

ROBBERS' ROOST



By ZANE GREY

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THE STORY

CHAPTER I.—Jim Wall, young cowboy from Wyoming, in the early days of the cattle industry, seeks a new field in Utah. He meets Hays, who admits to being a robber, and tells Wall he is working for an Englishman named 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 wants Wall to throw in with the rustlers.

CHAPTER II.—At the little settlement of Green River, Hays sets into an argument with a gambler called Stud, over a poker game. Wall saves Hays' life by bluffing the gambler out of shooting. With Hays and two other rustlers, Happy Jack and Lincoln, Jim Wall starts out for Herrick's ranch. In camp, the first night out, Jim regrets the step he has taken, but it is too late to turn back.

CHAPTER III.—The four men arrive at the ranch. Herrick announces that his sister, Helen, is coming to the ranch. Hays unfolds his plan for getting possession of the 12,000 head of live stock on the Herrick ranch. He and his lieutenants ride away to drive off the first bunch of cattle. Jim remains behind to shoot it out, if necessary, with Heeseman, Hays' rival among the cattle rustlers. Jim sees a dust cloud, which he is certain denotes the arrival of Miss Herrick and his gang. He stands with rifle ready.

CHAPTER IV.—Heeseman tells Wall that Hays was once his (Heeseman's) partner and double-crossed him. Herrick delegates Jim to go to Grand Junction to meet Miss Herrick. Jim gets Barnes, a young cowboy with him, to tell her that he (Jim) is a desperado and the worst type that Hays does so, but the girl treats the information lightly.

CHAPTER V.—On his arrival at the ranch, with Helen, Jim is confronted by Hays, who betrays unusual interest in the coming of Miss Herrick. Hays tells Hays that Miss Herrick brought a Wells Fargo package, probably of money. Jim goes riding with the Herricks and greatly impresses Helen with his revolver shooting.

CHAPTER VI.—The cattle drives to Grand Junction are started. Jim Wall finds himself falling in love with Helen. He 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 with the stolen cattle. The leader has sold the cattle and brought back the money. A quick getaway is imperative. Hays tells his men to go on ahead, that he will join them at a certain canyon. The riders arrive at the canyon and to their amazement, and Jim's dismay, Hays and a lieutenant are sighted with Helen Herrick—a captive.

CHAPTER VII.—The gang is about to break with Hays over the abduction, but he explains that he robbed Herrick and stole Helen for ransom. Realizing that Helen will be worse off if she falls into Heeseman's clutches, Jim Wall rides on with Hank and his men. Heeseman's riders are discovered in pursuit. After a running battle in which Latimer, one of Hays' men, is wounded, Hays leads the gang into a canyon retreat, difficult of access and easy to defend—The Robbers' Roost.

CHAPTER VIII.—After camp has been made, Jim seeks out Smoky Slocum, and secures his promise to aid in case Helen is threatened with harm by the villainous Hays. Jim hears a wild cry in the night. Before he dies, Latimer, who was wounded in the fight with Heeseman, tells Jim and Smoky that Hays has let out some of the money he stole from Herrick.

CHAPTER IX.—In the "roost" the robbers make permanent camp. Jim keeps a watchful eye on Helen. She steals from her tent at night to tell him that she fears the outlaw, Hank Hays. While they whisper, Hank steals upon them. Jim makes him believe that he has spurned a bribe from the girl to rescue her. Heeseman's riders are seen approaching and the desperados prepare to fight.

CHAPTER X.—Helen is taken to a cave. Jim and Smoky Slocum open fire. A sharpshooter has the range of the cavern. Smoky crawls out and shoots him. Hank Hays crawling to an advantageous position, kills Heeseman. The besiegers withdraw in panic.

CHAPTER XI.—Smoky is killed in almost the last exchange of shots, and when the triumphant Hays returns to the cavern where he has left Helen, he is faced by Jim, who denounces him for his double-crossing the gang, and particularly for his abduction of Helen. In a pistol duel, Jim kills Hank Hays. The problem now is to get Helen out of this wild, rough country. Helen faints at the end of the first day's ride, though she has borne the hardships of the journey heroically.

CHAPTER XII

To Jim Wall it seemed a miracle that he did not snatch Helen to his breast. Like a wind-driven prairie fire his blood raced. He set her upright on the ground.

"Can you stand?" he inquired. She essayed to, and, letting go of him, plainly betrayed her spent condition. Jim helped her into the shallow hollow under the rock.

