spent time in jail during his teenage years.

Considering himself a victim of society, he adopted the socialist political philosophy while at the same time resolving to live the law of "survival of the fittest". He joined "Kelly's Army", an army of unemployed people who marched to protest economic conditions. Later he became a drifter, and hobo, wandering around the country. He was seized by the gold fever of 1897 and headed for Alaska and the Klondike for an unsuccessful year. His observations there, however, provided material for *The Call Of The Wild* and *White Fang*. Much of his literature reflects his life, and is autobiographical in concept. His marriage failed, and he became an alcoholic. Eventually in 1916 he committed suicide. In spite of his difficult life, he wrote over fifty pieces of literature. For an extensive, more detailed description of London's life, refer to the introductory section of the text—pages 1 to 17.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

Both *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* are written at the sixth grade reading level, but students prefer to read *The Call of the Wild* because of the faster-moving action. After the first three chapters of *White Fang*, London's style grows ornate, and his long descriptive and narrative passages are a challenge for students to read. Included in both stories are hundreds of vocabulary words which are generally considered beyond the usual level of grade six.

The literal comprehension of both stories being about dogs and wolves in the Canadian and Alaskan wilderness makes it possible for grade school students to read. However, comprehension of the novels beyond that requires much of a student. Intellectual maturity is necessary to understand London's personification, philosophy, theology, and socio-governmental viewpoints. Much symbolism occurs within the concepts of the dog pack. The "call of the wild"—the primordial instinct, and the natural violence are also symbols. It is recommended that students be introduced to the overall concept of the meaning of the "human condition" before reading either story.

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the literary technique of "extended personification."
2. To understand London's expressed philosophy, especially that of the "dog eat dog" and "devil take the hindmost".
3. To study *The Call of the Wild* as both an allegory and an autobiography.
4. To explore the three levels of comprehension in *The Call of The Wild*: the narrative, the biographical, and the philosophical.
5. To study human nature and the animal nature of humanity.
6. To understand the roles of heredity and environment.
7. To grasp what it means to "flee from society" and again to "return to society".
8. To explore the stereotype characters in *White Fang*.

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences or thought units that have particular meaning in the story. Explain the meaning each has. Page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. "Old longings nomadic leap,  
chafing at custom's chain;  
Again from its brumal sleep  
wakens the ferine strain." (page 21)  
(*chafing*: becoming worn; *brumal*: of winter, or dormant; *ferine*: a term applied to wild animals)

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which ironically are descended from tame stock.

*This is an appropriate statement which rather predicts the whole plot: Buck's eventual turning to the wild after domestication on Judge Miller's Santa Clara estate. These lines can also be autobiographically applied to London himself—a man considered to be a rebel, a hoboing drifter, a wild oyster pirate and prospector.)*

