

# ROBBERS' ROOST

by Zane Grey

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## SYNOPSIS

Jim Wall, young cowpuncher from Wyoming, seeks a new field in Utah. He meets Hank Hays, who tells him he is working for an Englishman, Herrick. Hays and others are plotting to steal their employer's cattle and money. With Hays, Jim Wall goes to Herrick's ranch. Hays and his lieutenants drive off a bunch of cattle. Heese-man is Hays' rival among the cattle rustlers. Jim is sent to meet Miss Herrick. Hays betrays unusual interest in the girl's coming. Wall finds himself falling in love with Helen, and he fears Hays has designs on the girl. Jim coaches her in riding western style, and finally kisses her. She is angry and dismisses him, but returns and asks him not to leave the ranch. Hays' men return from the drive, having sold the cattle and brought back the money. A quick getaway is imperative. Hays tells them to go on ahead, that he will join them. He comes, with Helen Herrick—a captive. Hays explains that he stole Helen for ransom. Realizing that Helen will be worse off if she falls into Heese-man's clutches, Jim Wall does nothing. Heese-man's riders come in pursuit. Hays leads the gang into a canyon retreat—The Robbers' Roost. Latimer, one of Hays' gang-wounded with Heese-man, tells Jim that Hays has held out some of the money he stole from Herrick.

## CHAPTER IX—Continued

"Yes, and you fellows saw only a ghost of the money Hays got from the Herricks," retorted Jim, divining the moment for revelation had come.

An angry roar arose. Smoky threw up his hands and left the camp fire. Then Jim, in brief, cold terms, exposed the machinations of their chief. After the first outburst they accepted the disclosure in astounded and ominous silence. Jim passed off into the darkness.

Some time during the night he was awakened. As he lay there, eyes open, a soft hand touched his cheek and a whisper brought him wide awake, transfixed and thrilling.

"Jim! . . . Wake up. It is I!"

Helen knelt beside him. Jim sat up with a violent start.

"You! . . . What is it? Has that devil—"

"Hush! Not so loud. Nothing has happened. . . . But I couldn't sleep—and I must talk to you—or go out of my mind."

In the starlight her face had the same pearl-white tint as the clouds.

"All right. Talk—but it's risky," he whispered huskily. His hand rested upon the blanket.

She bent lower, so that her face was closer, and she could whisper very softly:

"First I want to tell you how cruelly it has come home to me—my ignorance, my failure to believe and trust you, even after you—so—so rudely insulted me that day up on the mountain trail. If I had only had faith in you then! It's too late. But I want you to know I have the faith now. Only the fear and the suspense are wearing me out."

"But you are well—all right still? . . . He has not harmed you?"

"No, he has not harmed me, and I am not ill. I'm losing flesh because I can't eat. But that's nothing. . . . Lately I don't sleep because I'm horribly afraid he will come—and—another me—or choke me—so I can't cry out. I've slept some in the daytime. . . . Jim, the thing is I—can't stand it much longer. I think I frightened him. But I can see—I can feel—Oh, Jim, for G-d's sake, do something to end—this horror—"

She leaned or fell forward in the weakness of the moment, her head against him. He stroked it gently, his reaction as far from that passionate and mocking embrace at Star ranch as could have been possible.

"Helen, don't—give up," he replied. "You have been brave. And it has gone—better than we could hope. . . . Only a little while longer!"

"We might steal away—now."

"Yes. I've thought of that. But only to get lost and starve—or die of thirst in these brakes."

"That almost—would be better—for me."

"If you can't stick it out we'll plan and go—say tomorrow night. We must have food, horses. . . . It's only honest, though, to tell you the chances are a hundred to one against us. . . . We've got an even break if we wait."

"How can you—think that?"

"This gang is about ready to go up in smoke. There'll be a terrible fight. Hays surely will be killed. And just as surely, more than he. That will leave a proposition I can handle without risk to you."

"Even then—we still have to find a way out of this awful place."

"Yes, but I'd have time, and I could pack water and food. . . . Helen, trust me, it's the best plan."

"If you take me back to my brother, I'll give you the ransom."

"Don't insult me," he replied, bitterly.

At that she drew up suddenly, and

threw her hair back from her face. "Forgive me. . . . You see, I have lost my mind. That never occurred to me before. But I'll reward you in some way."

"To have saved you will be all the reward I ask—and more than I deserve. . . . You have forgotten that I love you."

"Yes—I had," she whispered. Her great eyes studied him in the starlight as if the fact had a vastly different significance here than it had had at Star ranch.

