

London's Pain

Jack London tries to prove that man is no match for nature. He makes a strong case with point-of-view through a 3rd person narrator who knows exactly how the unnamed man and the dog are feeling at all times.. The story is of an unnamed man who is trekking across the Yukon in extremely cold temperatures. In the beginning of the story this unnamed man believes that he is superior to the forces of nature. He overestimates his own abilities, ignores the warning signs and even laughs at the possibility of death.

The man harms himself by being out in the -75 degree weather and if he shows bare skin, his body will be numb. For example the narrator says, "He removed the mitten from his right hand and helped the dog tear out the pieces of ice. He did not bare his fingers more than a minute, and was surprised to find that they were numb." This shows that although he knows the frost can harm him, he is still surprised when it actually happens. He then unbuttoned his shirt to take his lunch out. He was so cold that he couldn't even eat his lunch due the ice around his mouth. The narrator lets us know that the man realizes he forgot to build a fire and that he knew he was being a fool, forgetting he needed one to stay warm.

The man walked across ice and the ice broke and he needs to build a fire to survive because all of his clothes are wet. He had to dry his clothes and warm up. He needs to survive. What the man was going through you can see the pain and struggle in harsh conditions the whole time thinking he was prepared for this journey. The man couldn't beat nature everything he did nature just came in and made things so much tougher for him. The unnamed man had fallen into the water and had to build a fire. "The snow fell without warning upon the man and the fire, and the fire was dead. Where it had burned was a pile of fresh snow." He did build this fire but nature got the best of him, he had built the fire under a tree and the snow on the branches then dropped, extinguishing the fire. This shows how nature has beat him again.

Jack London shows how man is not match for nature in the story "To Build a Fire." The man had no chance in surviving. His inexperience and unrealistic ideas of what the cold was really like decreases his chance of survival. The dog survived because he had the tools to survive while the unnamed man was completely unprepared and finally realizes it as he dies.