2. "That club was a revelation. It was his introduction to the reign of primitive law." (page 28)  
*(Buck begins to learn that a man with a club was a law giver, a master to be obeyed. The club is something Buck had never experienced. He sees that man is the only animal that knows how to use "things" as weapons. Primitive law is law by means of brute force. The club is an added means for "savage man" to exercise this brute force.)*
  3. "He had been suddenly jerked from the heart of civilization and flung into the heart of things primordial." (page 30) and "The dominant primordial beast was strong in Buck, and under the fierce conditions of trail life it grew and grew." (page 39)  
*("Primordial" refers to the first existence—existence from the beginning. In the harsh, raw environments of the Northland, the civilized rules of the Southland no longer exist for Buck. He has never been stolen, sold, and flung into the heart of basic existence.)*
  4. "It is true, it was a vicarious experience, else he would not have lived to profit by it." (page 31)  
*(As he watches Curly's death, Buck realizes that there is no fair play in the wild environment he has been flung into. Curly did nothing to deserve the vicious attack and death. Buck's watching this death allows him to profit by it as he learns to distrust man and beast.)*
  5. ". . . in the Northland, under the law of club and fang, whoso took such things into account was a fool. . ." (page 37)  
*(Buck's first theft of a slice of bacon marks him as fit to survive in the hostile Northland environment. It marks his adaptability, his capacity to adjust himself to changing conditions, the lack of which would be foolish—would mean swift and terrible death.)*
  6. "All that stirring of old instincts which at stated periods drives men out from the sounding cities to forest and plain to kill things by chemically propelled leaden pellets, the blood lust, the joy to kill—all this was Buck's. Only it was infinitely more intimate." (page 48)  
*(This seems to be London's indictment of humanity. Both man and animal, according to London, have intimations of earlier lives. As civilized as man may think he is, London believes that, given the opportunity, man would easily return to his own savagery of the wild. The leaden pellets—obviously bullets; the blood lust; the joy of the kill; are phrases*
7. "The hair of this man was long and matted, and his hand slanted back from under it from the eyes." (page 56) and "Closely akin to the visions of the hairy man was the call still sounding in the depths of the forest." (page 89)  
*(These are London's parallels between man's ancestral savagery of the cave man era, and the wolf's instinct of the wild. Every night wolves lift a "nocturnal song, a weird and eerie chant" (p. 46). Buck often heard this call, and in him was a mysterious thrill and luring. His instincts were awakened, and he became drawn more and more toward his primordial instincts.)*
  8. "the law of meat" (White Fang, Chapters 7 and 8)  
*(White Fang begins to realize his own meaning in the world. He justifies his existence by killing meat and battling to kill it. Either living things were killed and eaten, or living things killed and ate themselves. Life lived on life. There were the eaters and the eaten. The law as it stood was: Eat or be eaten.)*
  9. "morose" (page 254)  
*(This word, more than any other, is used to show the reader a description of White Fang. "Morose" means to be ill humored, as with a person's mood. White Fang was fretful and peevish, always angry and temperamental, always quickly irritated and vexed.)*
  10. "law of property" (White Fang, Chapter 13)  
*(White Fang comes to learn the law of property and the duty of the defense of property. From the protection of his god's body (Gray Beaver's) to the protection of his god's possessions was a step to be made and practiced. . . even to the extent of biting other gods.)*
  11. "This feeling had been accentuated by the Ishmaelite life he had led from his puppyhood." (page 213)  
*(A reference to Ishmael of the Old Testament, and also a prediction of White Fang's future. Ishmael, the son of Abraham, was banished to the wilderness of Paran, south of Canaan. Ishmael married an Egyptian woman and had twelve sons, and is considered to be the traditional ancestor of the Arab peoples. See Genesis 25)*

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the two stories.

#### Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. What is the language London uses to describe the

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setting of the Northland?

*(The Northland is a land of desolation, lifeless, without movement, so lone and cold that the spirit of it was not even that of sadness. There was a laughter in it that was mirthless as the smile of the Sphinx, a laughter cold as the frost and partaking of the grimness of infallibility. It was the masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity laughing at the futility of life and the effort of life. Life is an offense to it, for life was movement; and the Wild aims always to destroy movement. pages 105-106)*

2. What is the language London uses to describe the setting of the Southland?

*(The Santa Clara Valley is "sun-kissed". Yet the streets were crowded with perils—wagons, carts, automobiles; great, straining horses pulling huge trucks; and monstrous cable cars hooting and clanging through the midst, screeching their insistent menace after the manner of the lynxes he had known in the northern woods. All this was the manifestation of the power of man. page 264)*

3. How were the dogs taken away from the protection of the sled team, and then attacked and eaten by the wolf-pack?

*(A she-wolf was the decoy for the pack. She drew out a dog and then all the rest of the wolves pitched in and killed it. The she-wolf was skilled enough to convince a dog that there was no harm in following, and the dog would innocently follow far enough away from the camp so that the other wolves could circle around it, making its escape back to camp impossible. page 115)*

