

Call of the wild – buck's metamorphosis

Literature



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What could transform a gentle pampered dog into an undomesticated man-killing beast, like his early ancestors, capable of killing humans? The central character in the story “ The Call of the Wild” is a dog-named Buck, whom is half St. Bernard – half Scotch Shepard. Buck’s life began on Judge Miller’s estate in central California, where he lived a docile life free to roam and do as he wished. The Gold Rush in 1897 created a demand for young strong dogs, like Buck, to pull the sleds through the snow.

The growing need directly impacted Buck’s life because it began the journey that converted him into a savage man-killing beast. The story is set into motion when Buck is kidnapped and sold to his first master. The main theme in his life was survival of the fittest. The events that lead to his metamorphosis include the lessons he learned, the masters he encountered, and the lost of his only love. The greed of Manuel, influenced by the Gold Rush, persuaded him to kidnap Buck to pay off his debt.

Buck’s first lesson, from the man in the red sweater, taught him he was no match to a man with a club. The club symbolized the untamed relationship between humans and dogs; as well as his entry into the primitive world, in which humans became enemies. Dave, who became too ill to work, taught Buck that if you could not pull your own weight you would be killed. Buck’s battle with his antagonist Spitz taught him a valuable lesson about external danger and the cruelty that existed among animals. He realized the wild had changed him because he killed Spitz and had no regret.

During this time he learns he must fight for food and possibly steal in order to survive. Slowly his old morals of his life with Judge Miller faded as his instincts of untamed ancestors emerge. After the death of Spitz he is

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eventually allowed to become the leader of the pack, where he learned that his tenacious will could affect the future outcome of others dogs. Hal, Charles and Mercedes are novices that were simply on an adventure to get rich. The owner’s treatment and beating revealed to Buck that cruel people exist in the civilized world.

Buck’s struggle with the two men show him he has connections to the primitive world because he can sense the danger that lies ahead which prevents him from being killed. Buck had many masters some he respected, such as Francois, and some he detested, such as Hal. Although the struggles with his various owners were crucial in his transformation into a savage beast, they did not ultimately convert him into a wild animal. The lost of Thornton as a companion is what eventually allows Buck to enter into the life of the wild.

Thornton was the first true love that Buck had ever felt. The love was the only thing holding him back from the strong call of the wild. Buck struggles between the identity of Thornton’s sled dog and the wild hunter he is destined to be. After Buck finds Thornton dead and the Yeehat Indians are to blame, he realizes that he no longer has anything left for him in the civilized world. He decides to answer the call of the wild and join the wolf pack. Buck’s metamorphosis from a tame house pet into the savage man-killing beast is fostered by the actions of various people.

Buck’s masters Judge Miller, Francois and Perrault, Hal and Charles, and lastly Thornton all influenced his ultimate transformation into the primitive world. Ultimately the call of the wild overpowers every moral that Buck had been taught in the domesticated life. Buck realized that if the events did not

happen he would not have learned the lessons allowing him to become the fittest among the dogs. Buck not only survived but he had become a legend among wolves and feared by Indians.