

The Challenge of the Yukon -created by Geo. W. Trendle

"The Trap in Cabin Four"

by Fran Striker

Number: 586

Date: December 10, 1948

24

Preston

King

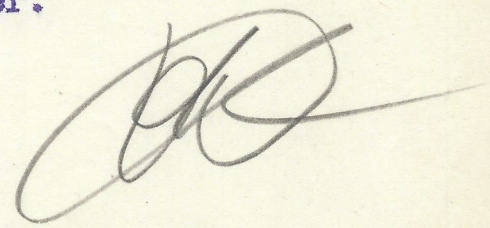
Tom ..... crook, schemer

Lefty ..... His partner

Sam ..... Townsman, straight

Kate ..... His wife

The meanest crooks in the world were waiting in a cabin on the trail from Scotch River. King and I went after them, and we never suspected that they had anticipated our arrival and had planted a time bomb in the cabin. We found the bomb, but that was just the beginning of our greatest danger.

Mr. Trendle 

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THE TRAP IN,  
CABIN FOUR

(USUAL OPENING)

Anner; There was gold to be had by panning Scotch River, but the rugged mountain country would not give up her treasure to a weakling. It was a wind swept area bitterly cold and far from any settlement. Men hardy enough to work the region were able to return to Dawson with a sack of hard-earned gold.

(WIND & STEPS ON CRISP SNOW)

But Tom Fernum and his partner Lefty Morris lacked both industry and courage. They were on their way back from Scotch River after less than a week, and Tom was in a particularly ugly mood.

Tom; Of all the fool ideas - goin' up to Scotch River! I don't know why I listened to you, Lefty.

Lefty; You listened to me because you wanted to strike it rich. ~~I thought~~ you knew it wouldn't be child's play.

Tom; There could be a million dollars in Scotch River and I wouldn't stay there another day.

Lefty; All right - all right, we've left.

Tom; Yeah, we're ~~shut of it~~, and where are we? We've *We're in the middle of nowhere - with a 4 or 5 day hike before* got to walk for days to get back to Dawson.

*we reach Dawson*

Lefty; You'll feel better after we've had something to eat.

Tom; Where'll we get it? You know as well as I do we're out of grub.

Lefty; There's a "Way" cabin straight ahead at the bend of the trail.

(FADE OUT SOUND)

Annrc;

*Way cabins were established at intervals on Yukon*  
~~The wilderness trails were marked at intervals by small windowless cabins along the way. They were established for the benefit of travelers and stocked with food and firewood. Any man was free to make use of the way cabins and take whatever he might need, but there was a strict code in effect. Tom and Lefty made themselves at home and soon had food on the fire that ~~crackled~~ <sup>CRACKLED</sup> in the fireplace. Tom was unfamiliar with the code of the Way Cabins.~~  
*stocked with food & firewood*  
*small windowless*  
*Tom was unfamiliar with the code of the Way Cabins.*

(FIRE CRACKLING IN FIREPLACE)

Tom: *Face grub! This heats me.*

Lefty; By the time the ~~coffee's~~ <sup>water's</sup> boiled, I'll have this steak done to a turn. ~~(CHUCKLES)~~ <sup>for tea</sup> I reckon you'll feel better

Tom, when you sink your teeth into a juicy slab of caribou.

Tom; *How about putting*  
~~Do you suppose we can throw some more wood on the fire?~~

Lefty; *why it's here*  
~~Sure thing, Tom. That's what the wood's piled up for. We can burn as much as we like as long as we replace it before we leave.~~

Tom; Replace it? You mean we've got to cut wood before we hit the trail?

Lefty; Sure.

Tom; Not me, Lefty. I'm leavin' here at daybreak and I'm not cuttin' any wood before I start!

I reckon he'd <sup>4</sup> and mush on,  
Lefty; Tighten his belt, I reckon. He'd be mighty  
hungry before he ~~got to~~ <sup>reached</sup> the next cabin.

Tom; Suppose there wasn't ~~no~~ food in that one?

Lefty; ~~There's mighty little chance of that.~~

Tom; ~~But just suppose—~~

Lefty; Well, Tom, if he ~~couldn't shoot somethin' to eat~~ <sup>found and a hot game</sup>  
he'd be in a ~~downright~~ <sup>starve to death</sup> critical situation. He might

Tom; ~~As I figure it, he'd be just about ready to pay almost~~  
any price for food, <sup>wouldn't he?</sup>

Lefty; He sure would. Why? <sup>you've got food</sup>

Tom; ~~He could have his pockets~~ <sup>might he</sup> bulgin' with gold, but  
~~it~~ wouldn't do him a bit of good if he starved on  
the trail to Dawson. Seems to me, he'd be willin'  
to give at least half of that gold for food enough  
to see him thru.

