



The first full-length biography of the celebrated author and wife of Jack London

Charmian Kittredge London

Trailblazer, Author, Adventurer

By Iris Jamahl Dunkle

Charmian Kittredge London (1871–1955) was the epitome of a modern woman. Free-spirited and adventurous, she defied modern expectations of femininity. Today she is best known as the wife of the famous American author Jack London, yet she was a literary trailblazer in her own right. This biography is the first book to tell the complete story of Charmian's life—freed from the shadow cast by her famous husband.

In this biography, Iris Jamahl Dunkle draws the reader into Charmian's private and public worlds, underscoring her literary achievements and the significant role she played in promoting her husband's legacy. Her life, as Dunkle emphasizes, required fortitude and bravery, and in many ways it paralleled the history of the American West.

Born on the mudflats of what would become Los Angeles's harbor, Charmian became an orphan at age fourteen. Raised by her aunt Netta Wiley Ames, a noted writer and editor for the *Overland Monthly*, Charmian attended college, became an expert equestrian and concert pianist, and had a successful career as a stenographer. But her life shifted when, in 1905, she married Jack London, already a bestselling author. For the rest of Jack's life, until his untimely death at the age of forty, reporters would follow the couple's every move. Charmian and Jack traveled the world, exploring and writing together.

In addition to collaborating with Jack on many of his projects, Charmian wrote three books about her travels, as well as countless articles. After Jack's death in 1916, she remained a celebrity, continuing to travel and write—and seek adventure. She also wrote a biography about her late husband and managed his estate, influencing how Jack's literary legacy was remembered.

Charmian Kittredge London is a central figure in California cultural history. Now, thanks to Dunkle's riveting portrait, readers have the opportunity to embark on the grand adventure that was her life.

Iris Jamahl Dunkle is the author four poetry collections, including the forthcoming *West : Fire : Archive*. She teaches at Napa Valley College and was the 2017–2018 Poet Laureate of Sonoma County, California.

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