

**JACK LONDON**

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**SOUTH SEA TALES**

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# SOUTH SEA TALES

ENGLISH

CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Комментарии и словарь

*Е. Г. Тигонен*

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### **Лондон Дж.**

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«Визитной карточкой» знаменитого американского писателя Джека Лондона (1876–1916), конечно же, являются его рассказы о суровых, мужественных золотоискателях, но предлагаемые вниманию читателей «Рассказы Южных морей» — не менее захватывающие истории о мужестве, доблести и о любви.

В предлагаемой вниманию читателей книге представлен неадаптированный текст рассказов, снабженный комментариями и словарем.

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## ОБ АВТОРЕ



Знаменитый американский писатель Джек Лондон родился 12 января 1876 года в Сан-Франциско. Родители разошлись до рождения мальчика. Позже его мать Флора Чейни вышла замуж повторно за овдовевшего фермера Джона Лондона. Денег в семье было мало, и Джеку, не доучившись в школе, пришлось с ранних лет зарабатывать себе на жизнь. Чем только он не занимался — продавал газеты, трудился на джутовой и консервной фабриках, зарабатывал в качестве «устричного пирата» — нелегального сборщика устриц в бухте Сан-Франциско, матроса, позже охотился на морских котиков в Тихом океане у берегов Японии, побывал на Аляске в качестве золотоискателя, был гладильщиком и кочегаром. Весь этот огромный жизненный опыт позднее нашел отражение в его литературном творчестве.

Джек Лондон — человек, сделавший себя сам. Не получив систематического образования, он с детства очень много читал — как художественную литературу, так и философские и социологические труды. Самостоятельно подготовился и поступил в Калифорнийский университет, но из-за отсутствия средств вынужден был оставить учебу после третьего семестра. Умелец, моряк, впоследствии фермер, познавший тяжесть физического труда, Лондон всю жизнь жадно поглощал знания и уже в

ранние годы загорелся мечтой стать писателем, благо ему было что сказать читателям.

Он был очень плодовит, работал по 15–17 часов в день. Из-под его пера вышло более 200 рассказов, первый из них, «За тех, кто в пути» увидел свет в 1899 году, после возвращения Лондона с Клондайка. Сборники рассказов «Сын волка», «Бог его отцов», «Дети мороза» и др., героями которых стали волевые, мужественные люди, осуждающие трусов и предателей, принесли ему широчайшую известность.

Дальнейшая литературная карьера Джека Лондона сложилась удачно, он получал безумные по тем временам гонорары — до пятидесяти тысяч долларов за книгу. Однако это не помешало ему продолжать писать в «социалистическом» духе, обличая социальную несправедливость.

Джек Лондон рано ушел из жизни — ему было всего сорок лет, отравившись прописанным ему морфием (он страдал тяжелым почечным заболеванием). Некоторые исследователи полагают, что это было самоубийство, что, впрочем, ничем не подтверждено, так как он не оставил предсмертной записки. Но, безусловно, мысли о самоубийстве у него были — достаточно вспомнить Мартина Идена, альтер эго писателя. Его герой сознательно покончил с собой, разочаровавшись в ценностях своего собственного круга и буржуазного мира, в котором, даже разбогатев и прославившись, он не смог жить.

\* \* \*

Предлагаемый вниманию читателей сборник «Рассказы Южных морей», вышедший в свет в 1911 году, — это захватывающие истории о человеческом мужестве, стойкости и, конечно же, любви.

## THE HOUSE OF MAPUHI



Despite the heavy clumsiness of her lines, the *Aorai* handled easily in the light breeze, and her captain ran her well in before he hove to just outside the suck of the surf. The atoll of Hikueru lay low on the water, a circle of pounded coral sand a hundred yards wide, twenty miles in circumference, and from three to five feet above high-water mark. On the bottom of the huge and glassy lagoon was much pearl shell, and from the deck of the schooner, across the slender ring of the atoll, the divers could be seen at work. But the lagoon had no entrance for even a trading schooner. With a favoring breeze cutters could win in through the tortuous and shallow channel, but the schooners lay off and on outside and sent in their small boats.

The *Aorai* swung out a boat smartly, into which sprang half a dozen brown-skinned sailors clad only in scarlet loincloths. They took the oars, while in the stern sheets, at the steering sweep, stood a young man garbed in the tropic white that marks the European. The golden strain of Polynesia betrayed itself in the sun-gilt of his fair skin and

cast up golden sheens and lights through the glimmering blue of his eyes. Raoul he was, Alexandre Raoul, youngest son of Marie Raoul, the wealthy quarter-caste, who owned and managed half a dozen trading schooners similar to the *Aorai*. Across an eddy just outside the entrance, and in and through and over a boiling tide-rip<sup>1</sup>, the boat fought its way to the mirrored calm of the lagoon. Young Raoul leaped out upon the white sand and shook hands with a tall native. The man's chest and shoulders were magnificent, but the stump of a right arm, beyond the flesh of which the age-whitened bone projected several inches, attested the encounter with a shark<sup>2</sup> that had put an end to his diving days and made him a fawner and an intriguer for small favors.

