

# 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. Heeseeman 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 relents 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 Heeseeman's clutches, Jim Wall does nothing. Heeseeman's riders come in pursuit. Hays leads the gang into a canyon retreat—The Robbers' Roost. Latimer, one of Hays' gang, wounded with Heeseeman, tells Jim that Hays has held out some of the money he stole from Herrick. In the "roost" Jim keeps a watchful eye on Helen. Heeseeman's riders are seen approaching and the desperadoes prepare to fight.

## CHAPTER IX—Continued

"I should shiver she did. Struck Hays' half-trigger gun—cocked—right into my belly, an' says: 'Will you tie this villain—an' swear by your honor not to release him or allow any of these other men to do so—or will you have me shoot you?'"

"How'd she get that gun?"

"Wal, she snatched it quicker'n lightning, that's how. An' when she cocked it with both hands it went off bang! The bullet went between Hank's legs. Ticked him. You can see the hole in his pants. Scared? My Gawd, you never see a man so scared. That gurl, cool as a cucumber, cocked the gun again, an' held Hays up—then all of us.

"We was sittin' at the table. She made us all stand, hands high, an' then she performed that little trick with Hank's gun agin my gizzard. Jim, I hope to die if I didn't go cold an' stiff. But I promised on my word of honor—as a robber—that I'd tie Hank up, an' make the other fellers play square. It was so funny, too, that I near bust. Hays, soon as he was helpless, got over his stare, an' then was he mad! I reckon no one on this earth saw a madder man. He cussed so terrible that she made me gag him."

"Well, I'll be—blowed!" gasped Jim.

"No wonder. We was wuss. We'd had breakfast, an' Hank was tryin' to face us fellers. I'll say he came clean, Jim. He divided all the money he got from Herrick an' his sister, an' the gold things an' diamonds. 'Fellers,' he said, 'I could lie an' say I meant to give this to you later. But I'm not built that way. I double-crossed you all—first time in my life. I meant to keep it all, an' the ransom, fer the girl. But now there won't be no ransom, for I'm not goin' to give her up. She's mine, an' I can do as I want, an' if any of you don't like it you can make your kick now.'"

"Wal, we was so plumb flobbergasted that we didn't see the gurl, who came close on the sun side of Happy's shelter. She heard the whole d—n' show. . . . Jim, I wish you could have seen her when she stepped up to Hank. I don't know what did it—mebbe her eyes—but he shore wilted. It was then she snatched his gun."

"So that's the deal!" ejaculated Jim.

"What are you going to do?"

"Don't ask me. I gave my word an' I'll keep it. For that matter the rest of our outfit air fer the gurl, ransom or no ransom."

Suddenly Jim awoke out of his stupefaction to remember the approach of Heeseeman.

"Smoky, I know what you're all going to do, and that's fight," he flashed, curtly. "Heeseeman's outfit is coming. I sighted them perhaps three miles. Traveling slow, but sure. We've got no time to pack an' get away. We've got to find the best place to stand an' fight, an' pack our stuff into it pronto."

"Heeseeman!" cried Smoky, coolly. "So it's come. I reckoned on that. Git busy, men."

Jim strode under the shelter to face Miss Herrick. She had heard, for she was white.

"We're all but surprised by Heeseeman's outfit," he said, abruptly. "We must fight. You will be worse off if you fall into their hands. I'm sorry I must release Hays. We need him. 'Too late!' she exclaimed. "Pack your things quickly and hurry over to the cave on this side." Then Jim picked up Hays' gun from the table and ran out. First he removed the gag, then in terse terms he stated the situation. Next he released the

robber from his painful fix and handed him the gun.

"Heeseeman, huh! Wal, so be it!" Hays said, facing Jim with an air of finality that intimidated relief.

"How far are they away?" he asked.

"Two miles."

"We've got half an hour—mebbe. Did you think to look for the hosses?"

"Eight horses in the valley. Others not in sight."

"Fine scout you air. How come you didn't spy them soon enough fer us to rustle out of hyar?"

"I couldn't have seen them half a mile sooner," snapped Jim. "They came out from behind a bank."

"Hell's fire! Tell that to me? You was sleepin'."

"You're a liar," flashed Jim, leaping clear of the others. "Open your trap to me again like that!"

"Say, it's you who'll shut his trap," replied Hays, stridently. "Or you'll git a dose of the medicine I gave Brad Lincoln."

"Not from you—you yellow dog of a woman thief!"

Smoky Slocum ran out in time to get in front of Jim.

