



























They soy th' Whoppers





























THE SNOWBALL

by Robert Peterson

WINTER was setting in fast. The tempera-ture had already dropped to ten below zero, and the biting wind was whipping into blizzard streogth, sending white clouds of snow flying across the tundra.

Sergeant John Larcau of the Royal Mouoted Police, his back to the wind, bent over the pile of bones and articles of clothing in the snow drift, all

that the wolves had left of the body. He nodded grimly as he inspected the identification in the billfold, George Carson, Montreal, Here

was his man. The elements and the wolves had proclaimed judgment upon him and executed sentence, saving the Dominion the expense of prosecu-Lareau shivered, and stood up. The man hunt

had brought him farther north than he had expected, and he was not prepared for the cold. He hoped he could reach Webb's outpost before night fell, or the morning might find him, too, reduced to gnawed and scattered bones

The temperature continued to drop, and it was twenty below and growing dark when at last he sighted the log structures of the outpost in the distaoce. With a strength and energy he didn't know he had left, he broke into a run, and in less than five mioutes he was inside the warmth of Webb's

The bewhiskered old trader brought him a large glass of brandy as he thawed out before the roaring

fireplace. "Try this, Sergeant," Lareau accepted the proffered glass and emptied its fiery contents wih one gulp. "Thanks, Webb. I've got my horse outside. Can you bed him down?"

"Shore thing." Webb called his helper, Akku, a half breed Eskimo and Indian and told him to bring the horse to the stable and not spare the oats. "Yup," observed Webb as Akku went out the

door, "winter did come purty quick. Caught us all off guard. But what brings va way up here? I was trailing a killer-George Carson. But the walves caught up to him before I did. I found his remains a few hours ago." He lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply. "Or at least I think it was his

remains. "Ya got any reason to suspect it mighta been someone else? "Well, no," said Lareau through an exhalation

of smoke. "The clothes were certainly his, and identification was in his wallet. But there was no gun, and Carson was never without a gun." Hmm, well maybe Injun took it. Lareau shook his head. "I don't think so. There

was money in his wallet, and an Indian would have taken that, too." He paused, contemplated the ash of his cigarette for a moment and then asked, "Have you had any visitors lately, aside from the regular trappers and men you know? Any strangers?

None. Except a Dr. Mathews who was here a few days back to stock up on supplies. One of them

explorer fellows. Studyin' Eskimo life, or somethin'. He had a right fine dog team an' sled. "What did he look like?" Webb shrugged. "Same as most every white man you see 'round these here parts. Had a face fulla

black whiskers, an' was pretty big an' stocky.' Did he say where he was going?

"None. But he head North." Lareau was silent for a moment, immersed in

thought, then he asked, "Is there any place around here a man could hole up for the wioter?" "Nope. The nearest settlement is the Hudson Bay post up near Wager, an' that's six hundred

miles. Course there's a shack here an' there along the trail that the trappers use. A man could hol up in one of them if he had enough food to tide hun over.

Lareau smiled wryly, and tossed his half-smoked cigarette into the fireplace. "I'm almost sorry I asked you," he said. "Now I've got to find that

man just to make sure . . The wind subsided during the night, but the dawn brought oo rise in temperature. A soft thick

snow was falling. Sergeant Lareau, wearing a furlined hood and cost, and looking like any Eskimo adjusted the snow shoes to his scal-skin boots, and pulled the straps tight. Webb helped him strap the heavy pack onto his

back. It was a sleeping bag in which were rolled four days rations. He said, "You oughts take a dog sled. What if ya git lost? Ya only got four days food." I only want to investigate a few shacks. If my

man's not there, I'll postpone it till the Spring thaw and check then."

"Well, I shore hope ya catch up with him so's ya can close yer case one way or 'nother."

"Thanks," Lareau shook his extended hand, and then started into the thickly falling snow. In a few minutes he had disappeared inside the white-

He slept that night beneath a protruding stone ledge on a hillside. The following morning found the wind rising again, and the temperature close to thirty. He massaged the stiffoess out of his limbs, ate, and then plodded on again over the endless expanse of snow. He reached the first shack by noon, so covered with snow that he almost passed without noticing it. It was unoccupied, but he remained long enough to avail himself of the stove and firewood to cook a hot dinner and coffee. It was getting dark when he came upon the sec-

ond cabin. It was in a valley at the foot of a high hill, and smoke was coming from the chimney. It was a welcome sight, for Sergeant Lareau did not relish another night in the open

Several dogs lay curled together for warmth beneath an overturned sled outside the cabio, Lareau entered without knocking. A tall black-bearded individual was throwing wood in the fireplace. He dropped the logs as Largau closed the door behind him, and reached for a rifle leaning against the wall, but it was too late. The police sergeant had his revolver in hand The man leaned the rifle back against the wall-"Sorry," he grinned, "You kinds startled me, Make yerself at home. I wuz jus' makin' grub. I'm

Dr. Mathews," Lareau slipped the revolver back in his holster. "I'm Sergeant John Lareau of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police," he said, "And you're not Dr. Mathews. You're George Carson, wanted for mur-

der, and you're under arrest. The hig man hesitated for a moment, and then ventured, "You've got me all wrong, but that name's familiar. Oh, yeah, I came across a body near Webb's post with that name in its pocket. As fer

me. I got plenty papers with me to prove I'm Dr. Mathews." "I don't doubt it. You've got his clothes, dogs and sled, too."

the heat would be off."

