

Crazy Jug Geocache

Oak Spring Geocache is, appropriately, located near Oak Springs just off Forest Road 22 on the Kaibab National Forest. Oak Springs is the first place Zane Grey and his companions camped on the Kaibab Plateau in 1907. Buffalo Jones chose this location as the place he would training his lion hunting hounds. While Jones' techniques might seem harsh today, they proved invaluable in preparing the dogs for the harrowing adventures to come. Here are Zane Grey's own words about Oak Spring as published in Chapter 4 of his non-fiction work, The Last of the Plainsmen. Before moving to this amazing story, let me help your enjoyment by outlining the cast of characters:

Zane Grey: A young dentist, soon to become the world's most celebrated author chronicling adventures of the Old West.

Buffalo Jones: The peer of Buffalo Bill Cody who had been a player in decimating the American bison, now working tirelessly to preserve the dwindling species.

Jimmy Owens: The ranger appointed by Teddy Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot to manage what was then called the Grand Canyon Forest Preserve; once an associate of Billy the Kid.

Frank Onstott: The cowboy from the Goodnight Ranch of "Lonesome Dove" fame who drove buffalo to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and became Jones' foreman in his "catallo" experiment crossbreeding the bison with Galloway cattle.

Grant Wallace: A freelance newspaper writer for periodicals such as the San Francisco Examiner.

Wes Lawson and the Stewart brothers: Experienced wild horse hunters familiar with the canyons and plateaus along the North Rim of the Grand Canyon.





Our camping site had been close to the divide made by one of the long, wooded ridges sent off by Buckskin Mountain, and soon we were descending again. We rode half a mile down a timbered slope, and then out into a beautiful, flat forest of gigantic pines. Clarke informed us it was a level bench some ten miles long, running out from the slopes of Buckskin to face the Grand Canyon on the south, and the 'breaks of the Siwash on the west. For two hours we rode between the stately lines of trees, and the hoofs of the horses gave forth no sound. A long, silvery grass, sprinkled with smiling bluebells, covered the ground, except close under the pines, where soft red mats invited lounging and rest. We saw numerous deer, great gray mule deer, almost as large as elk. Jones said they had been crossed with elk once, which accounted for their size. I did not see a stump, or a burned tree, or a windfall during the ride.

Clarke led us to the rim of the canyon. Without any preparation—for the giant trees hid the open sky—we rode right out to the edge of the tremendous chasm. At first, I did not seem to think; my faculties were benumbed; only the pure sensorial instinct of the savage who sees, but does not feel, made me take note of the abyss. Not one of our party had ever seen the canyon from this side, and not one of us said a word. But Clarke kept talking.

"Wild place this is hyar," he said. "Seldom anyone but horse wranglers gits over this far. I've hed a bunch of wild pintos down in a canyon below fer two years. I reckon you can't find no better place fer camp than right hyar. Listen. Do you hear thet rumble? Thet's Thunder Falls. You can only see it from one place, an' thet far off, but thar's brooks you can git at to water the hosses. Fer thet matter, you can ride up the slopes an' git snow. If you can git snow close, it'd be better, fer thet's an all-fired bad trail down fer water."

"Is this the cougar country the Stewarts talked about?" asked Jones.

"Reckon it is. Cougars is as thick in hyar as rabbits in a spring-hole canyon. I'm on the way now to bring up my pintos. The cougars they cost me hundreds I might say thousands of dollars. I lose hosses all the time; an' damn me, gentlemen, I've

never raised a colt. This is the greatest cougar country in the West. Look at those yellow crags! That's where the cougars stay. No one ever hunted 'em. It seems to me they can't be hunted. Deer and wild hosses by the thousand browse hyar on the mountain in summer, an' down in the breaks in winter. The cougars live fat. You'll find deer and wild-hoss carcasses all over this country. You'll find lions' dens full of bones. You'll find warm deer left for the coyotes. But whether you'll find the cougars, I can't say. I fetched dogs in hyar, an' tried to ketch Old Tom. I've put them on his trail an' never saw hide nor hair of them again. Jones, it's no easy huntin' hyar."

"Well, I can see that," replied our leader. "I never hunted lions in such a country, and never knew anyone who had. We'll have to learn how. We've the time and the dogs, all we need is the stuff in us."

"I hope you fellars git some cougars, an' I believe you will. Whatever you do, kill Old Tom."

"We'll catch him alive. We're not on a hunt to kill cougars," said Jones.

