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The Gold Rush

By Charles Chaplin

In the great Gold Rush, Alaska|was the hope and dream of men,
the ruthless siren|of the Far North,
beckoning thousands|to her icy bosom.
Beckoning thousands|to her unknown regions.
Chilkoot Pass was the great barrier|to the gold fields.
Over this Pass men faced|untold misery and hardship.
Many lost their lives.|Some fell by the wayside,
others lost courage|and turned back.
But the brave went on.
Far into the icy north,|deep into the silent nowhere,
came an undaunted lone prospector.
And somewhere in that nowhere|was another lone prospector.
With cheerful optimism|our little Columbus descended,
then stopped, stepped,|slipped and slid.
"Now let me see,"|thought the little fellow.
"Before I know where I am,|I must get there."
There in that frozen wilderness|a dream came true,
and a lone voice shrieked|into the solemn sky,
"Eureka! I've found it,|a mountain of gold!"
But the elements laughed,|roared and thundered.
In that raging nowhere|was a lone cabin,
and another lone man,|Black Larson,
an unmitigated,|predatory scoundrel.
Out of the lashing storm|came the Little Fellow
to find shelter and perhaps|a little hospitality.
There he sat,|resting his weary bones
as the icy wind howled|through the knothole.
"Come here," said Larson.
"What are you doing?"
"Eating, obviously."
"Get out."
"Go on!"
"Get out!"
The wind also was giving|Big Jim his troubles.
Big Jim was the noble type.|He had suffered.
Oh, how he loved to suffer.|He suffered about everything.
"Get out," said Black Larson.
"Or I'll fill you both|full of lead."
"Now then,|the pair of you, get out!"
"Out!"
That kind of noise|Jim don't tolerate.
"I'll stay right here, understand?"
"Right here," said Big Jim.
"Yes, sir, he'll stay right here,"|said the Little Fellow.

"Understand? We stay right here."
And stay they did,
for days and nights. |The cabin moaned and groaned.
Two men walked and never talked, |hunger gnawed their bones.
"I must have food!" yelled Big Jim.
"I must have food!"
"What are you eating?" |Said Black Larson.
"Nothing."
"Open your mouth!"
"Liar! It's that candle."
"That?" said the Little Fellow. |"How revolting."
"If I thought you were holding out |on me, I'd slit your gizzard!"
"One of us must brave that storm, |if we're to get food."
"Come here, the pair of you."
"We'll cut the cards |and the low man goes."
"You're the man," said Jim.
"Goodbye, good luck."
"Don't forget |to bring home the bacon."
Somewhere in that nowhere, |the law was looking for Black Larson.
Desperate with hunger |and here it was Thanksgiving Day.
Nevertheless there was something |to be thankful for.
"Not quite done yet, |give it two more minutes."
"Come on, come on," said Big Jim.
After scouring the country for food,
the Little Fellow had to admit |he had seen nothing,
not even a field mouse.
From the pangs of hunger,
Big Jim was becoming delirious, |hysterical.
In fact he was a pain in the neck.
"Food, food!" he thundered.
"I can put another shoe in the pot."
"No, no, anything but that!"
Poor Jim, he couldn't take it.
"What's the matter?" |Said the Little Fellow.
"I thought you were a chicken."
"Well, build up the fire," |said Big Jim.
"What's the matter with you?" |Said the Little Fellow.
"Come, my pretty bird," |said Big Jim.
"Don't be childish."
"Hey, quit it. |Don't be foolish, it's me!"
"You!" said Jim.
"I'm sorry. I must be crazy."
"You're telling me," |said the Little Fellow.
"You go inside. I'll take the gun |in case you lose it."

