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动物小说的开山之作



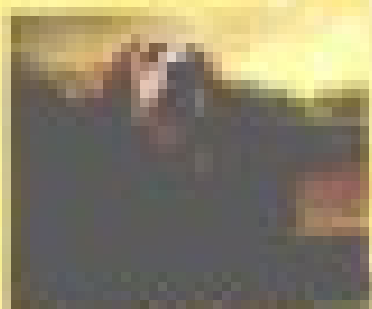
THE CALL OF
THE WILD
(UNABRIDGED)

野性的呼唤

■ Jack London

中国出版集团
中国对外翻译出版公司

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出版前言

一部文学史是人类从童真走向成熟的发展史，是一个个文学大师用如椽巨笔记载的人类的心灵史，也是承载人类良知与情感反思的思想史。阅读这些传世的文学名著就是在阅读最鲜活生动的历史，就是在与大师们做跨越时空的思想交流与情感交流，它会使一代代的读者获得心灵的滋养与巨大的审美满足。

中国对外翻译出版公司以中外语言学习和中外文化交流为自己的出版方向，向广大读者提供既能提升语言能力，又能滋养心灵的精神大餐是我们的一贯宗旨。尽管随着网络技术和数字出版的发展，读者获得这些作品的途径更加便捷，但是，一本本装帧精美、墨香四溢的图书仍是读书人的最爱。

“熟读唐诗三百首，不会做诗也会吟”，汉语学习如此，外语学习尤其如此。要想彻底学好一种语言，必须有大量的阅读。这不仅可以熟能生巧地掌握其语言技能，也可了解一种语言所承载的独特文化。“中译经典文库·世界文学名著（英语原著版）”便是这样一套必将使读者受益终生的读物。

PREFACE

A history of literature is a phylogeny of human beings growing from childhood to adulthood, a spiritual history of masters in literature portraying human spirit with great touch, as well as a thinking history reflecting human conscience and emotional introspection. Reading these immortal classics is like browsing through our history, while communicating across time and space with great writers into thinking and feelings. It bestows spiritual nutrition as well as aesthetic relish upon readers from generation to generation.

China Translation and Publishing Corporation (CTPC), with a publishing mission oriented toward readings of Chinese and foreign languages leaning as well as cultural exchange, has been dedicated to providing spiritual feasts which not only optimize language aptitude but also nourish heart and soul. Along with the development of Internet and digital publication, readers have easier access to reading classic works. Nevertheless, well-designed printed books remain favorite readings for most readers.

“After perusing three hundred Tang poems, a learner can at least utter some verses, if cannot proficiently write a poem.” That is true for learning Chinese, more so for learning a foreign language. To master a language, we must read comprehensively, not only for taking in lingual competence, but also for catching the unique cultural essence implied in the language. “World Literary Classics (English originals)” can surely serve as a series of readings with everlasting edifying significance.

作家与作品

杰克·伦敦(1876—1916)是著名的美国小说家。

杰克·伦敦生于加利福尼亚旧金山一个破产农民家庭，他从幼年起就不得不出卖体力养活自己。他当过牧童、报童、童工、工人、水手。他参加过1893年大恐慌中失业大军组成的抗议队伍，以流浪罪被捕入狱，罚做苦工几个月，出狱后，一边拼命干活，一边刻苦学习，1896年阿拉斯加发现金矿，他曾加入淘金者的行列，却因病空手而归。从此埋头读书写作，成为职业作家。24岁开始写作，去世时年仅40岁。16年中他共写成长篇小说19部，短篇小说150多篇，还写了3部剧本以及相当多的随笔和论文。其中最为著名的有《野性的呼唤》、《海狼》、《白牙》、《马丁·伊登》和一系列优秀短篇小说《老头子同盟》、《北方的奥德赛》、《马普希的房子》等。这些作品共同为我们展示了一个陌生又异常广阔的世界：那荒凉空旷又蕴藏宝藏的阿拉斯加，波涛汹涌岛屿星罗棋布的太平洋，横贯美洲大陆的铁路线，形形色色的鲜活人物，人与自然的严酷搏斗，人与人之间错综复杂的社会关系。他的创作笔力刚劲，语言质朴，情节富于戏剧性。他作品中的现实主义风格和多样化的题材，以及强烈显示出来的作家的独特个性，多少年来一直深深吸引着不同时代、不同经历的读者。