Suddenly she stiffened, no doubt at the slight sound that had checked her speech. She put a hand over his lips and stared at him with wide vague eyes.

Over her shoulder Jim's eye was arrested by a glint of starlight upon a bright object on the ground. Above and behind it a shape darker than the dark background, gradually took the outline of a man on hands and knees.

Cold terror assailed Jim Wall, despite his iron nerve. That was Hays crawling upon them with a gun in his hand.

A bursting tide of blood through Jim's veins paralleled the lightning flash of his thoughts. Death for both of them was terribly close. His gun was under his pillow. Helen knelt between him and the robber. A move of even the slightest kind would be fatal. Cunning must take precedence of action.

"It's Hays," he whispered, scarcely audibly. "Follow me—now." Then, exerting all his will to speak naturally, he said aloud: "No, Miss Herrick, I'm sorry, but I can't oblige you. I don't approve of Hays' kidnapping you, but it's done. And I'm a member of his band. I would not think of going against him, let alone trying to run off with you."

There was a terse silence, fraught with much apprehension for Jim. Would she be able to play up to him? There was just a chance that Hays had not heard any of their whispers.



"The Thing is—Boss—Will We Get It?"

in which case it was possible to deceive him. Helen comprehended. It was Jim Wall's privilege then to see the reaction of a woman at a perilous moment.

"I'll give you the ransom money," she said, quite clearly, and certainly most persuasively. "My brother will reward you otherwise."

"You can't bribe me," he rejoined. "And I wouldn't advise you to try it on Smoky or any of the others."

"Hays may have had only money in his mind at first, but now—"

"Don't move, Jim!" came a low, hard voice from the shadow.

Helen gave a little gasp and sagged on her knees. Jim waited a moment.

"I won't, Hank," he replied.

Then Hays' tall form loomed black above the rise of ground. He strode forward. If he had sheathed his gun, Jim would have made short work of that interview. But he held it half leveled, glancing darkly in the starlight.

The robber chief gazed down upon Jim and Helen. His features were indistinguishable, but the poise of his head was expressive enough. Still Jim sensed that he had been misled.

"You cat!" he declared, roughly. "If I ketch you again—tryin' to bribe any of my outfit—I'll treat you so you won't want to go back to your baby-faced brother. . . . Now you git to your tent!"

Helen rose unsteadily and vanished in the gloom.

"Jim Wall, you ain't been with me long, an' I don't know you, but I'm takin' this deal to heart," Hays said slowly. "I'm much obliged. I reckon you're the only man in the outfit who could of withstood that woman."

"No, you're wrong Hank. Smoky wouldn't have listened to her. And I'm sure the others would have stood pat."

"My faith was near gone."

"That's in you, Hank. You've no call to lose it. You've about split your gang over this woman."

"Wal, I'm not askin' judgments from you or any of the outfit," growled the chief gloomily. "You'll all be good an' glad to git your share of the ransom."

"The thing is—boss—will we get it?"

Hays made a violent move like a striking snake. "What you mean by that?"

"I'm askin' you."

"Air you insinuatn' you mightn't git yours?" demanded Hays.

"No. You might say I was askin' for all of us" replied Jim curtly,

"Wal, I'll git the outfit together an' do some askin' myself."

"It's a good idea. It might prevent the split—provided you divide the money you stole from Herrick."

"I'll wring that white cat's neck!" hissed the robber.

"You're wrong boss. She didn't tell me. She doesn't know you robbed her brother. Sparrow confessed before he died."

Hays swore a mighty oath. "An' he squealed?"

"Yes. To Smoky an' me. We kept it secret until we had to tell. They knew somethin' was wrong."

"All the time you knowed!" There was something pathetic in the fallen chieftain's shame and amazement. By this time he seemed to realize his crime.

"You see, Hank, how your outfit has stood by you, even in your guilt."

"Ahh! . . . If it ain't too late—I'll make amends," he rejoined hoarsely, and stalked away in the darkness.

Jim lay back on his blankets with a weight of oppression removed. He had saved himself for the hour, but what would the outcome be?

He had breakfast before the other men were up. With rifle in hand he headed toward the western exit.

The sun was still beneath the rim of the escarpments, in the east, but its golden approach was heralded by a magnificent glory of red and gold.

Loneliness was paramount. There was no sound—only an immense silence. No life at all! Not a winged creature hovering over that ghastly region! But over this scene of desolation slowly spread the solemn blight of heating, blazing sun, soon to mantle all in illusive copper haze.

