



PUFFIN  CLASSICS

JACK LONDON

The Call of the Wild

An Emulation Handbook-- Jack Sugrue

INTRODUCED BY MELVIN BURGESS

Element 1: Point of View

What is the author doing here?

London has created a point of view wherein the narrator is 3rd person omniscient, in a sense. The reader is offered insight into other characters occasionally, but the narrator's main focus is on Buck. Still, those moments make this point of view stand out from others -- it's not directly 3rd person omniscient, nor is it clearly 3rd person limited.

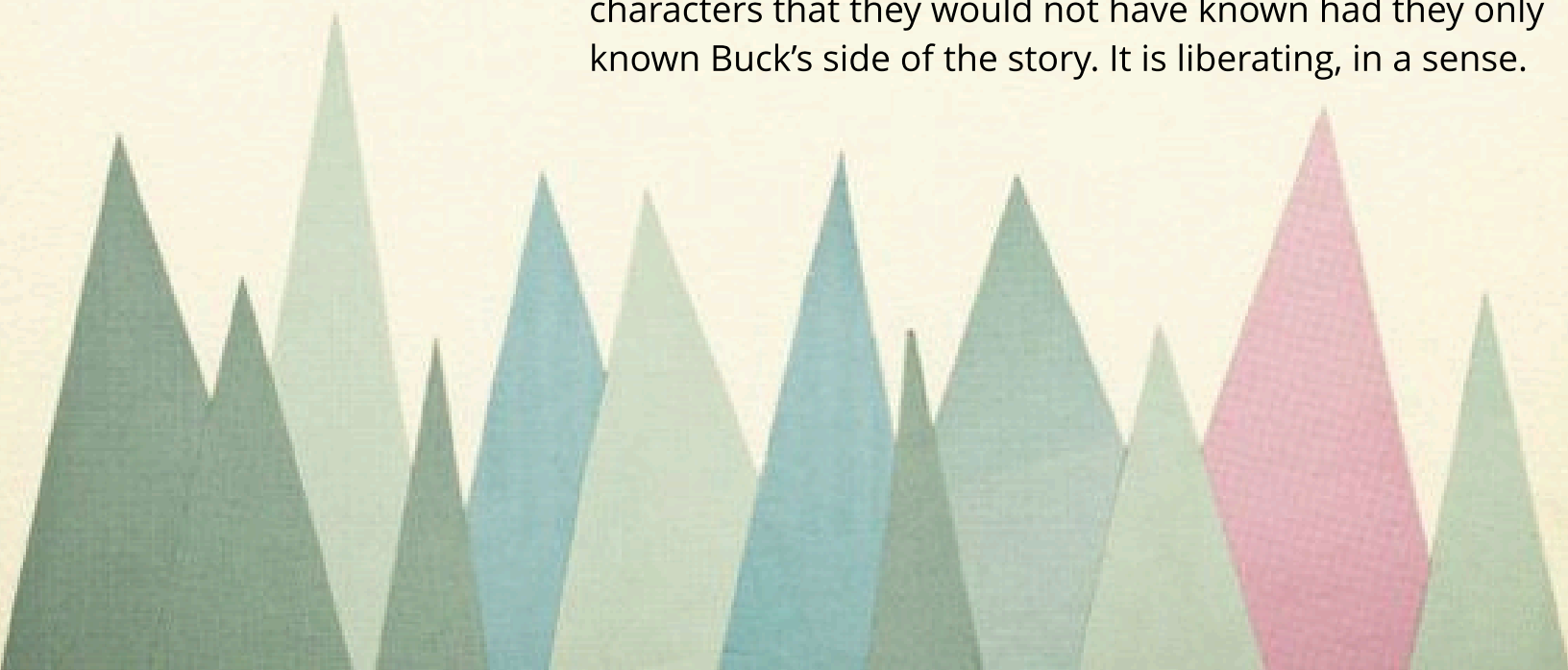
"After some time of this, François threw down his club, thinking that Buck feared a thrashing. But Buck was in open revolt."

Why is it important to the book?

The point of view here, especially when combined with Buck's emotions, helps establish that Buck is a dog. He is not sentient, he is not as intelligent as a human, he is just a dog. Because of that, taking on just Buck's point of view would be challenging, as, in comparison to humans, dogs are relatively shallow. London adds that layer of depth by adding that omniscience to the table, so the reader is not limited by what Buck knows.

What does this make the reader feel?

This makes the reader feel as aware as they need to be. They do not know everything, but they know more than Buck is aware of. Some moments of the narrator extending beyond Buck's limited point of view make the reader feel as though they are learning so much about these characters that they would not have known had they only known Buck's side of the story. It is liberating, in a sense.



Element 2: Chapter Titles

What is the author doing here?

London divides the book into 7 long chapters. What's more important, arguably, than that, however, is the names of each chapter, which are always directly quoted at some point in the book.

Why is it important to the book?

The chapter names somewhat reflect the plot: each chapter covers a specific theme, almost to a point where chapter names can be perceived literally. In "The Dominant Primordial Beast", for example, Buck establishes himself as just that, and does so by killing his rival, Spitz. Spitz was before the alpha dog of this pack, but now Buck has taken that spot. The chapter name is clearly an exact mirror of events in the plot.

Chapter 2: The Law of Club and Fang
Chapter 3: The Dominant Primordial Beast

What does this make the reader feel?