"Have you heard, Alec?" were his first words. "Mapuhi has found a pearl — such a pearl. Never was there one like it ever fished up in Hikueru, nor in all the Paumotus, nor in all the world. Buy it from him. He has it now. And remember that I told you first. He is a fool and you can get it cheap. Have you any tobacco?"

Straight up the beach to a shack under a pandanus tree Raoul headed. He was his mother's supercargo, and his business was to comb all the Paumotus for the wealth of copra, shell, and pearls that they yielded up.

He was a young supercargo, it was his second voyage in such capacity, and he suffered much secret worry from his lack of experience in pricing pearls. But when Mapuhi

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<sup>1</sup> **over a boiling tide-rip** — (разг.) сквозь (через) буруны прилива

<sup>2</sup> **attested the encounter with a shark** — (разг.) свидетельствовало о его встрече с акулой

exposed the pearl to his sight he managed to suppress the startle it gave him, and to maintain a careless, commercial expression on his face. For the pearl had struck him a blow. It was large as a pigeon egg, a perfect sphere, of a whiteness that reflected opalescent lights from all colors about it. It was alive. Never had he seen anything like it. When Mapuhi dropped it into his hand he was surprised by the weight of it. That showed that it was a good pearl. He examined it closely, through a pocket magnifying glass. It was without flaw or blemish. The purity of it seemed almost to melt into the atmosphere out of his hand. In the shade it was softly luminous, gleaming like a tender moon. So translucently white was it, that when he dropped it into a glass of water he had difficulty in finding it. So straight and swiftly had it sunk to the bottom that he knew its weight was excellent.

“Well, what do you want for it?” he asked, with a fine assumption of nonchalance.

“I want — ” Mapuhi began, and behind him, framing his own dark face, the dark faces of two women and a girl nodded concurrence in what he wanted. Their heads were bent forward, they were animated by a suppressed eagerness, their eyes flashed avariciously.

“I want a house,” Mapuhi went on. “It must have a roof of galvanized iron and an octagon-drop-clock<sup>1</sup>. It must be six fathoms long with a porch all around. A big room must be in the centre, with a round table in the middle of it and the octagon-drop-clock on the wall. There must be four bedrooms, two on each side of the big room, and in each

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<sup>1</sup> **octagon-drop-clock** — (разг.) часы с маятником



bedroom must be an iron bed, two chairs, and a washstand. And back of the house must be a kitchen, a good kitchen, with pots and pans and a stove. And you must build the house on my island, which is Fakarava.”

“Is that all?” Raoul asked incredulously.

“There must be a sewing machine,” spoke up Tefara, Mapuhi’s wife.

“Not forgetting the octagon-drop-clock,” added Nauri, Mapuhi’s mother.

“Yes, that is all,” said Mapuhi.

Young Raoul laughed. He laughed long and heartily. But while he laughed he secretly performed problems in mental arithmetic. He had never built a house in his life, and his notions concerning house-building were hazy. While he laughed, he calculated the cost of the voyage to Tahiti for materials, of the materials themselves, of the voyage back again to Fakarava, and the cost of landing the materials and of building the house. It would come to four thousand French dollars, allowing a margin for safety — four thousand French dollars were equivalent to twenty thousand francs. It was impossible. How was he to know the value of such a pearl? Twenty thousand francs was a lot of money — and of his mother’s money at that<sup>1</sup>.

“Mapuhi,” he said, “you are a big fool. Set a money price.”<sup>2</sup>

But Mapuhi shook his head, and the three heads behind him shook with his.

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<sup>1</sup> **at that** — (разг.) раз уж на то пошло

<sup>2</sup> **Set a money price.** — (разг.) Назначьте цену.

“I want the house,” he said. “It must be six fathoms long with a porch all around — ”

“Yes, yes,” Raoul interrupted. “I know all about your house, but it won’t do. I’ll give you a thousand Chili dollars.”

The four heads chorused a silent negative.

“And a hundred Chili dollars in trade.”

“I want the house,” Mapuhi began.

“What good will the house do you?” Raoul demanded. “The first hurricane that comes along will wash it away. You ought to know.”

“Captain Raffy says it looks like a hurricane right now.”

