

THE SECOND STRIKE

A Story of the Yukon

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SOUND BG TALK AND THE CLINK OF GLASSES

GEORGE No, no, Jim, you got it wrong--it wasn't Skookum Jim
 that first discovered gold in the Klondike--

BLAKE It was Bob Henderson.

GEORGE It wasn't Bob Henderson either. Oh, he was the first
 to find gold in the Klondike--but I mean--the first
 strike--the big strike that started the rush for gold--
 that was made by George Carmack's Indian wife, Kate.
 Carmack was sleepin' it off in his tent one day an'
 Kate went down to this stream to get a pail of water an'
 when she leans over to scoop it up there it was--instead
 of gravel there was gold on the bottom of the stream.
 When Carmack hears this he stakes out two claims--
 Discovery Claim and Number 1 Below--an' rushes off to
 Forty Mile to register them meanin' to say not a word
 about it. But a few whiskeys changes his mind an' he
 tells them an' the funny thing is they don't believe him.
 "What?" they says--"gold in that moose pasture?--You
 been in the bush too long, George!" But there was one
 or two who snuck away just to have a look....Well,

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within two weeks every prospector in the region was stakin' claims along Bonanza Creek--and then up Eldorado --and soon spillin' out onto the other creeks--Sulphur, Quartz, Dominion, Hunker, Gold Bottom--

JIM It was a merry-go-round alright.

GEORGE An' that so-called moose pasture yielded more'n thirty million dollars in gold.

JIM That's right.

BLAKE Thirty million--!

GEORGE There's luck for you, ain't it? The first claim registered in the strike was one of the richest and yet some of those just below was holes in the ground. It's all just plain dirt luck.

JIM Luck is right. I came here in '98 like George here an' I stayed ever since an' many a time I aksed myself why-- why'd I stay? Well, I'll tell you. The first claim I staked I sunk a shaft thirty feet--thirty feet of frozen ground--lighting bonfires at night to keep her thawin' and pickin' a few inches a day--thirty feet until I thought I'd never reach the end--but one day I hit bedrock--only it wasn't bedrock--it was gold--a floor of solid gold. I felt like I was standin' on heaven an' I was goin' to be as rich an' great as Solomon. Have you ever held pure gold in your hand, son? I guess you ain't. Well, it's somethin' you don't ever fergit. Let

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people laugh or call it a curse--they're all the same when it comes to holdin' that stuff--yellow an' heavy in their hands. Well, from those few square feet at the bottom of that shaft I took six thousand dollars-- but that was nothin'--that was only the beginnin', I thought.....Why, the bedrock of my claim must be covered with gold an' I was buildin' mansions on Nob Hill already--

GEORGE Dream mansions--

JIM --I drove shafts out along the bedrock in every direction-- I worked under there sixteen hours a day for three and a half months--pickin' at the concrete ground like a woodpecker--and I never found another spot of gold! (PAUSE) That's luck for you--there's Lady Fate.

BLAKE But you're still tryin'.

JIM Sure. That's just it. If I'd never had any luck at all, I'd've left the country long ago. But I been lookin' for that gold floor ever since. Now about another round, Sam!

SAM On the way, Jim!

GEORGE Jim, you recall a fella by the name of H.M. Henry?

JIM Why sure--His Majesty, you mean.

GEORGE That's right--His Majesty. When you speak of luck and what gold can do to a man, I always think of H.M. Henry-- a spit an' polish Englishman who stood about five foot

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four an' was never seen without a flower in his button-hole an' a bowler hat on his head. Why, he even wore his bowler underground. The first time i met him was at the MacDonald Hotel where Henry, who had just arrived in Dawson, was tryin' to get a room.

HENRY My name is H.M. Henry. I have letters of introduction from the Premier of Canada and the President of the Canadian Pacific Railway--and yet you refuse me a room?

MANAGER Mister--look, Mister, all I'm askin' you for is the price of a room--that's the only letter of interduction I can accept.

