

Burning Daylight: The Jack London Life Edition [Annotated]

Jack London



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This novel by Jack London was originally published in 1910. The first third of the book takes place in the North, and with the exception of The Call of the Wild it may be his best Klondike novel. At times it resembles a collection of scenes lifted from his early short stories, but London does a fine job of integrating these scenes into a compelling, well-crafted adventure story. Unfortunately, Burning Daylight is one of those books that gets worse as it goes along. It doesn't descend so far as to be a bad book, but Part II never quite lives up to the promise of Part I. When London writes about Daylight's financial adventures, such as hostile takeovers or stock market maneuverings, he uses so many poker and boxing metaphors it's often difficult to tell exactly what is being transacted. At times the book shows inklings of becoming a superman-versus-the-corrupt-establishment narrative, but about halfway through, Daylight finds a love interest. Though love was never London's strong suit, the relationship between Daylight and Dede is more realistic and less annoying than most of his romances, but the dialogue between the two does become tediously repetitive. Though it would have made a great subplot to the business adventure story, instead their romance dominates the latter half of the book. This unfortunate turn is easily forgiven, however, because Daylight is such a likeable and engaging character that the reader will willingly follow him anywhere.

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