

# 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, who admits being a robber, and tells Wall he is working for an Englishman, Herrick, who has located a big ranch in the mountains. Herrick has employed a small army of rustlers and gun-fighters, and Hays and others are plotting to steal their employer's cattle and money. Hays gets into an argument with a gambler over a poker game. Wall saves Hank's life by bluffing the gambler out of shooting.

## CHAPTER II—Continued

"H—I—you say," panted Stud. But that ringing taunt had cut the force of his purpose.

"You've got a gun in each inside vest pocket," said Wall, contemptuously.

The gambler let his hands relax and slide off the table.

Stud shuffled to his feet, malignant and beaten for the moment.

"Hays, you an' me are even," he said, gruffly. "But I'll meet your new pard some other time and then there'll be a show-down."

"Shore, Stud. No hard feelin's on my side," drawled Hays.

The little gambler stalked to the bar, drank and left the saloon.

Hank Hays turned round.

"Jim, that feller did have two guns inside his vest. I never saw them, till you gave it away. He—would have killed me."

"I think he would, Hays," returned Wall. "You were sitting bad for action."

"Right you are, Jim, and I'm much obliged to you. I'd like to know somethin'."

"What's that?"

"Did you bluff him?"

"Hardly. I had him figured. It was a pretty good bet he wouldn't try to draw. But if he had made a move—"

"A-huh. It'd been all day with him. . . . This gambler Stud has a name out here for bein' swift on the draw. He's killed—"

"Bah!" cut in Wall, good-humoredly. "Men who can handle guns don't pack them that way."

Presently they bade Red good night and went outside.

"Where you sleepin'?" asked Hays.

"Left my pack in the stall out back with my horse. What do we do to-morrow?"

"I was thinkin' of that. We'll shake the dust of Green River. I reckon to-morrow we'd better stock up on everythin' an' hit the trail for the Henrys."

"Suits me," replied Wall.

"Wal, then, good night. Breakfast here early," concluded Hays.

A red sunrise greeted Wall upon his awakening. When, a little later, he presented himself at the back of Red's house for breakfast he was to find Hays, Happy Jack and Brad Lincoln ahead of him.

They had breakfast. "Brad, you fetch your pack horses round back," ordered the leader, when they got outside. "Happy, you get yourself a hoss. Then meet us at the store quick as you can get there. . . . Jim, you come with me."

"Hays, I'm in need of some things," said Wall.

Hays drew out a handful of bills and pressed them upon Wall.

"Shore. Buy what outfit you need an' don't forget a lot of shells," replied Hays. "If I don't miss my guess we'll have a smoky summer. Haw! Haw! . . . Here's the store."

A bright young fellow, who looked to be the son of the proprietor, took charge of Wall. A new saddle blanket was Wall's first choice, after which he bought horseshoes and nails, a hammer and file, articles he had long needed, and the lack of which had made him lame. After that he selected a complete new outfit of wearing apparel, a new tarpaulin, a blanket, rope, and wound up with a goodly supply of shells for his .45 revolver. Likewise he got some boxes of .44 rifle shells.

Half an hour later the four men, driving five packed horses and two unpacked, rode off behind the town across the flat toward the west. Coming to a road, Hays led on that for a mile or so, and then branched off on a seldom-used trail.

Towards sunset they drew down to the center of a vast swale, where the green intensified, and the eyes of the range rider could see the influence of the water.

Hays halted for camp at a swampy sedge plot where water oozed out and grass was thick enough to hold the horses.

"Aha! Good to be out again, boys," said Hays, heartily. "Throw saddles an' packs. Turn the horses loose. Happy, you're elected cook. Rest of us guster somethin' to burn."

Jim rambled far afield to collect an armload of dead stalks of cactus, grease-wood, sunflower; and dusk was

mantling the desert when he got back to camp. Happy Jack was whistling about a little fire; Hays knelt before a pan of dough, which he was kneading; Lincoln was busy at some camp chore.

"Wall, I don't like store bread," Hays was saying. "Give me sour-dough biscuits. . . . How about you, Jim?"

"Me, too. And I'd like some cake," replied Jim, dropping his load.

"Cake! Wal, listen to our new hand. Jack, can you bake cake?"

"Sure. We got flour an' sugar an' milk. Did you fetch some eggs?"

"Haw! Haw! . . . That reminds me, though. We'll get eggs over at Star ranch. None of you ever seen such a ranch. Why, fellers, Herrick's bought every damn' hoss, burro, sow, steer, chicken in the whole country."

"So you said before," returned Lincoln. "I'm sure curious to see this Englisher. Must have more money than brains."

