

HER KNIGHT WITH A SHINING STAR

EXCERPT

PREFACE

New Castle, Colorado

In October of 1893 the coal miners for the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (C.F. & I.) went on strike after they were ordered to use covered lights, which they believed would dangerously impair their vision. The miners tried to negotiate what they considered reasonable terms, but the General Superintendent of the C.F.&I. responded by closing the mine, forcing the workers into a determined yet peaceful strike that lasted until the 26th of February 1894.

Just when the lives of the New Castle miners began to return to normal, another *nationwide* strike was called by the United Mine Workers in late April of 1894.

Although the miners of New Castle were hesitant to strike again, they eventually joined the nationwide movement in June. For the miners in the east this strike was short lived, ending on June 16, 1894. However, while the majority of those eastern miners had won their desired pay raises, the Colorado miners did not and they refused to return to work. Thus, the coal miners of New Castle were thrust into a far more determined and dangerous strike than the first.

Throughout the Nation

In April of 1894 the American Railway Union (ARU), a fledgling organization that represented all crafts of railroad employees, had just successfully beaten the Great Northern Railroad in a fight for higher wages.

Seeking the same results, the Pullman Palace Car Company workers joined the ARU and went on strike. The convention of the ARU supported the Pullman Palace Car Company workers and refused to work on any trains that included Pullman cars. The Pullman Strike escalated into a nationwide battle between the ARU and individual railroad companies. The ARU's boycott of the Pullman cars was effective, especially on all transcontinental lines west of Chicago.

The Railroad Managers Association wanted to destroy the ARU and devised a plan to have the Pullman cars attached to U.S. mail trains. Once the ARU members refused to work on the mail trains, this brought the U.S. Government into the fight on the side of the Railroad Managers Association.

In Colorado, the Denver Rio Grande Western, Colorado Midland and the Rio Grande Western Railroad Companies hired a large group of Deputy United States Marshals to ensure the safety and operation of their trains with Pullman cars attached.

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It was July 4, 1894, when the lawmen clashed with the citizens of New Castle . . .

Within moments a locomotive was spotted and the crowd erupted into a frenzied mass. People waved their red, white, and blue banners and flags and men began to shout out angry words and curses at the approaching train.

Renee felt Betsy tug at her sleeve, but she pulled away and peered anxiously down the tracks.

The train, consisting of just an engine and a caboose, pulled into the side track and behind it came another engine with two coach cars and a caboose and it stopped on the main track right in front of them.

The doors of the coach cars opened and one by one, men stepped down, and by the time the last man's boots touched the ground there were more than two dozen U.S. Marshals lined up alongside the train.

They all wore the same badge, a five pointed star, but their ages and appearances varied as much as their clothing and hats. Some lawmen had on clothes of a western style, such as leather and denim trousers, long-sleeved shirts, vests, cowboy boots and Stetsons. Others were dressed in suits of heavy linen and broadcloth with string ties and bowlers or Homburgs, while a handful of men wore a mixture of both styles of clothing.

Each Marshal had at least one weapon of their choice; a shotgun, Winchester rifle or a six-shooter purposely displayed, but not drawn on the crowd. They merely stood their ground and calmly watched the jeering mass of townspeople, coal mine strikers and railroad boycott sympathizers.

As Renee looked about, she couldn't believe what she was witnessing. Anger and rage distorted the familiar faces around her. Young boys with toy pistols fired imaginary shots at the Marshals while the men and women were shouting threats and foul oaths at them.

Her blood turned to ice and she shivered.

A ringing sound filled her ears, making her head begin to pound and suddenly she felt as though she couldn't breathe. Flinging back her veil, she took several deep, desperate breaths of air, and as she turned to leave, she noticed the U.S. Marshal standing

before her was intently watching her with his arms crossed over his chest.

He was taller than the other men, tall like Jacob, but much leaner. His brown Stetson hat shadowed his eyes, obscuring them, but she did notice the sharp edge of his jaw line and a firm set of lips. His white shirt was open at the neck and its sleeves were rolled back, exposing his sun darkened, muscled forearms. A five-pointed silver star was pinned over the left breast of his black vest and it glinted brightly in the hard afternoon sun. He wore black trousers, dusty brown cowboy boots and a pair of holstered guns strapped across his lean hips.

When the intimidating lawman tugged on the wide brim of his hat, she gasped and quickly looked away; thoroughly embarrassed that she had been caught studying him.

The ringing in her ears became a loud buzzing noise that filled her head and she grew frantic. "We should go now, Auntie! Let us go home!" She shouted over the clamor, and as she turned to leave, darkness washed over her in a wave.