



S I M O N & S C H U S T E R

TRADE DIVISION

BUFFALO NICKEL

C. W. Smith. Poseidon, \$19.95 ISBN 0-671-62447-4

This is a western novel in the most positive sense, a book that reveals a moment in history even as it tells a story of cultural alienation, love, greed, betrayal and longing. A seasoned raconteur with a historian's command of his material, which includes the Indian myths he weaves into the narrative, Smith (*Thin Men of Haddam*) spins a powerful, poignant but unsentimental story of a Kiowa Indian and his uneasy habitation in the white man's world in the early part of this century. David Copperfield (he is forced to relinquish his tribal name, Went On A Journey, in a mission school; the only buffalo he sees are imported from the Bronx zoo) becomes a millionaire when oil is found on his land in Oklahoma. Snared by the beauty of unscrupulous ex-vaudeville singer Laura Darby, David endures the humiliation of their marriage, though his childhood classmate Iola Conroy has never stopped loving him. The two women personify the ingredients of David's alienation while forcing him to explore his own self-worth. Not until he heads to California and becomes a movie actor in Hollywood westerns is Copperfield able to feel comfortable with one foot in either world. Though the book spans just 25 years, the emotional and physical distances Smith's characters travel are immense, and his loving narrative makes *Buffalo Nickel* a compelling read. (Sept.)

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