Before that hour arrived, Jim Wall took up the field glass. Below in the camp the men were lazily stirring to a late breakfast. The door of the cabin was open. A glint of gold crossed the dark aperture. Then the tall form of Hays stalked out. He yawned. He stretched wide his long arms. His ruddy face gleamed in the glass to that sight. Wall's whole being leaped.

"By heaven!" his voice rang out. "Hays, that's your last morning's stretch. . . . Before this day's done you'll stretch forever!"

Let his men have their hour, thought Jim darkly, but if they did not mete out justice to their chief the end was nevertheless fixed and unalterable.

Jim settled back and raised his fieldglass more from habit than any semblance of the old watchfulness. There was nothing to see but the stark denudation of the brakes.

Suddenly into Jim's magnified circle of vision crept dark objects—a long line of them.

He was so startled that the glass wavered out of line. He moved it to and fro, searching. What could that have been? An error of sight, a line of cedars, a conception of idle mind!

"There!" he breathed. He had caught it again. Not cedars—not brush, but moving objects! . . . "By heaven!" he muttered. "Am I dotty?"

Horses! A line of dark horses! His straining eyes blurred. He lowered the glass with shaking hands. "So help me—it looks like riders!"

A third time Jim caught the objects. He froze the glass on them. Horses and riders—horses with packs! A bursting gush of hot blood ran all through him. It looked like Heese-man's outfit, at least three miles away, approaching slowly by a route far to the south of that over which Hays had come.

"About three miles," muttered Jim. "Coming slow. They're lost. . . . But that was they're in heads into the Hays trail. . . . If they strike that they'll come fast. Not enough rain yet to wash out our tracks. We've not time to pack and ride out. . . . By thunder, they've cornered us! Now, Hank Hays—"

Jim took one more straining look. No hope! It was a big outfit and not traveling so slowly, either. The leader bestrode a black horse. Jim remembered that horse. Snatching up his rifle he slung the field-glass over his shoulder and ran down off the bluff to the camp.

To his profound amazement he espied Hays bound hand and foot, with a stick behind him and through his elbows. The robber sat in an uncomfortable posture against the woodpile. In a second Jim saw that Hays had been gagged and his face was so contorted by rage that it appeared scarcely human.

"What's up!" cried Jim, breaking out of his bewilderment.

Hays gave vent to an inarticulate sound, but it was expressive. Jim wheeled to stalk under the shack, his hand on his gun, as if he half expected Heese-man to have arrived before him. To his further amazement Miss Herrick was sitting at the rude table, eating breakfast. A big gun, that Jim recognized as Hays' property, lay conspicuously in front of her. Happy Jack, whistling as usual, was serving her.

"What does this mean?" demanded Jim.

"Ask the men," she replied, curtly. "Outside and below the shack sat Smoky on a rock, with the others standing near."

"Maw'nin', Jim," drawled Smoky, with a grin. "You see we've got a new chief."

"Who hawg-tied the boss?"

"Reckon I did—with a little help."

"What for?"

"D—n—if I know. Our lady prisoner made me do it."

"Miss Herrick forced you to tie Hays up?" queried Jim, trying to conceal his exultation.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Horses Known 3000 B. C.

Little figures of horses found in the ruins of an Assyrian city revealed that horses were known as early as 3000 B. C.

# Furs Are Gorgeous This Winter

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



NO MATTER how lavishly a coat or a suit or a dress be trimmed with fur this season, according to the present ways of fashion, it is not too lavishly furred. The same is true of the new separate fur pieces and "sets" which include muffers, the more sumptuous and the more spectacular the better do they interpret the latest style trends.

The big theme among furriers this season is capes—capas that are made of furs so gorgeous and grand they look worth a king's ransom. To illustrate, see the cape centered in the picture. This luxurious silver fox cape is semi-circular in shape, fastens on the left shoulder and has four tails falling to the back. The beauty of capes such as this is that they can be worn with different costumes, imparting an air of distinction wherever they go. Of course, we do not have to call attention to the attractive evening gloves which this lady is wearing, for no doubt they registered at first glance. They are of white suede, shirred in an openwork pattern as you see.

The separate cape theme is by no means confined to evening fashions; on the contrary, the newest thing going in the way of a fur piece is the fur cape which can be worn with either the cloth coat or the dress, if you prefer, which is made of a wintry good-looking woolen. The idea is conveyed in the stunning outfit to the right in the group. Here is something practical and smart. The color of this superb Russian lynx which forms the cape, blends in with the tone of the cloth to perfection. A particularly likable feature of this handsome cape is that while it is really a separate piece, it looks as if it were really an applied trimming. When you stop to think of it, what a worthwhile possession a separate fur cape such as this is—wear it with anything, dress, coat or

suit. This young woman's hat, if you are wanting to know, is a brown antelope felt trimmed with leather. The most important bit of news in regard to this hat is that it has an embossed monogram at one side of the crown just over the right eye. It is monogrammed because the fashionable thing to do is to monogram most everything this season.

