

# ROBBERS' ROOST

by  
**Zane Grey**

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## SYNOPSIS

Jim Wall, young cowpuncher from Wyoming, in the early days of the cattle industry, seeks a new field in Utah. He meets Hank Hays.

## CHAPTER I—Continued

"Wal, friend, the string is tight I want to locate you. Bend over here, so I can get your ear," went on Hays, confidentially, and when Wall had complied he said: "I run true to form today when I held up that stranger. But it was a blunder, considerin' the iron I have in the fire. Now, listen. Lately I've got in with a rancher over here in the Henry mountains. He's an Englishman with more money than sense. Bought ten thousand head of cattle an' a lot of hosses. There's some tough cowboy outfits over there, an' more'n one real rustler outfit. Wal, this Englishman—his name is Herrick—got the idee of hirin' all the hands available, cowpunchers, range-riders, gun-toters an' plain out-an'-out bad men. An' to throw this select outfit agin the whole country. What do you think of that idee?"

"Original, to say the least. But not practical, unless he can reform bad men," replied Wall, much interested.

"Wal, exactly. But I'm not concerned with the practicality of it. Herrick took a shine to me, made me what he calls his superintendent, an' sent me all over lookin' for hard-shootin', hard-ridin' men. An' that's how you happened to run into me. I call it good luck for us both."

"You've taken me for one of the hard-shootin', hard-ridin' kind, eh?"

"Wal, I want you in my outfit," resumed Hays. "Brad didn't cotton to you, I seen first off. But he's a gun-throver himself. All the same he's in my outfit an' I reckon you might get along. It's Heeseman who sticks in my craw."

"Heeseman. Who is he?"

"Heeseman is the rustler of Dragon Canyon. None of the ranchers even 'round here know that, but I know it. He's got a small outfit, but shore enough bad. An' in some way he got wind of Herrick's scheme. Darned if he didn't pack over to the Henrys with his outfit an' start ridin' for him."

"Heeseman saw the same opportunity as you?" queried Wall, quietly.

"Wal, yes, I was comin' to that," resumed Hays, gruffly. "I got the upper hand, though, an' I'll be the boss. They'll lead to friction. There'll be the two factions sooner or later, an' the sooner they fight comes off the better."

"I see. Less of a division of spoils."

"Wal, I'm no rustler," snapped Hays.

"Excuse me. If it isn't impertinent, may I ask just what you are?"

"Ever hear of Henry Plummer?"

"Can't remember if I did."

"Wal, Plummer flourished some ten an' more years ago, first in Montana an' later in Idaho. He was the greatest robber the West ever developed. Educated man of good family, born in the East. But the gold fever called an' he was not the kind of a man to dig. He operated on the placer mines. Was an officer of the law while he was head of the biggest robber gang the frontier ever knew. From Bannock to Lewiston he kept the miners, the stages, the Wells Fargo in terror for years. . . . Wal, I seen Plummer handed. I was one of his gang, a young man then in years."

"Thanks for the confidence, Hays," returned Wall, in surprise. "You must have strong interest in me to tell that."

"Shore I have. But I don't care to be classed as a rustler."

"Too low down, eh?"

"It certainly ain't any two-bit cattle stealin'. . . . However, there's not the point between you an' me. What I want to know is, will you take a job in my outfit?"

"That depends, Hays," returned Wall.

"Any scruples about it? Remember, I come clean with you."

"No. I broke jail in Cheyenne."

"What was you in for?"

"Shot a man. They were goin' to hang me."

"Ahh. Was that square?"

"It didn't think so. . . . Had to kill the jailer to get out."

"When was all this, Wall?"

"Some years ago."

"An' since then?"

"Been shootin' my way out of one jam after another."

"Much obliged," replied Hays, feelingly. "Wal, you're a hunted man. You're broke. It's about where you cross the divide."

"One more question. What 'bout this Herrick's family?"

"Wal, he ain't got any," rejoined Hays. "We heard somethin' about a sister comin' out, but she never turned up."

"Sister? It'd be a h—l of a note if she did."

