

Cornell Notes: "The Sounding of the Call" - Chapter 7, *The Call of the Wild*

Key Points/Questions	Notes
<p>1. London describe Buck's dreams of the primitive man: "The salient thing of this other world seemed fear." What does he mean by this? How is this different than how Thornton is characterized at the beginning of chapter 7?</p>	<p>London means that the primitive man was fearful of his surroundings, in part because fear was critical to his survival. Without fear, the primitive man would not have been able to survive because he lacked some of the modern tools that would help him survive (e.g., a gun). At the beginning of chapter 7, Thornton is characterized as without fear, wandering the wild and feeling unafraid as long as he had a rifle and some salt.</p>
<p>2. Why does Buck seek to befriend the wolf? Why does he return to camp? What does this suggest about Buck's place in the world?</p>	<p>Buck continues to feel "the call" of the wild. While he spends increasing amounts of time by the fire because the team has camped, he continues to feel a call or instinct to return to the wild. He seeks to befriend the wolf as a result of this call, and only returns to camp after he remembers John Thornton is still at the camp. This suggest that Buck feels torn between his feeling "called" to the wild - his true, primitive nature - and his love for John Thornton, which keeps him within the civilized world.</p>
<p>3. What does Buck's fight with the bear and the moose display about his embrace of the call?</p>	<p>Buck's fight with the bear and the moose demonstrate just how primitive that he has become. By killing a bear and stalking his prey (the moose) and killing it, he demonstrates that he is capable of survival in the wild and does not need to rely on humans to care for him. By killing these animals, Buck appears to be more wolf than dog.</p>

<p>4. Why does Buck retaliate against the Yeehats? What does Buck learn from his slaughter of the Yeehats?</p> <p>5. What does Buck do at the end of the text?</p>	<p>Buck retaliates against the Yeehats to avenge John Thornton’s death, which occurred while Buck was hunting the moose. When he slaughters the Yeehats, Buck learns that without clubs or guns or weapons, that man is not a difficult enemy to face. Buck reflects that it was harder to kill a husky dog than a man, and he vows to no longer fear man unless they had arrows, spears, or clubs that could hurt him.</p> <p>Buck goes into the wilderness and joins a pack of wolves, where he runs free.</p>
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Summary

John Thornton, Buck, and the team continue their journeys until they find gold and settle at a camp. There is less for the dogs to do once the team finds gold, and Buck spends a lot of time by the fire dreaming of the primitive man. He still feels “the call” of the wild, which is represented by his dreams and his desire to roam the forest. He makes friends with a wolf, and only returns to camp because of his love of Thornton. He then ventures back to the wild and kills a bear, which shows how he is becoming more like a wolf than a dog. Once fall comes, Buck heads out into the wilderness and tracks a moose for a period of days, eventually succeeding in killing it. However, when he returns to camp, he finds that Thornton and the men have been killed by natives of the Yeehat tribe. Buck retaliates by killing the natives he can find while the others flee. After Thornton’s death, Buck is finally able to fully give in to “the call” of the wild because there is no human relationship holding him back. He leads the wolf pack and becomes a “ghost dog” that members of the Yeehat tribe tell stories of.