



## Silver Canyon: A Novel

*By Louis L'Amour*

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A TROUBLED TOWN, A DEADLY SECRET

“You’re not wanted in Hattan’s Point,” Matt Brennan was told moments after arriving in town. “There’s trouble here and men are picking sides.” But Matt decided he wasn’t going anywhere. Not until he found out what the dispute was about, and not before he got to know Moira Maclaren. She considered him nothing more than a drifting ranch hand, but Matt was determined to prove her wrong. To do so, he’d have to solve a mystery that was at the center of the growing violence in Hattan’s Point—a secret that could make a man rich . . . or dead. Probably dead.

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## Editorial Review

### From the Inside Flap

Fueled by youth, courage, and quickness with a gun, Matt Brennan rode into Hattan's Point ready to live or die at a single challenge. But in one day he was a changed man. A beautiful woman had dared him to stay alive. A powerful landowner had set him up for a beating. And a good friend had died in his arms. Suddenly Matt found himself owner of the Two-Bar Ranch--and the odd man out in a vicious range war. With enemies everywhere, Matt knew that the next time he drew his gun, there would be much more than his life at stake--.

### About the Author

Louis L'Amour is undoubtedly the bestselling frontier novelist of all time. He is the only American-born author in history to receive both the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Congressional Gold Medal in honor of his life's work. He has published ninety novels; twenty-seven short-story collections; two works of nonfiction; a memoir, **Education of a Wandering Man**; and a volume of poetry, **Smoke from This Altar**. There are more than 300 million copies of his books in print worldwide.

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### *Chapter One*

I RODE DOWN from the high blue hills and across the brush flats into Hattan's Point, a raw bit of spawning hell scattered hit or miss along the rocky slope of a rust-topped mesa.

This was the country for a man, a big country to grow in, a country where every man stood on his own feet and the wealth of a new land was his for the taking.

Ah, it's a grand feeling to be young and tough, with a heart full of hell, strong muscles, and quick hands! And the feeling that somewhere in the town ahead there's a man who would like to cut you down to size with hands or gun.

It was like that, Hattan's Point was, when I swung down from my buckskin. A new town, a new challenge; and if there were those who wished to try my hand, let them come and be damned.

I knew the raw whiskey of this town would be the raw whiskey of the last. But I shoved open the batwing doors and walked to the bar and took my glass of rye and downed it, then looked around to measure the men at the bar and the tables.

None of them were men whom I knew, yet I had seen their likes in a dozen towns back along the dusty trails I'd been riding since boyhood.

The big, hard-eyed rancher with the iron-gray hair, who thought he was the cock of the walk, and the lean, keen-faced man at his side with the careful eyes, who would be gun-slick and fast as a striking snake.

And there were the others there, men of the western melting pot, all of them looking for the pot of gold, and each of them probably a man to be reckoned with, and no one of them ready to admit himself second best to any. And me among them.

I remembered then what my old dad told me, back in the hills where I ate my first corn pone. "See it, lad. Live it. There'll never be its like again, not in our time nor any other."

He'd been west, he'd seen it growing out of the days of Bridges and Carson, seen the days of fur change to the day of buffalo, and finally to the day of beef cattle. He sent me west in my 'teens and told me I'd have to walk tall and cut a wide swath.

The big man with the iron-gray hair turned to me as a great brown bear turns to look at a squirrel.

"Who sent for you?"

There was harsh challenge in the words. The cold demand of a conqueror, and I laughed inside me. His voice lifted me to recklessness, for it was here, the old pattern I'd seen before, in other towns, far back down the trail.

"Nobody sent for me." I let a fine insolence come into my voice. "I ride where I want and stop when I wish."

He was a man grown used to smaller men who spoke respectfully, and my reply was an affront. His face went cold and still, but he thought me only an upstart then.

"Then ride on," he said. "You're not wanted in Hattan's Point."

"Sorry, friend, I like it here. Maybe in whatever game you're playing, I'll buy some chips."

His big face flushed, but before he could shape an answer, another man spoke. A tall young man with white hair.