"Now, lissen-"Save it, Carson. I've got you dead to rights. You met Dr. Mathews on the trail, killed him and exchanged clothes with him. You figured the wolves would make the body unrecognizable, and when the clothes were found, you'd be reported dead, and

Carson shrugged his huge shoulders. "Okay," he said, "so you've got me. But let's eat. The grub's gettin' cold." All right, Carson," he said, "But understand one thing. One false move from you and it will be

your last. I've got orders to bring you back, but not necessarily alive. Do we understand each other?" Carson nodded, and brought out a tin plate and cup from the inverted box which served as a cupboard. Lareau emptied the cartridge clip from the rifle against the wall, and from another gun he found in the man's pack

"Blowin' up hard," observed Carson. "We'll be snowed in by morning if it keeps up." Lareau removed a pair of handcuffs from an inside pocket. "You'll have to sleep handcuffed to

the bed post," he said Carson scowled, "Brave, ain't va?"

I didn't last this long being careless." The wind turned into blizzard velocity during the night and piled the snow high against the rear wall of the log structure. The logs bent under the

pressure, but held. The old cabin had withstood worse weather in its fifty-odd years of existence. "You ain't takin' me back in this storm?" asked Carson. Lareau shook his head. He poured himself a cup

of steaming black coffee. "We'll wait until the wind's down. Carson lighted his pipe. "Lissen," he said, "I got a proposition fer va. There's four thousand bocks in my pack, an' it's all yours if va forget va found me, an' report me dead. You got a corpse

with my identification on it fer proof."

He raised the steaming cup to his lips.

"Forget the angles, Carson. I'm bringing you in." a snowball.

Carson thrust his hand forth suddenly and slammed the cup up into Lareau's face. The hot coffee splashed over his cheeks, nose and into his eyes. The Sergeant leapt backward, reaching for his revolver, but Carson rammed the table into him, sending him sprawling over the floor. Lareau rolled over and came up crouched against

the wall, gun in hand. A table leg knocked the revolver spinning from his grasp. He felt his wrist bone break under the impact of the wicked blow. The table leg came down again against the back of his skull. He fought desperately against the

blackness engulfing him, and tried hard to get to his feet, but then his less buckled and he sank into the dark arms of ohlivion

. . . He regained consciousness slowly. He felt very warm, and as he forced open his eyes he thought he was lying in a soft bed between white sheets, and it was several moments before he realized he was sprawled in a snowbank. He climbed to his feet with a superhuman effort, for when a freezing man feels warm, the shadow of death is already over him. He shook his head, and swung

his numb, almost paralyzed arms about until some semblance of circulation returned to them. He was dressed only in his uniform. He realized then that resistance was futile. It was only a matter of time now, and not much time, that he would die. He looked about. He was high on the hill above the valley, the cahin far below. Carson had carried him

here to freeze and die and furnish the wolves with carrion. Lareau started down the hill, but after a few steps his numh legs gave and he fell. He swore beneath his hreath. He was belpless. He climbed to a sitting position and started down at the cabin. Killer Car-

son had won again Suddenly his glazed eyes turned bright. He climbed to his feet, and made a snowhall. He rolled it down the incline, and with every turn, the bull enlarged. When it was big enough to roll by itself he held it fast for a moment, aimed and pushed. The snowball started down the steep hill, gaining

momentum and size as it went. Lareau held his breath as the gigantic white sphere neared the cabin. It was already the size of an ingloo, tons of solid, compressed snow, and expanding fast. It struck the cabin with the impact of a locomotive, sending the heavy logs flying like match sticks in all directions. Lareau smiled. He couldn't save

his own life, but at least he had done his job. George Carson was no more. The bark of a dog interrupted his thoughts and he turned to see a dog team and sled come swiftly towards him. Trader Wehh jumped from the sled and covered him with a fur blanket.

Looks like I came just in time," he said, unscrewing the cap of a hrandy flask. "When that storm hlew up, I got worried bout yz. Where's

yer clothes? What happened?"
"I found Carson. He outsmarted me though, and carried me out here to freeze to death."

Where is the varmint?" Larens smiled, "He's dead, I killed him with























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