"He hasn't got any sense. But Lordy, the money he's spent!"

Jim sat down to rest and listen.

"Queer deal—a rich Englishman hirin' men like us to run his outfit," pondered Lincoln, in a puzzled tone. "I don't understand it."

"Wal, who does? I can't, that's shore. But it's a fact, an' we're goin' to be so rich pronto that we'll jest about kill each other."

"More truth than fun in that, Hank. Old boy, an' don't you forget it," rejoined Lincoln. "How do you aim to get rich?"

"Shore, I've no idee. The'll all come. I've got the step on Heeseman an' his pards."

"He'll be aimin' at precisely the same deal as you."

"Shore. We'll have to kill Heeseman an' Progar, sooner or later. I'd like it sooner."

"I don't like the deal," concluded Lincoln, forcibly.

Presently they sat to their meal, and ate almost in silence. Darkness

settled down. One by one they sought their beds, and Wall was the last.

Dawn found them up and doing. Wall fetched in some of the horses; Lincoln the others. By sunrise they were on the trail, which about mid-afternoon led down through high gravel banks to a wide stream bed, dry except in the middle of the sandy waste.

"This here's the Muddy," announced Hays for Jim's benefit. "Bad enough when the water's up. But nothin' to the Dirty Devil. Nothin' at all."

"What's the Dirty Devil?" asked Jim.

"It's a river an' it's well named, you can gamble on that. We'll cross it tomorrow some time."

Next camp was on higher ground above the Muddy. Here Hays and Lincoln renewed their argument about the Herrick ranch deal. It proved what Wall had divined—this Brad Lincoln was shrewd, cold, doubtful and aggressive. Hays was not distinguished for any cleverness. He was merely an unscrupulous robber. These men were going to clash. That was inevitable, Jim calculated.

Early the next day Jim Wall had reason to be curious about the Dirty Devil river, for the descent into the defiles of desert to reach it was a most remarkable one. The trail, now only a few dim old hoof tracks, wound tortuously down and down into deep canyons.

The tracks Hays was following faded and he got lost in a labyrinthine maze of deep washes impossible to climb, and seemingly impossible to escape from.

Lincoln got off his horse and went down the canyon, evidently searching for a place to climb up to the rim above. He returned in an assertive manner and, mounting called for the others to follow.

"I hear the river an' I'm makin' for it," said Lincoln.

Jim had heard a faint, low murmur, which had puzzled him, and which he had not recognized. They all followed Lincoln. Eventually he led them into a narrow, high-walled canyon where ran the Dirty Devil. The water was muddy, but as it was shallow the riders forded it without more mishap than a wetting.

Still they were lost. There was nothing to do, however, but work up a side canyon. Hays led them to a camp-site that never could have been expected there.

"Fellers, I'll bet you somethin'," he said, before dismounting. "There's a roost down in that country where

never in Gaud's world could anybody find us."

"Ha! An' when they did it'd be only our bleached bones," scoffed Lincoln.

There never had been any love lost between these two men, Jim conjectured.

After supper Jim strolled away from camp, down to where the canyon opened up to a nothingness of space and blackness and depth. The hour hung suspended between dusk and night. He felt an overpowering sense of the immensity of this region of mountain, gorge, plain and butte.

While Jim Wall meditated there in the gathering darkness he was visited by an inexplicable reluctance to go on with this adventure.

## CHAPTER III

Next morning they got a late start. Nevertheless Hays assured Jim that they would reach Star ranch towards evening.

The trail led up a wide, shallow, gravelly canyon full of green growths. They rode on side by side. The trail led into a wider one, coming around from the northeast. Jim did not miss fresh hoof tracks, and Hays was not far behind in discovering them.

"Woods full of riders," he muttered.

"How long have you been gone, Hays?" inquired Jim.

"From Star ranch? Let's see. Must be a couple of weeks. Too long, by gosh! Herrick sent me to Grand Junction. An' on the way back I circled. That's how I happened to make Green River."

"Did you expect to meet Happy Jack and Lincoln there?"

"Shore. An' some more of my outfit. But I guess you'll more'n make up for the other fellers."

"Hope I don't disappoint you," said Jim, dryly.

"Well, you haven't so far. Only I'd feel better, Jim, if you'd come clean with who you air an' what you air on."

"Hays, I didn't ask you to take me on."

"Shore, you're right. Reckon I figured everybody knew Hank Hays. Why, there's a town down here named after me, Hankville."

"A town? No one would think it."

