



## **Collection Information:**

**Item:** Jack London correspondence, undated, 1910-1911.

**Collection:** Lewis, Sinclair, 1885-1951. Sinclair Lewis Correspondence.

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EXPLANATIONS. 2.

All the above given in one scene: lad at work, coming to the shack; with the men in the evening; dreaming away; and a little surly.

His turn to go to a comparatively near settlement. (They're out of ~~trub~~<sup>trub?</sup> that the idea? I don't know the Alaskan causes-of-mushing). The mail. Three letters or sets of letters from each of the three persons in question. And so he doesn't spend any time in dance hall or gin-mill. ~~He~~ He tucks away the letters, as being to<sup>o</sup>sacred to read ~~right~~ right away. On the way back, he makes a sort of sanctuary out of snow, or does some stunt of the kind. Sure; he's young and sentimental. And reads the first two letters or sets of letters: from his uncle, then those of the idol-friend.

And both of these men regard him as still being the young ass who had wasted his time in the city. The letters, under a veneer of affection, ~~are~~ distinctly pine; distinctly chilly letters are they. "They hear that he has made a strike. They are very glad to hear he has made a strike; and will he please send them their cash at once. They need it." (which, actually, they don't).

That's where the title of the story comes in: These people want EXPLANATIONS. They want him, because he has once been childish, to keep on explaining that he didn't mean to do this and did mean to do that. They do not trust him. That's what he reads in the letters. And so his dreams of joyously meeting them go glimmering.

He tucks back the letters of the girl. He can't bear to read them, but he can't bear to destroy them. He'll keep them; for say six months ~~then~~ then destroy them unopened. Thus, he will not know whether she too wants him to explain his soul or not; and he can perhaps retain ~~her~~ the image of her as believing in him. If, in her letters, she shows herself as doing so --- why, all right. If she

EXPLANATIONS. 3.

doesn't believe in him, he prefers not to know it.

He can't pay his uncle and idol yet, but he can in the spring --- with interest, he adds, grimly. (In the spring? I dunno how the Alaskan times-of-cashing-dust and that sort of thing runs. But he can't pay for quite ~~some~~ some time yet). And when he DOES pay up, he'll stay right here in Alaska --- with men who do trust ~~thamx~~ him, even when he's surly to him; and who do NOT chillily want him to explain his soul.

So back to the shack. One man ~~is~~ in, as he returns.

"I'm with you!" he cries to that man.

His former behavior has not been enough to make his being with them much of a cause for rejoicing, ~~th~~ and the man retorts, "God A' mighty, don't I see you are?"

"You don't savvy. I'm really with you? Old man, I've had a grouch all winter. I didn't know how slick you fellows were. But I've just had some letters from the ~~staxx~~ de-yar ones at home; the

'where is my wandering boy tonight?  
Well, you chump, are you still a fright?'

sort. Savvy?"

"I savvy. Welcome to our midst."

That night he was the decentest of the little bunch.

Spring comes; the time when he was to destroy the <sup>girl's</sup> letters unread, so as to ketchum right ~~whaxx~~ whether they were favorable or not. Spring when he was to ~~payx~~ send home the dough, but do a melodramatic "me, I shall stay among these rugged men but honest" stunt.

And he hikes right out for the States, instead, with the mun for his share of the mine in his wallet. But he doesn't read the girl's letters yet. For, if they ARE favorable --- why, he needn't read them, for he 's going to her just as fast as he can, anyway. And if they are not trusting ---- well he'll make her trust him, now. And

he chuckles as he does laps around the hurricane deck; no longer a goat; no longer so dependent as to care whether chilly people wanted him to explain his soul or not; with the girl's face ----- That sort of thing, or somethin like it.

He's made good, anyway; most of all in refusing to explain when the work he was doing was the best of all explanations.

|||||

This is the original of one of the story -  
collins Sinclair Lewis made for  
Jack London. This one, however, was  
never used by London. It shows  
editorial corrections in London's and  
Lewis' hands. All rights of publication  
have been turned over to me by Mr.  
Lewis.

Harvey Taylor  
Literary Manager  
Estate of Jack London

Letter to Sinclair Lewis

Glen Ellen, Oct. 4, 1910.

Dear Sinclair Lewis:

Your plots came in last night, and I have promptly taken nine (9) of them, for which same, according to invoice, I am remitting you herewith check for \$52.50.

Some of the rejected ones were not suited to my temperament; others did not suit because I am too damn lazy to dig up requisite data or atmosphere.

I didn't care to tackle the World Police (which is a splendid series), because I am long on splendid novel-motifs of my own, which require only time and relaxed financial pressure for me to put through.

I'll let you know whenever one of your plots is published.

"Winged Blackmail" was published in Sept. number of THE LEVER, a monthly magazine issued in Chicago.

I have 20,000 words done on the Assassination Bureau, and for the first time in my life am stuck and disgusted. I haven't done my best by it, and cannot make up my mind whether or not to go ahead with it.

Be sure to send me plots from time to time, with prices attached, and for heaven's sake, remember the ones I take, so that you won't make the mistake of writing them up yourself some time.

In a wild rush,

Sincerely yours,

Letter to Sinclair Lewis

Medford, Oregon

August 18, 1911

Dear Sinclair Lewis:

In reply to yours of August 7, 1911, which has just caught me here in Southern Oregon. We have been out two months and a half now on a driving trip, with four saddle horses hitched up to a light city trap. Nskata is with us. We expect to be home in another month or six weeks. And you can't tell me anything about mountain roads.

I cannot begin to tell you how much I regret that you and Charley Aiken did not steal the poster for that Jack London cigar. If you get hold of it, and for heaven's sake, as you love me do get hold of it, send it along.

The prizefight story, under the title of The Abysmal Brute, has appeared in The Popular Magazine, in one or the other of its two issues for the month of August. Look it up and tell me what you think of it. Sam Berger, who thinks he is my Sam Stubener, I hear is looking to punch my head off.

Any time you want to dispose of more plots, send them along.

In a rush,

Sincerely yours,

Letters to Sinclair Lewis

October 20, 1911. . .

Dear Lewis:

In reply to yours of October 10, 1911. Yes, I received the plots some time ago, but have not been home very much. Please find inclosed my check for \$15.00 for THE GRIT OF DOCTOR PIBBIN, THE DESERTER, and GREATER LOVE. Several reasons prevent me from taking more of them. In the first place, a number of them are regular O. Henry plots. O. Henry could have handled them, and they'd have been great for his style of handling. And then, since the first of the year I've been working quite steadily on the SMOKE BELLEW tales for THE COSMOPOLITAN, and the SUN TALES in SATURDAY EVENING POST. You see, I haven't been using up any outside short story ideas at all.

How would you suggest a possibly play out of THE ABYSMAL BRUTE? I can't possibly see any. Frankly, I don't know whether I'm making money or losing money by working up some of those other short-story ideas I got from you. Take THE ABYSMAL BRUTE, for instance. I got \$1200.00 for it, after it had been refused by the first-class magazines. Had the time I devoted to it been devoted to SMOKE BELLEW or SUN TALES, I'd have got \$3000 for the same amount of work.

The foregoing is merely in reply to your question. Personally, despite the fact that it did not make a financial killing, I'm darned glad I wrote THE ABYSMAL BRUTE.

Thanks for the tip about the New Hampton Columbian Magazine. Luckily, they do not owe me anything. But you can understand how extremely valuable your tip would have been had they been in my debt. Gee! Any time you get a tip like that, send it along.

Sincerely yours,