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White Fang



Synopsis

This companion novel to Jack London's best known work, "The Call of the Wild" was first serialized in "Outing" magazine in 1906. Upon its release it was an immediate success, especially among young readers. Rather than trying to humanize animals, as many other writers had done, London sought to hammer into the average human understanding that these dog-heroes of mine were not directed by abstract reasoning, but by instinct, sensation, and emotion, and by simple reasoning. London believed that they did not think these things; they merely did them. --This text refers to an alternate Audible Audio Edition edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The story begins with White Fang's mother, a half wolf, half dog, a wild predator in the Arctic who literally stalks her prey that includes dogs and humans. After a while, and I won't get into the gory details, but there are many, she mates with a full bred wolf to produce a litter, including White Fang, who ends up being the only survivor of the breed. Being in his cave for a while, he comes out and discovers the world, his world, being the Arctic, in Alaska and the Yukon. Coming upon humans for the first time, he looks upon them as gods, and comes under three different masters, one Native, one cruel master who only uses him for dog fights in a betting ring, and then is rescued by a more benign owner who ends up taking him to California in the end. This wolf is trained to protect his owners, though he hated his second master, to pull dog sleds, and most of all, to defend himself. There are three different stories of the wolf being under these masters, doing all sorts of chores, and you learn something of Arctic life during the Alaskan gold rush. Most off, the author

delves into the mind of the wolf, how he thinks, and how he deals with the world. The main plot here is that White Fang lives like a dog, but cannot completely adapt himself to the dog's instincts, as his masters and their kin expect him to do. He does not jump for joy at the sight of his master, or other humans. He is suspicious of all other dogs, and lets them know, by fighting them, that he is the one in charge. The wolf will go as far as to kill other animals, both for food and to prove his own superiority. However, he is faithful to his masters, but to no other human. The wolf has to constantly be trained not to kill certain animals and to respect the master's kin, but can and will defend his master, and family, against any outside intruder, even to kill them. The main point here, I think, is that wolves are not dogs. Wolves have natural instincts that cannot be trained out of them. They can interbreed with dogs, but dogs are much too domesticated, and wolves are too wild ever to become pets. This book pictures the struggles of this fact, with White Fang struggling with his inner nature, trying to overcome them to adapt to the world of humans. The wolf succeeds, but not without many harsh lessons.

My 13 year old son needed to pick a book to read off of a given list of selections. I prompted him to choose White Fang by Jack London. I thought it would keep his interest since it is a good read. He enjoyed this book very much and even continued to read ahead of his reading assignments. Rarely does read ahead and keep interest in a book he is required to read, so he most certainly enjoyed this book and it kept his interest. I would recommend White Fang for older children.

Enthralling story brought vividly to life. A book of its time, though, calling white men "superior gods" - that was jarring and excessively uncomfortable to read. Even more uncomfortable to read were the descriptions of the beatings, and the minute details of the dog fights, described almost with enjoyment so much were they lingered over. I am not a huge animal lover, but intensely dislike any abuse of animals, and these descriptions were extremely difficult to read. If you are sensitive to this kind of thing, please be aware there is a large stomach-churning section that is very upsetting. The persecutor gets his comeuppance though, as do all villains. Almost made me love the wilds of the Yukon, but not entirely - it's cold enough here in Toronto. :P

It's easy to see why Jack London's stories have become classics. As you read the books you feel like you're there when everything is happening. There's a better quality in the descriptions of what's going on. To me, it seems like the quality of his stories are something that modern day writers should strive for.

I know it's a classic and it is a great story filled with amazing imagery. For that, I like it quite a bit. But, to this reader, 3 sentences in every paragraph could be cut and the book could still hold together. Especially when Jack is talking about meat. We get it Jack! Animals eat meat and aren't all ceremonial about it! Anyways... fairly entertaining book with some of the dryness you'd expect with the age. The first part of the book is a great hook and it all flows perfectly. Great adventure.

White Fang is a timeless classic that is easy to read over and over and over. I first picked up the book at the age of 11 in 2004 and it's still just as beautiful today as it was back then, even though I understand more of it now that I'm older. White Fang primarily focuses on survival - What must be done to survive, and if you do survive, what kind of person/wolfdog have you become? At one stage Jack London sums up the Wild as "Eat or be eaten. Kill or be killed." White Fang rises to the challenge, and after a lifetime of hardships has become a relentless killer, unlovable and unloving. However, his circumstances change rapidly, and White Fang must learn how to love or else he will perish. The book also focuses on cruelty, loyalty and the remarkable formation of the sled dog team in the sub-arctic temperature of Yukon Territory, Canada, in the Klondike Gold Rush at the end of the 19th century. As it is a rather old book (1906 was the original publication, I believe, making this book 104 years old at the time of this review) some of the expressions and terms can be a little hard to understand - One that had me giggling like a little girl was "burning faggots". However, with the handy-dandy dictionary installed on your Kindle, enlightenment is only a few clicks away. The text is dense, so I don't suggest it to readers who have short attention spans or a low tolerance for classical literature. But if you're willing to give it a go you will be very pleased to have read this fantastic novel. This book is great for wolf, dog or animal lovers, and I'd recommend it to anyone who has an appreciation for wild animals. There is a fair bit of violence in this novel (Ripping of throats and other such charming things), but once a reader overcomes this there is nothing in the way of enjoying the amazing, timeless journey of White Fang.

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