HENRY My good man--the certificate of a gentleman is connection --and connection is credit--and credit is infinitely more valuable than cash.

MANAGER If it's more valuable than cash then put it on the table.

HENRY Here--and here--and here.

MANAGER But those are letters.

HENRY Those represent my credit.

MANAGER I'll tell you what you do Mister-- you put your credit back in yer pocket an' take it down to the bank which is just next to Sarah's Salloon around the corner--and you trade your credit for cash and I will personally see to it that you get a room. It's simple.

HENRY Sir, if I had cash do you think I would be seeking a room in this disreputable hotel?

MANAGER Now, wait a minute----

HENRY Filled with the dregs of humanity--oh I heard all about it on the way up--the flotsam and jetsom of America--

MANAGER I'm an American!

HENRY ---the scum of San Francisco---

MANAGER I'm from San Francisco!

HENRY ---villains, gamblers, harlots, drunks---

MANAGER Into the street with you you cheap little Limey peddlar! Tryin' to git somethin' for nothin'! An' don't let me see you around here again!

GEORGE Well, he flung little Henry about twelve feet into the air, an' Henry made a graceful arc an' came down square on his bowler hat in a foot of mud. I guess I was the only bystander who didn't laugh. In fact, I went over to him---

YOUNG GEORGE -----Here, I'll give you a pull up.

HENRY I can manage quite well, thank you.

Y. GEORGE Look, Mister, yer only goin' to git yourself in trouble, I can see that--

HENRY I d-don't believe they know what a g-gentleman is!

Y. GEORGE It's somethin' you gotta pay to be.

HENRY Cash never made a gentleman, sir!

Y. GEORGE That may be, but I never heard of a hotel that preferred a gentleman without cash over a bum with money.

HENRY Then I am sorry for you, sir, because you have never lived in a civilized society!

Y. GEORGE Look, my name's George Hendrickson and I don't know of any hotels here that take letters of interdution over pokes of gold but I don't like to see anyone thrown in

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the mud--gentleman or not. Maybe I can find something for you.

GEORGE It was a mistake. I should of left him stuck in the mud where he'd've died without a gurgle. But I helped him--got him into a hotel--loaned him ten dollars--he insisted it was at five percent--and we had a meal of creamed asparagus at two dollars a plate. He insisted on paying and wouldn't hear of me thanking him.

BIZ THEY LAUGH

GEORGE Well, I never seen anythin' like him. We was walkin' down Front Street one night an' happened to pass a Dance Hall. Henry stopped--

MUSIC BG STRAINS OF THE BLUE DANUBE

HENRY What's in there?

Y.GEORGE Well, that's a Dance Hall.

HENRY Is it?--The Blue Danube--

GEORGE An' a dreamy look comes into his eyes an' he walks right by the ticket collector, leaving me to pay the shot. By the time I get inside--

MUSIC UP

GEORGE --Henry has approached one of the gals. It was Leghorn Lil.

HENRY Could I have the honour of this next dance?

LIL (WITH A GIGGLE) The honour is all mine, Mister.

HENRY Henry. Henry M. Henry.

LIL That's a musical name now, ain't it, Henry? Okay, here we go.

GEORGE An' she swirled away carryin' him like a chip on a hurricane sea. I don't think his feet ever once touched the floor, but when they finished he give Lil a little bow.

HENRY Thank you so much, Miss Leghorn. And might I have the honour of this next one, also?

LIL I guess you can, Henry, only you gotta pay after each dance, you know. It's the rules. One dollar, please.

HENRY Pay....? For the dance, you mean....?

LIL (LAUGHING) Why, sure, Henry. Didn't you know? Everybody pays for their dances.

HENRY But it's preposterous! Pay for a dance--? I never in my life----!

LIL Look, the next dance is startin', Henry. One dollar on this little palm, if you please.

HENRY I asked you to dance--you accepted. I did not agree to pay you to dance. Is this place completely money mad?

LIL I'll be mad if I don't get my money! Now pay up--or I'll call Homer!