4. What was the "unpardonable" crime?

*(The unpardonable crime was to bite one of the gods. Later this was modified when White Fang learned the law of the property—that it was permissible to protect the property of his master, even if it meant biting another god. page 199)*

5. About what did Buck dream?

*(Buck dreamed of another man than his present day master. This other man was shorter of leg and longer of arm, with muscles that were stringy and knotty rather than rounded and swelling. The hair of this man was long and matted, and his head slanted back under it from the eyes. He uttered strange sounds, and seemed very much afraid of the darkness, into which he peered continually, clutching in his hand, which hung midway between knee and foot, a stick with a heavy stone made fast to the end. He was all but naked. This was Buck's dream of his primitive time, his instincts inbred from his ancestors. pages 56, 57, 88, 89, and 92.)*

### Questions 6-9 Interpretive Level

6. What was Buck's feeling to his killing of the Yeehat

Indians?

*(All day Buck brooded or roamed restlessly above the camp. Death, as a cessation of movement, as a passing out and away from the lives of the living, he knew, and he knew John Thornton was dead. It left a great void in him, somewhat akin to hunger, but a void which ached and ached, and which food could not fill. At times, however, when he paused to contemplate the carcasses of the Yeehats, he forgot the pain of it; and at such times he was aware of a great pride in himself—a pride greater than any he had yet experienced. He had killed man—the noblest game of all—and he had killed in the face of the law of club and fang. They had died so easily. Thenceforward he would be unafraid of them except when they bore in their hands their arrows, spears, and clubs. pages 98-99)*

7. What is the meaning of "the call of the wild?"

*(Every night, regularly at nine, at twelve, at three, the wolves lifted a nocturnal sound, a song, weird, and eerie. It was Buck's delight to join in. As often as he heard this call, mysteriously thrilling and luring, he felt compelled to turn his back upon the protective fire of man, and to plunge into the forest. He knew not why. pages 46 and 77)*

8. What is the meaning of the law of love, the law of the club, and the law of the fang?

*(The law of the club was the first lesson driven home to Buck. A man with a club could do him harm, against which he had no defense. A man with a club was a law-giver, a master to be obeyed, though not necessarily conciliated. The law of the fang was the law of "no fair play". No reason had to exist for one dog to attack another dog. And once down, that was the end of the dog, for the other dogs would join in. The law of love belonged to the Southland, where love and fellowship, the respect of private property and private feelings existed. The law of love was unknown to life in the Northland. pages 28, 31 and 37)*

9. What significance is there in the wolf cub's life with the role of fear and growth?

*(Fear taught cubs that there were restrictions. Hunger was a restriction, and the fear of going hungry. The obstructions of the den, the cave walls, the sharp nudge of mother's nose, and the smashing stroke of her paw were all things to fear. These fears fostered in the wolf cub a respect and a growth of cunning and tact. Fear meant caution. Eventually growth was routed by fear, and fear was routed by growth. Such was the process of learning. pages 152-55)*

### Questions 10-13 Critical Level

10. Compare the molding of clay with reference to man and animal.

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*(London used both heredity and environment as factors in the growth of both animal and man. He considers man an animal first, and later a human being. The characters of both man and animal are laid down by heredity and environment. The animal heredity was a life-stuff that may be likened to clay. It possessed many possibilities, was capable of being molded into many forms. Environment served to model the clay, to give it particular form. If White Fang had never come into the environment of the fires of man, then the Wild would have molded him into a true wolf. But the gods had given him a different environment, and he was molded into a dog that was rather wolfish, but more a dog and not a wolf. Nevertheless the clay of White Fang had also been molded until he became what he was, morose and lonely, unloving and ferocious, the enemy of all his kind. In the same way, Beauty Smith was a monstrosity, and the blame of it lay elsewhere. He was not responsible. The clay of him had been so molded in the making. Nature had been niggardly with him. pages 205-06 and 218-220)*