In the quarter-hour before dusk he had unpacked, hobbled and fed the horses, built a fire and put water on to boil.

He carried his bed under the shelf and unrolled it, changed and doubled the blankets and folded the tarpaulin so that it could be pulled up in case rain beat in.

The fire sent a ruddy light into the cavern, and all at once Jim discovered that the girl was watching him.

"Are we safe here?" she asked.

"God only knows! I think so—I hope so. It's a lonely desert. Our enemies have gone the other way. They know they nearly wiped out Hays, and they'll try again with reinforcements. They know Hays had a fortune in cash—and you."

To his concern and discomfiture, she ate very little. She tried, only to fall. But she did drink her coffee.

"You'll pick up," he said hopefully. "Sleep, though, is more necessary than food."

"Jim, I can't pull off my boots," she said later. "Please help me."

She was sitting on the bed when Jim took hold of the boot she elevated.

"Look to see if you have any blisters," he said. "I'll bathe your feet in a little cold water and salt."

Bringing a pan of water, he knelt before her.

"Don't stand on ceremony, Helen. Stick out your foot. . . ."

She put out her small feet. Jim lost no time in pressing them down into the cold salt water. Then he rubbed her feet until they were red.

"Put your stockings back on and sleep in your clothes," he said. "Before you crawl in, I'll bring a hot stone."

"Ooooo!" She stretched out with a slow, final movement and pulled the blankets up under her chin.

Almost instantly she fell asleep with the flickering firelight upon her face.

Jim walked out, to find the horses close to camp and making out fairly well on the grass. He patrolled his beat between the flickering fire and the sleeping girl, heedless of the rain, sleepless for hours, on guard. And after that when he slept it was with one eye open.

Toward dawn he got up and rolled his bed. The air was raw and cold, blowing a fine rain in his face.

By the time breakfast was cooking daylight had broken. Finding a thin, flat rock Jim placed Helen's breakfast upon it and carried it to her bedside. Then he called her.

"I've brought some food and strong coffee," he said.

Jim repaired to his own breakfast, after which he wrapped up biscuits and meat to take on the day's ride.

She pulled on her boots, and crawling out and straightening up with slow, painful effort she asked for a little hot water. Jim fetched it.

Free then to pack, Jim applied himself with swift, methodical hands.

She mounted unassisted. Jim helped her into the long slicker.

"It'll be a tough day," he went on. "But we're starting dry. Hang on as long as you can. We absolutely must get out of these brakes."

With that he lined up the pack animals, and they were off.

Jim traveled as best he could, keeping to no single direction, though the trend was northerly and following ground that appeared passable. The pack horses led. He followed them, and Helen brought up the rear.

The rain fell all morning and let up at intervals. Then black clouds gathered, and a storm, with thunder and lightning, burst upon them. Water ran in shoots off the rocks.

At length the fugitives came to a veritable river at which the lead horse balked. Bay, however, did not show any qualms. So he put Bay to the task. The big horse made it easily, with water coming up to his flanks. Whereupon Jim rode him back, after which the pack horses, intelligent and sensible, essayed the ford.

Then Jim returned to Helen.

"I'll carry you while you hang on to your bridle," said Jim, riding close to the gray. He had to lift her sheer off her horse and around in front of him, where he upheld her with his left arm.

They made it, with the splendid horse staggering out under his double burden just in the nick of time.

"You are doing fine. We have come eighteen or twenty miles. But I don't like the look ahead."

When once more they were on the way Jim gave her a biscuit and a strip of meat. "Eat. The rain will be on us soon."

Late in the afternoon there was a momentary brightening of massed clouds in the west.

They rode down out of these low gravel hills that had limited their sight, into a long, green, winding valley. A red river, surely the Dirty Devil, ran, ridged and frothy, under a steep wall of earth.

"I can't hang on—longer," faltered Helen, faintly.

"I'll carry you. Why didn't you tell me sooner?" reproved Jim. He knotted her reins and dropped the loop over the pommel of her saddle. Then he lifted her off her horse onto his.

So Jim rode on, aware that her collapse and the terrible nature of the desert and another storm at hand were wearing away even his indomitable spirit.

Ragged, red bluff stood up all along his right, with acres of loose rock ready to slide.

They swung in behind the bluff, and then out again to the higher and narrower bank upon which the old trail passed around the corner.

"Whoa, Bay," called Jim hauling up to wait for the gray. "I don't like this place. Don't look, Helen."