HENRY You should be ashamed of yourself--selling your--

LIL Homer! Call me a harlot, would you?--Homer!

HOMER Yeh? Is this squirt gettin' fresh, Lil?

LIL Do you think I'd call you if he was gettin' fresh? He won't pay!

HOMER Won't pay!?! Well, we'll jist turn him upside down an' see if he can pay!

MUSIC UP SHARP AND OUT

GEORGE An' so Homer held him by his feet an' shook out his last dollar. I mean my dollar. An' all the time Henry jest hung onto his bowler hat. I think as long as he had that on his head he believed he was safe, his dignity was intact.

Well, afterwards I took him into a salloon that was along the street and bought him a brandy and soda to bring the blood back to his face. And I said:

Y. GEORGE Henry, you gotta learn a thing or two or your gonna get yourself killed. We call a new comer in this country a cheechako an' you're the most cheechako cheechakoan I ever met. No doubt you came up here to make yourself a fortune an' set yourself up as a gentleman--well, I'm advisin' you right now Henry, fergit it--clear out--it's the wisest thing you can do--you don't belong here, you don't know how to work, y'got no money. Dawson is a tolerant place, it's got all kinds here--but it aint got a combination like that. Why, with your connections you could get a fine job somewhere's on the outside.

HENRY I need money.

Y. GEORGE That's right, Henry. But you can't git money except by bruisin' hard work an' that would kill you.

HENRY There must be some other way.

Y. GEORGE There aint, believe me, or I'd of tried it.

HENRY What's that room back there, could you tell me?

Y. GEORGE That's nothin' but a gamblin' room.

HENRY Oh?

Y. GEORGE That aint for the likes of you an' me, Henry. Those boys are sharp.

HENRY Are they dishonest?

Y. GEORGE I don't say that--but they learnt their card sense in the cradle.

HENRY I noticed on the boat coming up they gambled large sums.

Y. GEORGE Why, I've seen as much as fifty thousand dollars lost in a night.

HENRY Is that so?

Y. GEORGE We better get out of here--we're not goin' in any gamblin' room.

HENRY One moment, Jim. I'd better tell you. I'm not a gambler but I am after a fortune and now that I am here I'm not going to turn around and go home again. That isn't grit. My people fought at Omdurman and Crecy-- and they would all turn deathly pale if they thought a Henry failed. I shall not fail. If you will fall in with my plans, George, you will do well by me, I assure you. When I strike it rich--

Y. GEORGE When you strike it rich we'll both be dead. Come on.

HENRY Sit down, George. I need ten dollars.

Y. GEORGE No!

HENRY At five percent.

Y. GEORGE No! Yer not throwin' my money away on a card table.
Why--they'd--they'd skin you, Henry.

HENRY Ten dollars--George. (PAUSE) George, if I lose I
promise you I will take the next boat back. Now, isn't
that fair?

GEORGE And like a fool I lent it to him--thinkin' well he'll
lose an' he'll have to leave an' I won't feel responsible
for his safety no more.

But it wasn't like that, we went into the Snake Room
an' there was one table with six people sittin' round
it an' a few watchin' on. Sally McCann--remember her--
Alley Sally they called her--a smoulderin' redhead with
smokin' eyes--was standin' behind her latest man--that
mad Irishman Rory Mulhoon--and feedin' him money which
he just as rapidly lost. So up to the table hops Henry.

HENRY Could I join you?

GEORGE There was a pause while everybody stared at him like he
just stepped down from the moon--

PLAYER 1 Uh---

PLAYER 2 Hmm---

RORY Sit down, stranger! You got cash you get cards!

SALLY Get the gentleman a chair somebody!

PLAYER 1 Why sure, get him a chair.

PLAYER 2 Make yourself right at home, sir.

GEORGE I could see that Rory had sized Henry up and figured him for a greenhorn with cash--it was just the break Rory needed. Then they started to play. Dealer out to each in turn. The minimum bet a dollar--but ten was usual and Henry lost. He lost the first game an' he lost the second, and the third and then he said:

HENRY Excuse me, gentlemen.