11. How are the books *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* an allegory about humanity?

*(London equates men with dogs and wolves, and equates the harshness of the trail with the harshness of society, implying that force, savagery and cunning were equally the ways to success in both areas. London's vocabulary also reinforces this. Buck is "put into harness", becomes "lead-dog", or "top-dog", meets the "man with the club", leads the "wolf-pack", and lives "a dog's life"—all terms that can be equally applied to man and his lifestyles. pages 9-11)*

12. How does London parallel the lives of White Fang, Beauty Smith, and Jim Hall?

*(White Fang's environment and heredity had caused him to be the enemy of his kind. Because of his cub-life in the wild, White Fang could not be the same as other sled dogs, and because of his life in the captivity of man, he could neither be a full wolf. In the same way Beauty Smith was unlike other humans. His ugliness separated him from his own kind; others separated him from his ugliness. This caused him to be a spiteful man. Jim Hall, a convict, is also an outcast of society, as all convicts unfortunately seem to be labeled.)*

13. How can *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* be read on three different levels of comprehension?

*(The first level is a narrative level. It is the story of a dog or dogs that revert from one kind of life and treatment by man to another kind of life and treatment by man. It is a story which has sequence and plot and resolution. The second level is a biographical level, or even an almost autobiographical level. The treatment of the animals almost parallels London's perception of his own*

*treatment by other human beings. The third level is a philosophical level. The doctrines of survival of the fittest—social Darwinism—and the basic violence of man is found as it is personified in the varying character/personalities of the dogs and wolves.*

### Questions 14-16 Creative Level

14. Which is the better of the two novels in structure, plot and theme? Explain your answer.
15. Is the change in the character/personality of White Fang from wild to domesticated a believable and lasting happening? Is it possible for animal nature to change in such a way? Further, is it possible for a man to change his human nature?
16. On page 178 concerning White Fang's respect for his "god" Gray Beaver—it is written: "no effort of faith is necessary to believe in such a god." Explain the implications that faith in any "god" is an effort.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. The introduction of the text includes many references to people and places in history. Choose one or more of the following for a research report:  
Gorky (p. 1); Horatio Alger (p. 3); industrial America (p. 14); social Darwinism (p. 9); American virtues (p. 1); Teddy-Roosevelt-Robber Baron (p. 15).
2. Do a study of the character personalities of the human beings in Buck's life, comparing them with the personalities of the other dogs on the sled team. Point out similarities among the virtues and faults of both the humans and the dogs.
3. There occurs in both novels a great amount of very difficult vocabulary words. Compile a list of the more difficult words, and construct a "London Dictionary". Instead of arranging the words alphabetically, perhaps they would be listed in the order in which they appear in the novels.
4. The novels have a historical setting—that is—the gold rush of the Northwest Territories. Find more information on this topic and report what is found by means of an oral delivery to the class.
5. Most of the action in both novels takes place in the Canadian Northwest Territories near the Alaskan-Canadian border. Make a map and label those places which are mentioned. For example:

Chilkout Divide	Pelly
Lake Bennett	White Horse
Lake LeBarge	Fort Yukon
Big Salmon River	Marsh
Fort McCurry	Tagish
Great Slave Lake	White Pass
Dawson	Skagway
Yukon Trail	Klondike

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6. Students who have skills in art may wish to draw, sketch, or paint illustrations of scenes or characters in the novels.

## TEACHING NOTES

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

About Jack London:

*Jack London: The Man, The Writer, and the Rebel*, written by Robert Balthrop, 1977, Urigen.

*Jack London: American Rebel*, written by Philip S. Foner, 1947, Citadel.

*A Pictorial Life of Jack London*, by Russ Kingman, 1979, Crown.

*Jack London: A Biography*, written by Richard O'Connor, 1964, Little, Brown.