Lefty; ~~(IT BEGINS TO DAWN ON HIM)~~ Tom, what're you gettin'  
at?

Tom; <sup>It was your idea to go to Scotch</sup>  
(CHUCKLES) ~~We went up to Scotch River to act on~~  
~~your idea, Lefty. It didn't work out for us,~~  
~~your idea, Lefty. Now it's my turn to have an idea.~~

Lefty; Tom, if your idea's what I think it is --

Tom; Let these sourdoughs freeze an' starve to get gold from  
Scotch River. Lefty, ~~we can have~~ <sup>we'll take</sup> our share without  
liftin' a hand.

Lefty; No no!

Tom; <sup>We'll pack up all the grub in</sup>  
~~All we've got to do is clean out this cabin, pack all~~  
~~this cabin~~  
~~the food there is and take it with us.~~

Lefty; We couldn't carry it all.

Tom; We <sup>will</sup> ~~can~~ pack it and drag it on a line. We'll do the same with ~~all~~ the grub ~~that's~~ in the next cabin.

Lefty; Tom, we can't get away with it. It's ~~a hangin' crime in these parts~~. It's the same as horse stealin' in the States. <sup>It's a hangin' crime!</sup> Look at ~~all the horse~~ <sup>think of all the horse</sup> thieves that have got their necks stretched.

Tom; <sup>I'm think of horse thieves that got</sup> ~~There's also some horse thieves that got~~ mighty rich, then went ~~back~~ east to live the life of millionaires.

Lefty; Tom, I won't --

Tom; <sup>Sister, Lefty!</sup> (SNARLS) ~~You've got no choice. I've got a plan~~ <sup>I see a good</sup> ~~and I'm going to act on it. If you're with me~~ <sup>thing</sup> you'll ~~get your~~ share <sup>of</sup> the profits; if you're against me -- (EFFORT) ~~You'll get a share of the~~ ~~bullets that are in this gun.~~

Lefty; Tom! ~~you - you wouldn't shoot me!~~ <sup>?</sup>

Tom; <sup>No?!</sup> Speak up. What's your decision?

Lefty; ~~Well I -- Tom -- do you think we can really~~ ~~get away with it?~~

Tom; ~~We'll get away with it.~~

Lefty; <sup>Tom,</sup> ~~what do you think will happen~~ ~~But when those sourdoughs get into Dawson and tell~~ <sup>reach</sup> about findin' no grub in the ~~way~~ cabins <sup>and</sup> ~~tell~~ about us takin' half their gold for food --

Tom;

~~We won't have to get away with it for very long.~~

We'll make a quick clean up, then head for the States! <sup>before we're caught. Now speak up.</sup> Now come on - get together all the grub <sup>are you with me or against me?</sup> in this place an' we'll get 'er packed to take <sup>will I - - I don't want to be shot -</sup> along with us when we start out at daybreak.

Lefty!

Jones!

Then you're with me. We'll pack the grub that's here and leave at daybreak.  
(BREAK)

Anncr;

Sergeant Preston and his great dog <sup>Yukon</sup> King, had a ~~territory that covered a vast expanse of Yukon~~ <sup>period</sup> country. They reached Dawson at certain times on schedule. It was a rare occasion when the Mountie and his dog came into the community ahead of schedule.

Kate;

(EXCITED) Sam! Sam! Come over here! Look out the window!

(STEPS CROSS ROOM AS:)

Anncr;

Sam Gaulkins and his wife lived at the edge of town.

Sam;

I do declare it's Sergeant Preston!

Anncr;

They were surprised to see the man who represented law and order approaching from the south.

Kate;

And there's his <sup>LEAD DOG</sup> ~~face-less~~ King! He has his sled and everything.

Sam;

He's not due around here for three or four weeks.

Kate;

He's been sent by Providence, that's what.

Sam;

I'll say this - there's no one I'd rather see right now.

(STEPS CROSS ROOM)

Sam; Lemme at that door!

(SNATCH DOOR OPEN - WIND)

(DISTANT DOG BARKING)

(SHOUTS) Sergeant Preston! Hi there!

Preston; (BACK) Hello!

(DOG SLED COMING IN)

KING COMING IN AND BARKING

Sam; Takes alive, Sergeant, you're a sight for sore eyes!

Kate; If you but knew how glad we are to see you, Sergeant Preston.

(KING BARKS)

Yes, and you, too, King.

Preston; It's good to see both of you.

Sam; You're here ahead of time, aren't you?

Preston; Yes. I've changed my route.

Sam; Sergeant Preston, I'm awful glad you're here.

Preston; Sam, are you in trouble?

Sam; Sergeant, I've been robbed.

Preston; Robbed?

Kate; Yes and Sam's not the only one. Do step inside so we can tell you all about it.