Mademoiselle sitting so placidly in the picture has on one of those sleek, patrician looking full-length gray kid-skin coats which are so beautifully slenderizing. The model shown has a double sailor collar (turn it up or down) which is youthful in line and exceedingly flattering. The sleeves are full below the elbow, which is a characteristic feature of many of the new coats. The black felt sombrero is edged and banded with black wool.

If you are having a suit tailored, let it reflect Russian inspiration in that its tunic-like coat be bordered with fur all around, even up the front or side-front fastening. There should be an upstanding collar fencing the throat. A cosack turban of matching fur with a muff of the same are essential to complete the picture.

The three-quarter coat, all of fur, with wide belt across the front and full peasant sleeves, is also a favorite. Other fur style notes point to the return of gray squirrel into favor, also borders of tawny, showy furs around hemlines or bandings of flat furs such as caracul or nutria. A black cloth cosack outfit with bandings, tall turban and muff of black caracul, is chic.

Western Newspaper Union.

## THREE NEW GOWNS NOVEL TO EXTREME

Three dresses Parisiennes like: One from Mirande called "Pour l'aire," which, interpreted, means "to please," and it should, for it is a dinner frock in black velvet with the lower portion of the bibulous sleeves made of bright blue velvet. It has a belt of the bright blue velvet, too, and the neckline is shaped something like a stirrup, round in the back and squared off in the front.

The second model is by Roseviene and named "Satinco," after the novel new fabric of which it is made, combining satin with a mat surface. It is an afternoon dress of flame-colored satin combined with incrustated diagonal bands of the reverse side of the satin which is mat.

The third item is from Irnone, who has called it "Ciros." It is a coat in brown wool trimmed with frosted brown lamb as collar and cuffs. Both collar and cuffs are small and discreet, and the coat has a tailored look about it at first glance, but on second glance you see it is also a semi-dress coat.

## NEW HIGH TURBANS

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Hats have gone frankly Russian. Here is one of the high turbans which is distinctly of Russian influence. It is fashioned of black hatters' plush. Not only have hats gone Russian, but costumes in the winter mode bespeak this influence in no uncertain terms. In every collection there is a predominance of Cosack tunics, Cosack turbans, wide-belted Russian effects, high military-looking collars and fur borderings galore.

## Trains Will Be in Vogue This Winter, Says Paris

Trains will be in vogue this winter. Some have a long panel that starts at the waistline at the back; others feature a Watteau pleat or court mantle effect at the back.

Worth shows trains with a long flared volant that develops from the back of the dress. Maggy Rouff has very formal dresses with a wing effect that is used for a train. Augustabernard obtains effects by several shirred volants that are continued down to the ground in irregular effects.

## Parchment for Buttons

Thick parchment made up into odd buttons add to the long line of novelties being launched this year. They are available curled up on the edges like ancient scrolls or just slightly bent like bits of peanut brittle.

## Neckwear Is Feminine

There is a revival in delicate, truly feminine neckwear. Very smart are the new styles in sheer chiffon, combined with lace and trimmed with metal thread stitching, especially in feather stitching.

## Key to Heredity Found

by the Busy Scientist

Scientists working to solve the mysteries of heredity have been given a key to many of their problems with the discovery of a giant chromosome in the salivary gland of the yeast fly, says Pathfinder Magazine. Some 70 times normal size, this over-sized model of cell nuclei brings into identifiable clearness the genes held thereon. It is the genes in which the scientists have the greatest interest since they are the units controlling heredity. Arranged in long strings on each chromosome, a complete set is contained in each cell and therefore the giant chromosome is a large-scale model of all its smaller brothers. In the case of the yeast fly it is thought that between 2,000 and 3,000 genes are contained in each cell, and since the ordinary chromosome is only 15 one hundred thousandths of an inch long it is easy to see the minuteness of each gene. There is now proof of the existence of 300 genes and a few of these have been individually identified. Each one has its individual function such as controlling the color of the eyes in the human or the formation of the black speck under the wing of the fly, etc.

## Sunday School Popular

World membership in Sunday schools increased at the rate of more than 1,000,000 a year in the last four years.



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