"Wal, it ain't much to brag on. A few cabins, the first of which I threw up with my father years ago. In his later years he was a prospector. We lived there for years. I trapped fur up here in the mountains. In fact I got to know the whole country except that Black Dragon canyon, an' that hellhole of the Dirty Devil. . . . My old man was shot by rustlers."

"I gathered you'd no use for rustlers. . . . Well, then, Hays, how'd you fall into your present line of business?"

"Haw! Haw! Present line. Thee's a good one. Now, Jim, what do you reckon that line is?"

"You seem to be versatile, Hays. But if I was to judge, I'd say you're a low-down thief. . . . Jim, I was an honest man once, not so long ago. It was a woman who made me what I am today. Thee's why I'm cold on women."

"Were you ever married?" went on Jim, stirred a little by the other's crude pathos.

"That was the h—l of it," replied Hays, and he seemed to lose desire to confide further.

They rode into the zone of the foothills, with ever-increasing evidence of fertility. But Jim's view had been restricted for several hours, permitting only occasional glimpses up the gray-black slopes of the Henrys and none at all of the low country.

Therefore Jim was scarcely prepared to come round a corner and out into the open. Stunned by the magnificence of the scene he would have halted Bay on the spot, but he espied Hays waiting for him ahead.

"Wal, pard, this here is Utah," said Hays, as Jim came up, and his voice held a note of pride. "Round the corner here you can see Herrick's valley an' ranch. It's a bit of rich land thirty miles long an' half as wide, narrow'n like a wedge. Now let's ride on, Jim, an' have a look at it."

Across the mouth of Herrick's gray-green valley, which opened under the escarpment from which Jim gazed, extended vast level green and black lines of range, one above the other, each projecting farther out into that blue abyss.

"Down in there somewhere this Hank Hays will find his robbers' roost," soliloquized Jim, and turned his horse again into the trail.

Before late afternoon of that day Jim Wall had seen as many cattle dotting a verdant grass, watered valley as ever he had viewed in the great herds driven up from Texas to Abilene and Dodge, or on the Wind River Range of Wyoming. A rough estimate exceeded ten thousand head. He had taken Hays with a grain of salt. But here was an incomparable range and here were the cattle. No doubt, beyond the timbered bluff across the valley lay another depression like this one, and perhaps there were many extending like spokes of a wheel down from the great hub of the Henry mountains. But where was the market for this unparalleled range?

## TO BE CONTINUED.

## Real Generosity

Our purse should not be so closed that our kind feelings cannot open it, nor yet so unfastened that it lies open to all. A limit should be set, and it should depend on our means.—Cicero.

## Solving School Clothes Problems

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



WHAT to wear "first day of school" and the day after the day after and for months to come in the class room—an ever important problem which the month of September never fails to present as it sings the swan-song of happy vacation time.

To doting mothers and others whose responsibility it is to see that the children of the household go suitably and modestly appareled to school, the message in regard to juvenile fashions according to early fall showings is sure to prove nothing less than inspirational. That designers are giving so much of their best efforts to create attractive, at the same time practical styles for little folks ought to be a very encouraging sign for future costuming.

The trio of cunning models pictured tell a fascinating story of early fall juvenile style trends. These charming fashions were selected for illustration from among a host of equally as attractive outfits for youngsters as displayed in recent style shows held by the Chicago Wholesale Market council. The young miss standing to the left in the picture shows how really style-wise a little girl of this day and generation can be in that she is wearing a frock of green wool crepe, and green as the color card tells us is a leader this season, especially dark mossy greens. Then, too, interest in crepe weaves is very apparent in the fabric realm. Being jumper style this dress is ideal for school wear, for the little maiden can enjoy a fresh blouse each day if she so chooses.

Again brother and sister outfits are proving of tremendous appeal and in this connection it is interesting to note

that the two-sister theme is also being advanced, in which costumes showing duplication of color and pattern are sized to fit little girls of different ages. In the instance of the brother and sister outfits pictured, plaid in a gay new cotton weave will go off to school in a manner to delight every eye that beholds this adorable two-some. The contrast of plain with print is effectively emphasized.

Speaking generally of style items stressed at these recent previews of children's fashions one is impressed with the radical color departure in little folks' costumes. Instead of the dainty childish colors usually associated with the juvenile world, little girls are now adopting the greens, browns and reds of their older sisters with of course a continued use of dark blue.

Also it is noted that plaids identify an increasing number of frocks this fall, taking from the formerly favored floral prints considerable of their glory. One clever frock in the style parade looks like a genuine Scotch costume with its red plaid pleated skirt and navy bolero over a white blouse. Frocks of unusual interest also feature the use of three and even four colors.

