



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE CALL OF THE WILD BY JACK LONDON

1. In the beginning of Chapter I, how is Buck described? Based on this description, how do you think he will deal with the hardships of the Yukon Territory? Which of his traits will serve him well in his new life? Which will he have to abandon to survive?
2. What important lesson did Buck learn from the man with the club? What is meant by the line, "It was his introduction to the reign of primitive law, and he met the introduction halfway."?
3. How did François begin to earn Buck's respect? From the description of this incident, predict what Buck's relationship will be with "a big, snowy-white fellow from Spitzbergen."
4. What are the "laws of club and fang" that Buck learned in chapter II? How are these laws different from what Buck was used to?
5. What is the one thing that Dave and Sol-leks live for? Why do you think they are like this? How do you think they got this way? Can you think of examples of other animals or humans that show these traits? What does this tell you about animal and human nature?
6. What trait insures that Buck will survive in the north? How is this aspect of his character shown in the story? How would this trait be accepted in his former life? What does this say about the differences in the two worlds?
7. How do François and Perrault display their true natures in this chapter? Give specific examples to support your answer.
8. How does Buck begin to undermine Spitz's authority in this chapter? What were the effects of Buck's actions? What does this say about Buck's transformation from a "southland dog?"
9. What traits have helped Buck thrive in his new world? Of them, which do you think is the most important? Why?
10. Describe Buck's qualities as the new team leader. How is he similar to Spitz? How is he different?
11. Describe the man in Buck's dreams. What is the significance of these dreams? What is London trying to show us with these dreams?
12. What is the significance of Dave's death? Does it remind you of any other work you've read or of any event from your life?
13. What was Mercedes' reaction when experienced men went through her belongings to lighten the load? What does this say about her and about her relationship with her husband and brother?
14. Compare Charles, Hal, and Mercedes to any other characters you've met in other books, movies, plays, television shows, or real life. What traits did Buck have that allowed him to adapt to the north that they lacked?
15. Why do you think London included these three characters in the book? What do they represent? 5. Why did Buck refuse to rise and lead the team? What did he have that his masters lacked?



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16. How did Buck's relationship with John Thornton differ from his relationships with his previous masters? How does London illustrate Buck's intense feelings for Thornton? How is this in keeping with his new, more primitive self? How does Buck balance his love for Thornton with his more primitive self?
17. What does London mean by the following quotation: "He was older than the days he had seen and the breaths he had drawn." (57)
18. How does Buck's love for Thornton compare to Dave's love of toiling in the traces?
19. London describes Buck's dreams of the primitive man: "The salient thing of this other world seemed fear." (68) What does he mean by this? Why would that be true? Why isn't Thornton's world filled with fear?
20. Why is Buck intent on befriending the wolf? What makes him break off their travels to return to camp? What does this say about Buck's place in the world?
21. What does Buck's fight with the bear and the moose display about his embrace of the call? Why do you think London included them in the story? What predictions can you make about Buck's future?
22. What does Buck learn from his slaughter of the Yeehats? Does this make his answering of the call harder or easier? Explain.
23. Does the book have a happy or sad ending? Explain your answer. What do you think London would say?
24. Who is wild and who is civilized in the story? Explain your answer with specific examples.
25. Do you think Buck would be able to rejoin man at some point in his future? Explain.
26. Compare and contrast all of Buck's masters. What did he learn from each? Which lesson or lessons were most important to his survival? His happiness?
27. What does the man's reaction to the old timer's advice tell us about him? What does his reaction foreshadow?
28. Describe the relationship between the man and the dog. Compare and contrast this relationship with that of the usual human/pet relationship.
29. Compare and contrast the man's interaction with and attitudes toward nature to those of the dog's interaction with and attitudes toward nature. What is London telling us about man's relationship with nature versus that of animals'?
30. What is London's message to readers about man's relationship with nature?

Questions from the publisher.



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