"Wal, this shore ain't no country for women."

It seemed to Jim Wall that this sally completed a definitely conscious feeling in his mind toward the self-confessed robber. If it had not been dislike and disgust before, it certainly fixed at that now. Wall sensed a gathering interest in the situation he had happened upon.

Hays called for drinks and insisted on a handshake which he executed solemnly, as if it were a compact which implied honor even among thieves. Shortly afterwards the saloon gradually began to fill with loud-voiced, heavily booted men.

Among them were Happy Jack, Lincoln and a giant of a man with a russet beard, whom Hays introduced as Montana. Then a man, undoubtedly a trapper, entered. He wore buckskin and seemed out of place in that crowd. The bartender, Red, did a thriving business.

"Seems to be no lack of money," observed Wall to the watchful Hays. "Where do they get it?"

"Wal, you're surprised, I see. So was I. This burg here is a stage stop for points in Utah an' west. Lots of travel. But there's big cattle ranges off toward the Henrys."

"I see. But at that bar there are half a dozen men who are not travelers or ranchers or riders."

"Wal, for that matter, all men in these diggin's have got to be riders."



"Sister? It'd Be a h—l of a Note if She Did."

It's a long way from one waterin' place to another. But you hit into things at that. There's four or five fellers I never seen before."

"Who's the tall one, with his hat pulled down, so you can only see his black, pointed beard?"

"That's Morley. Claims to be a rancher. But if he ain't the boss of the Black Dragon outfit, I'll eat him."

"And the loud feller—the one with the plaid vest?"

"His name is Stud somethin' or other. Seen him before an' ain't crazy about him."

"Let's play poker."

"Shore, but not just 'among ourselves."

"Got any money, Hank?" asked Happy Jack.

"Did you ever see me broke? Brad, go dig up some suckers. But not that hombre they call Stud. He didn't get that name playin' solitaire."

There were only two large gaming tables, one of which was in use. Lincoln went among the men to solicit players, returning with Morley and the russet-bearded giant, Montana. There was no formality or greeting between Hays and these men. It was dog eat dog, Wall grasped.

"Make it six-handed. Come an' set in, Wal," said Hays. "Friendly little game of draw. Sky limit."

Wall laughed. "I couldn't play penny ante."

"Wal, I'll stake you."

"No, thanks. I'd rather watch."

"Excuse me, sir, but we don't care for watchers," interposed Morley.

No sooner had they seated themselves than the man Hays had called Stud strode up.

"Am I belin' left out of this on purpose?" he demanded, and evidently he addressed Hays.

"Lincoln got up the game," replied Hays, coolly.

"You ask my friends to set in, an' not me."

"Wal, if you're so keen about it, why set in with us," went on Hays, fingering a deck of cards. "But if you want to know bad, I'm not stuck on playin' with you."

"Mean that to insult me?" Stud queried, sharply, his right hand rising to the lapel of his open vest. If Wall had not observed the bulge of two guns inside this vest he would have divined from Stud's action that there was one at least.

"Not at all," replied Hays, leaning back in his chair. That significant movement of Stud's had not been lost upon him. A little cold glint appeared in his pale eyes. "Reckon you're too slick a poker player for Hank Hays. I want a run for my money."

"Slick, eh? Wal, I don't mind belin' called that. It's a compliment. I've yet to see the gambler who wouldn't be slick if he could. But when you ask my pard to play an' not me—that's different."

"Set in, Stud," rejoined Hays civilly, as he began to shuffle the cards. "I feel lucky tonight. Last time you had it all your way."

The game began then with Happy Jack and Wall looking on. Morley made rather a pointed move and re-

mark anent Wall's standing behind him.

"Shore I'll change seats with you," replied Hays, obligingly, but it was plain he felt irritated.

"Never mind, Hays," interposed Wall, deliberately. "The gentleman evidently fears I'll tip off his cards. So I'll stand behind you, if I may."

