

# Biographical criticism: to build a fire by jack london

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The short story “To Build a Fire” is not the typical man versus man struggle. It is more of a man versus nature, or in other perspective, a man versus himself struggle. It only has two characters, a man and a dog, both traversing a snowy path towards a certain place, despite knowing the inevitability of danger or even death itself. In the end, death was sure for the man, as his struggle against himself and against nature ended drastically.

The dog, following his instinct, went away towards safety. But the story is not only a work of fiction. It is in itself, a combination of the writer’s imagination and his real life. Jack London is one of those writers who lived a very colorful life. Jack London is not the typical writer who wrote for pleasure in his pastime or has made a living out of writing. London grew up without knowing his dad, and eventually lived his life under the care of a foster parent.

He worked manual labor in both land and sea, and when he finds a free time, that’s when he scribbles down his thoughts. London literally struggled against himself and his environment. When the time came that he has to live by himself, he worked hard in order to sustain his needs. It was like trying to create a fire in a vast land covered by snow so that you would survive the night and would not freeze to death. He has to take care of everything in order to survive.

As a man, Jack London grew up in a hostile environment full of snow which would kill him anytime if he doesn’t take care of himself. The story “To Build a Fire” is not just the work of imagination by Jack London. Somehow, it is affected by his outlook in life, as well as his influences in life. All of his struggles against himself and his harsh environment were reflected in the

story. These struggles would literally make or break you. It made Jack London, and it killed the man in the story.