Chicken or no chicken,
the Little Fellow looks appetizing|to Big Jim.
Meanwhile Black Larson stumbled|onto Big Jim's mountain of gold.
Then came the parting of the ways,
Big Jim to his mine,|our hero to his fate.
"Goodbye," said the Little Fellow.
"It's been a great pleasure|knowing you."
Treachery awaited Big Jim|at his mountain of gold.
Big Jim looked deep into the eyes
of Black Larson
and saw there the soul of a skunk.
Caught in a maelstrom|of desperate deeds,
Black Larson swept on|to impending doom.
And out of a dream|in that frozen waste, a city grew.
And humanity warmed it with living,|loving and desiring.
Georgia.
Jack was a ladies' man.
Georgia was quick and impulsive,
proud and independent.
In the evening Georgia worked|as a dancehall girl.
Jack had lots of appeal for Georgia.
Perhaps that's why she resented him.
Out of the night|came the Little Fellow,
towards the dancehall,|that beacon light of pleasure,
that retreat of lost dreams.
"Georgia,|why aren't you nice to Jack?"
"I believe he really likes you,"|said the girl.
"He likes everybody,"|said Georgia quite audibly.
"I'm bored with this place,"|she continued.
"I'd give it all up if I could find|someone honest and worthwhile."
"Don't worry,|I'll find him someday."
Then she turned
and looked and looked
and looked.
"Kinda fresh, ain't ya?"|Thought Jack.
"Get down off that high horse."
"Me and you are gonna dance."
"Hey there, pan out a tune."
"Just a moment,|I said we're gonna dance."
"I beg your pardon," said Georgia.
To show her utter contempt for Jack,
she picked out the most deplorable|looking tramp in the dancehall.
"Hey you, come here."
"Yes, you. Do you want to dance?"

"You see, I'm very particular|about whom I dance with."
And there he stood,|the dauntless cavalier, guarding...
her sanctuary.

"If you wanna make a hit|with your lady friend,"
"you should put your hat|on straight, like this!"
"Take that you... Ouch!"

"Huh! Very good."

"Didn't know me own strength,"|said the Little Fellow.
Hank Curtis' cabin was|a stone's throw from the dancehall.
Hank was a mining engineer|who lived alone
and occasionally went|on long expeditions
into the Far North.

Hank was kind and human,
and our hero cold and hungry,
and the beans smelled good|and the coffee was steaming hot.
So the Little Fellow|devised a way of getting breakfast.
Big Jim recovered from the blow|he received from Black Larson
but lost his memory.

Hank's partner arrives.

Both are ready to leave|on a long expedition.
Hank informs his partner|that the Little Fellow
is to look after the cabin|while he's away.

"Goodbye," said Hank.|"And don't forget to feed the mule."
Since that night in the dancehall|the Little Fellow hadn't seen Georgia,
but an incident|was to bring them together again.
There she stood,|her loveliness lighting the room,
filling his soul|with the music of romance
for which he was so ill-fitted.

As she introduced her friends,|his heart began to sing.
As they warmed up by the stove,|he excused himself to get firewood.
And in that cabin|his secret was revealed,
his love for Georgia.

And the girls giggled and laughed,
perhaps in order to hide their pity.
For in the world of the dancehall|it wasn't wise for the girls
to reveal their hearts.

And so they thought|they'd have a little fun with him.
There in the gloaming they sat,
their faces alight with mischief,
but all the while|his heart was singing.
And so she fooled and flirted|and stroked his hair.
He knew she was fooling,|but he was happy.
For she was near him,|holding his hand,
smiling at him.

"Nice place you have here," |said Georgia.
"I hope you will invite us again."
What if she were fooling?
He was enjoying|the warmth of her attention.
And the lady was enjoying|the warmth of his chair.
And now she was leaving.
The light of her loveliness|would be gone.
And he would be left|with an emptiness,
to return to his bleak,|lonely existence.
"Pardon me," |said the Little Fellow,
"But, uh..." |He was lost for words.
"Would you really like|to come again?"
"Of course," said Georgia.|"What do you say, girls?"
"We'll come for dinner|New Year's Eve," said the ladies.
"Very well," said Georgia.
"We'll come to dinner|New Year's Eve."
Of course at that moment|Georgia would forget her gloves!
For the next few days the Little|Fellow hustled and shoveled
in order to buy|that New Year's dinner.
The eve of a new year. |New hopes and new dreams.
And there was Georgia, caressing him|with her smiles and tender glances.
And the girls called for a speech.
But he was too happy to speak.
All that mattered|was Georgia was there. Georgia!
So he muttered and stuttered|and finally said,
"I can't make a speech|but I'll do a dance."
And a dance he did, with the rolls.
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And days of auld lang syne
For auld lang syne|My dear
For auld lang...
In the midst of all their revelry|the vague memory
of a promise crept|into Georgia's mind.
"Let's go up and visit|the Little Fellow," she said.
"We'll have some fun|with him," said Jack.
"We'll send Georgia in first,|then give him a scare."
"Oh, forget it," said Jack.
"How about giving me|a little attention?"
A day or so later|in the Recorder's office,
Big Jim tried to convince|the assayers
that he had a mountain of gold.
"Where is this place?" they said.

