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St. James Hotel, Cimarron

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The evening wind rustles through the cottonwood trees; a solitary tumbleweed rolls down the main street. To my right, the saloon door swings; I turn back to my whiskey sitting on the old oak bar. Through the mirror, I glimpse the prize antelope head—the black eyes leer over my shoulder. I ask Jim to fill my glass, savoring the last of its contents. The Winchester rifle on the wall gleams, like a polished rodeo belt buckle, the quiet bar reflecting in the metal. Above my head, I count the holes, those left from gunfights of years past, 6, 7, 8, 9 . . . many more, but the whiskey distracts me. Pulling the glass from my lips, I taste dust on the air, dry and bitter. The floor rumbles as though a steam engine were approaching, but it’s the boiler kicking in, beyond the wooden planks below. In Cimarron, the wild town, the St. James Hotel rests, left lonely amongst the sage.