Preston; Very well.

(KING WHIMPERS)

Preston; King, you'll have to stay out here and take charge of the dogs.

(STEPS IN AS:)

*Prest.*

Sorry to track all this snow into your house.

(DOOR CLOSES, STAMP OFF SNOW - CUT WIND)

Kate; Think nothin' of it, Sergeant.

Preston; By the way, Sam, the last time I was here you were talking about going up to the Scotch river country to try your luck at panning gold.

Sam; I went there and that's what I want to tell you about.

Kate; Sam was robbed of almost all the gold he got in Scotch River.

Preston; Is that so?

Sam; I went there, Sergeant Preston. I froze and starved. I never worked so hard in all my life, but I <sup>found</sup> got gold. Yes sir, I <sup>found</sup> got gold there, and if it hadn't been for the orneriest thievin' skunks that ever lived, <sup>me and Kate</sup> <sup>and I</sup> would have had enough to take us back to the States!

Preston; What happened?

Sam; Sergeant, do you know the country between here and Scotch River?



Preston; I've been over it ~~just~~ <sup>only</sup> once. It's desolate country,

Sam; *It sure is.* There are three "Way" cabins up along the trail, and there's no part of the Yukon where they're needed more.

Preston; I remember the cabins.

Sam; On the way back I stopped at the first one. There wasn't a ~~smidge~~ <sup>mouthful</sup> of food or ~~firewood~~ <sup>a stick of</sup> there. I had to ~~shove~~ <sup>travel</sup> on the next day on an empty stomach, but I kept goin', and by nightfall reached the ~~next~~ <sup>second</sup> ~~place~~ <sup>cabin</sup>, figurin' for ~~sure~~ <sup>I'd be sure to</sup> I'd find grub.

Kate; But he didn't.

Preston; You mean to say there was ~~nothing to eat~~ <sup>no food</sup> in either of the first two cabins?

Sam; That's right. When I started out from the second one ~~I want to tell you~~ I was just about licked. I was so weak from hunger I could hardly travel.

Preston; What about the third cabin?

Sam; (LAUGHS BITTERLY) I couldn't believe it, Sergeant Preston. But ~~that one~~ <sup>it</sup> was <sup>empty</sup> just like the others.

Preston; It was?

Sam; I knew it meant the end for me. After I'd looked around and realized that there was no grub, I - well, I fell down to the floor and I cried like a baby - I was that weak.

Preston; I'll see that those cabins are stocked right away.

Kate; *Wait 'el you hear the rest!*  
~~Wait a minute, Sergeant Preston. Wait 'til Sam finishes.~~

Sam; I don't know how long I lay there on the floor.  
 I may have lost consciousness, <sup>I woke up with</sup> ~~for a bit. Pretty~~  
~~soon I felt~~ someone shakin' me. <sup>It was</sup> ~~I looked up an'~~  
 a man in a bearskin parka, <sup>He offered</sup> ~~was offerin'~~ me a bowl  
 of steamin' hot broth.

Preston; ~~Who was he?~~ *Was he anyone you knew?*

Sam; <sup>no.</sup> ~~Let me tell you the rest.~~

Preston; Go ahead.

Sam; He gave me the broth, then he explained that he had a  
 place in the woods not far away. He offered to sell  
 me grub enough for a square meal so's I could <sup>finish</sup> ~~get here~~  
<sup>my trip to D,</sup> to Dawson.

Preston; ~~You mean~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~took~~ <sup>money</sup> ~~cash~~ for the food that saved your  
 life?

Kate; (LAUGHS BITTERLY) ~~cash!~~ *money!*

Sam; ~~He took gold!~~ <sup>almost</sup> He took ~~most~~ all of the gold ~~I had~~ <sup>I'd</sup>  
 brought ~~back~~ from Scotch River. That was his price  
 for grub enough to give a starvin' man a meal.

Preston; A man like that must be -- (BREAK) *but go on, Sam.*  
*Have you more to tell?*

Sam; ~~When~~ I got here I found that Pete Doolittle who had  
 left Scotch River a couple of weeks ahead of me had  
 run into the same situation. The same man had sold  
 him food and took most of the gold he had slaved to  
 get.

Preston; (ANGRIER) ~~I see.~~ *I m.*

Kate; *yesterday* ~~Jim Forsythe came into town just yesterday, Sergeant.~~  
*from Sc. R.*

Sam; ~~Yeah, Jim Forsythe had been to Scotch River, too.~~

Preston; What about him?

Kate

Sam;

*See him, Sam.*  
*Jim* He had dogs and a sled, but he was short of food  
 the same as the rest of us. He didn't have much  
*in the thick cabin - but Jim didn't have*  
*enough* gold - ~~not enough to satisfy that buzzard.~~  
*the thief in pole cat.*

Preston; What happened to Forsythe?