"What!" exclaimed Clarke, looking from Jones to us. His rugged face wore a half-smile.

"Jones ropes cougars, an' ties them up," replied Frank.

"I'm — — if he'll ever rope Old Tom," burst out Clarke, ejecting a huge quid of tobacco. "Why, man alive! it'd be the death of you to git near that old villain. I never seen him, but I've seen his tracks fer five years. They're larger than any hoss tracks you ever seen. He'll weigh over three hundred, that old cougar. Hyar, take a look at my man's hoss. Look at his back. See them marks? Wal, Old Tom made them, an' he made them right in camp last fall, when we were down in the canyon."

The mustang to which Clarke called our attention was a sleek cream and white pinto. Upon his side and back were long regular scars, some an inch wide, and bare of hair.

"How on earth did he get rid of the cougar?" asked Jones.

"I don't know. Perhaps he got scared of the dogs. It took that pinto a year to git well. Old Tom is a real lion. He'll kill a full-grown hoss when he wants, but a yearlin' colt is his especial likin'. You're sure to run acrost his trail, an' you'll never miss it. Wal, if I find any cougar sign down in the canyon, I'll build two fires so as to let you know. Though no hunter, I'm tolerably acquainted with the varmints. The deer an' hosses are rangin' the forest slopes now, an' I think the cougars come up over the rim rock at night an' go back in the mornin'. Anyway, if your dogs can follow the trails, you've got sport, an' more'n sport comin' to you. But take it from me—don't try to rope Old Tom."

After all our disappointments in the beginning of the expedition, our hardship on the desert, our trials with the dogs and horses, it was real pleasure to make permanent camp with wood, water and feed at hand, a soul-stirring, ever-changing picture before us, and the certainty that we were in the wild lairs of the lions—among the Lords of the Crag!

While we were unpacking, every now and then I would straighten up and gaze out beyond. I knew the outlook was magnificent and sublime beyond words, but as yet I had not begun to understand it. The great pine trees, growing to the very edge of the rim, received their full quota of appreciation from me, as did the smooth, flower-decked aisles leading back into the forest.

The location we selected for camp was a large glade, fifty paces or more from the precipice far enough, the cowboys averred, to keep our traps from being sucked down by some of the whirlpool winds, native to the spot. In the center of this glade stood a huge gnarled and blasted old pine, that certainly by virtue of hoary locks and bent shoulders had earned the right to stand aloof from his younger companions. Under this tree we placed all our belongings, and then, as Frank so felicitously expressed it, we were free to "ooze round an' see things."

I believe I had a sort of subconscious, selfish idea that someone would steal the canyon away from me if I did not hurry to make it mine forever; so I sneaked off, and sat under a pine growing on the very rim. At first glance, I saw below me, seemingly miles away, a wild chaos of red and buff mesas rising out of dark purple clefts. Beyond these reared a long, irregular tableland, running south almost to the extent of my vision, which I remembered Clarke had called Powell's Plateau. I remembered, also, that he had said it was twenty miles distant, was almost that many miles long, was connected to the mainland of Buckskin Mountain by a very narrow wooded dip of land called the Saddle, and that it practically shut us out of a view of the Grand Canyon proper. If that was true, what, then, could be the name of the canyon at my feet? Suddenly, as my gaze wandered from point to point, it was attested by a dark, conical mountain, white-tipped, which rose in the notch of the Saddle. What could it mean? Were there such things as canyon mirages? Then the dim purple of its color told of its great distance from me; and then its familiar shape told I had come into my own again—I had found my old friend once more. For in all that plateau there was only one snow-capped mountain—the San Francisco Peak; and there, a hundred and fifty, perhaps two hundred miles away, far beyond the Grand Canyon, it smiled brightly at me, as it had for days and days across the desert.

Hearing Jones yelling for somebody or everybody, I jumped up to find a procession heading for a point farther down the rim wall, where our leader stood

waving his arms. The excitement proved to have been caused by cougar signs at the head of the trail where Clarke had started down.

"They're here, boys, they're here," Jones kept repeating, as he showed us different tracks. "This sign is not so old. Boys, to-morrow we'll get up a lion, sure as you're born. And if we do, and Sounder sees him, then we've got a lion-dog! I'm afraid of Don. He has a fine nose; he can run and fight, but he's been trained to deer, and maybe I can't break him. Moze is still uncertain. If old Jude only hadn't been lamed! She would be the best of the lot. But Sounder is our hope. I'm almost ready to swear by him."

