

SPOT

· A · BALLAD · OF · THE · KLONDIKE ·

· BY · HOWARD · V · SUTHERLAND ·

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1
HE was only an Irish setter, and a puppy, sir, at that;
But a goodly dog to look on, being well-behaved and fat.
And I somehow got to love him, and to wish the beast could speak
As he danced about before me and tried to lick my cheek.

2
I bought the dog in 'Frisco, and a couple more as well,
And though I lost my temper and knocked them both pell-mell,
Because they shirked from working, I never licked good Spot,
Because he seemed so human, which the other dogs were not.

7
I slept till early morning, and when at last I rose
The little dog was standing by my bunk upon his toes,
And in his mouth he carried my heavy hunting knife,
And with his fore paws motioned that I should take his life.

3
He helped me drag my outfit over
many miles of trail,
And though the others soldiered,
good Spot would never fail;
When camp was pitched at night-time,
he always came and crept
Beneath my heavy blanket, where the
little beggar slept.

4
Yes, sir, that dog was human, and
when my beans were low
And I had sold the others to a hunter
whom I knew,
Good Spot became my partner, and so
I divided up
My meagre meals twice daily with the
pretty little pup.



8
My God! but it was awful. How
could I kill my dog
With whom I had divided my last thin
slice of hog?
No, no, I would not do it. But there
he stood and sighed,
And motioned me to fix him, until I
almost cried.

9
At last an idea struck me. Before my
courage failed
I grasped the knife, and horrors!
poor Spot had been entailed.
And then I boiled the morsel and
shoved the dog outside
Until the stub was frozen—the wound
completely dried.

5
Three months we starved together on bacon twice a day,
And though the dog was hungry, he always looked away
The while I cut the rations (how small they were!) in two,
And ate his portion slowly as mannered canines do.

10
Day came again and with it the dog, who seemed to beg
Me put my pride in pocket, and breakfast off his leg.
Alas! I was so hungry; then, too, I was so weak;
And, then, Spot made me do it—he almost seemed to speak.

6
Then early in the winter we only dined at noon
And slept for twenty hours, which was, verily, a boon;
But one cold day the bacon was eaten up, and we
Were forced to still our hunger with a bowl of bitter tea.

11
A month we lived together off body, legs and neck,
And soon my little setter was nothing but a wreck.
He ate himself with pleasure until I took his hide,
But that he could not swallow. And then, alas, he died.



12
I lived till spring off rubber boots, and moccasins and socks,
And flour sacks and birch bark, and kindling wood and rocks;
And though I've made my fortune since, I never have forgot
That I had died that winter except for little Spot.

13
He was only an Irish setter, but I know that when I die
He will meet me when I waken with a fond look in his eye,
And wag the tail he gave me in the land of snow and ice,
And bark the while he shows me the trail to Paradise.