"What he means is there's trouble here, and men are taking sides. A man alone may be any man's enemy."

"Then maybe I'll choose a side," I said. "I always liked a fight."

The thin man was watching me, reading me, and he had a knowing eye, that one.

"Talk to me before you decide," he said.

"To you," I said, "or to any man."

When I went outside the sun was bright on the street. It had been cold on the bench where I'd slept last night, cold under the shadow of the ridge rising above me. The chill had been slow to leave and the sun now was warm to my flesh.

They would be speculating about me back there. I'd thrown down my challenge for pure fun. I cared about no one, anywhere. . . . And then suddenly I did.

She stood on the boardwalk before me, straight and slim and lovely, with a softly curved body and magnificent eyes, and hair of deepest black. Her skin was lightly tanned, her lips full and rich with promise.

My black chaps were dusty and worn, and my gray shirt sweat-stained from travel. My jaws were lean and unshaved, and under the tipped flat-brimmed hat my hair was black as hers, and rumped. I was in no shape

to meet a girl like that, but there she was, and in that instant I knew she was the girl for me, the only girl.

You can say it cannot happen, but it does, and it did. Back along the road there had been girls. Lightly I'd loved, and then passed on, but when I looked into the eyes of this girl I knew there would be no going on for me. Not tomorrow or next year, nor ten years from now. Unless this girl rode with me.

In two steps I was beside her, and the quick sound of my boots on the boardwalk turned her around sharply.

"I've nothing but a horse and the guns I wear," I said quickly, "and I realize that my appearance is not one to arouse interest, let alone love, but this seemed the best time for you to meet the man you are to marry. The name is Mathieu Brennan."

Startled, as well she might be, it was a moment before she found words. They were angry words.

"Well, of all the egotistical-!"

"Those are kind words! More true romances have begun with those words than with any others. Now, if you will excuse me?"

I turned, put on my hat, and vaulting lightly over the rail, swung into the saddle.

She was standing as she had been, staring at me, her eyes astonished, but no longer quite so angry as curious.

"Good afternoon!" I lifted my hat. "I'll call on you later."

It was the time to leave. Had I attempted to push the acquaintance further I'd have gotten exactly nowhere, but now she would be curious, and there is no trait that women possess more fortunate for men.

The livery stable at Hattan's Point was a huge and rambling structure at the edge of town. From a bin I got a scoop of corn, and while my buckskin absorbed this warning against hard days to come, I curried him.

This was a job that had to be done with care. The buckskin liked it, but his nature was to protest, so I avoided his heels as I worked.

A jingle of spurs warned me and, glancing between my legs as I was bent over, I saw a man standing behind me, leaning against the stall post.

Straightening, I worked steadily for a full minute before I turned casually. Not knowing I had seen him, he was expecting me to be surprised.

The man was shabby and unkempt, but he wore two guns, the only man in town whom I'd seen wearing two guns except for the thin man in the saloon. This one was tall and lean, and there was a tightness about his mouth I did not like.

"Hear you had a run-in with Rud Maclaren."

"No trouble."

"Folks say Canaval offered you a job."

Canaval? That would be the keen-faced man, the man with two guns. And Rud Maclaren the one who had ordered me from town. Absorbing this information, I made no answer.

"My name's Jim Pinder, CP outfit. I'll pay top wages, seventy a month an' found. All the ammunition you can use."

My eyes had gone beyond him where two men lurked in a dark stall, believing themselves unseen. They had come with Pinder, of that I was sure.

Suppose I refused Pinder's offer? Nothing about the setup looked good to me, and I could feel my hackles rising. The idea of him planting two men in the stall got under my skin.

Shoving Pinder aside, I stepped quickly into the open space between the stalls.

"You two!" My hands were over my guns and my voice rang loud in the echoing emptiness of the building. "Get out in the open! Move, or start shootin'!"

My hands were wide, my fingers spread, and right then I did not care which way the cat jumped. There was that old jumping devil in me that always boiled up to fight-not anger, exactly, nor any lust for killing but simply the urge to do battle that I'd known since I was a youngster.