But Big Jim's memory|had failed him.
All he knew was|that it was near the cabin.
"The cabin, that's it!"
"F I could find my way to the cabin|I could find the mine."
"But I can't remember."
"Hey!" said Jack,|"Georgia's been looking for you."
The Little Fellow knew otherwise.
How dare that cad mention|her name so lightly?
For two pins|he'd give him another thrashing.
However being a little underweight|he would ignore the insult.
But it was true.|Georgia had been looking for him.
Georgia had written him a letter.
And as he went looking for Georgia,|so Big Jim went looking for him.
"You, you!" said Big Jim.
"You! The very man|I've been looking for!"
"The cabin, the cabin! Where is it?"
"Answer me, I say!"
"Can't you speak, man? Tell me!"
"Where's the cabin? Where is it?"
"At last I shall find|my mountain of gold."
"To your feet man, quick!"
"You're coming with me!"
"Take me to the cabin|and I'll make you a millionaire!"
"Georgia! Just a moment,"|said the Little Fellow.
"Georgia, you don't have to explain.|I understand."
"I love you.|I'll take you away from this life."
"I'm going away, and when I return,"
"I shall come back."
Exhausted and footweary,|they arrived at the cabin.
"Ah!" said Big Jim,|"it won't be long now."
"Bring in the eats and tomorrow|we'll start for the mine."
"Here, take a swig of this.|It'll put hair on your topcoat."
"My, this is a heavy lamb chop,"|said the Little fellow.
Then fate - it's always fate -|played its little joke,
and again the elements laughed,|roared and thundered,
but through it all|our heroes soundly slumbered.
Then came the dawn.
The Little Fellow awoke,
blissfully ignorant|of what happened the night before,
but feeling definitely conscious|of "the morning after".
"Oh well, may as well tidy up|and get breakfast."
"This is the worst liver attack|I've ever had."
"Feel that rocking?"
"It's the stomach."

"It's not the stomach."
"Let's go to the other side."
"We'll see how far it|will go over."
"Something|must be missing underneath."
"I'll go outside|and see what it is."
"Now," said Big Jim,|"don't get excited."
"Take it easy, don't move,|don't breathe!"
"I said don't breathe, stupid."
"You can be most annoying|at times."
"If you'll only be cool, be calm,"|said Big Jim,
"We have nothing to worry about."
"Now show a little character!|Where's your willpower?"
"Now listen,|I've got a very good idea."
"Hold your hands like this,|then I can get out first."
"You see what I mean?"|Said Big Jim.
"Your mind is chaotic.|You have no psychology."
"You have no control."
And Big Jim discovered his claim!
"Now we shall be rich," said Jim.
"We shall be millionaires!"
And so they were.
Now they were homeward bound
and they were leaving the hardship|and toil of Alaska
to live in the land|of milk and honey.
To live, laugh and indulge themselves|in the lap of luxury.
They were famous,|and sought after by the press.
In their cabin deluxe
they were welcomed|and waited upon.
The reporter wanted to write|the Little Fellow's life story,
"From Rags to Riches",|and he graciously consented.
And Big Jim was manicured.
"Not the nails," said he,|"the corns."
The reporter thought of a good idea,
to have the Little Fellow pose|in his mining clothes.
It would make a human story.
Georgia...
There she was in the steerage.|Neither knew of the other's presence.
Georgia overheard the officer say|there was a stowaway aboard.
"You!" said Georgia.
"I thought I'd never see you again."
And then she mistook him|for the stowaway.
The officer was going|to put him in irons.
But Georgia pleaded for him|and said she would pay his fare.
"Heck!" said the Captain.|"That's no stowaway."

"That's Big Jim's partner,|the multimillionaire."

Then of course there were apologies.

The Little Fellow|gathered himself together.

James, the valet, was told|to prepare for an extra guest.

"Pardon me," said the reporter,|"but who's the lady?"

"Buzz buzz buzz!"

"Oh, you don't say!|Well, congratulations."

"This will make a great story,|and with a happy ending."

And so it was.

A happy ending.