As she made no reply Jim leaned

back to get a glimpse of her face. Asleep!

"Come on, Gray," he called to the horse behind, and to Bay: "Steady, old fellow. If that narrows round there you want to step sure."

It did narrow. Eight feet, six feet—less! Bits of the steep bank were crumbling away. But the pack horses had gone round. It would not be safe to try to turn now.

Suddenly Jim encountered a still narrower point, scarcely five feet wide. The edge had freshly crumbled. It was crumbling now.

Bay stepped carefully, confidently. He knew horses with wide packs had safely passed there. He went on. Jim felt him sink. One hind foot had crushed out a section of earth, letting him down. But with a snort he plunged ahead to wider trail.

Jim's heart had leaped to his throat. He heard thud of hoofs behind, a heavy, sliddery rumble. Looking back he saw the gray horse leap from a section of wall, beginning to gap outwards to solid ground ahead. Next instant six feet of the trail, close up to the bluff, slid down in an avalanche.

"Close shave for us all!" cried Jim, huskily.

Right at his feet a red torrent rushed with a wrestling, clashing sound from out a deep-walled gorge of splintered, rocking walls.

This was a tributary, a vicious child of the hideous Dirty Devil. It barred Jim's progress. Thirty paces to the fore, on the widest part of the bank, stood the pack horses. Jim forced his startled gaze to the rear. No rider would ever come or go that way again.

Jim dismounted carefully with Helen and, stooping as he moved under the leaning rock, he set her down on dry dust.

"Is it the end for us?"

He did not answer. Folding the slicker into a pillow he laid her head back upon it. Scrambling up, he removed the saddle from Bay and dropped it under the shelter. Then, leading the horse, he stepped forward to where the gray and the pack animals had halted.

The instinct of the horses had guided them to halt behind the only safe spot on the unsafe bank. Jim removed their packs, leaving the saddles on. Without hesitation he poured out all of the grain, about two quarts for each horse. Lastly he jammed the packs under the edge of the boulders and left the horses free to take care of themselves.

He dreaded the coming hours—the night—the he knew not what.

Jim removed his slicker and folded it into a long pad. As he crept closer the girl stirred again and spoke. He thought she asked if he was there. He placed the slicker in the best available place and covered that with the drier of the two saddle blankets. He pulled the saddle closer. Then he lifted the girl over his lap and covered her with the dry blanket. He leaned back against the stone with her head on his shoulder and his arm supporting her. It was not only that he wanted to keep her dry and warm; he had to have her in his arms while he waited for the nameless terror he anticipated.

This was the climax of the storm that had been gathering for days. Out upon the level desert it would have been serious for travelers; here in this gorge it was a maelstrom. Jim did not expect to live to hear it pass away. Yet he did. And then began the aftermath of a flood let loose upon such unstable earth. The waterfall gradually rose to a thundering, continuous crash. It dominated for a while, until the thousand streams from above poured over the rims to deaden all, to completely deafen Jim.

A sheet of water, sliding over the rock, hid the opaque blackness from Jim's eyes. Any moment now a flood would rise over the bank, and when it did Jim meant to climb higher with the girl, to front the hurtling rocks and slipping slides, and fight till the bitter end.

But many changes as the hours brought, that flood did not rise above the bank. Jim saw the sheet of water fall and the black space of gorge again. He heard the avalanches and the great single boulders come down, and the furious backlash of the torrent below, and the lessening roar of the waterfall.

The time came to Jim, as if he dreamed, when all sounds changed, lessened, faded away, except the peculiar thrashing of the stream below. And he got to listening for that sound, which occurred only occasionally. For a while the sliding rush of heavy water swept on, suddenly to change into a furious splashing.

At length Jim calculated it was a strong current laden with sand, which at times caused billows to rise and lash their twisting tips back upon themselves. Long he heard these slowly diminishing, gradually separating sounds.

The streams ceased flowing, the slides ceased slipping, the rocks ceased rolling and the waterfall failed from a thundering to a hollow roar and from that to a softening splash.

Jim imagined he saw dim stars out in a void that seemed to change from black to gray. Was dawn at hand? Had they been spared? The gurgle of the stream below merged into the distant, low rumble of the Dirty Devil. Jim rested there, staring out at the spectral forms on the opposite wall, thinking thoughts never before inhabitants of his confused brain.