## CHAPTER II

From the very first deal Hays was lucky. Morley stayed about even. Brad Lincoln lost more than he won. The giant Montana was a close, wary gambler, playing only when he had good cards. Stud was undoubtedly a player who required the stimulation and zest of opposition. But he could not wait for luck to change. He had to be in every hand. Moreover, he was not adept enough with the cards to deal himself a good hand when his turn came. He grew so sullen that Wall left off watching and returned to the fresdo.

But presently he had cause to attend more keenly than ever to this card game. The drift of conversation wore toward an inevitable fight. These men were vicious characters. Wall knew that life out here was raw. There was no law except that of the six-shooter.

While he bent a more penetrating gaze upon Stud, to whom his attention gravitated, Wall saw him perform a trick with the cards that was pretty clever, and could not have been discerned except from Wall's position.

Nevertheless, fickle fortune most certainly had picked on Stud. He bet this hand to the limit of his cash, and then, such was his confidence, he borrowed from Morley. Still he could not force Hays to call. He fell from elation to consternation, then to doubt, from doubt to dismay, and from this to a gathering impotent rage, all of which proved how poor a gambler he was. When at last he rasped out:

"Wal, I call! Here's mine."

He slammed down an ace full. Hays had drawn three cards.

"Stud, I hate to show you this hand," drawled Hays.

"Yes, you do! Lay it down. I called you."

Whereupon Hays gently spread out four ten spots, and then with greedy hands raked in the stakes.

Stud stared with burning eyes. "Three-card draw! . . . You come in with a pair of tens?"

"Nope. I held up one ten an' the ace," replied Hays, nonchalantly. "I had a hunch, Stud."

"You'd steal coppers off a dead man's eyes."

"Haw! Haw!" bawled the victoriously gaminster. But he was the only one of the six players who seemed to see anything funny in the situation. That dawned upon him. "Stud, I was takin' that crack of yours humorous."

"Was you?" snapped Stud.

"Shore I was," returned Hays, with congealing voice.

"Wal, I didn't mean it humorous," Stud retorted.

"Ahh. Come to look at you I see you ain't feelin' gay. Suppose you say just what you did mean."

"I meant what I said."

"Shore. I'm not so awful thick. But apply that crack to this here card game an' my playin'."

"Hays, you palmed them three ten-spots," declared Stud hotly.

Then there was quick action and the rasp of scraping chairs, and the tumbling over of a box seat. Stud and Hays were left alone at the table.

"You're a liar!" hissed Hays, suddenly black in the face.

Here Jim Wall thought it was time to intervene. He read the glint in Stud's eyes. Hays was at a disadvantage, so far as drawing a gun was concerned. And Wall saw that Stud could and would kill him.

"Hold on there," called Wall, in a voice that made both men freeze.

Hays did not turn to Wall, but he spoke: "Pard, lay off. I can handle this feller."

"Take care, stranger," warned Stud, who appeared to be able to watch both Hays and Wall at once. They were, however, almost in line. "This ain't any of your mix."

"I just wanted to tell Hays I saw you slip an ace from the bottom of the deck," said Wall. He might as well have told of Hays' irregularities.

"Wot! He filled his ace full that way?" roared Hays.

"He most certainly did."

"All right let it go at that," replied Stud, deadly cold. "If you can say honest that you haven't palmed any tricks—go for your gun. Otherwise keep your shirt on."

That unexpected sally exemplified the peculiar conception of honor among thieves. It silenced Hays. The little gambler knew his man and shifted his deadly intent to a more doubtful issue.

"Jim Wall, eh?" he queried, insolently.

"At your service," retorted Wall. He divined the workings of the little gambler's mind. Stud needed to have more time, for the thing that made decision hard to reach was the quality of this stranger. His motive was more deadly than his will, or his power to execute. All this Jim Wall knew. It was the difference between the two men.

"I'm admittin' I cheated," said Stud, harshly. "But I ain't standin' to be tipped off by a stranger."

"Well, what're you going to do about it?" asked Wall, while the spectators of the drama almost held their breath.

Stud's lean, dark, little hands lifted quiveringly from the table.

