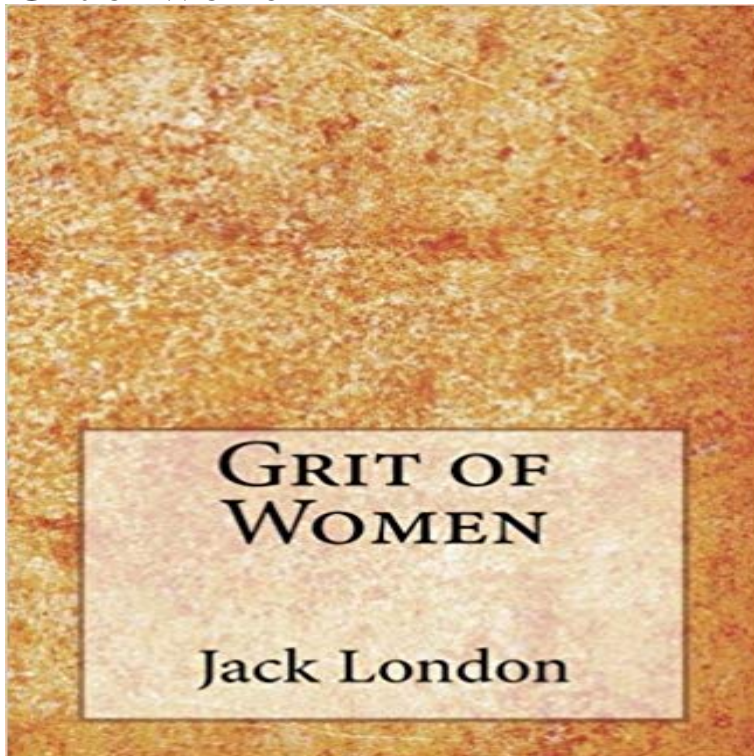


## Grit of Women



*Grit of Women* is a short story by Jack London. John Griffith Jack London (born John Griffith Chaney, January 12, 1876–November 22, 1916) was an American author, journalist, and social activist. He was a pioneer in the then-burgeoning world of commercial magazine fiction and was one of the first fiction writers to obtain worldwide celebrity and a large fortune from his fiction alone. He is best remembered as the author of *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, both set in the Klondike Gold Rush, as well as the short stories *To Build a Fire*, *An Odyssey of the North*, and *Love of Life*. He also wrote of the South Pacific in such stories as *The Pearls of Parlay* and *The Heathen*, and of the San Francisco Bay area in *The Sea Wolf*. London was a passionate advocate of unionization, socialism, and the rights of workers and wrote several powerful works dealing with these topics such as his dystopian novel *The Iron Heel*, his non-fiction expose *The People of the Abyss*, and *The War of the Classes*. On July 12, 1897, London (age 21) and his sisters husband Captain Shepard sailed to join the Klondike Gold Rush. This was the setting for some of his first successful stories. Londons time in the Klondike, however, was detrimental to his health. Like so many other men who were malnourished in the goldfields, London developed scurvy. His gums became swollen, leading to the loss of his four front teeth. A constant gnawing pain affected his hip and leg muscles, and his face was stricken with marks that always reminded him of the struggles he faced in the Klondike. *Father William Judge*, *The Saint of Dawson*, had a facility in Dawson that provided shelter, food and any available medicine to London and others. His struggles there inspired Londons short story, *To Build a Fire* (1902, revised in 1908), which many critics assess as his best. His landlords in Dawson were mining

engineers Marshall Latham Bond and Louis Whitford Bond, educated at Yale and Stanford. The brothers father, Judge Hiram Bond, was a wealthy mining investor. The Bonds, especially Hiram, were active Republicans. Marshall Bonds diary mentions friendly sparring with London on political issues as a camp pastime. London left Oakland with a social conscience and socialist leanings; he returned to become an activist for socialism. He concluded that his only hope of escaping the work trap was to get an education and sell his brains. He saw his writing as a business, his ticket out of poverty, and, he hoped, a means of beating the wealthy at their own game. On returning to California in 1898, London began working deliberately to get published, a struggle described in his novel, *Martin Eden* (serialized in 1908, published in 1909). His first published story since high school was *To the Man On Trail*, which has frequently been collected in anthologies. When *The Overland Monthly* offered him only five dollars for it and was slow paying London came close to abandoning his writing career. In his words, literally and literarily I was saved when *The Black Cat* accepted his story *A Thousand Deaths*, and paid him \$40 the first money I ever received for a story. London began his writing career just as new printing technologies enabled lower-cost production of magazines. This resulted in a boom in popular magazines aimed at a wide public and a strong market for short fiction. In 1900, he made \$2,500 in writing, about \$71,000 in todays currency. Among the works he sold to magazines was a short story known as either *Diable* (1902) or *Batard* (1904), in two editions of the same basic story; London received \$141.25 for this story on May 27, 1902. In the text, a cruel French Canadian brutalizes his dog, and the dog retaliates and kills the man. London told some of his critics that mans actions are the main cause of the behavior of their animals, and he would show this in another story, *The Call of the Wild*.

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