*Jack London and the Klondike: The Genesis of An American Writer* written by Franklin Walker, 1966, Huntington Library.

By Jack London:

*"To Build A Fire"*

*Burning Daylight*

*Love of Life*

*The Sea Wolf*

Other Authors—parallel themes:

*Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding

*Heart of Darkness*, by Joseph Conrad

*Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley

*Incredible Journey*, by S. Burnford

*Old Yeller*, by F. Gipson

*The Red Pony*, by John Steinbeck

**THE CALL OF THE WILD and WHITE FANG**

**COMPREHENSION TEST A**

**(CALL OF THE WILD)**

Part I: Vocabulary (20 points)

Match each underlined word with its definition listed below. Write the letter of the definition in the space provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. And over this great demesne Buck ruled. (p. 22)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The tormentors were evil looking creatures, ragged and unkempt. (p. 25)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. . . . the more outrage to his dignity, and his anger waxed and waxed. (p. 25)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. His eyes turned bloodshot, and he was metamorphosed into a raging fiend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The other dog made no advances, for he was a gloomy, morose fellow. (p. 30)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. It was as though it had always been, the wonted way of things (p. 50)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Dave fell, howling lugubriously as the long train of sleds churned by. (p. 59)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Mercedes averred she would not go an inch, not for a dozen Charleses. (p. 65)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. As it was with Buck, so it was with his mates. They were preambulating skeletons. (p. 69)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. But in the end Buck's pertinacity was rewarded. (p. 90)

- |                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. deadly, mournfully  | f. extensive territory        |
| b. dull, somber, sad   | g. persistant, stubborn       |
| c. declare, insist     | h. walking about, moving      |
| d. usual and customary | i. change physical form       |
| e. rough, messed       | j. increase, grow, strengthen |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

In the space provided next to each name, place the letter corresponding to the descriptive word or phrase that best fits.

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| _____ 1. Judge Miller  | a. Charles's wife          |
| _____ 2. Manuel        | b. government courier      |
| _____ 3. Perrault      | c. mountain range          |
| _____ 4. Hal           | d. Santa Clara estate      |
| _____ 5. John Thornton | e. amateur                 |
| _____ 6. Yeehat        | f. indians                 |
| _____ 7. Curly         | g. gardener who sells buck |
| _____ 8. MacKenzie     | h. first dog to die        |
| _____ 9. Sol-leks      | i. angry dog               |
| _____ 10. Mercedes     | j. loving man              |





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**COMPREHENSION TEST B**

**(WHITE FANG)**

Part I: Vocabulary (20 points)

Match each underlined word with its definition listed below. Write the letter of the definition in the space provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. But there was life abroad in the land and defiant. (p. 105)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "You're off color, what's the matter with you," Henry dogmatized. (p. 117)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Bill seemed to have forgotten the forebodings of the previous night. (p. 121)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Never had he been so fond of this body of his as now when his tenure of it was so precious, so precarious. (p. 127)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The she-wolf slid up close to him and watched him with hungry wistfulness. (p. 129)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The she-wolf's need to find the thing for which she searched had now become imperative. (p. 140)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The animal sense of living was never more alive than they were then in their seeming petrification. (p. 145)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Insidiously were the shackles of White Fang's bondage being riveted upon him. (p. 184)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. White Fang could have become leader of the pack, but he was too morose and solitary for that. (p. 197)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. His naked fangs and writhing lips were uniformly efficacious. (p. 280)

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. bold and proud        | f. oncoming evil         |
| b. rigid like stone      | g. sad, sullen           |
| c. producing results     | h. to say with authority |
| d. having and enjoying   | i. necessary and binding |
| e. sly and full of plots | j. yearning, wanting     |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

In the space provided next to each name, place the letter corresponding to the descriptive word or phrase that best fits.