"Don't draw!" yelled Wall. "The man doesn't live who can sit at a table and beat me to a gun."

TO BE CONTINUED.

## Frocks for College-Going Girls

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



WHEN it comes to thrills for the college girl who is selecting her going-away-to-school frocks it is the stunning new and versatile materials which cause hearts to beat faster.

To be sure there is everything imaginable to be had in the way of super-hue buttons, and other clever gadgets together with most beguiling neck wear fantasies to help out when occasion demands, but in the main it is the garment which speaks in terms of handsome material along lines of studied simplicity which wins the highest number of credits.

There is that about the woollens and silks and velvets and synthetic weaves as shown this season which is so intrinsically decorative and satisfying to the eye, little or no frills or furbelows seem to be required to accent the costumes they fashion. Which, no doubt, is the reason why advance fashions indicate that the college girl's wardrobe will, for the most part, be styled on the same smartly simple tailored lines favored by chic business women.

The model to the left in the picture is a dress of this type. The plaid chulla crepe which fashions it is in itself so attractive and self-sufficient, fussy dressmaker detail would detract from its "classy" simplicity. For service, for looks and for real joy in the wearing a crepe of this sort is ideal, and listen to this, ye coeds who needs must watch your budget with an eagle eye, these all-rayon crepe prints are easily washable and iron out smooth and lovely as if by magic—the problem of going back and forth to be dry cleaned is entirely done away with. This plaid (brown, egg-shell and rust in its color scheme) two-piece is cut on the new-so-voguish shirtmaker lines with a neat grosgrain belt, bow tie and grosgrain-covered buttons (button links on the double cuffs) to set it off.

Speaking of unusual materials, the dress centered in the group, so sophisticated in its simplicity, is made of, guess what!—sports tulle. This fabric is so perfectly new it's the "last word."

The claim to fame of this novel and very good-looking sports-tulle is based on the delightful sheerness of its weave which together with the fact that it lends itself perfectly to simple lines and classic tailoring assures its prestige as a medium admirably adapted to wear at teas and bridge parties and other smart daytime gatherings. In this model, so simple yet so distinctive in its cut, Alix, who created it of sports-tulle in a black and white mixed effect, has certainly contrived to give the college girl or any young woman of fashion for that matter, the ideal all year-round afternoon dress.

A frock of satin and a frock of velvet should by all means be included in an up-and-going-places college girl's wardrobe. The new daytime satins are as practical as they are stunning in appearance, and so wonderfully slenderizing, fashioned as many of them are with sleek-fitting skirts slit at the hemline in order to give ease of movement. The model pictured to the right in the group is styled along girlish lines and with its jacket becomes a many-purpose costume which can be tuned at will to street or indoor afternoon wear. The treatment of the neckline is interesting, the collar being formed of loops of white velvet ribbon edged with black.

In regard to velvet the big news is smart trimming suits with narrow skirts and neat-fitting jackets, the sort college girls simply adore.

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## Housewife's Idea Box



**Selection of Shortening**

Some care must be used in selecting the proper shortening for frying purposes. To fry properly, the shortening must be raised to a high temperature. Some fats smoke before they reach this temperature. These fats are not good. As soon as fat smokes it begins to change chemically and quickly becomes rancid.

THE HOUSEWIFE.  
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## Girls Unite Enemy Tribes

Through the work of Girl Guides in Africa two native tribes, 180 miles apart, which have been enemies for centuries, have decided to be friends. Each tribe has its Girl Guide company, and they decided this year to have a joint camp. The invitation was sent from tribe number one. The Guides of tribe number two responded and walked the entire 180 miles for a fortnight's fellowship. The shyness of the first few hours was soon broken, as with their leaders they joined in preparing the common meal and helping the old people in the village. In doing their good deeds they soon became friends. Older members of the tribes liked the friendship idea and adopted it.