The literal chapter names make the reader stop and think for a moment. It forces them to analyze what every chapter means, and how that is going to impact the story's development and advancement.



Element 3: Use of Dialogue

What is the author doing here?

London sets all the dialogue between the two main human characters: François and Perrault. Along with that, the dialogue is relatively minimal.

Why is it important to the book?

This establishes that the cast of characters is limited and probably will not expand much upon this group of sledding dogs. Also, the lack of dialogue in most situations strengthens the importance of a non-sentient animal protagonist.

*"' Dat Spitz fight lak hell,' said Perrault.
' And Buck fight lak two hells,' was François's answer."*



Author Emulation

King of the House

Rory eagerly scampered through the house, right up to the door of the pantry. He *knew* something was in there. He could hear the *pitter-patter* as it walked around the floor. The only thing between him and that mouse was this door.

He was eager to get in, but his paws couldn't reach the doorknob. He had seen Tom, the man in the house, open it countless times with ease. *If only he was here...* Rory decided his best bet was to meow loudly enough that someone would notice.

Sure enough, Tom made his way into the kitchen, noticing his favorite cat clawing at the door, meowing. He saw this as a cute spectacle, and gave Rory a scratch behind the ears, Rory's favorite spot to be petted.

"You gonna catch a mouse, Rory? Oh yes you are, my little kitty." Tom opened the door, letting Rory run free.

The moment Rory stepped in that door, his primal hunting instincts gave him a sharp kick in the rear. The mouse, he noticed, was in the corner, nibbling away at some spilled cat food. Before the pest had time to react, Rory pounced. With one blow, the mouse was down for the count. He took the mouse's body and played with it a little, bouncing it from paw to paw. He hadn't done anything like that in a long time. The pounce itself was exhilarating, and Rory immense satisfaction in actually finishing off the mouse. He took the small mouse by the scruff in his mouth, and walked out triumphantly. This was his work, his prize, and he wanted everyone to see that he was the king of the house.

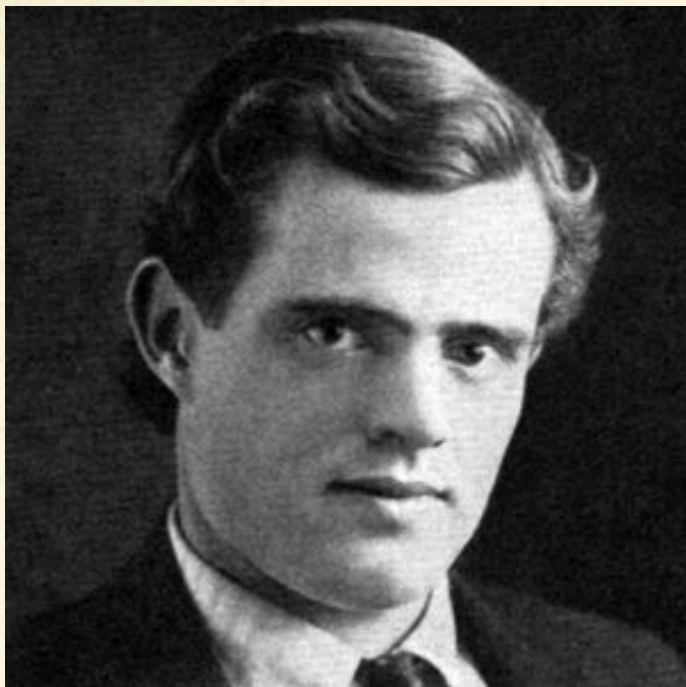
Element #1 for me was the point of view. Here, my objective was to have the point of view be mostly on the cat, Rory, but I tried to have parts of it be other characters. My key example here was Tom, whose thoughts were seen in part of this passage. The two points of view here were meant to create a juxtaposition of sorts that I hoped the reader picked up on: the seriousness of Rory's perspective compared to Tom, whose perspective capitalized on the idea that Rory was just a cute little kitty.

The third idea was the lack of human characters and the subsequent lack of dialogue. I showed the same in this passage by featuring a brief cameo from Tom, who had some dialogue talking to Rory. Like *Call of the Wild*, the passage is mostly based around the animals rather than the people, and I hoped to pass that along with the distribution of time spent focusing on Tom rather than Rory.

The second element was the idea of chapter names. I ended this passage with the name of the chapter in hopes that the reader would notice it and would remember that was the title. I also thought, while acting as a direct quote from the passage, the chapter name also exemplifies the beliefs Rory has of himself throughout this chapter: he believes that he is on top of the world.

About the Author -- Jack London

1876-1916



Jack London was born an illegitimate son, and grew up in the slums of Oakland. At the age of 17 years old, he went to sea, and had a change in life plans. After being imprisoned for a month, he decided to take up an intellectual job as an author. Many of his most famous books, including *Call of the Wild* and *The Sea-Wolf*, were based off of his own experiences searching for gold in the Klondike region of Alaska. London was, unfortunately, in poor health. He passed away at the age of 40, from a variety of diseases.

About the Writer -- Jack Sugrue



Jack Sugrue is an SLA sophomore. His reading choices recently have been classics, as he wants to be well-informed on a lot of the most famous books of history. He is an avid quizbowl player, and has been reading books that come up often in quizbowl questions so he can buzz in as early as possible. His current book, *Call of the Wild*, was one he won at a quizbowl tournament for being one of the highest scorers. In other words, he's just a big nerd.

