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deputy, out on a job and holding it down. With the issue squarely before him, he faced it instinctively and unflinchingly.

"You go on home!" he ordered quietly. "You, Tom Potter, you ought to know better than to be mixed up in any such dirty business as this. And you, too, Johnston, and you, Briggs."

"Cut it, Dave!" snarled Potter. "We mean business."

"So do I. There ain't goin' to be any lynchin' tonight."

The men in the doorway might have parleyed; but even as Wilson spoke, they were thrust aside and a huge figure leaped into the room, brandishing an iron bar.

"Oh, hell! What you waitin' for? Come on and get him!"

There was a wild burst of shouts and yells, and above it sounded the report of the deputy's revolver. The iron bar clanged noisily on the tiles, as the big man spun slowly around and then collapsed into a crumpled heap.

For an instant, there was silence. Then, mad with fury, the crowd flung itself forward. The deputy's revolver spoke again and again, and at each shot a man went down.

Through the drifting smoke, Wilson could see the struggling mass stagger and reel back upon itself.

Down the long corridor and through the splintered doors the mob poured, shouting, yelling, cursing, trampling each other in the frantic rush for safety. A bullet crashed through the window, showering glass in every direction, and through the opening whizzed a sharp thing, that struck Wilson just behind the temple and tore open a jagged wound, from which the blood streamed over his face. He did not even feel the pain.

Above the frenzied clamor, he heard threats to burn the building, to dynamite it, to tear it stone from stone; but he did not move. His eyes were fixed on the door, near which lay those sinister, silent heaps.

Suddenly, there was a change in the huge volume of sound that filled the air. There were the clatter of horses' hoofs, loud imperative commands, cries of fear and pain. Wilson sprang to the window.

A squad of horsemen in dark gray uniforms were forcing their way through the press, their great riot sticks rising and falling with merciless regularity; and as their horses charged this way and that, the crowd scattered like sheep before them.

Through every exit from the square poured a steady stream of fleeing men. Not one member of all that mob cared to stay to try conclusions with the State Police. Like snow before a south wind, the rioters melted away before the onslaught of the Black Cossacks.

"Where 's the prisoner?"

Wilson turned at the sound of a voice behind him. Just inside the doorway stood the captain and two of the troopers. The deputy pointed toward the cot.

"Under there," he said.

"You've had a pretty warm time here," he remarked grimly. "Were you alone?"

"Sure!"

"How did that happen? Have n't you any police in the town? What's your sheriff thinking about, any way, not to have a guard here?"

"Politics," said Wilson briefly.

"Oh, I see! Well, this will about 'politics' him. I would n't like to be in his shoes. It's a mighty good job we were going through here. Ordered on strike duty across the river, and got word from the super at the rolling mill that trouble was brewing." He touched one of the crumpled figures on the floor with his foot. "Dead?" he asked.

"I shot to kill," he said.

"Pretty tough character, I guess," the captain suggested; but the deputy shook his head.

"No, he was n't." His voice was strangely expressionless, and his eyes were dull and lustreless. His hands hung loosely at his sides. "Tom Potter was a good fellow—one of my best friends."

"Gee! That 's tough!" exclaimed one of the troopers.

The captain stood looking at Wilson with grave, understanding eyes. Then, without a word, he stepped forward and held out his hand.



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