"Hyar! Hyar!" he called, piercingly. "Is this a time fer us to fight each other? Cool down, Jim. Make allowances fer Hays. He's wuss'n drunk."

"I don't care a d—n if there's ten outfits on our trail. He can't talk to me that way. . . . And, Smoky, I reckon you're presuming on friendship."

"Shore I am," returned Slocum, hurriedly. "I'll not do it again, Jim. Hays is what you called him. But leave your dispute till we settle with Heeseeman."

"All right. You're talking sense," replied Jim. He had been quick to grasp the opening made by Hays. "There must be ten riders in Heeseeman's outfit."

"Wal, that suits me," rejoined the robber, harshly.

"Now think fast," snapped Smoky. Hays pulled himself together. "Mac, you an' Jeff run to fetch what hosses you can find quick. . . . Jack, you an'

Smoky stood there, in the act of climbing.

"They near got me," rang out Jim. "I hit one of them way over where they shot at Bridges. There's a bunch of them hid on that cliff to the right of the outlet, you know, where Jeff went up to scout."

"Jim, they got us located," replied Slocum, gravely.

"Sure. But so long as they can't line on us in here—"

"They can move all around. An' pretty soon Heeseeman will agger that men behind the high center in front can shoot straight in hyar."

"They're below the ridge now. Look sharp, Smoky, or they might get a couple of shots in first."

"Wal, if they do I hope both bullets lodge in Hank's gizzard."

"My sentiments exactly. . . . Smoky, I saw something shine. Tip of a rifle. Right—to the right. . . . Ah!"

"Take the first feller, Jim. . . . One—two—three."

The rifles cracked in unison. Jim's mark sprang convulsively up, and plunged down to roll and weave out of sight. The man Smoky had shot at sank flat and lay still. Next moment a volley banged from the cliff and a storm of bullets swept hissing and spanging uncomfortably close.

Jim slid and leaped to the floor of the cave below. Smoky, by lying down, lowered the rifles to him, and then came scrambling after.

Hays had slouched back to them, followed by Happy.

"Jack, gimme Jeff's gun an' belt," Hays said, and receiving them, he buckled them over his own. Next he opened his pack to take out a box of rifle shells, which he broke open to drop the contents in his coat pocket on the left side. After that he opened his shirt to strip off a broad, black money belt. This was what had made him bulge so and give the impression of stoutness, when in fact he was lean. He hung this belt over a projecting point of wall.

"In case I don't git back," he added. "An' there's a bundle of chicken-feed change in my pack."

There was something gloomy and splendid about him then. Fear of God, or man, or death was not in him. Rifle in hand he crept to the corner on the left and boldly exposed himself, drawing a volley of shots from two quarters. Then he disappeared.

"What's Hays' idea?" asked Jim. "He must know a way to sneak around on them."

A metallic, spanging sound accompanied rather than followed by a shot, then a sudden thud right at hand choked further speech. Happy Jack had been cut short in one of his low whistles. He swayed a second upright, then uttering an awful groan, he fell. Smoky leaped to him, bent over.

"Dead! Hit in the temple. Where'd that bullet come from?"

Presently a white puff of smoke showed above the ragged rim. Spang! The fight was on. One of Hays' men—Bridges—let out a hoarse bawl and swayed over, almost losing his balance. Jim looked no more at him, but concentrated his gaze on the rim. Another puff of white! Something dark—a man's slouch hat—bobbed up. Jim's rifle, already raised, swerved a trifle—cracked. The hat went flying.

The horses came over the bench, frightened, but not stampeding, and Mac drove them into the corral. This was around the corner from the range of the sharpshooter of the rim. Bridges, leaning on the horse, followed Mac, who ran out of the corral to catch him as he fell. Tien, as they came along close to the wall, Hays arrived from the other direction.

"Heeseeman—with his outfit—nine in all," he heaved. "They're scatterin' to surround the roost. . . . But they can't cross—below us—an' across there it's—out of range. . . . We're all right."

A bullet thudded into the wall, followed by the report of a rifle.

"Duck back! That was from someone else," shouted Hays.

They dove twenty feet farther back. Here they were apparently safe, except from the grassy ridge of the oval in front, which it was unlikely any sharpshooters could reach in daylight.

After a careful study Jim crept into the brush, stirred by a renewal of firing from the west rim. Wisps of white cloud, thinning on the light wind, located the positions of the shooters. First Jim peered through the growth of brush directly in front.