RORY Uh?

HENRY Is this a type of poker?

BIZ A ROAR OF LAUGHTER

RORY Well, sir, this is what they call Blackjack, sir.

HENRY Oh! Well, you don't mind my asking.

RORY Since you're playing it, you might as well know what it is you're playing.

BIZ LAUGHTER

HENRY I gather you're supposed to go close to twenty-one, but not to go over it. Is that right?

RORY You're supposed to go over it, but we're not.

BIZ LAUGHTER

SALLY Give his Majesty a cigar--an' don't be mean to him.

HENRY No thank you--I never smoke cigars.

GEORGE I shrunk in my shoes for poor Henry, though now I don't know why I wasted the sympathy. Well, there was another round and Henry was down to his last dollar before he started to win. Once he figured he wasn't supposed to go over twenty-one he never did--never--but it was always

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nineteen, or twenty, or twenty-one itself. In an hour he had near three thousand dollars worth of chips stacked up in front of him an' Rory was crackin' his knuckles like pistol shots.

RORY His Majesty couldn't win, an' now he can't lose!

SALLY Now, Rory, you let that nice gentlemen win a few dollars-- what's it to you.

RORY They're my dollars--that's what's it to me.

SALLY You seem to forget--honey--they're my dollars.

RORY What are ye so happy about, then?

GEORGE Three thousand---twelve thousand- twenty thousand dollars-- He couldn't lose. It was four a.m. and there was a glaze in everyone's eyes--but Rory was twitchin' like a Mongol Dancer--

SALLY He's just about cleaned me out. If I ever expect to get it back--I'll have to marry him.

RORY There must be somethin' dirty about it--there must be!

Y. GEORGE Now, look here, Rory--are you accusin' Henry of cheatin'?

RORY Well, what else could it be? It's either cheatin' or it's black magic. No man--no man!--can sit for six hours an' win steady. No man!

PLAYER1 It aint natural.

Y. GEORGE Either you take that back, or prove it, or get out of the game.

RORY I tell you it's dirty.

Y. GEORGE Prove it!

RORY I can't prove it! But it can't be nothin' else--

Y. GEORGE Are you withdrawin'?

RORY As long as I got a dollar left I'm gonna break him. He
 jist can't last!

SALLY That's the spirit, honey. Since it aint your money
 after all what you gotta lose?

GEORGE In another hour, Henry, as calm as Lake Bennet at
 seventy below has twenty-five thousand dollars in front
 of him. And then he stands up.

HENRY Well, that should do it.

PLAYER 1 Huh?

RORY What are you standin' up for?

HENRY Well, I'm finished. Thank you very much for the---

RORY You're what? Finished? Sit down!

HENRY Well, no. You see, I decided I would play until I had
 won twenty-five thousand dollars, and then I'd stop.
 My luck might run out over twenty-five thousand, you know.

RORY Your life might run out if you don't sit down!

HENRY Are you threatening me?

RORY Yes--I am--yes!

Y. GEORGE Well now--wait a minute---

RORY You're not finished until either you or us is cleaned
 out, understand?!

HENRY I shall do what I bally well please---

RORY I warn you! Sit down!

Y. GEORGE You see, Henry, the winner never quits until he's either
 taken all the money or the others withdraw. That's the
 rule.

HENRY But I have no wish to take all their money.

PLAYER 1 Huh?

PLAYER 2 Listen to 'im, he's taken ninety-nine one hundredths of it already.

RORY Sit down!

HENRY I am not used to threats, sir, and I shall not be intimidated. Now, if you will kindly make way, George and I will get a couple of wheelbarrows so that we can take our winnings home.

SALLY Rory! Don't!

SOUND THE CRASH AND TINKLE OF GLASS

GEORGE That's right. Rory picked Henry up like he was a grasshopper and threw him out the window--only the window was closed and it was the second story...Lucky for Henry it was a muddy street. I scraped him off the road at five a.m. an' carried him to his room an' put him to bed with a brandy and soda and then I went back to carry twenty-five thousand dollars back to the hotel! The only person who wasn't impressed was Henry himself.