## No More Freckles; Weather-Beaten Skin

It is so easy now to have a lovely skin of satin-like texture; to have smooth, white, flawless new beauty. Just begin tonight by using famous Nadinola Bleaching Cream, tested and trusted for over a generation. The minute you smooth it on, Nadinola begins to whiten, smooth and clear your skin. Tan and freckles; muddy, yellow color vanish quickly. You feel its tonic effect immediately and almost overnight you see beneficial results, radiant new beauty in your complexion. No long waiting; no disappointments. Money back guarantee. Get a large box of Nadinola Bleaching Cream at your favorite toilet counter, or by mail, postpaid, only 50c. NADINOLA, Box 11, Paris, Tenn.



## Ambition's Spur

Ambition is a longing that makes some men near great.

## DO YOU SUFFER FROM NEURITIS?

American and European Scientists Agree That Mineral Water Is Beneficial

## TRY THIS NATURAL WAY

People spend hundreds of millions of dollars every year going to the great mineral water health resorts of Europe and America.

Many of these people have to travel thousands of miles. Many of them were suffering untold pain from "rheumatic" aches, from arthritis, from neuritis, from gout. Others suffered from certain stomach ailments or excess acid or sluggishness or a general rundown condition.

The scientific and medical records of Europe and America show that a very large percentage of these people gained blessed relief and help by these natural mineral water treatments.

Today, however, you do not have to travel long distances to partake of the healthful qualities of fine natural mineral water. You do not even have to pay the excessive cost of having it shipped to you in quart or gallon containers. For Crazy Water Crystals bring to your own home the precious minerals of one of the world's fine mineral waters in crystal form at a great saving in expense.

To Crazy Water Crystals absolutely nothing is added. All you do is add Crazy Water Crystals to your drinking water and you have a great mineral water which has benefited millions.

If you, or any of your friends, suffer from "rheumatic" aches or pains we suggest you investigate Crazy Water Crystals at once. Just ask any of the millions of people who have given them a full and fair trial and you will realize how beneficial they have been to so many sufferers.

The standard size box costs only \$1.50 and makes enough mineral water for several weeks treatment. Crazy Water Co., Mineral Wells, Texas.



are for sale by dealers displaying the red and green Crazy Water Crystals sign. Get a box today.

## HIGH-STYLE ITEMS

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



Women who delight in veils can wear them to their heart's content, for they are decidedly in the fashion picture. Worn with just the right air, veils can be coquettish and glamorous and the newer veils have that way about them. The pointed contour of the veil pictured is a recent accent which will especially delight the young girl who takes delight in an air of sophistication. Lace slippers for evening match the lace frock. Padova, who created this exquisite type of footwear, has combined black lace and black satin in this model, with white satin under the lace to bring out the delicate patterning. A great vogue is in promise for this type of luxury footwear, this coming fall and winter.

## FALL BRIDAL GOWN HAS HEAVY TRAIN

The trains on the new fall wedding gowns mean a heavy day's work for some bridal attendants. Nine or ten feet of shimmering satin will slither down the aisle behind the bride.

To dress the bride will be no small task, too, if she has chosen Germaine Montell's favorite wedding robe.

This designer has a penchant for trains, surpassed only by her love for frills and bows. This fall she gives women a chance to wear stiff white jabots that protrude four inches from severe black frocks. And "fish-tail" trains. She still likes them, although many designers have chopped them off. A pert little train for evening and a deep skirt slash in front.

## Two-Piece Frock Is Due for Popularity This Fall

Many of the daytime frocks beginning to appear just now contain more than a hint of the sartorial picture for the autumn.

Two-piece tunic frocks appear at the smartest places, many of them in silk, making it easy to visualize this fashion in woollens.

A typical advanced style frock is a two-piece tunic town model in beige silk.

The line is fairly severe but is softened by an enormous ruffled jabot cut from the dress fabric and pulled through a ring at the side of the neckline for fastening.

## Long Sashes, Wide Belts

Wide belts are used on the new fall sports clothes. And long, flowing sashes, tied in front, are shown on street and afternoon dresses.

## Tortoise Shell Clips

Tortoise shell or crystal hemispheres rimmed and centered with gold make smart clips designed for winter frocks.