- |                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Lord Alfred  | a. convict                   |
| _____ 2. Henry        | b. bully                     |
| _____ 3. Scott        | c. rescued by search team    |
| _____ 4. Gray Beaver  | d. White Fang's first master |
| _____ 5. Jim Hall     | e. love master               |
| _____ 6. Collie       | f. White Fang's mate         |
| _____ 7. One-Eye      | g. buried in a tree          |
| _____ 8. Beauty Smith | h. White Fang's father       |
| _____ 9. Kiche        | i. White Fang's mother       |
| _____ 10. Lip-lip     | j. mean and ugly man         |



## THE CALL OF THE WILD and WHITE FANG

### COMPREHENSION TEST A ANSWER KEY

#### Part I: Vocabulary

- f
- e
- j
- i
- b
- d
- a
- c
- h
- g

#### Part II: Matching

- d
- g
- b
- e
- j
- f
- h
- c
- i
- a

#### Part III: Multiple Choice

- d
- c
- d
- b
- c
- b
- a
- a
- c
- c

#### Part IV: Matching

- a
- b
- c
- d
- e

#### Part V: Essay

- First: Buck belongs to Judge Miller and lives on his estate in Santa Clara Valley, California. Second: He is then kidnapped and sent by train to Seattle where he is broken to the law of the club by the man in the red sweater. Third: He is purchased by Francois and Perrault who deliver dispatches for the Canadian government and then shipped to Dyea beach where he begins to learn the law of the fang. Then he becomes lead sled dog, leading the team over hundreds of miles of Northland wilderness. Fourth: A Scotch halfbreed takes charge of Buck and the other dogs and they make the weary, monotonous mail run between Skagway and Dawson. Fifth: the amateurs Charles, Hal, and Mercedes buy Buck and the team and literally work the dogs to death. Sixth: After John Thornton rescues Buck, the great dog comes to love the man and remains with him until Thornton is murdered by the Indians. Seventh: Buck returns to the woods and becomes a leader of the wolf pack.
- Hal, Charles, and Mercedes foolishly drive their sled onto the thin ice, fall through, and drown. Hal, Charles, and Mercedes are civilized representatives of the Southland; however they fail to make any accommodation with the harsh wilderness. Therefore, they die.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B ANSWER KEY

#### Part I: Vocabulary

- a
- h
- f
- d
- j
- i
- b
- e
- g
- c

#### Part II: Matching

- g
- c
- e
- d
- a
- f
- h
- j
- i
- b

#### Part III: Multiple Choice

- b
- c
- a
- c
- c
- c
- a
- d
- a
- a

#### Part IV: Sequence

- 2
- 1
- 5
- 3
- 4

#### Part V: Essay

- White Fang was used to the "law of the fang". He had learned how to fight with other dogs with the method used by all of the dogs in the Northland. The attack consisted of knocking them off of their feet, and biting the neck at the main vein. The slicing of the main vein at the neck meant almost instant death for the animal. Cherokee, however, was a different breed of dog that had ever come to the Northland. Cherokee was a pit-bull dog. Bull-dogs are built unlike any other dog; they are short, squat and extremely chunky. Because their legs are so short, it is very difficult to knock them off of their feet. Also, it is difficult to have any dog with fangs penetrate their body effectively, because it is so full of muscle. The main vein is under the thick skin. In addition, bull dogs do not strike and let go. Once they sink their teeth into their opponent, it is the "holding on" that eventually causes death of the opponent.
- In the beginning, White Fang knew laughter to be something of scorn. As the men poked and prodded him in his cage, he watched them laugh. Laughter was to White Fang a sign of belittlement. Further, when Beauty Smith had the wolf tied up, men would laugh at the viciousness of the dog when they too threw things at him. Laughter meant evil things and torment upon White Fang. However, it is Weedon Scott who slowly turns "evil" laughter into the kindness of smiles and love. The laughter is a symbol of the change in White Fang's life—the change both in the men he encounters and the change in his interpretation of the meaning of smiles and laughter.



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