Sam;

~~EVERYTHING THAT WAS ON HIS SLED,~~  
 He had to swap ~~his dog sled and all that~~  
~~FOR FOOD.~~ *his* He had a lot of campin' equipment - tools  
*and everything else he had on his*  
 blastin' powder that ~~was left over on~~ things like  
*sled. It's a wonder he could keep his dogs.*  
~~that.~~

Preston;

Sam, why ~~in the name of goodness~~ haven't you men  
~~done something about this situation?~~ Why haven't  
~~you~~ gotten together and gone ~~up~~ to look for this  
 man who ~~is~~ *wants* waiting like a vulture to pounce on  
 starving travelers?

Sam;

There's been some talk of it, Sergeant, but we  
 haven't gotten around to it. Besides, the changes  
 are, he'd see us comin' and light out.

Preston;

Um-m.

Sam;

*What's more*  
 "e're so doggoned glad to be back in Dawson that  
 none of us ~~have got the stomach to go out on the~~  
*feel like goin'*  
 trail again. *Not right away.*

Preston;

Do ~~you~~ *as anyone* know the man ~~who robbed you?~~

Sam;

*Jim Forsythe*  
 I remember ~~ed~~ *ed* seein' him. ~~He and a partner spent a~~  
*with*  
 few days around Scotch River.

Preston;

So he has a partner.

Sam; He had -- I don't know whether he still has or not.

Preston; What's his name?

Sam; *Jim says they* ~~He was called Tom Farnum. His partner was Lefty~~ *him and* ~~some-thing or other. I don't remember his last name.~~

Preston; *(Decisively) Thanks for the information, Sam,* ~~well those two have a lot to account for, Sam, I'm~~ ~~going to bring them back to Sawson.~~

Kate; *What're you going to do, Serg?* ~~Maybe you'd better take some men with you, Sergeant~~ ~~Preston.~~

Preston; *I'll investigate. I'll take King and leave* ~~I think King and I can handle the situation. I'll~~ ~~the rest of my dogs here.~~ *leave my dog team here.*

Sam; You'll have to be careful - mighty careful. There's a wide valley just this side of the third cabin. It's open country. You'll be seen long before you ~~reach the cabin,~~ ~~get to the place where Farnum is waitin'.~~

Preston; I remember that valley.

Kate; They might shoot you when they see you comin'!

Preston; Men have tried that many times, Kate. I'll take my chances.

(BREAK)

Anncr; Tom and Lefty <sup>had</sup> built a very small cabin <sup>among trees</sup> in the woods not far from the third "Way" cabin. It was strategically placed so they could watch the trail from Scotch River and be ready for travelers, while at the same time they maintained a watch on the valley to the south. It was Lefty who first saw two dark, distant specks against the snow--

Lefty; Someone's comin'!

Tom; I've been expectin' it. How many are there, Lefty?

Lefty; I just see two figures. Wait 'til I get the binoculars focused on 'em, and I'll tell you more about 'em.

Tom; 'hose binoculars come in right handy.

Lefty; So do a lot of other things we got off the sledge of that last pilgrim.

Tom; What do you see?

Lefty; Tom! ~~Tom!~~ *I don't like!* This is worse than we figured!

Tom; ~~What do you mean?~~ *Huh*

Lefty; You said we'd be ready for any of the men <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ might come up from Dawson lookin' for us.

Tom; We are ready ~~and you know it.~~

Lefty; Yeah, we're ready for townsmen, but Tom, <sup>the man</sup> ~~that's a~~ ~~Mountie~~ comin' this way *is a Mountie*

Tom; Just one?

Lefty; Just one and a dog.

Tom; All right, we <sup>had</sup> all deal with the Mountie just as I said we'd deal with the townsmen.

~~Lefty; No no!~~

~~Tom; Don't start that again!~~

Lefty; But Tom, when it comes to killin' a Mountie --

Tom; Take it easy, Lefty. There'll be no one to prove it's murder. As a matter of fact, I ~~don't think~~ <sup>doubt it</sup> anyone will be able to prove that the Mountie's dead.

Lefty; What do you mean <sup>?</sup> by ~~that, Tom?~~

Tom; To prove a man is dead, there's <sup>has</sup> got to be a body. Isn't that right?

Lefty; Yeah, sure.

Tom; What do you think would happen to a man who has about three pounds of blastin' powder set off beneath his feet?

Tom; (GASP) Blastin' powder?

Tom; ~~We got some from Jim Fors.~~  
There was blastin' powder as well as a few other <sup>Remember?</sup> things on that sled we got.

Lefty; ~~Jim Forsythe's?~~

Tom; Yeah. Now give me a hand and we'll prepare a reception for the Mountie -- (CHUCKLES) -- a hot reception!