伟大的革命导师列宁在病榻上时，曾特意请人朗读小说，其中就有杰克·伦敦的短篇小说《热爱生命》。列宁给予这部小说

很高的评价。美国传记小说家伊尔文·斯通在他的《马背上的水手》里称杰克·伦敦是美国无产阶级文学之父。他的作品不仅在美国本土广泛流传，而且受到世界各国人民的欢迎。他在现代美国文学史和世界文学史上都享有崇高地位。

《野性的呼唤》描写一只名叫巴克的大狗与群狗斗争后，逃入原始森林的故事。巴克原是米勒法官家的一只爱犬，经过了文明的教化，一直生活在美国南部加州一个温暖的山谷里。后被卖到美国北部寒冷偏远、盛产黄金的阿拉斯加，成了一只拉雪橇的狗。它目睹了人与人、狗与狗、强者与弱者之间的冷酷无情和生死争斗，于是为了生存，它学会了只求活命、不顾道义的处世原则，变得凶悍、机智而狡诈。最后，在森林中狼群的呼唤下，巴克狼性复萌，逃入丛林，重归荒野。在小说中，杰克·伦敦运用拟人手法，把狗眼中的世界及人类的本质刻画得淋漓尽致，反映了资本主义社会冷酷的现实和“优胜劣汰，适者生存”的客观现实。巴克渴望并奔向了自由，这也正是作家的追求和理想的体现。

《野性的呼唤》是一部描写动物的卓越的作品，这部小说描写动物在保护自己、消灭敌人的斗争中表现出的巨大勇气。

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CHAPTER I

Into the Primitive

*Old longings nomadic leap,
Chafing at custom's chain;
Again from its brumal sleep
Wakens the ferine strain.*

Buck did not read the newspapers, or he would have known that trouble was brewing not alone for himself, but for every tide-water dog, strong of muscle and with warm, long hair, from Puget Sound to San Diego. Because men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship and transportation companies were booming the find, thousands of men were rushing into the Northland. These men wanted dogs, and the dogs they wanted were heavy dogs, with strong muscles by which to toil and furry coats to protect them from the frost.

Buck lived at a big house in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley. Judge Miller's place, it was called. It stood back from the road, half-hidden among the trees, through which glimpses could be caught of the wide cool verandah that ran around its four sides. The house was approached by gravelled driveways which wound about through wide-spreading lawns and under the interlacing boughs of tall poplars. At the rear things were on even a more spacious scale than at the front. There were great stables, where a dozen grooms and boys held forth, rows of vine-clad servants' cottages, an endless and orderly array of outhouses, long grape arbours, green pastures, orchards, and berry

patches. Then there was the pumping plant for the artesian well, and the big cement tank where Judge Miller's boys took their morning plunge and kept cool in the hot afternoon.

And over this great demesne Buck ruled. Here he was born and here he had lived the four years of his life. It was true, there were other dogs. There could not but be other dogs on so vast a place, but they did not count. They came and went, resided in the populous kennels, or lived obscurely in the recesses of the house after the fashion of Toots, the Japanese pug, or Ysabel, the Mexican hairless—strange creatures that rarely put nose out of doors or set foot to ground. On the other hand, there were the fox terriers, a score of them at least, who yelped fearful promises at Toots and Ysabel looking out of the windows at them and protected by a legion of housemaids armed with brooms and mops.

But Buck was neither house-dog nor kennel-dog. The whole realm was his. He plunged into the swimming tank or went hunting with the Judge's sons; he escorted Mollie and Alice, the Judge's daughters, on long twilight or early morning rambles; on wintry nights he lay at the Judge's feet before the roaring library fire; he carried the Judge's grandsons on his back, or rolled them in the grass, and guarded their footsteps through wild adventures down to the fountain in the stable yard, and even beyond, where the paddocks were, and the berry patches. Among the terriers he stalked imperiously, and Toots and Ysabel he utterly ignored, for he was king—king over all creeping, crawling, flying things of Judge Miller's place, humans included.

His father, Elmo, a huge St. Bernard, had been the Judge's inseparable companion and Buck did fair to follow in the way of his father. He was not so large—he weighed only one hundred and forty pounds—for his mother, Shep, had been a Scotch shepherd dog. Nevertheless, one hundred and forty pounds, to which was added the

dignity that comes of good living and universal respect, enabled him to carry himself in right royal fashion. During the four years since his puppyhood he had lived the life of a sated aristocrat; he had a fine pride in himself, was even a trifle egotistical, as country gentlemen sometimes become because of their insular situation. But he had saved himself by not becoming a mere pampered house-dog. Hunting and kindred outdoor delights had kept down the fat and hardened his muscles; and to him, as to the cold-tubbing races, the love of water had been a tonic and a health preserver.