As to important fabrics it is significant that woolsens are proving a strong factor. Wool crepes and novelities lead, while even the cottons take on a wool-like texture.

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## SMARTLY SIMPLE

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



This frock of navy and white coin-dot print in a chulla crepe weave is a good example of the new vogue which is being so enthusiastically acclaimed for simplicity in one's daytime apparel. It is just such a type as the well-dressed school girl will wear, as it will be equally at home in the classroom or at an informal dormitory tea, just as good form in the office, for that matter. Note that it is styled without pleated or ruffled elaboration, fancy lingerie touches or any other detail that would be difficult to handle in laundering, for as most women have found out to their joy and satisfaction these all-rayon crepes wash perfectly.

## Rings Over Gloves

Signet rings are being worn over gloves by engaged girls of London.

## HAT TRENDS FOLLOW THREE DIRECTIONS

Three trends are the outstanding hat news. The first is the rule "over the face," for virtually every hat pitches forward over the right eyebrow and curls up in the back. The second is double brims with one piece of felt swooping down from the crown, turning under and looping back into the head band. The third is the use of such 1910 fabrics as panne velvet, beaver, soft drape felts and feathers.

Feathers are everywhere. Black birds of paradise swoop forward from under the wide curved-up brim of a black panne velvet. A white bird, wings outspread, hangs head down from the back of a black felt. Five little rose birds lie flattened on the crown of another black felt.

## Muffs Assume New Shapes for Fall and New Furs

Muffs for fall are assuming new shapes and new furs.

There's just enough room in them for your two hands, and after all, that's all the room a muff needs, when you consider the situation impartially.

These are shown in sleek, flat furs, for wear with furless coats and suits, and they're the last whisper from the last boat from Paris.

Practically the same effect is gained by the new muff gloves shown in recent displays of advance winter styles.

These are of Angora knit, with a long cuff which may be pulled down over each hand. Place the hands together in the approved fashion for muff-holding, and lo!—you have a muff.

## Satin Blouses

Satin is peculiarly becoming off-shades made with drapery necklines and ruffled elbow sleeves is first choice in the thorough line-up of luxurious blouses which the shops are showing for fall.

## Plaid Crepes

Mossy crepes in plaid patterns will be shown in jacket suits, scarfs and blouses for early fall.

## CHURCH HYMNALS DEAR TO HEARTS OF WORSHIPERS

In every religious system, the singing of songs and hymns is an important part of the ritual. Some of the finest poetry of the ages has gone into the hymnals of the Christian churches, and skilled musicians have contributed the best of their art to provide suitable tunes.

Naturally, the hymnals have been changed, as the years went on, just as have other forms and ceremonies. The change in hymnology, it must be confessed, has not always been for the best.

The president of the Hymn Lovers' Society of America protests that most of the hymns sung today are atrocious. His society, he says, will attempt to raise the standard in all denominations.

The fact that a hymn is old does not, of course, militate against it. Nor does the fact that it is a relatively new production argue that it is unfit. There are old hymns that will live forever, and there are new ones that have tremendous appeal to all that is to be regarded as uplifting, worshipful and devotional.

Such hymns as "Rock of Ages," "Jesus Lover of My Soul," "Nearer, My God to Thee," "Coronation," "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," and similar ones of Toplady, the Wesleys, Watts, Newton and Montgomery, are sung today as they were sung many generations ago, and, it is to be hoped, will be sung many generations hence.

Along with them are songs, regarded by the younger folks, perhaps, as old, but, by comparison, relatively new, and these lack nothing the older hymns possess. Among them is Washington Gladden's hymn, "Oh, Master, Let Me Walk With Thee," a hymn that breathes resignation, humility, steadfastness of purpose and rare devotion.

The aim and purpose of the Hymn Lovers' society are praiseworthy. One hopes, however, that there will be no wholesale deletion of the old and popular hymns to make room for modern ones, just on the score that the old hymns are old and that the new ones are new.—Ohio State Journal.

## If you feel low-

don't be discouraged—remember, loss of strength... sleeplessness... nervousness... paleness... lack of appetite... and general run-down condition quite often may be traced directly to low blood strength—that is, the red corpuscles and vital oxygen-carrying, hemoglobin of the blood are below normal.

S.S.S. is the great, scientifically-tested medicine for restoring this blood content. Its benefits are progressive... accumulative... and enduring. By all means try it for better health and more happiness. Unless your case is exceptional, you should soon enjoy again the satisfaction of appetizing food... sound sleep... and renewed strength.

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Polish Very often a car is better polished than the man who is driving it.—Florida Times-Union.

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