CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Martin Eden

Jack London · *1909 · original English text*

The one opened the door with a latch-key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap. He wore rough clothes that smacked of the sea, and he was manifestly out of place in the spacious hall in which he found himself. Martin Eden is London's complete 1909 novel of a sailor who wills himself into letters.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What does it cost a sailor to make himself a writer, and how should a novel of ambition, class, and a dark close be taught with gravity for older students?

"The one opened the door with a latch-key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap."
Chapter I, the opening

The hosted text is Martin Eden (1909, PG #1056), complete in forty-six chapters. The opening is exact, including "latch-key" and "awkwardly removed his cap." A sailor enters a spacious hall and a world of books; Ruth Morse, work, and a fierce self-education are the middle book. The close is a suicide at sea; for older and advanced students, teach it with gravity, not as spectacle, and do not treat the book as a simple success story. Quote this typography.

KEY CHARACTERS

Martin Eden
The young fellow who awkwardly removes his cap in a spacious hall, a sailor willing himself into letters.

Ruth Morse
The young woman of that house, whose world Martin would enter.

the one with the latch-key
The friend who brings Martin through the door in the first sentence.

the later company of editors and friends
The world of print and talk that meets him when success comes, and is not enough.

A LATCH-KEY, AND A CAP

> *"The one opened the door with a latch-key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap."*
> Chapter I

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Latch-Key, and a Cap

CHAPTER I, THE OPENING

The one opened the door with a latch-key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap. He wore rough clothes that smacked of the sea, and he was manifestly out of place in the spacious hall. The novel begins as an entrance, and as a misfit.

- The first sentence is exact in both witnesses, including 'latch-key.'
- Martin's awkwardness in the hall is the first law of the book.
- For older and advanced students.

> *"The one opened the door with a latch-key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap."*
> Chapter I

02

Books, Work, and Ruth

THE MIDDLE CHAPTERS

Martin educates himself, writes, starves, and loves Ruth Morse, whose world is not the forecastle. Class, labor, and a will to letters occupy the long middle book. Do not flatten it into a mere rise.

- Map the work and the self-education, not a fairy-tale success only.
- London's social arguments are part of the book; teach them as he wrote them.
- A wide older band, for older students, can read this with help.

03

A Dark Close

THE LATER CHAPTERS

Success, when it comes, is not the rest Martin had imagined. The close is a suicide at sea. Teach it with gravity, for older students, not as spectacle, and not as a simple moral tag.

- Do not hide the suicide; do not make a spectacle of it.
- The book is not a simple success story.
- Cite this typography.

04

A Complete 1909 Novel

THE HOSTED FILE

PG #1056 and the site EPUB are this complete book, forty-six chapters. Quote stretches that appear in both.

- Complete Martin Eden.
- For older and advanced students.
- The opening typography is 'latch-key.'

Ambition | A Sailor in a Hall | Class | Work and Letters | A Dark Close

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. The hosted text is Martin Eden (1909, Project Gutenberg #1056), complete in forty-six chapters. The opening is exact: "The one opened the door with a latch-key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap."
2. A sailor enters a spacious hall and a world of books; Ruth Morse, work, and a fierce self-education are the middle book. The close is a suicide at sea; for older and advanced students, teach it with gravity, not as spectacle, and do not treat the book as a simple success story.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #1056, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/london-martin-eden/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.