All this was too much for me, so I slipped off again to be alone, and this time headed for the forest. Warm patches of sunlight, like gold, brightened the ground; dark patches of sky, like ocean blue, gleamed between the treetops. Hardly a rustle of wind in the fine-toothed green branches disturbed the quiet. When I got fully out of sight of camp, I started to run as if I were a wild Indian. My running had no aim; just sheer mad joy of the grand old forest, the smell of pine, the wild silence and beauty loosed the spirit in me so it had to run, and I ran with it till the physical being failed.

While resting on a fragrant bed of pine needles, endeavoring to regain control over a truant mind, trying to subdue the encroaching of the natural man on the civilized man, I saw gray objects moving under the trees. I lost them, then saw them, and presently so plainly that, with delight on delight, I counted seventeen deer pass through an open arch of dark green. Rising to my feet, I ran to get round a low mound. They saw me and bounded away with prodigiously long leaps. Bringing their forefeet together, stiff-legged under them, they bounced high, like rubber balls, yet they were graceful.

The forest was so open that I could watch them for a long way; and as I circled with my gaze, a glimpse of something white arrested my attention. A light, grayish animal appeared to be tearing at an old stump. Upon nearer view, I recognized a wolf, and he scented or sighted me at the same moment, and loped off into the shadows of the trees. Approaching the spot where I had marked him, I found he had been feeding from the carcass of a horse. The remains had been only partly eaten, and were of an animal of the mustang build that had evidently been recently killed. Frightful lacerations under the throat showed where a lion had taken fatal hold. Deep furrows in the ground proved how the mustang had sunk his hoofs, reared and shaken himself. I traced roughly defined tracks fifty paces to the lee of a little bank, from which I concluded the lion had sprung.

I gave free rein to my imagination and saw the forest dark, silent, peopled by none but its savage denizens, the lion crept like a shadow, crouched noiselessly down, then leaped on his sleeping or browsing prey. The lonely night stillness split to a frantic snort and scream of terror, and the stricken mustang with his mortal enemy upon his back, dashed off with fierce, wild love of life. As he went, he felt his foe crawl toward his neck on claws of fire; he saw the tawny body and the gleaming eyes; then the cruel teeth snapped with the sudden bite, and the woodland tragedy ended.

On the spot I conceived an antipathy toward lions. It was born of the frightful spectacle of what had once been a glossy, prancing mustang, of the mute, sickening proof of the survival of the fittest, of the law that levels life.

Upon telling my camp-fellows about my discovery, Jones and Wallace walked out to see it, while Jim told me the wolf I had seen was a "lofer," one of the giant buffalo wolves of Buckskin; and if I would watch the carcass in the mornings and evenings, I would "shore as hell get a plunk at him."

White pine burned in a beautiful, clear blue flame, with no smoke; and in the center of the campfire left a golden heart. But Jones would not have any sitting up, and hustled us off to bed, saying we would be "blamed" glad of it in about fifteen hours. I crawled into my sleeping-bag, made a hood of my Navajo blanket, and peeping from under it, watched the fire and the flickering shadows. The blaze burned down rapidly. Then the stars blinked. Arizona stars would be moons in any other State! How serene, peaceful, august, infinite and wonderfully bright! No breeze stirred the pines. The clear tinkle of the cowbells on the hobbled horses rang from near and distant parts of the forest. The prosaic bell of the meadow and the pasture brook, here, in this environment, jingled out different notes, as clear, sweet, musical as silver bells.

At daybreak our leader routed us out. The frost mantled the ground so heavily that it looked like snow, and the rare atmosphere bit like the breath of winter. The forest stood solemn and gray; the canyon lay wrapped in vapory slumber.

Hot biscuits and coffee, with a chop or two of the delicious Persian lamb meat, put a less Spartan tinge on the morning, and gave Wallace and me more strength—we needed not incentive to leave the fire, hustle our saddles on the horses and get in line with our impatient leader. The hounds scampered over the frost, shoving their noses at the tufts of grass and bluebells. Lawson and Jim remained in camp; the rest of us trooped southwest.

A mile or so in that direction, the forest of pine ended abruptly, and a wide belt of low, scrubby old trees, breast high to a horse, fringed the rim of the canyon and

appeared to broaden out and grow wavy southward. The edge of the forest was as dark and regular as if a band of woodchoppers had trimmed it. We threaded our way through this thicket, all peering into the bisecting deer trails for cougar tracks in the dust.