“Not on Fakarava,” said Mapuhi. “The land is much higher there. On this island, yes. Any hurricane can sweep Hikueru. I will have the house on Fakarava. It must be six fathoms long with a porch all around — ”

And Raoul listened again to the tale of the house. Several hours he spent in the endeavor to hammer the house obsession out of Mapuhi’s mind; but Mapuhi’s mother and wife, and Ngakura, Mapuhi’s daughter, bolstered him in his resolve for the house. Through the open doorway, while he listened for the twentieth time to the detailed description of the house that was wanted, Raoul saw his schooner’s second boat draw up on the beach. The sailors rested on the oars, advertising haste to be gone. The first mate<sup>1</sup> of the *Aorai* sprang ashore, exchanged a word with the one-armed native, then hurried toward Raoul. The day grew suddenly dark, as a squall

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<sup>1</sup> **The first mate** — (мор.) Помощник капитана

obscured the face of the sun. Across the lagoon Raoul could see approaching the ominous line of the puff of wind.

“Captain Raffy says you’ve got to get to hell outa here,” was the mate’s greeting. “If there’s any shell, we’ve got to run the risk of picking it up later on — so he says. The barometer’s dropped to twenty-nine-seventy.”

The gust of wind struck the pandanus tree overhead and tore through the palms beyond, flinging half a dozen ripe cocoanuts with heavy thuds to the ground. Then came the rain out of the distance, advancing with the roar of a gale of wind and causing the water of the lagoon to smoke in driven windrows. The sharp rattle of the first drops was on the leaves when Raoul sprang to his feet.

“A thousand Chili dollars, cash down<sup>1</sup>, Mapuhi,” he said. “And two hundred Chili dollars in trade.”

“I want a house — ” the other began.

“Mapuhi!” Raoul yelled, in order to make himself heard. “You are a fool!”

He flung out of the house, and, side by side with the mate, fought his way down the beach toward the boat. They could not see the boat. The tropic rain sheeted about them so that they could see only the beach under their feet and the spiteful little waves from the lagoon that snapped and bit at the sand. A figure appeared through the deluge. It was Huru-Huru, the man with the one arm.

“Did you get the pearl?” he yelled in Raoul’s ear.

“Mapuhi is a fool!” was the answering yell, and the next moment they were lost to each other in the descending water.

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<sup>1</sup> **cash down** — (*разг.*) платите наличными; деньги на бочку

Half an hour later, Huru-Huru, watching from the seaward side of the atoll, saw the two boats hoisted in and the *Aorai* pointing her nose out to sea. And near her, just come in from the sea on the wings of the squall, he saw another schooner hove to and dropping a boat into the water. He knew her. It was the *Orohena*, owned by Toriki, the half-caste trader, who served as his own supercargo and who doubtlessly was even then in the stern sheets of the boat. Huru-Huru chuckled. He knew that Mapuhi owed Toriki for trade goods<sup>1</sup> advanced the year before.

The squall had passed. The hot sun was blazing down, and the lagoon was once more a mirror. But the air was sticky like mucilage, and the weight of it seemed to burden the lungs and make breathing difficult.

“Have you heard the news, Toriki?” Huru-Huru asked. “Mapuhi has found a pearl. Never was there a pearl like it ever fished up in Hikueru, nor anywhere in the Paumotus, nor anywhere in all the world. Mapuhi is a fool. Besides, he owes you money. Remember that I told you first. Have you any tobacco?”

And to the grass shack of Mapuhi went Toriki. He was a masterful man, withal a fairly stupid one. Carelessly he glanced at the wonderful pearl — glanced for a moment only; and carelessly he dropped it into his pocket.

“You are lucky,” he said. “It is a nice pearl. I will give you credit on the books.”

“I want a house,” Mapuhi began, in consternation. “It must be six fathoms — ”

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<sup>1</sup> for trade goods — (разг.) за контрабандный товар

“Six fathoms your grandmother!<sup>1</sup>” was the trader’s retort. “You want to pay up your debts, that’s what you want. You owed me twelve hundred dollars Chili. Very well; you owe them no longer. The amount is squared. Besides, I will give you credit for two hundred Chili. If, when I get to Tahiti, the pearl sells well, I will give you credit for another hundred — that will make three hundred. But mind, only if the pearl sells well. I may even lose money on it.”

Mapuhi folded his arms in sorrow and sat with bowed head. He had been robbed of his pearl. In place of the house, he had paid a debt. There was nothing to show for the pearl.

“You are a fool,” said Tefara.

“You are a fool,” said Nauri, his mother. “Why did you let the pearl into his hand?”

“What was I to do?” Mapuhi protested. “I owed him the money. He knew I had the pearl. You heard him yourself ask to see it. I had not told him. He knew. Somebody else told him. And I owed him the money.”

“Mapuhi is a fool,” mimicked Ngakura.