Almost at once he caught a movement of a dark object through a crevice in the rim. The distance was great for accurate shooting at so small a target. But with a rest he drew a coarse, steady aim and fired once.

The object flopped over. A shrill cry, unmistakable to any man used to gunplay, rent the air. Jim knew he had reached one of the Heeseeman gang, to disable him, if no more. Next instant a raking fire swept the brush on both sides of Jim. He dropped down into the cave.

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"Dead! Hit in the temple. Where'd that bullet come from?"

"It glanced from a rock. I know the sound."

"Jim, the only safe place from that—is hyar, huggin' this corner," declared Smoky. "An' there ain't room enough fer the two of us."

"Keep it, Smoky. I'm not going to get hit. This is my day. I feel something in my bones, but it's not death."

"Huh. I feel somethin' too—clear to my marrow—an' it's sickish an' cold. . . . Jim, I'll sneak out an' crawl back of them. That's my idee, I don't have wrong ideas at this stage of a fight."

That was the last he spoke to Jim. Muttering to himself he laid a huge roll of bills under the belt Hays had deposited on the little shelf of rock. Then he vanished.

TO BE CONTINUED.

First Fraternity Started 1750. The first American college fraternity was organized at William and Mary college in 1750 in Virginia.

## Give the Little Folks Hand Crochet

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



MAYBE you will and maybe you won't have time to crochet one or the other of the cunning garments here pictured before Christmas, but where there is a will to do and dare why not "get busy" and find a way? Really, can you think of anything to hang on the Christmas tree that will bring greater joy to the heart of a child than either of these cunning hand-crochet frocks or the gay coat with its jaunty matching beret?

Anyway what if you do not see your way clear to finish before the holidays, a gift as adorable as this will be hailed with delight any day on the calendar. Being done in sturdy mercerized crocheted cotton, apparel like this is an all-year-round proposition so far as timely wearableness is concerned. Either little dress will be charming to wear to parties this winter, made in a dark or a pastel color, and being washable they will emerge from their tubbing all ready to wear when spring and summer comes.

To "brighten the corner where you are" is no task for a little girl dressed for a party in the hand-crochet dress of bright yellow pearl cotton (centered in the group). The skirt is a series of crocheted lace ruffles done in shell mesh stitch, matching the round collar and slightly puff sleeves. Each ruffle, and about the neck and sleeves, is tipped with white. There is no wear-out to a dress of this mercerized cotton.

The simple little slip of a frock on

the lovely child seated is easier to make and takes less time to complete than the one just described. Any little girl would be proud of this Sunday-go-to-meeting dress of mercerized crocheted cotton. There will never be any trouble in persuading a young lady to hurry and get dressed if she can tumble into this pretty little frock. Make it in any color you choose, for mercerized crocheted cotton comes in dozens and dozens of delectable tones and tints from dark to light.

Perhaps you think a gift of jacket-sweater with matching beret would be more apropos for the youngster you have in mind. The two-piece ensemble in the picture is easily made of knitting and crocheted cotton. It is a question whether it is more effective in navy, brown or wine-red. The embroidery which adds so vastly to its attractiveness is done in a lazy-daisy stitch—the easiest, quickest decorative stitch known in needle art. Don't forget the cluster of lazy-daisies which tops the crown of the beret.

There now! We have told you about crocheted for little folks but have you seen the stunning triangle scarf crocheted or knitted of mercerized cotton in the color you like best, which make such acceptable gifts for grown-ups? They are bordered on two sides with hand-tied fringe just as are the silk fabric or velvet ones which are making such a hit in neckwear displays this year.

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## BIAS-CUT CLOTHES POPULAR IN PARIS

There is much more give and take in our new clothes judging from the numbers of things brought out on the bias.

Sleeves are set into shoulders biasly, or very often sleeves and yoke, coming down in a design back and front, appear on short jackets as well as three-quarter and full-length coats, and on dresses themselves.

Another 1934 winter notion is the use of solid color in two and three-piece suits with the splash of color coming in a short scarf about one yard long and six to ten inches wide. This is knotted rather close at the throat and the ends are sometimes tucked in or else they are tucked through tabs that button or fasten on the back of the lapels of the jacket or coat.

## Long Slender Tunics in Latest Afternoon Models

Elaborate afternoon models this season show long, slender tunics, almost following in style the three-quarter or seven-eighth coat. These tunics are always in contrasting material and tone. They are noted in faconne rayon crepe, lame and rayon, ottoman and faille, to accompany dull velvet costumes. Marcel Rochas shows elaborate tunics in lame, chenille material, tufted fabrics, quilted crepe and in beaded or spangled fabrics, to accompany his smart ensembles combining a mixture of wool and silk cellulose film.

