

Trouble Ahead

Trouble was coming. But Buck didn't know. Dogs couldn't read newspapers. Gold had been found in the Arctic. Dogs with strong muscles were in danger.

Thousands of men were rushing north. They needed dogs. They wanted strong dogs. They wanted furry dogs. They wanted big dogs. Dogs that could work hard.

Buck lived in a large home in sunny

California. It was Judge Miller's place. There was a lot of land. There was a stable. Grapes were growing. There were fruit trees and green grass.

Buck ruled over the land. He was born here four years ago. There were other dogs. But they didn't count. They came and went. Buck was the king.

The land belonged to Buck. He hunted with the sons. He took walks with the daughters. He would lie at the Judge's feet when it was cold. The Judge's grandsons rode on his back. Buck went wherever he wanted.

Buck's father was a huge St. Bernard. Buck was smaller. He weighed 140

pounds. His mother was a Scotch shepherd. Buck carried himself like a king. Being outdoors made him strong.

It was 1897. People had gold fever. They were going to the Klondike. Buck didn't know this. His life was about to change forever. He didn't know this either.

Manuel was the gardener's helper on the land. He loved to gamble. And he needed money. He had bills. But his paycheck wasn't enough.

One night the Judge was at a meeting. His sons were busy too. Manuel walked Buck away from the house. No one saw them leave. Buck thought they were

just taking a walk. They soon arrived at the train station. A man gave Manuel money.

Manuel put a rope under Buck's collar. It was wrapped around his neck.

"Twist it. You'll choke him plenty." The stranger nodded. The ends of the rope were given to the man. Buck growled. He showed the man he wasn't happy. He thought the rope would be removed.

Buck was surprised. The rope tightened around his neck. He couldn't breathe. He jumped at the stranger. The man grabbed him by the throat.

He threw Buck over his back. The rope grew tighter. Buck struggled.

Buck was mad. He had never been treated like this. His big chest rose up and down. The rope got tight again. Buck's eyes got dull. Then they closed. He didn't know what was happening. He was thrown onto the train.