But the sky was graying, the gorge taking shape in the gloom, and this place which had heard a din of hideous sounds was silent as a grave.

At last Jim had to accept a marvelous phenomenon—dawn was at

hand. Gently he slipped Helen into the hollow of the saddle. She was still asleep. His cramped limbs buckled under him and excruciating pains shot through his bones and muscles.

In the gray light objects were discernible. He could not see to the head of the gorge, where the waterfall had plunged out from the wall. But silence meant that it had been surface water, a product of the storm, and it was gone. Beneath the bank ran a channel of fine-ribbed sand where not even a puddle showed. On the bank the horses stood patiently, except Bay, and he was nosing around for a blade of grass that did not exist on the sodden earth. The great slope appeared the same and yet not the same. A mute acceptance of ultimate destruction hovered over it.

Sunrise found Jim Wall topping a rise of rocky ground miles beyond the scene of his night vigil. Again he followed his sure-footed lead pack horse.

The sky was blue, the sun bright and warm, and at the moment it crowned with gold the top of the purple butte Jim had seen twice before. It appeared close now, rearing a corrugated peak above yellow and brown hills. Jim was carrying Helen in front of him. Conscious, but too spent to speak or move, she lay back on his arm and watched him.

There had been a trail along here once, as was proved by a depressed line on the gravelly earth. When Jim surmounted this barren divide he suddenly was confronted by an amazing and marvelous spectacle.

"Blue valley!" he ejaculated.

"Blue valley! . . . Helen, we're out of the brakes! . . . Safe! Men live here."

She heard him, for she smiled up into his face, glad for his sake, but in her exhaustion beyond caring for her own.

There was no sign of habitation, nor any smoke. But Jim knew this was Blue valley. It was long, perhaps fifteen miles, and probably the farms were located at the head, where irrigation had been possible. How could even pioneers utilize that ferocious river?

Jim followed the lead pack horse down into gumbo mud. The floor of the valley supported a mass of foliage besides the stately cottonwoods. And at every step a horse's hoof sank deep, to come forth with a huge cake of mud.

At midday Jim passed deserted cabins, some on one side of the river, some on the other. They did not appear so old, yet they were not new. Had Blue valley been abandoned? Jim was convinced it could not be so. But when he espied a deserted church, with vacant eye-like windows, then his heart sank; Helen must have rest, care, food. He was at the end of his resources.

An hour later he toiled past a shack built of logs and stones, and adjoining a dugout, set into the hill. People had lived there once, but long ago.

Jim's last hope fled. He was still far from the head of the valley, but apparently he had left the zone of habitation behind.

The afternoon waned. The horses plodded on, slower and slower, wearing to exhaustion. Helen was a dead weight. Despair had seized upon him when he turned a yellow corner between the slope and the cottonwoods, to be confronted by a wide pasture at the end of which a log cabin nestled among cottonwoods. A column of blue smoke rose lazily against the foliage.

The horses labored out of the mud to higher ground. Jim rode up to the cabin. Never in all his life had he been so glad to smell smoke, to see a garden, to hear a dog bark. His ever-quick eye caught sight of a man who had evidently been watching, for he stepped out on the porch, rifle in hand. Jim kept on to the barred gate. There were flowers in the yard and vines on the cabin—proof of feminine hands. And he saw a bed on the porch.

"Hello," he shouted, as he got off carefully, needing both hands to handle Helen.

"Hullo, yourself," called the man, who was apparently curious, but not unfriendly. Then as Jim let down a bar of the gate with his foot, this resident of Blue valley leaned his rifle against the wall and called to some one within.

(Continued Next Week)

London's Law Courts

London's famous law courts contain about two and a half miles of corridors.

Local Woman Guilty Of Liquor Violation

Johanna Wicniski, an aged woman of Dallas township, was adjudged guilty by a jury before Judge Fine this week of having alcoholic liquor in her possession and violating the liquor law. She was directed to appear in court on Tuesday next for sentence. Joseph Shuppick was the prosecutor. Assistant District Attorney Hessel represented the plaintiff.

THE EARTH SHAKES!

The world is trembling . . . mile-deep chasms split across 's surface . . . death and desolation spread from ocean to ocean . . . millions are dying . . . every day is a wild nightmare . . . how can it end? see The Dallas Post.

ROADSIDE MARKETING

By T. J. Delohery

BOYS ARE GOOD SALESMEN

"DON'T send a boy to do a man's job" may be good advice at times, but numbers of farmers have found that boys can do as good, if not a better job of selling produce direct to the consumer. Especially is this true of town deliveries, where the youngsters are known in the community and neighborliness and friendliness breaks the ice.