"Bring the dogs! Hurry!" suddenly called Jones from a thicket.

We lost no time complying, and found him standing in a trail, with his eyes on the sand. "Take a look, boys. A good-sized male cougar passed here last night. Hyar, Sounder, Don, Moze, come on!"

It was a nervous, excited pack of hounds. Old Jude got to Jones first, and she sang out; then Sounder opened with his ringing bay, and before Jones could mount, a string of yelping dogs sailed straight for the forest.

"Ooze along, boys!" yelled Frank, wheeling Spot.

With the cowboy leading, we strung into the pines, and I found myself behind. Presently even Wallace disappeared. I almost threw the reins at Satan, and yelled for him to go. The result enlightened me. Like an arrow from a bow, the black shot forward. Frank had told me of his speed, that when he found his stride it was like riding a flying feather to be on him. Jones, fearing he would kill me, had cautioned me always to hold him in, which I had done. Satan stretched out with long graceful motions; he did not turn aside for logs, but cleared them with easy and powerful spring, and he swerved only slightly to the trees. This latter, I saw at once, made the danger for me. It became a matter of saving my legs and dodging branches. The imperative need of this came to me with convincing force. I dodged a branch on one tree, only to be caught square in the middle by a snag on another. Crack! If the snag had not broken, Satan would have gone on riderless, and I would have been left hanging, a pathetic and drooping monition to the risks of the hunt. I kept ducking my head, now and then falling flat over the pommel to avoid a limb that would have brushed me off, and hugging the flanks of my horse with my knees. Soon I was at Wallace's heels, and had Jones in sight. Now and then glimpses of Frank's white horse gleamed through the trees.

We began to circle toward the south, to go up and down shallow hollows, to find the pines thinning out; then we shot out of the forest into the scrubby oak. Riding through this brush was the cruelest kind of work, but Satan kept on close to the sorrel. The hollows began to get deeper, and the ridges between them narrower. No longer could we keep a straight course.

On the crest of one of the ridges we found Jones awaiting us. Jude, Tige and Don lay panting at his feet. Plainly the Colonel appeared vexed.

"Listen," he said, when we reined in.

We complied, but did not hear a sound.

"Frank's beyond there some place," continued Jones, "but I can't see him, nor hear the hounds anymore. Don and Tige split again on deer trails. Old Jude hung on the lion track, but I stopped her here. There's something I can't figure. Moze held a beeline southwest, and he yelled seldom. Sounder gradually stopped baying. Maybe Frank can tell us something."

Jones's long drawn-out signal was answered from the direction he expected, and after a little time, Frank's white horse shone out of the gray-green of a ledge a mile away.

This drew my attention to our position. We were on a high ridge out in the open, and I could see fifty miles of the shaggy slopes of Buckskin. Southward the gray, ragged line seemed to stop suddenly, and beyond it purple haze hung over a void I knew to be the canyon. And facing west, I came, at last, to understand perfectly the meaning of the breaks in the Siwash. They were nothing more than ravines that headed up on the slopes and ran down, getting steeper and steeper, though scarcely wider, to break into the canyon. Knife-crested ridges rolled westward, wave on wave, like the billows of a sea. I appreciated that these breaks were, at their sources, little washes easy to jump across, and at their mouths a mile deep and impassable. Huge pine trees shaded these gullies, to give way to the gray growth of stunted oak, which in turn merged into the dark green of pinyon. A wonderful country for deer and lions, it seemed to me, but impassable, all but impossible for a hunter.

Frank soon appeared, brushing through the bending oaks, and Sounder trotted along behind him.

"Where's Moze?" inquired Jones.

"The last I heard of Moze he was out of the brush, goin' across the pinyon flat, right for the canyon. He had a hot trail."

"Well, we're certain of one thing; if it was a deer, he won't come back soon, and if it was a lion, he'll tree it, lose the scent, and come back. We've got to show the hounds a lion in a tree. They'd run a hot trail, bump into a tree, and then be at fault. What was wrong with Sounder?"

"I don't know. He came back to me."

"We can't trust him, or any of them yet. Still, maybe they're doing better than we know."

