

HIGH NOON

Jack Binns

The desert air was hot and gritty with sand, as the sun scorched the dusty little one-horse town at the foot of the basin. In the middle of the town's main (only) road, two gunslingers stood twenty paces apart, hands twitching above holsters.

Quick-hand Tim was the fastest gun in the West. But his opponent, Ironsides Greg, was famous in his own right. Some said he had cobra venom for blood; others claimed he'd once killed four men standing in opposite corners of a saloon with the same bullet. In that moment, even Tim felt the cold excitement of fear. A bead of sweat trickled from under the brim of his hat.

'Draw!' The shout came from some unseen referee.

For an instant, the two men were a blur. His opponent was fast, but Tim put four bullets into him before Greg's gun was even up, causing his shots to go wide. Tim twirled his revolver and blew the smoke off the barrel, but showboating was interrupted by gunfire. Tim looked down at his ruined chest, bullet holes smoking, and up to see Ironsides Greg back on his feet.

Stamping across the car park, Tim jabbed his finger at him. 'That's cheating, I shot you, you're dead!'

'No I'm not,' Greg yelled back. 'I was wearing bulletproof armour.'

Tim was having none of it. 'I shot you in the head, and anyway, a revolver only has six bullets.'

Greg smirked, then mock-pouted. 'A wevolvuh onwy has six buwwets.'

Tim kicked Greg's briefcase over. 'Oh, piss off! If you won't take this seriously, I'm going back to work!'