Y. GEORGE Well, Henry, you got yer money. You can set yourself up as a real gentleman, now.

HENRY My dear George, I simply wanted a little capital so that I could begin operations.

Y. GEORGE Well, you certainly got it.

HENRY But it isn't much really. Not for the operations I have in mind.

Y. GEORGE Operations? What do you mean--operations?

HENRY Ahhh.

GEORGE The only money he spent on himself ^{was} to buy a frock coat, ~~and~~ a cane, and he sent to England for a new bowler his own being a little battered by his---falls.

But about his operations he would say no more--until one evenin' in June we was walkin' along Front Street an' he commenced to tap idlers on the shoulders and asked them whether they wanted a job. Soon there was twenty-five of the most grizzly whiskey jacks in Dawson followin' along behind us like a pack of wolves. Henry finally stops an' climbs on a' packing crate---

HENRY Gentlemen, gather around please.

SOUND SHUFFLING AND MUTTERING

HENRY I am about to begin an enterprise the scope of which will belittle the great strike of 1896.

BIZ MURMURS OF APPROBATION

HENRY That millions of dollars have been taken out of the creeks you all know. Fifty thousand people have suckled on that golden breast provided by the hand of nature but--compared to the wealth that is revealed to me, the wealth that has so far been recovered, is a mere trickle. I am after the source--the fountainhead--the inexhaustible Mother Lode!...Ask yourselves, where has the gold all been found....Why, you will answer, in the creeks running into the Klondike River from the south and the creeks running into the Indian River from the north.

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But where, I would ask, do those streams meet and where do they point like arrows on a pirate map--why to the Dome--that crest and butt of rock which dominates the valley. That Dome, gentlemen, we will uncap to release a flood of gold such as the imagination cannot conceive! hurray!

CROWD

GEORGE

It was the first time I realized that Henry was more than just a broken down Englishman on the make. He was a dreamer, too. Well, Talk as I might I could not get him to see how crazy his plan was--maybe because--I wasn't sure myself. The gold had drifted down the creeks from somewhere--there must be a source for it all--and those streams all did point to the Dome. But to find it..!

SOUND

SPADES DIGGING, PICKS HITTING ROCKS, OCCASIONAL SHOUTS OF MEN

HENRY

A good weeks work, wouldn't you say, George?

Y. GEORGE

Any showings?

HENRY

Oh no, no--we can't expect anything like that yet. If my guess is correct the gold will be in a puddle--a vast, extraordinary puddle in the very centre.

Y. GEORGE

You know, Henry, other people have thought of this.

HENRY

The may have thought of it--but they have not acted upon it.

Y. GEORGE

Maybe---there was a reason.

HENRY

There was--lack of initiative, daring, and imagination. It seemed too good to them to be true.

Y. GEORGE That's the way it seems to me.

HENRY Well, there you are. The hardest thing to conceive is always the most obvious--because it seems beyond belief that it should be so simple. Men would rather putter and poke in these little creeks and crannies than go straight to the source.

Y. GEORGE Henry, you won't be too disappointed if---

HENRY But if the conception is daring--the execution must be twice so. I have quadrupled my labour force. I have surrounded the Dome. At twelve points tunnels are being dug slanting downwards to converge at the centre and base of the mountain. In ten days the tunnels will meet on the golden pile...You must admit, George, it has flair.

GEORGE The tunnels met just as he said they would and there was great pleasure in breaking through and shaking hands all round. It had flair alright--but that's all it had. There was no gold. Well, Henry went into town after that and spent a day sitting in the Shelalagh Salloon drinking brandies and sodas and reading over his letters of interdution. And I had to foot the bill. The twenty-five thousand dollars was gone, an' he went back to the Snake Room and soon my last twenty dollars was gone, too. I thought sure the Yukon had finished him at last.

SOUND THE TINKLE OF A PIANO BG AND FAINT MURMURING...