The outcome of the chase, so favorably started was a disappointment, which we all felt keenly. After some discussion, we turned south, intending to ride down to the rim wall and follow it back to camp. I happened to turn once, perhaps to look again

at the far-distant pink cliffs of Utah, or the wave-like dome of Trumbull Mountain, when I saw Moze trailing close behind me. My yell halted the Colonel.

"Well, I'll be darned!" ejaculated he, as Moze hove in sight. "Come hyar, you rascal!"

He was a tired dog, but had no sheepish air about him, such as he had worn when lagging in from deer chases. He wagged his tail, and flopped down to pant and pant, as if to say: "What's wrong with you guys?"

"Boys, for two cents I'd go back and put Jude on that trail. It's just possible that Moze treed a lion. But—well, I expect there's more likelihood of his chasing the lion over the rim; so we may as well keep on. The strange thing is that Sounder wasn't with Moze. There may have been two lions. You see we are up a tree ourselves. I have known lions to run in pairs, and also a mother keeps four two-year-olds with her. But such cases are rare. Here, in this country, though, maybe they run round and have parties."

As we left the breaks behind, we got out upon a level pinyon flat. A few cedars grew with the pinyons. Deer runways and trails were thick.

"Boys, look at that," said Jones. "This is great lion country, the best I ever saw."

He pointed to the sunken, red, shapeless remain of two horses, and near them a ghastly scattering of bleached bones. "A lion-lair right here on the flat. Those two horses were killed early this spring, and I see no signs of their carcasses having been covered with brush and dirt. I've got to learn lion lore over again, that's certain."

As we paused at the head of a depression, which appeared to be a gap in the rim wall, filled with massed pinyons and splintered piles of yellow stone, caught Sounder going through some interesting moves. He stopped to smell a bush. Then he lifted his head, and electrified me with a great, deep sounding bay.

"Hi! there, listen to that!" yelled Jones "What's Sounder got? Give him room—don't run him down. Easy now, old dog, easy, easy!"

Sounder suddenly broke down a trail. Moze howled, Don barked, and Tige let out his staccato yelp. They ran through the brush here, there, everywhere. Then all at once old Jude chimed in with her mellow voice, and Jones tumbled off his horse.

"By the Lord Harry! There's something here."

"Here, Colonel, here's the bush Sounder smelt and there's a sandy trail under it," I called.

"There go Don an' Tige down into the break!" cried Frank. "They've got a hot scent!"

Jones stooped over the place I designated, to jerk up with reddening face, and as he flung himself into the saddle roared out: "After Sounder! Old Tom! Old Tom! Old Tom!"

We all heard Sounder, and at the moment of Jones's discovery, Moze got the scent and plunged ahead of us.

"Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!" yelled the Colonel. Frank sent Spot forward like a white streak. Sounder called to us in irresistible bays, which Moze answered, and then crippled Jude bayed in baffled impotent distress.

The atmosphere was charged with that lion. As if by magic, the excitement communicated itself to all, and men, horses and dogs acted in accord. The ride through the forest had been a jaunt. This was a steeplechase, a mad, heedless, perilous, glorious race. And we had for a pacemaker a cowboy mounted on a tireless mustang.

Always it seemed to me, while the wind rushed, the brush whipped, I saw Frank far ahead, sitting his saddle as if glued there, holding his reins loosely forward. To see him ride so was a beautiful sight. Jones let out his Comanche yell at every dozen jumps and Wallace sent back a thrilling "Waa-hoo-o!" In the excitement I had again checked my horse, and when Jones remembered, and loosed the bridle, how the noble animal responded! The pace he settled into dazed me; I could hardly distinguish the deer trail down which he was thundering. I lost my comrades ahead; the pinyons blurred in my sight; I only faintly heard the hounds. It occurred to me we were making for the breaks, but I did not think of checking Satan. I thought only of flying on faster and faster.

"On! On! old fellow! Stretch out! Never lose this race! We've got to be there at the finish!" I called to Satan, and he seemed to understand and stretched lower, farther, quicker.

The brush pounded my legs and clutched and tore my clothes; the wind whistled; the pinyon branches cut and whipped my face. Once I dodged to the left, as Satan swerved to the right, with the result that I flew out of the saddle, and crashed into a pinyon tree, which marvelously brushed me back into the saddle. The wild yells and deep bays sounded nearer. Satan tripped and plunged down, throwing me as gracefully as an aerial tumbler wings his flight. I alighted in a bush, without feeling of scratch or pain. As Satan recovered and ran past, I did not seek to make him stop, but getting a good grip on the pommel, I vaulted up again. Once more he raced like a wild mustang. And from nearer and nearer in front pealed the alluring sounds of the chase.