With the right kind of training in salesmanship boys become very good merchants. Some of them, when they learn "their vegetables," are on a par even with the best farmer merchants, being more willing to do everything to please and accommodate customers.

In some counties roadside marketing is a part of the Boys and Girls 4H club work, and vocational agriculture teachers who use vegetable and fruit growing as a class room subject are carrying their teaching further by having their students open up roadside and other markets for the produce grown. Many of these teachers, in preparation for the marketing work, have studied roadside markets and have obtained college bulletins and other literature, the gist of which they pass on to their pupils.

Selling, as a rule, is left to the boys showing their adeptness for this work, the others spread the word of their market among customers, thus making customers which older people might fail to interest.

Up in Milwaukee county, Wisconsin, William Hawthorne, who won the state gardening championship in 4H club work and who learned about selling to city consumers while carrying on the project, is now on his own with two rented acres for outdoor vegetable production. During the winter season he keeps his trade supplied with what he grows in the greenhouse he leases. William makes deliveries on his bicycle.

Mrs. Frank A. Burford of Warren county, Illinois, sells home-made country butter to 60 families in town. Deliveries require a little too much time

considering she does her own house work, so she has hired Margaret Swanson, her granddaughter, to help her. Margaret, who is quite a candy-maker, increases her earnings by selling her sweets to the same people. She packs the candy in half-pint paper containers.

The children were always running to Harry Kleck for permission to sell magazines, perfume and other things to neighboring farmers. Permission was refused, of course. But when the wholesale price of eggs got down to where Kleck's flock wasn't paying, and he began to "think out loud" to his wife about new markets, the youngsters chorused "let us sell them to people in town."

Eggs were different from perfume or magazines. People needed good eggs such as Kleck produced, so he let the kids try their hand. And what a success they made of the job! Now Kleck sells all of his eggs to consumers, and, instead of delivering them, the people drive out to his farm outside of Emporia, Kan. He gets a margin over wholesale, too. He paid the youngsters 10 per cent for selling.

Robert James had to lease a larger farm because he needed more vegetables to keep up with the demand created by two boys who sold his produce from house to house. Now he has a crew of ten youngsters ranging from twelve to sixteen years of age, who have pushcart routes of their own making. The routes average 12 blocks, both sides of the street.

When J. R. Robbins' house-to-house milk route got too big for him to handle and supervise his farm work, and yet too small to hire another truck and driver, he turned to boys to deliver his product. The youngsters not only supplied his customers, but operating in localities where they lived, soon had 150 people in several Porter county, Indiana, towns buying not only milk but fruit, sausage, vegetables and eggs. Each boy works two to four blocks.

"I use paper milk bottles," said Mr. Robbins. "Hence, there are no returns.

"Our relationship with the boys is strictly business—that is, I'm constantly giving them information on salesmanship to read and I keep close check to see that they don't become involved in their accounts.

"My boys are a bright lot and I think they appreciate not only the opportunity of making money but learning something which will help them when they are old enough to shift for themselves. A milk route offers a good chance to study human nature and there is every indication that the natural smartness of the boys is helping educate them along business lines."

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-Jackson-

A group of young people sponsored by the Jackson Ladies' Aid Society, will hold a Halloween Costume Social on Friday evening, October 26th, in the M. E. Church Hall. Everyone is asked to come in costume.

Mr. and Mrs. Newell Kester of Trucksville spent Monday evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gus Splitt.

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Ashton and children visited relatives at Scranton on Sunday.

Mrs. Sarah Ashton who has been ill, is somewhat improved.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Bonning attended the funeral of Peter Lameroux of New York State on Tuesday of last week.

The Citizen's League of Jackson Township held its first monthly meeting of the winter on Wednesday evening, October 3rd, at Barney's community hall. A good sized crowd attended.

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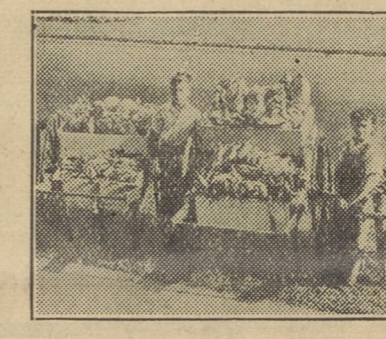
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