~~MUSIC:~~

~~Annrc; we'll continue our story in just a moment.~~

~~(COMMERCIAL)~~

Lefty; we've gotta work fast.

Tom; There's plenty of time. The mountie will have slow going thru the deep snow in the valley. It'll be nearly an hour getting here.

Lefty; what d'you want me to do?

Tom; Take Jim Forsythe's pickaxe and dig a hole right here in the snow.

Annex; Tom rammed worked rapidly after seeing Sergeant Preston and the great dog King as distant specks across the valley. In the small cabin he and Lefty had built, he had a number of articles spread out on a crude home-made table. He was fitting them into a wooden box while Lefty dug a hole in the center of the dirt floor.

(DIGGING)

Tom; That <sup>is</sup> ~~hole~~ deep enough, Lefty. ~~Just leave the dirt there in a pile.~~

(STOP DIGGING)

Lefty; *Good!*  
Phew, that ground was sure frozen hard. *what about the dirt I scooped out?*

Tom; I've got this box just about rigged. Take a look ~~Leave it right there in a pile,~~

L: ~~at 'er.~~ *what've you been doing?*

T: ~~Take a look at the way I've rigged this box.~~  
Lefty; Looks like a pretty elaborate contrivance.

Tom; I have the blastin' powder here in the bottom of the box. (SLIGHT EFFORT) Now I'll fix this <sup>rig-</sup> gun right here like -- this. It's a lucky thing the gun has a hair trigger.

Lefty; You've ~~got~~ <sup>tried</sup> a string ~~to~~ tied to the trigger.

Tom; That's right, and there's one cartridge in the gun. I took the lead out of the cartridge. When the gun is fired, it'll set off the blastin' powder. Now-- the clock goes right here. I'll wind 'er up.

(WINDING CLOCK)

I've got the clock set for five minutes after the hour. That means that in fifty-five minutes it'll strike the time.

(STOP WINDING CLOCK, TICKING SUSTAINS)

Lefty; You didn't wind 'er very much.

Tom; It's only got to run for fifty-five minutes. Now I'll just fasten this string from the trigger of the gun to this here little hammer that strikes the time on the hour. When the hammer goes back the gun goes off. (CHUCKLES) And that's the end of the Mountie.

Lefty; Tom, I -- I don't like bein' part of a deal like this. I never figured on gettin' into murder.

Tom; Let me do the figurin'. You just do as I tell you. Now I'll cock the gun --

(COCK GUN)

-- and the bomb's all set. I'll close the box --

(CLOSE WOODEN BOX)

Lefty; I wish you'd think this over a little bit. Maybe we can stall the Mountie ~~off~~. Maybe --

Tom; Stand aside, ~~so I can put this box into the hole you've dug.~~

Lefty; But hang it all, Tom--

Tom; Shut up. ( ) There. Just fits. <sup>the hole</sup> ~~Now~~ grab that spade, and fill in the hole, then we'll move the table over the place and get out of here.

Lefty; But Tom, how do you know the Mountie'll stay here until that powder blows up?



Tom; I'll leave a note on the door and I guarantee it'll keep him here. ~~Now fill in that hole.~~

(FILLING IN HOLE, FADING OUT)

(FADE IN WIND IN B.G.) (STEPS)

Annex; Sergeant Preston had left his sled and the dogs that pulled it on Dawson. He and King reached the first of the "Way" cabins and found it barren of food. There were a number of footprints in the snow and it took but a few moments to follow these to a smaller cabin -- a newly built one back among the trees.

(KING SNIFFING)

The trained eye of the Mountie read the footprints in the snow before he saw the note that was fastened to the door.

Preston; King it looks as if the men who live here have gone away.

(KING WHIMPERING)

Started out in different directions -- () We'll see what's on this note. (READING) "To Lefty: If you get back ahead of me, be sure and wait because I have something important to tell you. I've gone hunting. I'll be back no later than four o'clock." () Four o'clock, eh? Well, King, we might as well go inside and wait. Tom Arnnum signed that note and he's the man I want to talk to, and his partner Lefty, too.

(DOOR OPENS, STEPS ON DIRT FLOOR)

Preston;

Come on in, King.

(DOOR CLOSES - CUT WIND)

(KING SNIFFING)

'His place seems to be newly built, eh, King?

(KING WHIMPERS)

'Those two crooks probably put it up in a hurry so they could wait here and watch for travelers on the way back from Scotch River.

(COUPLE OF STEPS-- THEN OPEN CUPBOARD)

Well stocked with food.

(OPEN SECOND CUPBOARD)

Mighty well stocked.

(FADE IN WIND)

Anncr;

Tom and Lefty had made divergent tracks from the cabin so the note on the door would appear authentic. But the two had gone only a short distance before meeting. They were within an eighth of a mile of the cabin, waiting among the trees.