There was a moment when I did not believe they would come out, a moment when I almost hoped they wouldn't. Jim Pinder had been caught flat-footed, and he didn't like what was happening. It was obvious to him that he would get a fast slug in the stomach if anything popped.

They came out then, slowly, holding their hands wide from their guns. They came with reluctance-more than half ready for battle, but not quite.

One of them was a big man with black hair and blue-black jowls. The other had the flat, cruel face of an Apache.

"Suppose we'd come shootin'?" The black-haired man was talking.

"Then they would have planted you before sundown." I smiled at him. "If you don't believe it, cut loose your wolf."

They did not know me and I was too ready. They were wise enough to see I'd been trailing with the rough-string but they didn't know how far I could carry my bluff.

"You move fast." Pinder was talking. "What if I had cut myself in?"

"I was expecting it." My smile angered him. "You would have gone first, then a quick one for Blackie, and after that"-I indicated the Apache-"him. He would be the hardest to kill."

Jim Pinder did not like it, and he did not like me. Nonetheless, he had a problem.

"I made an offer."

"And I'm turning it down."

His lips thinned down and I've seldom seen so much hatred in a man's eyes. I'd made him look small in front of his hired hands.

"Then get out. Join Maclaren and you'll die."

When you're young you can be cocky. I was young then and I was cocky, and I knew I should be wiser and hold my tongue. But I was feeling reckless and ready for trouble, and in no mood for beating around the greasewood.

"Then why wait," I threw it right in his teeth with a taunt. "So far as I know, I'm not joining Maclaren, but any time you want what I've got, come shootin'."

"You won't live long."

"No? Well, I've a hunch I'll stand by when they throw dirt on your face."

With that, I stepped to one side and looked at Pinder. "You first, amigo, unless you'd like to make an issue."

He walked away from me, followed by his two men, and I waited and watched them go. I'll not deny I was relieved. With three men I'd have come out on the short end-but somebody would have gone with me and Jim Pinder was no gambler. Not right then, at least.

Up the street from the door of the stable I could see a welcome sign:

mother o'hara's cooking

meals four-bits

When I pushed open the door there were few at table-it was early for supper-but the young man with the white hair was eating, and beside him was the girl I loved.

It was a long, narrow, and low-ceilinged room of adobe, with whitewashed walls, and it had the only plank floor among the town's three eating houses. The tables were neat, the dishes clean, and the food looked good. The girl looked up, and right away the light of battle came into her eyes. I grinned at her and bowed slightly.

The white-haired man looked at me, surprised, then glanced quickly at the girl, whose cheeks were showing color.

The buxom woman who came in from the kitchen stopped and looked from one to the other of us, then a smile flickered at the corner of her mouth. This, I correctly guessed, was Mother O'Hara. The girl returned to her eating without speaking.

The man spoke. "You've met Miss Maclaren then?"

Maclaren, was it?

"Not formally," I said, "but she's been on my mind for years." And knowing a valuable friend when I saw one, I added, "And it's no wonder she's lovely, if she eats here!"

"I can smell the blarney in that," Mother O'Hara said dryly, "but if it's food you want, sit down."

There was an empty bench opposite them, so I sat there. The girl did not look up, but the man offered his hand across the table. "I'm Key Chapin. And this, to make it formal, is Moira Maclaren."

"I'm Brennan," I said, "Matt Brennan."

A grizzled and dusty man from the far end of the table looked up. "Matt Brennan of Mobeetie, the Mogollon gunfighter?"

They all looked at me then, for it was a name not unknown. The reputation I'd rather not have had, but the name was mine and the reputation one I had earned.

"The gentleman knows me."

"Yet you refused Maclaren's offer?"

"And Pinder's, too."

They studied me, and after a minute Chapin said, "I'd have expected you to accept-one or the other."

"I play my own cards," I told him, "and my gun's not for hire."

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## **Users Review**

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Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information today can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a know-how or any news even a concern. What people must be consider if those information which is from the former life are challenging be find than now's taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you get it as your main information we will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen with you if you take Silver Canyon: A Novel as your daily resource information.

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