Satan was creeping close to Wallace and Jones, with Frank looming white through the occasional pinyons. Then all dropped out of sight, to appear again suddenly. They had reached the first break. Soon I was upon it. Two deer ran out of the ravine, almost brushing my horse in the haste. Satan went down and up in a few giant strides. Only the narrow ridge separated us from another break. It was up and down then for Satan, a work to which he manfully set himself. Occasionally I saw Wallace and Jones, but heard them oftener. All the time the breaks grew deeper, till finally Satan had to zigzag his way down and up. Discouragement fastened on me, when from the summit of the next ridge I saw Frank far down the break, with Jones and Wallace not a quarter of a mile away from him. I sent out a long, exultant yell as Satan crashed into the hard, dry wash in the bottom of the break.

I knew from the way he quickened under me that he intended to overhaul somebody. Perhaps because of the clear going, or because my frenzy had cooled to a thrilling excitement which permitted detail, I saw clearly and distinctly the speeding horsemen down the ravine. I picked out the smooth pieces of ground ahead, and with the slightest touch of the rein on his neck, guided Satan into them. How he ran! The light, quick beats of his hoofs were regular, pounding. Seeing Jones and Wallace sail high into the air, I knew they had jumped a ditch. Thus prepared, I managed to stick on when it yawned before me; and Satan, never slackening, leaped up and up, giving me a new swing.

Dust began to settle in little clouds before me; Frank, far ahead, had turned his mustang up the side of the break; Wallace, within hailing distance, now turned to wave me a hand. The rushing wind fairly sang in my ears; the walls of the break were confused blurs of yellow and green; at every stride Satan seemed to swallow a rod of the white trail.

Jones began to scale the ravine, heading up obliquely far on the side of where Frank had vanished, and as Wallace followed suit, I turned Satan. I caught Wallace at the summit, and we raced together out upon another flat of pinyon. We heard Frank and Jones yelling in a way that caused us to spur our horses frantically. Spot, gleaming white near a clump of green pinyons, was our guiding star. That last quarter of a mile was a ringing run, a ride to remember.

As our mounts crashed back with stiff forelegs and haunches, Wallace and I leaped off and darted into the clump of pinyons, whence issued a hair-raising medley of yells and barks. I saw Jones, then Frank, both waving their arms, then Moze and Sounder running wildly, airlessly about.

"Look there!" rang in my ear, and Jones smashed me on the back with a blow, which at any ordinary time would have laid me flat.

In a low, stubby pinyon tree, scarce twenty feet from us, was a tawny form. An enormous mountain lion, as large as an African lioness, stood planted with huge, round legs on two branches; and he faced us gloomily, neither frightened nor fierce. He watched the running dogs with pale, yellow eyes, waved his massive head and switched a long, black tufted tail.

"It's Old Tom! sure as you're born! It's Old Tom!" yelled Jones. "There's no two lions like that in one country. Hold still now. Jude is here, and she'll see him, she'll show him to the other hounds. Hold still!"

We heard Jude coming at a fast pace for a lame dog, and we saw her presently, running with her nose down for a moment, then up. She entered the clump of trees, and bumped her nose against the pinyon Old Tom was in, and looked up like a dog that knew her business. The series of wild howls she broke into quickly brought Sounder and Moze to her side. They, too, saw the big lion, not fifteen feet over their heads.

We were all yelling and trying to talk at once, in some such state as the dogs.

"Hyar, Moze! Come down out of that!" hoarsely shouted Jones.

Moze had begun to climb the thick, many-branched, low pinyon tree. He paid not the slightest attention to Jones, who screamed and raged at him.

"Cover the lion!" cried he to me. "Don't shoot unless he crouches to jump on me."

The little beaded front-sight wavered slightly as I held my rifle leveled at the grim, snarling face, and out of the corner of my eye, as it were, I saw Jones dash in under the lion and grasp Moze by the hind leg and haul him down. He broke from Jones and leaped again to the first low branch. His master then grasped his collar and carried him to where we stood and held him choking.

"Boys, we can't keep Tom up there. When he jumps, keep out of his way. Maybe we can chase him up a better tree."

Old Tom suddenly left the branches, swinging violently; and hitting the ground like a huge cat on springs, he bounded off, tail up, in a most ludicrous manner. His running, however, did not lack speed, for he quickly outdistanced the bursting hounds.

