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* **BLACK DOE** *
* By H. M. Egbert *
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Perhaps Dunn should never have joined the Northwestern mounted police, for of all types of men who are out of their element there, the moody, introspective, unaggressive man comes easily first. But Dunn had had a hankering after the military life when he went out to Calgary two years before.

Now he was in for several years, and cursing his luck daily. What he liked best was the lonely patrols up in the Big Lake country.

He had met Marie Dufour there, the daughter of an old trapper who had retired, like his fur-bearing beasts, before the march of civilization. He had seen her three times during the past two years, and it had been understood that when he became a corporal he was to speak to her father.

But the coveted stripes would never be his so long as Serg't Mitchell remained in the squadron. A hard-featured, service-bitten man, Mitchell made Dunn's life wretched. He inspected his uniform with an eagle eye that discovered the smallest speck or flaw, he hauled him before his officers on trivial charges; in short, he did his best to break Dunn or force him out of the service.

It was a long time before Dunn discovered that Mitchell had met Marie in the Big Lake country the year before and coveted her beauty. When Dunn understood this he privately resolved that some day he would even up the score between them. For the present he remained quietly in barracks, doing his duty and suffering under Mitchell's ill-treatment.

The quiet life was interrupted by one of those periodical excitements that descend upon the barracks. Black Doe, in a state of drunkenness, had shot a police officer at Never-

port, and was making for the Big Lake country. Mitchell was ordered to take two troopers and get him.

It was a journey of 200 miles, in the slushy period of spring. But the police never postpone their vengeance when it can avoid it, and never abandon it.

Dunn could not imagine what it was that impelled Mitchell to select him along with Crum. Perhaps Mitchell wished to see the man he most hated in Marie's presence, so



"You Were in the Nick of Time."

as to be more sure of his bearings. Whatever the motive, he selected Dunn, and he gibed at him all the way.

He found fault with him during the long and painful day marches, with his equipment, his care of his horse, his manner of riding. He detailed him on one-man fatigues in the daytime, and gave him all the difficult work. Dunn's rage smoldered, but the idea in the back of his mind that