

JULIAN

By Carole L. Cooney

“As a lion is to a cat, so is a mastiff compared to a dog.”

The noble Old English Mastiff breed is valued for its ability to be a watchful, patient dog with a gentle-nature. This dog is intelligent and dignified; it rarely barks, but it will defend its territory and family. During the Gold Rush, the mastiff’s talents were significantly useful especially transporting people, goods and heavy weights.

Setting: Chilkoot Pass – Lake Bennett

Characters:

Narrator

Joe

Mack

CJ - the nickname of Clarence J. Berry

Julian - the mastiff

Fred

Narrator: It was the time of the Gold Rush in Alaska. The year was 1895 when Clarence J. Berry, better known as “CJ,” returned from his first trip to Alaska. That trip proved that dogs were extremely valuable for transporting people and goods. When CJ returned to California, he married Ethel and spent the winter in Fresno training his team of dogs to pull a sled on wheels.

Joe: Hey, CJ! When you go back up to the gold country, are you going to bring that sled with wheels?

Mack: I still can’t see how pulling a sled on wheels is going to work in the snow.

CJ: You’ve got to be kidding me, Mack. I’m not going to use *this* sled. This is just to train the dogs to work together while pulling a lot of weight.

Julian: (bark) I’m sure glad my master knows what he’s doing! (bark)

Narrator: When the team of dogs was ready, CJ returned to the Klondike. It was the spring of 1896. CJ and the members of his party were camped at the bottom of the dangerously steep route to Chilkoot Pass.

Julian: (bark) Look at that treacherous pass! (bark) I can hardly wait to beat every other dog pulling our sled to the top. This is going to be fun! Come on, you team dogs, let’s do it!

CJ: Okay, old boy, it’s time to get going. Atta boy, lead the way, Julian. Mush! Mush!

Julian: All right! (bark) Come on guys, are you pulling or what? (bark, bark)

Narrator: Julian, the two-hundred-pound yellow mastiff, led the way to the very top of the pass and then down to icy Lake Bennett below.

CJ: Good, old boy! You've done what other dogs could not do. Look at all those other travelers. They've just stopped with exhaustion. Now, old boy, let's show them what you can really do!

Narrator: The ice was rough and the winds were strong. The dogs of CJ's team were nearly worn out, but not Julian, the mighty mastiff.

Julian: (bark) I'm so glad CJ made those leather shoes for my feet. Oh, they're cold all right, but the leather smoothes over the sharp pieces of ice. (bark) Looks like my team is tired. I'll just let them rest a while. I wonder what CJ wants me to do? I think I'll go over and nose around.

CJ: Here, old boy. You've done a wonderful job leading the way through the pass. Are you ready for more work?

Julian: (jumping up and down) Yes, sir! I can hardly wait to show what I can really do.

Narrator: CJ harnessed Julian to the sled load of more than a thousand pounds.

CJ: All right, old boy. Show'em what you can do. Mush! Mush! Across the lake we go. You're looking good, old boy. Keep goin'. Mush! Mush!

Narrator: Julian pulled the entire load across the lake by himself. From that day on, Julian became the best-known dog in the goldfields of Alaska and the Yukon. But that wasn't the end to his fame.

Fred: Hey, CJ, we need to haul those logs to our camp so we can build cabins and sluice boxes for finding gold. How're we going to do it?

CJ: Well, now that the snow has fallen, I think Julian and the team can manage hauling logs very well. Let's give it a try.

Fred: Sounds good to me.

Narrator: Not only did the team haul loads of logs, but Julian broke the record for pulling the heaviest loads of any dog in the Klondike. Julian became so famous that many gold miners offered huge sums of money to CJ for the dog. CJ would have none of it. To him, Julian was a companion and a member of the family.