And this was the manner of dog Buck was in the fall of 1897, when the Klondike strike dragged men from all the world into the frozen North. But Buck did not read the newspapers, and he did not know that Manuel, one of the gardener's helpers, was an undesirable acquaintance. Manuel had one besetting sin. He loved to play Chinese lottery. Also, in his gambling, he had one besetting weakness—faith in a system; and this made his damnation certain. For to play a system requires money, while the wages of a gardener's helper do not lap over the needs of a wife and numerous progeny.

The Judge was at a meeting of the Raisin Growers' Association, and the boys were busy organizing an athletic club, on the memorable night of Manuel's treachery. No one saw him and Buck go off through the orchard on what Buck imagined was merely a stroll. And with the exception of a solitary man, no one saw them arrive at the little flag station known as College Park. This man talked with Manuel, and money clinked between them.

"You might wrap up the goods before you deliver 'm," the stranger said gruffly, and Manuel doubled a piece of stout rope around Buck's neck under the collar.

"Twist it, an' you'll choke 'm plentee," said Manuel, and the stranger grunted a ready affirmative.

Buck had accepted the rope with quiet dignity. To be sure, it was an unwonted performance: but he had learned to trust in men he knew, and to give them credit for a wisdom that outreached his own. But when the ends of the rope were placed in the stranger's hands, he growled menacingly. He had merely intimated his displeasure, in his pride believing that to intimate was to command. But to his surprise the rope tightened around his neck, shutting off his breath. In quick rage he sprang at the man, who met him halfway, grappled him close by the throat, and with a deft twist threw him over on his back. Then the rope tightened mercilessly, while Buck struggled in a fury, his tongue lolling out of his mouth and his great chest panting futilely. Never in all his life had he been so vilely treated, and never in all his life had he been so angry. But his strength ebbed, his eyes glazed, and he knew nothing when the train was flagged and the two men threw him into the baggage car.

The next he knew, he was dimly aware that his tongue was hurting and that he was being jolted along in some kind of conveyance. The hoarse shriek of a locomotive whistling a crossing told him where he was. He had travelled too often with the Judge not to know the sensation of riding in a baggage car. He opened his eyes, and into them came the unbridled anger of a kidnapped king. The man sprang for his throat, but Buck was too quick for him. His jaws closed on the hand; nor did they relax till his senses were choked out of him once more.

"Yep, has fits," the man said, hiding his mangled hand from the baggageman, who had been attracted by the sounds of struggle. "I'm takin' 'im up for the boss to 'Frisco. A crack dog-doctor there thinks that he can cure 'im."

Concerning that night's ride the man spoke most eloquently for himself, in a little shed back of a saloon on the San Francisco water

front.

"All I get is fifty for it," he grumbled; "an' I wouldn't do it over for a thousand, cold cash."

His hand was wrapped in a bloody handkerchief, and the right trouser leg was ripped from knee to ankle.

"How much did the other mug get?" the saloon-keeper demanded.

"A hundred," was the reply. "Wouldn't take a sou less, so help me."

"That makes a hundred and fifty," the saloon-keeper calculated, "and he's worth it, or I'm a squarehead."

The kidnapper undid the bloody wrappings and looked at his lacerated hand. "If I don't get hydrophobia—"

"It'll be because you was born to hang," laughed the saloon-keeper. "Here, lend me a hand before you pull your freight," he added.

Dazed, suffering intolerable pain from throat and tongue, with the life half throttled out of him, Buck attempted to face his tormentors. But he was thrown down and choked repeatedly, till they succeeded in fitting the heavy brass collar from off his neck. Then the rope was removed, and he was flung into a cage-like crate.

There he lay for the remainder of the weary night, nursing his wrath and wounded pride. He could not understand what it all meant. What did they want with him, these strange men? Why were they keeping him pent up in this narrow crate? He did not know why, but he felt oppressed by the vague sense of impending calamity. Several times during the night he sprang to his feet when the shed door rattled open, expecting to see the Judge, or the boys at least. But each time it was the bulging face of the saloon-keeper that peered in at him by the sickly light of a tallow candle. And each time the joyful bark that trembled in Buck's throat was twisted into a savage growl.