## Dresses, Tight to Knees, Now Develop into Train

Lucien Lelong shows evening dresses extremely close-fitted in front and at back down to the knees, where, through a clever cut, it develops into a long graceful train. Molyneux obtains train effects by adding at the back of his evening dresses a sort of second hem, which is sewn under the edge of the long skirt and allowed to fall on the ground. Some of these trains in hem effect are entirely covered with plastic sequins, forming a contrasting appearance with the dull rayon satins or crepe of the dress.

## SWISH OF TAFFETA

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Again the swish of taffeta resounds in fashion's realm. Especially during the romantic evening hours does the murmuring of its rustle make music in the air. What's more "they say" that taffeta will be a very important fabric both in winter resort and early spring modes. The dance frock pictured is of deep blue celanese taffeta. A huge bow of self-taffeta at the neck and a pronounced flare of fullness from the knee carry this lovely and youthful gown to a point of high distinction.

## Snappy Buttons

This is a year of snappy buttons as seen in new collections. Some dress-makers show no other fastening or buttoning than large plastic clips.



"DO YOU ever win anything in those contests you are always entering?" Muriel Wilson queried of her sister Agnes, who was home for the holidays, as they sat on the bed doing up last minute family gifts Christmas eve.

"Not yet," Agnes laughed. "But by the law of averages I should win sometimes."

"Soon, I'd say," Muriel said grimly. "You've been entering contests of one kind and another ever since we were infants and mother entered you in a prettiest baby contest."

"That's where I began my losing. If I'd won then I'd probably have kept on winning like these people we read about who live on what they make from contests."

"Phooey!" Muriel scoffed. "What makes you do it, anyway?"

"Just my love of adventure. I'm really a born gambler—in a discreet way, of course. That's why I write for my living, just to see if my brain children will find a place or come back home to me."

"Was it your love of adventure, or gambling spirit, or whatever you call it, that made you turn down Harold Ryan three years ago when he came home from college with his cousin Fred to spend the holidays? Now, why did you do that, Agnes? He was everything anyone would want in a husband—looks, family, money, and aren't we always told that marriage is the great adventure?"

"Maybe it is an adventure but what sort of a gamble is it to marry a man



Harold Decided to Deliver the Prize in Person.

who already has everything. No, I preferred to gamble with my own career."

"And now that you've made a success where is the gamble in it?" Muriel carefully stuck a sprig of holly in the knot of her red tissue ribbon.

When Agnes replied it was in a more serious manner:

"Since you ask me so pointedly, Muriel dear, I think, perhaps, if Harold lost his money during the depression, as so many did, and if he were to present himself now as a man winning his way through his own efforts, I might trust myself to adventure along with him. But, I fancy, it is too late. He's probably found some less adventurous soul ere this."

"Most likely," Muriel answered, as she rose to answer the door bell which had been persistently ringing. "Guess we're home alone." She hurried down the stairs.

Five minutes later she was back, trying vainly to refrain from any show of excitement:

"Some one on business for you, Agnes. He's the persistent kind, insisted he had to see you right now."

"Oh, well, all right. I'll go down and get it over with." Agnes took off her smock and departed.

Muriel heard Agnes' surprised ejaculation, but it was some time before she was summoned to join the two in the living room below.

"Muriel is just dying to congratulate me," Agnes gaily greeted her younger sister. "Behold, sister mine, I've actually won in a contest. You see, Harold is managing editor now of the paper that was running this particular contest. When the judges were sort of stuck as to which of three people had won second prize they referred the matter to him and, recognizing your honorable sister's name among the three, he immediately decided in her favor and came, in person, to deliver it."

"But I thought it was for another reason I was to congratulate you," Muriel did not try to conceal her disappointment.

"There is," Harold answered promptly. "I let Agnes speak first. But the reason I had for bringing Agnes the prize in person was to see if I could win this prize person."

Just then the door of the room adjoining was thrown open and another overcoated young man appeared. This time it was Agnes' turn to show astonishment:

"Of all things, Fred Ryan! Have you been there all the time?"

"Sure thing. I came with Harold, a sort of moral support. You see, Muriel and I have our wedding all planned. Let's make it a double one!"

To which bright idea they all joyfully agreed, hugging one another and shouting "Merry Christmas!"

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