

The Battle of Bushey Heath

A true tale by Ivor Morris

In praise of comradeship, I sing,
Between a cat and spaniel,
When puss for valour showed herself
A veritable Daniel.

On cushions plumped, through days and nights
She'd dozed, and known no critic:
Proud denizen of countless laps,
Pampered and sybaritic;

Till, by a sudden freak inspired,
From source infernal tending,
Her folk obtained a dog, and urged
Upon her its befriending.

Acquaintance scarce was of long date,
A mere three weeks the story,
Since Christal put encroaching foot
On Alice territory.

Not had each new encounter proved
More cordial than former;
An iceberg in comparison
Would have deemed the warmer.

With canine hustling, snuffling, tread
Dame Alice was offended;
Yet patient she, though near assured
Domestic bliss was ended.

Let mortals tempted to despair
(And this applies to fauna)
Know that, by dispensation strange,
Help lies just round the corner.

The Auntie Pat, who dwelt nearby,
A rugged tyke possessing,
Could not have dreamt a social call
Might lead to scenes distressing.

The cat, she knew, by instinct true
Would work its own removal;
Naught else in that demesne could rouse
Her darling's disapproval.

But disillusion on her burst
In format quite dismaying –
The terrier rampant: and at once
She's shattered by the baying.

Fierce Harvey straight on Christal fell
With militant intention;
The very thought he would have scorned
Of feline intervention.

Alice beheld her rival gored
Without gratification;
Enough that housemate was assailed:
Her mind was indignation.

The strategy she set aside
To crouch in posture static:
For this, the intruder's attitude
Was rather too dogmatic.

Instead, from sheaths slid razor prongs
A wolfhound fit to ravage,
And glinting jaws gave forth a shriek
Unutterably savage.

With that war-cry of, 'Do or die!'
Pacific mien dying,
Headlong she sprang amidst the twain,
And sent the aggressor flying.

O'er lawn and bed contention spread,
Quarter nor asked not granted, -
Nor atom of concern for all
The poor E*****ds had planted!

Tooth, nail, fur, tail, bark, bite and growl
Swirled by with wild gyration;
In creatures, joy of battle reigned:
In humans, consternation.

The house's master, tried until
He could endure no longer,
Resolved to let unbending Fate
Determine which was stronger.

He on that day entered the fray
In manner most decided;
Struck right and left with martial hand,
And combatants divided.

For mutts insensate there ensued
Captivity inglorious:
Upon the field in triumph pranced
Alice alone victorious.

The garland not through prowess hers,
Despite rumpuss and riot –
But theme of potency to enfold
A world in peace and quiet:

For, championing quotidian foe
Against incursive malice,
She'd won, by charitable zeal,
The title of Saint Alice.

Contemptible might seem a broil
By dint of fangs and claws:
But few the battles ever fought
Upon a worthier cause.

Until the brotherhood of man
Appear as more than name,
This saga of a cat and dog
May put us all to shame.