A stampede for horses succeeded this move. I had difficulty in closing my camera, which I had forgotten until the last moment, and got behind the others. Satan sent the dust flying and the pinyon branches crashing. Hardly had I time to bewail my ill-luck in being left, when I dashed out of a thick growth of trees to come upon my companions, all dismounted on the rim of the Grand Canyon.

"He's gone down! He's gone down!" raged Jones, stamping the ground. "What luck! What miserable luck! But don't quit; spread along the rim, boys, and look for him. Cougars can't fly. There's a break in the rim somewhere."

The rock wall, on which we dizzily stood, dropped straight down for a thousand feet, to meet a long, pinyon-covered slope, which graded a mile to cut off into what must have been the second wall. We were far west of Clarke's trail now, and faced a point above where Kanab Canyon, a red gorge a mile deep, met the great canyon. As I ran along the rim, looking for a fissure or break, my gaze seemed impellingly drawn by the immensity of this thing I could not name, and for which I had as yet no intelligible emotion.

Two "Waa-hoos" in the rear turned me back in double-quick time, and hastening by the horses, I found the three men grouped at the head of a narrow break.

"He went down here. Wallace saw him round the base of that tottering crag."

The break was wedge-shaped, with the sharp end off toward the rim, and it descended so rapidly as to appear almost perpendicular. It was a long, steep slide of small, weathered shale, and a place that no man in his right senses would ever have considered going down. But Jones, designating Frank and me, said in his cool, quick voice:

"You fellows go down. Take Jude and Sounder in leash. If you find his trail below along the wall, yell for us. Meanwhile, Wallace and I will hang over the rim and watch for him."

Going down, in one sense, was much easier than had appeared, for the reason that once started we moved on sliding beds of weathered stone. Each of us now had an avalanche for a steed. Frank forged ahead with a roar, and then seeing danger below, tried to get out of the mass. But the stones were like quicksand; every step he took sunk him in deeper. He grasped the smooth cliff, to find holding impossible. The slide poured over a fall like so much water. He reached and caught a branch of a pinyon, and lifting his feet up, hung on till the treacherous area of moving stones had passed.

While I had been absorbed in his predicament, my avalanche augmented itself by slide on slide, perhaps loosened by his; and before I knew it, I was sailing down with ever-increasing momentum. The sensation was distinctly pleasant, and a certain spirit, before restrained in me, at last ran riot. The slide narrowed at the drop where Frank had jumped, and the stones poured over in a stream. I jumped also, but having a rifle in one hand, failed to hold, and plunged down into the slide again. My feet were held this time, as in a vise. I kept myself upright and waited. Fortunately, the jumble of loose stone slowed and stopped, enabling me to crawl over to one side

where there was comparatively good footing. Below us, for fifty yards was a sheet of rough stone, as bare as washed granite well could be. We slid down this in regular schoolboy fashion, and had reached another restricted neck in the fissure, when a sliding crash above warned us that the avalanches had decided to move of their own free will. Only a fraction of a moment had we to find footing along the yellow cliff, when, with a cracking roar, the mass struck the slippery granite. If we had been on that slope, our lives would not have been worth a grain of the dust flying in clouds above us. Huge stones, that had formed the bottom of the slides, shot ahead, and rolling, leaping, whizzed by us with frightful velocity, and the remainder groaned and growled its way down, to thunder over the second fall and die out in a distant rumble.

The hounds had hung back, and were not easily coaxed down to us. From there on, down to the base of the gigantic cliff, we descended with little difficulty.

"We might meet the old gray cat anywheres along here," said Frank.

The wall of yellow limestone had shelves, ledges, fissures and cracks, any one of which might have concealed a lion. On these places I turned dark, uneasy glances. It seemed to me events succeeded one another so rapidly that I had no time to think, to examine, to prepare. We were rushed from one sensation to another.

"Gee! look here," said Frank; "here's his tracks. Did you ever see the like of that?"

Certainly, I had never fixed my eyes on such enormous cat-tracks as appeared in the yellow dust at the base of the rim wall. The mere sight of them was sufficient to make a man tremble.

"Hold in the dogs, Frank," I called. "Listen. I think I heard a yell."

From far above came a yell, which, though thinned out by distance, was easily recognized as Jones's. We returned to the opening of the break, and throwing our heads back, looked up the slide to see him coming down.