Tom;

It's too bad we had to leave so much stuff in the cabin.

Lefty;

We brought all we could carry. You should have made Forsythe leave his dogs and sled.

Tom;

I didn't want the bother of feedin' the dogs.

Lefty;

Tom, are you sure we'll hear the explosion from here?

Tom; *(chuckle)* We'll hear it all right. *There's three pounds of dynamite*  
*in that box*

Lefty; Then what will we do *afterwards?*

Tom; As soon as we're sure the Mountie's off our trail for keeps we'll go into Dawson - get a sled and some dogs and strike out for another part of the country.

Lefty; But you said we'd go back to the States.

Tom; I figured we could stay here longer and collect from more of those prospectors from Scotch River before we had to pull stakes.

Lefty; We did pretty well from those three.

Tom; Bah - a few thousand dollars worth of gold! I want ten times that much, and we'll get it, too.

Lefty; Don't you think it's dangerous to go into Dawson for supplies? We might run into Forsythe or one of those others we robbed.

Tom; We didn't rob anybody. We just sold food. We kept 'em from starvin'.

Lefty; That's the way you look at it, but --

Tom; *You'll do the talking in D. no one saw*  
~~We'll keep a sharp watch,~~  
*you wound here. I'll keep out of sight.*

Lefty; Tom.

Tom; ~~Huh?~~

Lefty; ~~What~~ what time is it now?

Tom; Half past three.

Lefty; Half an hour to wait. (SIGHS) I hope nothin' goes wrong.

Tom; Nothin' will go wrong. You just wait and see.

(FADE OUT WIND)

Anncr; Meanwhile Sergeant Preston and his dog investigated every nook and corner of the cabin. Then the Mountie sat down on a box that served as a chair. But King was restless. The dog's keen instincts told him danger lurked quite close at hand.

(KING SNIFFING)

There was something intangible -- he sniffed at boxes and at cupboards, then at a small spade that stood against the wall.

Preston; (SLIGHTLY BACK) What's the matter with you, King?

(KING SNIFFING AND WHIMPERING)

That's just an ordinary spade.

Anncr; King stood up - braced his front feet against the wall and sniffed the handle of the spade. He touched it with his delicate nostrils and it slid to the floor.

(SPADE FALLS)

Preston; (SLIGHTLY BACK) (CHUCKLES) Take it easy, King. We haven't much longer to wait. (APPROACHING) I'll put that spade back where it was. I - (BREAK OFF ABRUPTLY) Here's a peculiar thing, King. It has fresh dirt on it - been used quite recently.

(KING WHIMPERS)

Ann cr;

*watched as* When King ~~was~~ <sup>ed</sup> his master examining the spade, he ~~felt~~ <sup>ed</sup> that he was on the right track. ~~The spade~~ <sup>fresh dirt, some</sup> had some relationship with the ~~dog's~~ <sup>strange</sup> uncanny feeling ~~that both he and Sergeant Preston were in jeopardy.~~ <sup>that danger was close at hand.</sup>

*Insert* Still holding the spade the Moutie examined the dirt floor, of the cabin. King found a place beneath the table where the dirt had been disturbed and patted down. He started whimpering and digging.

(WHIMPERING AND DIGGING)

Preston;

King I wonder if you've found something. Let's have a look. (EFFORT) Stand back, boy. I'll move this table.

(BREAK) (THEN FADE IN WIND)

Ann cr;

Tom and Lefty waited with growing impatience ~~for~~ <sup>four o'clock came and went but there was</sup> the sound of the explosion. A half an hour passed, ~~and then another fifteen minutes.~~ <sup>no sound of an explosion. They</sup> Tom looked at his ~~watch for the fifth time, then closed the lid with~~ <sup>waited 15 min more,</sup> a decisive snap.

(SNAP)

Tom;

Something's gone wrong.

Lefty;

It's way past four o'clock.

Tom;

Yeah. That blast should have gone off fifteen or ~~twenty~~ minutes ago.

Lefty;

~~I think the Moutie's still at the cabin.~~

Tom;

Mabe the clock stopped.

Lefty; What're we going to do, Tom? ~~We can't wait here much longer. It's gettin' colder every minute.~~

Tom; We've got to go back to the cabin.

Lefty; Not me! Maybe that blast was delayed. Maybe it'll go off any second. I don't want to get blown to Kingdom Come!

Tom; Maybe you'd rather stay here and freeze to death.

Lefty; Couldn't we just pull stakes? Go away from here and not come back?

Tom; And leave that Mountie to track us down? No sir!

Lefty; But maybe he isn't looking for us at all. We don't know that he wants to arrest us.

