

## About the Author

**Jack London** was born in San Francisco in 1876. Life was hard when Jack was growing up and he started working when he was 10. He did lots of different jobs. In his free time he went to the library and he spent many hours there, reading. In 1894 he went back to school, and published his first short story *Typhoon* off the Coast of Japan. Then in 1896 he went to the

University of California at Berkeley, but he had to leave because of money problems.

In July 1897 he left for the Klondike Gold Rush in Alaska. However, he became ill and came home and started working as a full-time writer. He wrote short stories and soon he was well-known. In 1903 he wrote his most famous story: *The Call of the Wild*. His next novel was *The Sea-Wolf* (1904) which is perhaps his best literary novel. With the earnings he bought a large farm in California, where he died in 1916, aged only 40 years old.

London was a prolific writer in his short life. Between 1895 and 1916 he published 18 novels and six collections of stories, as well as a play, various works of non-fiction and a biography. He is renowned for his descriptions of nature and the animal world.

### Glossary

- **earnings:** money you get for work
- **Klondike Gold Rush:** when gold was discovered in the Klondike area between Alaska and Canada in 1896 people went there to find gold
- **prolific:** who wrote many books
- **renowned:** known
- **typhoon:** tropical cyclone
- **well-known:** famous

## About the Book

*White Fang* came out first as a serialized story in *The Outing Magazine* between May and October, 1906. Then it was published as a single book. It was an immediate success. London wrote *White Fang* as a companion to *The Call of the Wild*. In *The Call of the Wild*, a domesticated dog from California ends up with wild wolves in Alaska. In *White Fang*, a dog which is three-quarters wolf and one quarter dog is brought up wild in Alaska and ends up domesticated in California.

In the story, White Fang is forced to adapt to a series of different situations in order to survive. The book also traces White Fang's relationship with the world of humans and how, after suffering great cruelty, he gradually learns to love and trust someone. The story was written during Jack London's courtship and marriage to Charmian Kittredge. Just as White Fang is tamed by Scott's love, London, too, is tamed by his love for Charmian.

Like *The Call of the Wild*, this story explores the theme of the survival of the fittest – this idea was put forward by Darwin in his *Origin of Species* where living creatures are forced to adapt to their surroundings or die. London also examines the idea of 'nature versus nurture': do animals and people act according to the characteristics with which they were born (nature), or do they change depending on how they are treated by those around them (nurture)?

- **adapt:** change
- **companion:** (here) to go with
- **domesticated:** tame and good with people
- **ends up:** finds himself
- **nurture:** how you are looked after when you are growing up
- **serialized:** in parts
- **traces:** follows
- **trust:** believe in someone

## THE LONG TRAIL

14 White Fang sensed something terrible. He was whining softly outside the cabin.

'I think he knows,' said Matt.

'What can I do with a wolf in California?' asked Scott.

Then White Fang saw his love-master packing his things into a bag. His god was going away again, and, like last time, he wasn't taking White Fang with him. That night he howled the long wolf-howl, pointing his nose to the stars and telling them of his sadness.

The next day Scott called White Fang into the cabin.

'You poor thing,' he said, rubbing his ears. 'I'm starting the long trail, where you cannot follow. Now give me a last goodbye growl.'

But White Fang didn't growl. He put his head between his master's arm and body. Then, at that moment from the Yukon River, the boat's whistle sounded.

'You need to go now,' said Matt.

The two men locked the doors and went outside. From inside they could hear White Fang whining and crying.

'Take good care of him, Matt,' said Scott.

White Fang was howling like dogs do when their master is dead.

Down by the river, everything was busy. The two men stood shaking hands, but Matt's hand suddenly dropped to the deck past his employer. Scott turned around. Sitting on the deck a few meters away was White Fang.

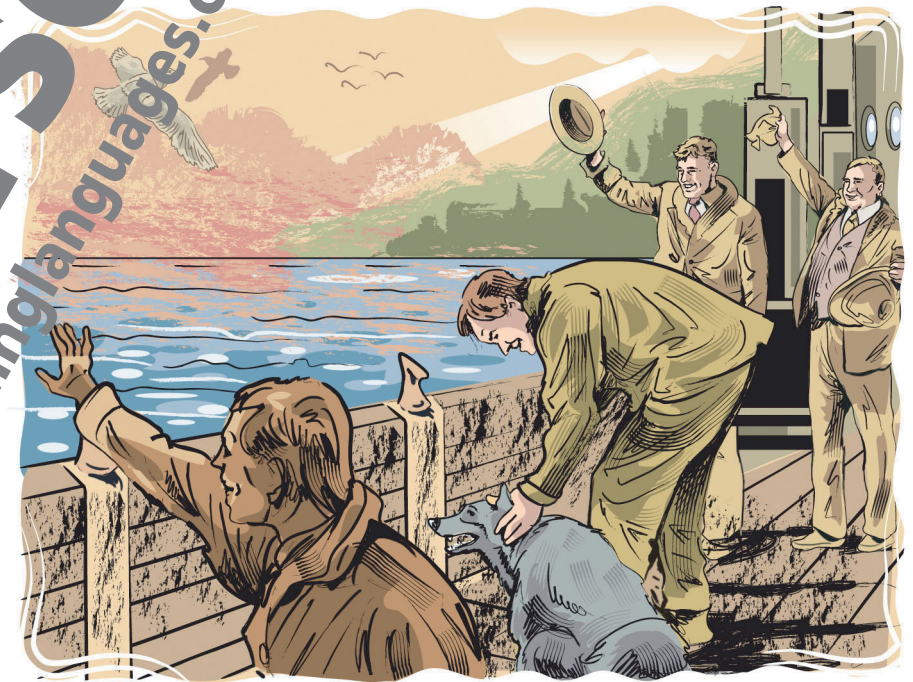
The ship's whistle hooted again to announce the departure. People ran down onto the bank. Matt went to get White Fang, he wanted to use his scarf as a lead.