"Wait for me! Wait for me! I saw the lion go in a cave. Wait for me!"

With the same roar and crack and slide of rocks as had attended our descent, Jones bore down on us. For an old man it was a marvelous performance. He walked on the avalanches as though he wore seven-league boots, and presently, as we began to dodge whizzing boulders, he stepped down to us, whirling his coiled lasso. His jaw bulged out; a flash made fire in his cold eyes.

"Boys, we've got Old Tom in a corner. I worked along the rim north and looked over every place I could. Now, maybe you won't believe it, but I heard him pant. Yes, sir, he panted like the tired lion he is. Well, presently I saw him lying along the base of the rim wall. His tongue was hanging out. You see, he's a heavy lion, and

not used to running long distances. Come on, now. It's not far. Hold in the dogs. You there with the rifle, lead off, and keep your eyes peeled."

Single file, we passed along in the shadow of the great cliff. A wide trail had been worn in the dust.

"A lion run-way," said Jones. "Don't you smell the cat?"

Indeed, the strong odor of cat was very pronounced; and that, without the big fresh tracks, made the skin on my face tighten and chill. As we turned a jutting point in the wall, a number of animals, which I did not recognize, plunged helter-skelter down the canyon slope.

"Rocky Mountain sheep!" exclaimed Jones. "Look! Well, this is a discovery. I never heard of a bighorn in the Canyon."

It was indicative of the strong grip Old Tom had on us that we at once forgot the remarkable fact of coming upon those rare sheep in such a place.

Jones halted us presently before a deep curve described by the rim wall, the extreme end of which terminated across the slope in an impassable projecting corner.

"See across there, boys. See that black hole. Old Tom's in there."

"What's your plan?" queried the cowboy sharply.

"Wait. We'll slip up to get better lay of the land."

We worked our way noiselessly along the rim-wall curve for several hundred yards and came to a halt again, this time with a splendid command of the situation. The trail ended abruptly at the dark cave, so menacingly staring at us, and the corner of the cliff had curled back upon itself. It was a box-trap, with a drop at the end, too great for any beast, a narrow slide of weathered stone running down, and the rim wall trail. Old Tom would plainly be compelled to choose one of these directions if he left his cave.

"Frank, you and I will keep to the wall and stop near that scrub pinyon, this side of the hole. If I rope him, I can use that tree."

Then he turned to me:

"Are you to be depended on here?"

"I? What do you want me to do?" I demanded, and my whole breast seemed to sink in.

"You cut across the head of this slope and take up your position in the slide below the cave, say just by that big stone. From there you can command the cave, our position and your own. Now, if it is necessary to kill this lion to save me or Frank, or, of course, yourself, can you be depended upon to kill him?"

I felt a queer sensation around my heart and a strange tightening of the skin upon my face! What a position for me to be placed in! For one instant I shook like a

quivering aspen leaf. Then because of the pride of a man, or perhaps inherited instincts cropping out at this perilous moment, I looked up and answered quietly:

"Yes. I will kill him!"

"Old Tom is cornered, and he'll come out. He can run only two ways: along this trail, or down that slide. I'll take my stand by the scrub pinyon there so I can get a hitch if I rope him. Frank, when I give the word, let the dogs go. Grey, you block the slide. If he makes at us, even if I do get my rope on him, kill him! Most likely he'll jump down hill—then you'll HAVE to kill him! Be quick. Now loose the hounds. Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!"

I jumped into the narrow slide of weathered stone and looked up. Jones's stentorian yell rose high above the clamor of the hounds. He whirled his lasso.

A huge yellow form shot over the trail and hit the top of the slide with a crash. The lasso streaked out with arrowy swiftness, circled, and snapped viciously close to Old Tom's head. "Kill him! Kill him!" roared Jones. Then the lion leaped, seemingly into the air above me. Instinctively I raised my little automatic rifle. I seemed to hear a million bellowing reports. The tawny body, with its grim, snarling face, blurred in my sight. I heard a roar of sliding stones at my feet. I felt a rush of wind. I caught a confused glimpse of a whirling wheel of fur, rolling down the slide.

Then Jones and Frank were pounding me, and yelling I know not what. From far above came floating down a long "Waa-hoo!" I saw Wallace silhouetted against the blue sky. I felt the hot barrel of my rifle, and shuddered at the bloody stones below me—then, and then only, did I realize, with weakening legs, that Old Tom had jumped at me, and had jumped to his death.