Y. GEORGE (SLIGHTLY DRUNK) Remember, I tole you, Henry, the Yukon aint fer you--you'd better get out and get a good job

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through all those connections you got with the Prime Minister an' the Governor of the Bank of Canada on the Outside. But you had to win a lot of money an' that was the worse thing could've happened because it give you ideas of a golden horde.

HENRY You're quite right, George, my friend, and I am not going to look for the pot at the end of the rainbow any longer. Not right off. I shall have to dirty my hands first.

Y. GEORGE No, Henry, it aint fittin'. Leave while the leavin's good an' before the long night comes. You wouldn't be no good at dirtyin' your hands, Henry.

HENRY I have an idea, George.

Y. GEORGE What idee is that, Henry?

HENRY You see, the gold was found around the creeks. Now, the creeks run down the centre of valleys at the most six hundred yards wide. Now, it is my contention that over these ages those valeys sank to their present position and they left gold behind them, on the bedrock, above the valleys--

Y. GEORGE Huh?

HENRY On the shelflands above the valleys there is gold. I'm going to dig for it!

GEORGE Well, when the word got around that His Majesty as he was now dubbed was going to dig for gold--up in the hills-- it was the joke of Dawson.

MINER 1 His Majesty's taken to the hills!

BIZ LAUGHTER

MINER 2 He couldn't find gold in the middle of a mountain so he's
 goin' to look on the top of a mountain!

BIZ LAUGHTER

MINER 3 Maybe t'aint gold he's arter, mebbe tis the silver linin'
 in the clouds. (MUCH LAUGHTER)

GEORGE But Henry struck it rich. His theory was right! There
 were rich deposits left on the hillsides when the valley
 sank. In one season, doing his own work, Henry cleaned
 up one hundred and forty thousand dollars! When the
 season was over he appeared in Dawson wearin' his new
 coat, his new bowler, and a orchid in his buttonhole,
 and he walked down Front Street.

MINER 1 How do, Henry.

MINER 2 Nice day, Henry.

MINER 3 The top of the evenin' to you, Henry.

GEORGE He went into the Flora Dora Salloon.

GIRL 1 Us girls have been missing you, Henry. We'd like to
 see more of you.

GIRL 2 You're a real gentleman, Mr. Henry, and I like gentlemen.

LIL Remember me, Henry? I hope you don't hold no hard
 feelings against me. I don't hold none towards you. You
 can have all the dances you want for free.

GEORGE But Henry only sighed and joined me at the bar.

HENRY When you are without gold they spurn you, when you are rich they crowd around you like horseflies in June. Gold. It is centre of gravity in human affairs.

Y. GEORGE That's right. It's gravitating me right out of town.

HENRY Are you leaving us?

Y. GEORGE There's a place north of here about one hundred miles. I'm goin' to winter in. It's big, Henry. I'm goin' to make the Second Strike.

HENRY Don't be ridiculous, George. The gold is here in the Klondike, not away off in the wilderness.

Y. GEORGE I'm goin' to make the Second Strike, I tell you. Drink to me, Henry.

HENRY Uh. You should drink to me, also.

Y. GEORGE Drink to you? No need to drink to you. You got what you want--you can set yourself up as a gentleman of means.

HENRY I'm about to get married.

Y. GEORGE Married! Who to?

HENRY Miss Sally McCann.

Y. GEORGE Sally Alley! But she's engaged to Rory Mulhoon!

HENRY I know.

Y. GEORGE And she's gonna marry you?

HENRY Of course. Mind you, I haven't asked her yet.

Y. GEORGE Well, Henry--I don't think you got a chance. No man cuts in on Rory Mulhoon--it's like hangin' yourself.

HENRY I have already taken care of Rory Mulhoon.

Y. GEORGE Taken care of him?

HENRY

He is now the manager of the Henry M. Henry Mining Company at ten percent of the profits--and I do not think he will want to forfeit his present lucrative position by opposing me in the matter of Miss McCann.

Oh, by the way, I do not wish to hear you call her Sally Alley again. It's vulgar. She is Miss McCann--until, that is, she becomes Mrs. Henry.