She was twelve years old and did not know any better<sup>2</sup>. Mapuhi relieved his feelings by sending her reeling from a box on the ear; while Tefara and Nauri burst into tears and continued to upbraid him after the manner of women<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> **Six fathoms your grandmother!** — (зд., *руг.*) Да пошел ты со своим домом!

<sup>2</sup> **did not know any better** — (*разг.*) мало что понимала

<sup>3</sup> **after the manner of women** — (*разг.*) совершенно поженски

Huru-Huru, watching on the beach, saw a third schooner that he knew heave to outside the entrance and drop a boat. It was the *Hira*, well named, for she was owned by Levy, the German Jew, the greatest pearl-buyer of them all, and, as was well known, *Hira* was the Tahitian god of fishermen and thieves.

“Have you heard the news?” Huru-Huru asked, as Levy, a fat man with massive asymmetrical features, stepped out upon the beach. “Mapuhi has found a pearl. There was never a pearl like it in Hikueru, in all the Paumotus, in all the world. Mapuhi is a fool. He has sold it to Toriki for fourteen hundred Chili — I listened outside and heard. Toriki is likewise a fool. You can buy it from him cheap. Remember that I told you first. Have you any tobacco?”

“Where is Toriki?”

“In the house of Captain Lynch, drinking absinthe. He has been there an hour.”

And while Levy and Toriki drank absinthe and chattered over the pearl, Huru-Huru listened and heard the stupendous price of twenty-five thousand francs agreed upon.

It was at this time that both the *Orohena* and the *Hira*, running in close to the shore, began firing guns and signalling frantically. The three men stepped outside in time to see the two schooners go hastily about and head off shore, dropping mainsails<sup>1</sup> and flying jibs on the run in the teeth of the squall<sup>2</sup> that heeled them far over on the whitened water. Then the rain blotted them out.

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<sup>1</sup> **dropping mainsails** — (мор.) опустив паруса на грот-мачте

<sup>2</sup> **in the teeth of the squall** — (мор.) прямо против ветра

“They’ll be back after it’s over,” said Toriki. “We’d better be getting out of here.”

“I reckon the glass has fallen some more,” said Captain Lynch.

He was a white-bearded sea-captain, too old for service, who had learned that the only way to live on comfortable terms with his asthma was on Hikueru. He went inside to look at the barometer.

“Great God!” they heard him exclaim, and rushed in to join him at staring at a dial, which marked twenty-nine-twenty.

Again they came out, this time anxiously to consult sea and sky. The squall had cleared away, but the sky remained overcast. The two schooners, under all sail and joined by a third, could be seen making back. A veer in the wind induced them to slack off sheets<sup>1</sup>, and five minutes afterward a sudden veer from the opposite quarter caught all three schooners aback, and those on shore could see the boom-tackles being slacked away or cast off on the jump. The sound of the surf was loud, hollow, and menacing, and a heavy swell was setting in. A terrible sheet of lightning burst before their eyes, illuminating the dark day, and the thunder rolled wildly about them.

Toriki and Levy broke into a run for their boats, the latter ambling along like a panic-stricken hippopotamus. As their two boats swept out the entrance, they passed the boat of the *Aorai* coming in. In the stern sheets, encouraging the rowers, was Raoul. Unable to shake the

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<sup>1</sup> to slack off sheets — (мор.) ослабить паруса

vision of the pearl from his mind, he was returning to accept Mapuhi's price of a house.

He landed on the beach in the midst of a driving thunder squall that was so dense that he collided with Huru-Huru before he saw him.

"Too late," yelled Huru-Huru. "Mapuhi sold it to Toriki for fourteen hundred Chili, and Toriki sold it to Levy for twenty-five thousand francs. And Levy will sell it in France for a hundred thousand francs. Have you any tobacco?"

Raoul felt relieved. His troubles about the pearl were over. He need not worry any more, even if he had not got the pearl. But he did not believe Huru-Huru. Mapuhi might well have sold it for fourteen hundred Chili, but that Levy, who knew pearls, should have paid twenty-five thousand francs was too wide a stretch<sup>1</sup>. Raoul decided to interview Captain Lynch on the subject, but when he arrived at that ancient mariner's house, he found him looking wide-eyed at the barometer.

"What do you read it?" Captain Lynch asked anxiously, rubbing his spectacles and staring again at the instrument.

"Twenty-nine-ten," said Raoul. "I have never seen it so low before."

"I should say not!" snorted the captain. "Fifty years boy and man on all the seas, and I've never seen it go down to that. Listen!"

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<sup>1</sup> **was too wide a stretch** — (разг.) был слишком большой разброс (в цене)

<sup>2</sup> **What do you read it?** — (зд.) Что показывает барометр?



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