Tom; I'm going to find out. I don't like to leave loose ends dangling. I'll go on alone, Lefty. You come after me. When I get to the cabin, you come close enough to cover me if I need help. And if you know what's good for you, don't let me down.

(WIND UP AND UNDER:)

Anncr; Tom set out following his own backtrail in a roundabout route to the cabin. *King had signalled his approach. Serg T was waiting for him.*

(DOOR OPENS)

(KING BARKS)

~~had any~~  
~~King barked violently as he opened the door.~~

~~Tom; Hey!~~

Preston; Quiet, King.

## (KING SUBSIDES)

Tom; A Mountie -- that dog--

Preston; Take it easy. ~~There's no cause for alarm.~~ The dog won't hurt you.

*Answer:* Tom tried to suppress his surprise when he saw the death box open on the table,  
Tom; "hat - what're you doin' here?"

Preston; Close the door and sit down, Lefty.

Tom; You're callin' me Lefty. How - How --

Preston; Isn't that right? Isn't that what your partner calls you?

Tom; Well - how did you know?

Preston; When I came here I found this note fastened to the door. It's addressed to Lefty and signed by Tom. Do you know where Tom went?

(RUSTLE PAPER)

Tom; Well - uh - accordin' to this note he went huntin'. It - it says he'll be back - I'm to wait here.

Preston; *He'd* I guess he expected you back before four o'clock, <sup>2</sup> ~~didn't he?~~

Tom; Yeah, come to think of it he did, ~~but - how'd you know that?~~

Preston; He had a death trap set for you.

Tom; "hat - what did you say? A death trap?

Preston; ~~(SLIGHT EFFORT)~~ Look at this box. ~~I'll open it.~~

~~(BOX OPENS)~~

Tom;

~~What's that?~~ (Gasp) No!

Preston;

This clock strikes the hour. There was a string tied from the hammer of the clock to the trigger of this gun. I removed the string, otherwise the gun would have been fired into blasting powder down at the bottom of the box. It was set to go off at four o'clock. Tom left that note to be sure you'd stay here until then.

Tom;

Wh - where did you find the box?

Preston;

My dog King pointed it out for me. It was buried beneath the table.

Tom;

I see.

(CLOCK TICKING, FADE IN AND UNDER:)

Annccr;

There was silence in the room broken only by the ticking of the clock. Tom know he had been mistaken for his partner by the Mountie. He looked at the clock, and then at the floor, and back at the clock while he considered his next move. He decided to act out the role Lefty would be expected to play.

Tom;

So my partner was going to double-cross me, eh? Going to kill me. Why that ornery -- wait 'til I get my hands on him!

Preston;

The law will take care of him for you, Lefty, if you'll cooperate.

Tom;

Cooperate? What do you mean by that?

Preston;

Lefty, I know what you and Tom have been up to. Several men in Dawson came close to starving because you two took all the food from the "Way" cabins.



Tom; Who can prove that we--

Preston; (CUTS IN) I know what you're going to say. It might be hard to make a charge against you stick in court. There's the matter of proof. There's no actual proof you stole the food, but you and I both know that that is the case. *It will not be hard to prove that* ~~We can prove you took just about~~ *you + Tom robbed men under the pretense* ~~all the gold Sam Caulkins brought back from Death~~ *of selling food* ~~River in exchange for food enough to stave off starvation.~~

Tom; When food is scarce the price goes up. It was mighty scarce for those men.

Preston; *That's a poor excuse. (?)* While I was waiting for you to return I wrote out a full confession. Here it is.

(HUSTLE PAPER)

Tom; You expect me to sign a confession that'll put me in jail?

Preston; I'm giving you a chance to stay out of jail. Of course, your fate will lie in the hands of a jury, but I think if you sign that confession *return what you* ~~and give back the gold and~~ *sole* ~~property you took from the men who came along this~~ ~~trail~~, and restock the cabins you looted, the Jury will deal leniently with you.

Tom; What about my partner?

Preston; *probably* ~~When your story is told, he'll~~ go to jail for attempted murder.

Tom; Well, I don't know. Let me think it over. I -- (SUDDEN EFFORT) Get 'em up, Mountie!

(KING, SHARP SNARL)

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Preston; Quiet, King. ~~Quiet~~, boy.

Annex; ~~The great dog King knew what it meant when someone pulled a gun and held it steady on his master. He trembled with eagerness to leap to the attack as he had been so carefully trained to do.~~ <sup>but</sup> He held back only because there could be no misunderstanding the sharp command --

Preston; ~~Steady, King.~~ Hold it, ~~boy.~~ King.

Annex; King wondered at such a command.

Tom; Get 'em up, do you hear me?

Preston; I didn't expect you to pull a gun on me, Lefty.

Tom; No I reckon you didn't. That was another mistake you made. You made a lot of mistakes today, Mountie. The first was in mistakin' me for my partner Lefty.