But the saloon-keeper let him alone, and in the morning four men entered and picked up the crate. More tormentors, Buck decided, for they were evil-looking creatures, ragged and unkempt; and he stormed and raged at them through the bars. They only laughed and poked sticks at him, which he promptly assailed with his teeth till he realized that that was what they wanted. Whereupon he lay down sullenly and allowed the crate to be lifted into a waggon. Then he, and the crate in which he was imprisoned, began a passage through many hands. Clerks in the express office took charge of him; he was carted about in another waggon; a truck carried him, with an assortment of boxes and parcels, upon a ferry steamer; he was trucked off the steamer into a great railway depot, and finally he was deposited in an express car.

For two days and nights this express car was dragged along at the tail of shrieking locomotives; and for two days and nights Buck neither ate nor drank. In his anger he had met the first advances of the express messengers with growls, and they had retaliated by teasing him. When he flung himself against the bars, quivering and frothing, they laughed at him and taunted him. They growled and barked like detestable dogs, mewed, and flapped their arms and crowed. It was all very silly, he knew; but therefore the more outrage to his dignity, and his anger waxed and waxed. He did not mind the hunger so much, but the lack of water caused him severe suffering and fanned his wrath to fever-pitch. For that matter, high-strung and finely sensitive, the ill treatment had flung him into a fever, which was fed by the inflammation of his parched and swollen throat and tongue.

He was glad for one thing: the rope was off his neck. That had given them an unfair advantage; but now that it was off, he would show them. They would never get another rope around his neck. Upon that he was resolved. For two days and nights he neither ate nor drank and during those two days and nights of torment, he accumulated a

fund of wrath that boded ill for whoever first fell foul of him. His eyes turned bloodshot, and he was metamorphosed into a raging fiend. So changed was he that the Judge himself would not have recognized him; and the express messengers breathed with relief when they bundled him off the train at Seattle.

Four men gingerly carried the crate from the waggon into a small, high-walled backyard. A stout man, with a red sweater that sagged generously at the neck, came out and signed the book for the driver. That was the man, Buck divined, the next tormentor, and he hurled himself savagely against the bars. The man smiled grimly, and brought a hatchet and a club.

“You ain’t going to take him out now?” the driver asked.

“Sure,” the man replied, driving the hatchet into the crate for a pry.

There was an instantaneous scattering of the four men who had carried it in, and from safe perches on top the wall they prepared to watch the performance.

Buck rushed at the splintering wood, sinking his teeth into it, surging and wrestling with it. Wherever the hatchet fell on the outside, he was there on the inside, snarling and growling, as furiously anxious to get out as the man in the red sweater was calmly intent on getting him out.

“Now, you red-eyed devil,” he said, when he had made an opening sufficient for the passage of Buck’s body. At the same time he dropped the hatchet and shifted the club to his right hand.

And Buck was truly a red-eyed devil, as he drew himself together for the spring, hair bristling, mouth foaming, a mad glitter in his bloodshot eyes. Straight at the man he launched his one hundred and forty pounds of fury, surcharged with the pent passion of two days and nights. In mid air, just as his jaws were about to close on the man, he

received a shock that checked his body and brought his teeth together with an agonizing clip. He whirled over, fetching the ground on his back and side. He had never been struck by a club in his life, and did not understand. With a snarl that was part bark and more scream he was again on his feet and launched into the air. And again the shock came and he was brought crushingly to the ground. This time he was aware that it was the club, but his madness knew no caution. A dozen times he charged, and as often the club broke the charge and smashed him down.

After a particularly fierce blow, he crawled to his feet, too dazed to rush. He staggered limply about, the blood flowing from nose, and mouth and ears, his beautiful coat sprayed and flecked with bloody slaver. Then the man advanced and deliberately dealt him a frightful blow on the nose. All the pain he had endured was as nothing compared with the exquisite agony of this. With a roar that was almost lionlike in its ferocity, he again hurled himself at the man. But the man, shifting the club from right to left, coolly caught him by the under jaw, at the same time wrenching downward and backward. Buck described a complete circle in the air, and half of another, then crashed to the ground on his head and chest.

For the last time he rushed. The man struck the shrewd blow he had purposely withheld for so long, and Buck crumpled up and went down, knocked utterly senseless.

“He’s no slouch at dog-breakin’, that’s wot I say,” one of the men on the wall cried enthusiastically.

“Druther break cayuses any day, and twice on Sundays,” was the reply of the driver, as he climbed on the waggon and started the horses.

Buck’s senses came back to him, but not his strength. He lay where he had fallen, and from there he watched the man in the red