GEORGE

And it was just the way he said it was. She accepted him. And all the violence Rory Mulhoon did was to knock down several whiskies an' curse the fickleness of the female sex. As for Sally Alley, who we all recall as the brazen, wide-eyed whiskey gal of Bogan's Barroom, she became Mrs. Henry M. Henry--complete with a maid in a house he built specially for her. He called it Wildwood Lane. Wildwood Lane--Heh! After that--we sort of lost sight of one another for several years. Sam--another round over here!...Oh, I used to bump into him now an' then but he always got away as fast as he could. I was a rock rat--scrapin' and pokin' in the hills an' livin' off beans an' whiskey. But he was a man of position--who entertained all the important people an' never soiled his hands on anythin' but gold dust. He was a gentleman! (PAUSE) But one night about three a.m. I'm surprised to see Henry in the Mickey Mac Salloon an' he's puttin' down brandies an' sodas--

MUSIC

PIANO TINKLING BG

HENRY George! You're just the man I've been looking for!

Y. GEORGE Oh? Since when did you start looking for me, Henry?

HENRY Now, George, I realize I've used you pretty tardily since those days--it's dreadful the way one drops ones old friends--and I'm sorry about it. You haven't any hard feelings, have you, old chap?

Y. GEORGE Why worry about me now, Henry? You've got what you want --set yerself right up. A far cry from the day I met you outside the MacDonal Hotel popped in a mud puddle.

HENRY That's just it.

Y. GEORGE What?

HENRY I haven't what I want.

Y. GEORGE Well, I call that just plain--

HENRY I've made a great deal of money, as you say--but all these years I've been evading the one thing I really want to do.

Y. GEORGE And what is that?

HENRY I've not been entirely idle, I can tell you. George, I've been studying maps and gathering geological information--and I believe, George, I've stumbled onto something. I think I know where there's gold to be found that will make the whole Klondike look silly. The Second Strike, George!

MUSIC UP. HOLD BG STRONG.

Y. GEORGE Henry, you go home and get a good rest! Everybody gets ideas of grandeur--but you got too much to lose, Henry. Look at me--spendin' all my years tryin' to make the Second Strike. The great Second Strike which will make a curse, Henry, a disease--because there ain't goin' to be a Second Strike!

HENRY George, you're wrong, and you know it. There is going to be a Second Strike and I hope I'm the man for it.

SOUND BAR SOUNDS

GEORGE I tried to argue him out of it but I knew I couldn't: He'd blasted his bridges. He was goin' forward no matter what...I shoulda known. There was always somethin' extra about Henry--and it would never leave him be. I'd seen it at the Dome but I still thought he was just a little Englishman who wanted a fortune and a castle of his own--something he could hang onto like his bowler hat--a property--position. But, poor Henry, for all he fooled himself, was just a rock rat like the rest of us--seekin' the golden fleece--the Holy Grail--the Second Strike. Wealth wasn't enough for him, he had to have the world an' if he had the world that wouldn't be enough either. People like that, what they want is believing there's something out there in the blue--somethin' that's too good ever to be found! (GRUNT OF DISGUST)

(PAUSE)

BLAKE Well, what happened to him?

GEORGE What do you think happened? He started on one crazy venture after another, year by year spent all his money--finally his wife was supportin' because she'd had enough horse sense to grab some of the money and buy a hotel. She died ten years ago.

BLAKE And he's still alive?

GEORGE Oh sure. The last time I saw him was just after his eighty-third birthday--he was janitoring up at the hospital--an' the old fool wanted me to go on a prospect with him. Way up beyond the Pelly River, mind you.

BLAKE That's two hundred miles, isn't it.

GEORGE Yep. He went, too. He's up there right now as far as I know.

BLAKE Well, if he has made it--he'll never make it back.

GEORGE Maybe not--but I'm just on pins an' needles wonderin' if he might not hit it, after all. The Second Strike, I mean.

MUSIC TO END
