

An Instrument Of Justice

by
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FADE IN:

A SHERIFF'S BADGE

Dried blood stains the glittering gold star. This doesn't seem to matter to the man wearing it:

INT. OLD WEST SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

THE SHERIFF (40's) a maverick with more lives than a cat. Eyes closed in reverie. Deep breathing. Sleeping? Meditating?

He sits behind his desk bathed in dusty sunlight slicing through the shutters. A peaceful afternoon, until...

His eyes FLASH OPEN, suddenly alert, sensing danger.

He whips out his Colt Revolver:

A beautiful piece, polished to a glistening shine.

A sharp glint of sunlight travels the barrel, engraved with the name "Lydia".

THE DEPUTY (20's), enters from an adjacent room, wondering...

THE DEPUTY
Something wrong, boss?

THE SHERIFF
Lydia says something's very wrong.

A chill runs down the Deputy's spine.

THE DEPUTY
Oh shit, what'd she say?

The Sheriff sets the gun on the table, makes it spin.

Both men watch Lydia whirl, with life-or-death interest.

Lydia stops spinning. Her barrel points right at the door.

THE SHERIFF
She says trouble's comin' through
that door.

Right outside, the chilling CLACKING of boots, coming closer.

THE SHERIFF
And my gut says that whatever it
is, it ain't pretty.

The door WHINES open to reveal a pretty cowgirl figure silhouetted against bright sunlight.

Enter THE MISS (30's), the comeliest woman they've ever seen, black cowboy hat and a red duster. Twin revolvers holstered at that fine waist.

Her feline eyes drill right into the Sheriff's. She means business.

He stares right back, holds his ground, doesn't even blink.

THE SHERIFF
May I help you?

THE MISS
I don't need your help.

THE SHERIFF
Then scram.

THE MISS
I've got a tip about the Union
Pacific robbery.

THE SHERIFF
Leave us, kid.

The Deputy obeys, closes the door behind him.

The Sheriff gestures at an empty chair. She takes a seat.

THE SHERIFF
Whoever hit that train... he did a
bang-up job.

THE MISS
That's nothin'. The real zinger is
what he's doing with the loot.

THE SHERIFF
Bending his elbow at a whorehouse I
guess.

THE MISS
He put a price on your head. A much
bigger price than you put on his.

That hits home with the Sheriff who's now funeral serious.

THE SHERIFF
Who's the cocksucker?

THE MISS
That, I can't tell.

THE SHERIFF
(to Lydia)
Who's the cocksucker?

The Miss raises an eyebrow, watching how he sets the gun on the table and makes it spin.

Dazzling sunlight reflects off polished steel as Lydia whirls.

She stops spinning.

The Sheriff turns to see where the tell-tale barrel points at:

A jail cell in a corner. Behind bars sits THE OUTLAW (30's), flashing a crooked smile a stare that would make the Devil piss himself.

THE SHERIFF

This clown did the Union Pacific?

She's quite impressed. Clearly, this is the guy.

THE SHERIFF

Ballsy. I'll give him that. But there ain't a gunman dumb enough to take the job.

THE MISS

Word around town... is there's someone who might.

THE SHERIFF

Who's the cocksucker?

THE MISS

Maybe you should ask your gun.

The Miss watches with increasing interest as The Sheriff does the spinning trick again.

Once Lydia stops spinning...

The barrel points right at The Miss!

THE SHERIFF

You're a bounty hunter?

Her chilling cold stare says she is.

THE SHERIFF

Well, since I already got him... it looks like one of the bounties ain't no good anymore. Unless...

He sets a key on the table, slides it over to her.

THE MISS

Unless?

THE SHERIFF

Unless this joker somehow manages to escape. Like he did so many times before. Then you can have his head and collect the price.

She slides the key back to him.

THE MISS
Yours head pays double.

THE OUTLAW
Make that triple.

The Sheriff keeps his quizzical stare on her.

THE SHERIFF
Yet you ain't shootin'. How about
that?

He uncorks a bottle of Scotch with his teeth. Pours two
glasses as...

THE MISS
I only hunt for those on the wrong
side of the law.

THE SHERIFF
Good thing I have a badge, then.

THE MISS
Stained with blood.

THE SHERIFF
Perks of the job.

THE MISS
You always drink on the job?

THE SHERIFF
Sometimes, it can make my job
easier.

THE MISS
Your job is to fill jailhouses, not
graveyards.

THE SHERIFF
Do you always question your prey
before the kill?

THE MISS
Sometimes, it can make my job
easier.

He raises his glass in a toast. Downs the drink.

THE SHERIFF
Whatever gets the job done.

THE MISS
Bet that's what you tell yourself
when you fire that gun with no
questions asked.

THE SHERIFF

This ain't no gun. This is an
instrument of justice. Only to be
wielded by those pure of heart.

The Outlaw laughs his ass off.

She finds this amusing as well.

THE MISS

Your heart is pure?

THE SHERIFF

How about yours?

He sets the gun on the table, right in front of her.

THE SHERIFF

Take it.

She stares at Lydia for a moment.

THE OUTLAW

Shoot him with his own whore-gun,
and make yourself rich.

She accepts the challenge. Tries to take the gun but --

PSSS! - her fingers sizzle at the touch - she yanks her hand
away.

Now she looks totally stunned.

And so does The Outlaw.

He opens the Colt's cylinder so she can see that:

THE SHERIFF

Lydia can only hold one bullet at a
time. The bullet has a soul, and
only craves for the heart of the
wicked.

He spins the cylinder. Snaps it SHUT. Places the muzzle
against his heart and pulls the trigger -- CLICK!

She just watches, mesmerized.

THE SHERIFF

You're starting to believe, I can
see it in those pretty eyes of
yours.

He offers the gun back to her.

THE SHERIFF

Maybe Lydia misjudged you, like you
misjudged me.

She downs her drink. Decides to give it another shot.

Her hand slowly approaches the gun. Fingers make contact. A slight SIZZLE. But she can take it this time.

Her eyes widen and her breath quickens. Holding this piece is like getting an adrenaline shot.

THE SHERIFF

Can you feel it?

THE MISS

Damn right I can feel it.

THE SHERIFF

She talking to you?

THE MISS

I can hear her whisper...

THE SHERIFF

What is she telling you?

Eyes oozing bloodlust, she levels Lydia at...

THE OUTLAW

You better put that goddamn gun
down, woman!

THE MISS

This ain't no gun. This is an
instrument of justice.

BLAM!

FADE OUT.