

Whispering Smith

For Seagrue and Smith there was no cover: for one or both it was death in the open and Seagrue, with his rifle at his cheek, walked straight into it. Taking for a moment the fire of the three guns, Whispering Smith stood, a perfect target, outlined against the sky. They whipped the dust from his coat, tore the sleeve from his wrist, and ripped the blouse collar from his neck; but he felt no bullet shock. He saw before him only the buckle of Seagrue's belt forty paces away, and sent bullet after bullet at the gleam of brass between the sights. Both men were using high-pressure guns, and the deadly shock of the slugs made Seagrue twitch and stagger. The man was dying as he walked. Smith's hand was racing with the lever, and had a cartridge jammed, the steel would have snapped like a match.

It was beyond human endurance to support the leaden death. The little square of brass between the sights wavered. Seagrue stumbled, doubled on his knees, and staggering plunged loosely forward on the sand. Whispering Smith threw his fire toward the boulder behind which Sinclair and Barney Rebstock had disappeared.

Suddenly he realized that the bullets from the point were not coming his way. He was aware of a second rifle-duel above the bend. Wickwire, worming his way down the stream, had uncovered