'Goodbye, Matt,' said Scott. 'And about the wolf, don't write about him. It will be a waste to you!!'

'You don't mean...?' started Matt. 'The climate in California will be perfect for a wolf.'

The ship moved out into the river. Scott waved a last goodbye. Then he turned and bent over White Fang.

'Now growl, will you, growl!' he said, as he patted the dog's head.



• **lead:** long rope you use to take a dog for a walk

• **ship's whistle hooted:** the steam went through a pipe in the ship and made a loud noise

## Glossary

- **deck:** top part of a large boat, where you stand
- **growl:** low vibrating noise a dog or wolf makes when it is angry

- **whining:** long noise a dog or wolf makes when it is unhappy

## THE SOUTHLAND

15 White Fang landed in San Francisco. Here the white men really seemed like powerful gods. There were towering buildings, automobiles and electric trams. It was amazing and frightening. He felt even more dependent on his love-master.

They got a train and White Fang found himself outside the city in wonderful, sunny countryside. A carriage was waiting and a man and woman walked towards them. White Fang growled when Scott's mother embraced him, but Scott calmed him and they drove off in the carriage to a large house.

As soon as they arrived, White Fang was attacked by a sheep-dog called Collie, and a deerhound called Dick. White Fang attacked Dick and nearly killed him but he didn't attack Collie because she was female, and that was the rule.

All White Fang wanted was to be left alone. Dick soon agreed to this, and they no longer took any interest in each other. However, Collie remembered wolves stealing sheep, and she couldn't accept him. She regularly attacked him, but he never once hurt her because she was female.

Next White Fang learned about his master's family. He learned who was most important to Scott. He was soon able to tolerate, then even like, his master's children. However, he never saw the other members of the family as anything but possessions of his master.

## Glossary

- **carriage:** kind of 'car' pulled by horses
- **deerhound:** large dog used for hunting deer



- **electric trams:** type of public bus which runs on rails
- **sheep-dog:** dog used for moving sheep
- **tolerate:** accept



## After Reading

### Test

**1 Read the text and choose the correct word for each space. Write 1, 2, or 3 in the space.**

#### National Parks in the Yukon

Three of Canada's National Parks are in the Yukon. The Kluane National Park **(a)** ..... an area of 21, 980 km<sup>2</sup>. It is an area of high mountains, huge ice-fields and fertile valleys. Mount Logan is Canada's **(b)** ..... mountain at 5,950 m. The park is home to 118 species of breeding birds. The Vuntut National Park was **(c)** ..... in 1995. It is in the extreme northeast of the Yukon. Vuntut **(d)** ..... 'among the lakes' in Gwitchin, the language of the Native Americans who live in the region. The Ivavik National Park is also mountainous, with the British Mountains covering **(e)** ..... of its territory. It is the place where the caribou go to have their babies. As well as caribou, these three National Parks are **(f)** ..... to a range of interesting animals such as grizzly bears, lynxes, moose, foxes and wolves. On the coast there are polar bears, and there are enormous breeding grounds for half a million migratory birds. The Yukon is not very **(g)** .....: the average summer temperature is only 14°C, and the winter average is -29°C! But it is a **(h)** ..... place to visit with beautiful wild countryside.

- |                         |                      |                   |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>a)</b> 1 includes    | <b>2</b> covers      | <b>3</b> owns     |
| <b>b)</b> 1 highest     | <b>2</b> lowest      | <b>3</b> shortest |
| <b>c)</b> 1 made        | <b>2</b> built       | <b>3</b> opened   |
| <b>d)</b> 1 understands | <b>2</b> means       | <b>3</b> speaks   |
| <b>e)</b> 1 all         | <b>2</b> two-thirds  | <b>3</b> none     |
| <b>f)</b> 1 home        | <b>2</b> house       | <b>3</b> nest     |
| <b>g)</b> 1 cold        | <b>2</b> frozen      | <b>3</b> warm     |
| <b>h)</b> 1 frightening | <b>2</b> fascinating | <b>3</b> funny    |

**2 Read the text below, and tick (✓) true (T) or false (F).**

The gray wolf is a medium-sized carnivore which is found in many parts of the world. Russian, European and North American wolves tend to be more similar to each other than the Indian, Middle Eastern and African ones. Adult northern wolves are 100-130 cm long, 80 cm high, and weigh about 36 kg. They have great endurance, travelling up to 25 km a day, living in temperatures of -40°C, and being able to survive for two weeks without food. They have thick gray fur, which helps them keep warm in snowy mountainous areas where they often live. They live together in family groups known as packs, and mated pairs stay together for life. Each pack has a large territory, and they will fight other packs which come into it. Their main food is deer, but they also eat other small mammals such as hares, foxes, mice, birds and their eggs. They communicate over long distances by howling, usually to group the pack together or when they are in an area they don't know well. A female can produce four or five cubs each year. When there are young cubs the pack does not move around.

- |  | <b>T</b>                 | <b>F</b>                 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>a)</b> Wolves everywhere in the world are the same.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>b)</b> Wolves can survive in difficult conditions.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>c)</b> Their fur helps them to survive in the cold.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>d)</b> The males mate with a different female every year.     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>e)</b> Packs are made up mostly of the same family of wolves. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>f)</b> Wolves only eat one or two kinds of animals.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>g)</b> The wolves stay in one place when the cubs are born.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

 **3 Look at the picture on page 28 ask a partner questions about what you can see in it.**