Preston; You're not Lefty?

Tom; No. My name 's Tom Farnum and that note I left on the door wasn't meant for Lefty. It was meant for you, <sup>WE SAW YOU COMING.</sup>  
~~see.~~ (LAUGHS) And so was the blast. I figured the note would keep you here 'til the blast went off.

Preston; So you're Tom Farnum, eh? Well what I said about you still goes. You're headed for jail and the charge is attempted murder. <sup>and</sup> ~~But now I won't need your confession.~~  
~~Moreover, you needn't look for leniency from any Jury.~~  
The law is <sup>deals harshly</sup> ~~tough~~ with men who <sup>plan</sup> ~~plot~~ the murder of a mounted Policeman.

Tom; To hear you talk you'd think you were the one holdin' the gun.

Preston; You won't shoot. As it stands now, you'll go to jail ~~for attempted murder~~. Shoot me and you'll hang. ~~The Yukon Territory is large, but it's not large enough to hide in. You'll be found.~~

Tom; *I'll probably hang any way for skatin' level.*  
(CALLS) Come on in, Lefty!

(DOOR OPENS)

(KING GROWLS)

Preston; Hold it, King! Quiet, boy.

(KING SUBSIDES)

Lefty; (BACK) I've got a gun on him, Tom.

(DOOR CLOSES)

Preston; I wondered where you were.

(STEPS COMING IN)

Lefty; (COMING IN) Well now you know.

Tom; we'll tie him ~~up~~, Lefty, then set this bomb all over again. This time we won't have to bother burying it. ( ) You see, Mountie, if there's enough left of you to be found, it'll be hard for any jury to prove you were murdered. You thought I'd shoot you and leave a bullet hole, eh? (LAUGHS) Well that was just one more mistake on your part. Get that rope over there, Lefty.

Preston; *Tom you spoke of my*  
~~I seem to have made a lot of mistakes, today, but you~~  
*Well*  
~~know, Tom, there's one, I did not make.~~  
*mistake*

Tom; Yeah?

Preston; My dog King nearly went for you when you pulled a gun. If I hadn't held him back your partner outside might have come in shooting. But now your partner's here in the room, and I think King and I, between us, can take both of you.

Tom; Oh you can, eh? Well I'd like to see you --

Preston; (SHARPLY) On, King!

Ad lib; (COMMOTION)

(KING EXPLODES INTO ACTION)

(COUPLE OF GUNSHOTS)

Tom; (AD LIB HOWLS AND YELLS)

Lefty; (AD LIB HOWLS AND YELLS)

Anncr; King had been tensed like a tightly drawn bow. He sensed what was coming and was in the air before his master could complete the command to attack. Sergeant Preston, too, went into action. His gun came up like lightning. He fired a split second before Tom, and as he fired, he threw himself to one side. Tom Farnum's shot went wild, but the Mountie's bullet found a mark.

Tom; My arm! My arm!

Lefty; (AD LIBBING HOWLS ABOUT DOG) Take him off! Take him off! Help! Help! He'll kill me!

Anncr; King's jaws closed on Lefty's gun arm like a bear trap. Lefty, knocked off balance, went down with the mighty dog on top. Tom staggered from the impact of the bullet. His right arm hung useless but he regained his balance and with his left hand snatched a knife from his belt.

Tom; (HOWLING) I'll get you, Mountie!

Anncr; Sergeant Preston closed in, dodged the knife, and jabbed ~~shot out his fist in a stunning blow to the stomach.~~ <sup>Tom's</sup> stomach.

Tom; (GASPS) (MOANS AND GROANS)

(FALLING BODY) (KNIFE FALLS)

Preston; That should do it!

Lefty; (MORE AD LIB ABOUT DOG)

Preston; All right, King. (SLIGHT EFFORT) I'll take his gun. Stand back, boy.

(KING SUBSIDES)

Lefty; That - that dog --

Preston; Get up, Lefty. The fight is over.

Tom; (GROANING)

Preston; You, too, 'arnum - on your feet. King, you stand guard while I bandage this wound, then we'll take these two into Dawson with the gold they've stolen.

(KING BARKS)

~~I guess Sam Caulkins and the others who were robbed will be glad to help return the food to the "Way" cabins, in exchange for their hard won gold.~~ <sup>restock</sup>

Lefty; Th-that dog--

Tom; (SNARLING) If it hadn't been for that mutt, Mountie, you'd have been sitting here waiting for the explosion that would send you into Kingdom Come!

Preston; You're quite right, Farnum. <sup>my thanks go to</sup> ~~I can thank King for~~ saving my life.

(KING BARKS)

Yes, King, <sup>old boy</sup> ~~I can thank you twice for saving my life.~~  
This case is closed.

MUSIC: Theme