

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, who has located a big ranch in the mountains. Hays and others are plotting to steal their employer's cattle and money. With Hays and two other rustlers, Jim Wall goes to Herrick's ranch. Herrick announces that his sister, Helen, is coming to live with him. Hays unfolds his plan for getting possession of Herrick's 12,000 head of live stock. He and his lieutenant-enslaved ride away to drive off the first bunch of cattle. Heeseman, Hays' rival among the cattle rustlers, tells Wall that Hays was once his (Heeseman's) partner and double-crossed him. Jim is sent to meet Miss Herrick. He tries to impress on her that he (Jim) is a desperado of the worst type, but the girl treats the information lightly.

CHAPTER V—Continued

Jim let Barnes take the team, while he crossed the bench and made his way down the steep, rocky declivity to Hays' cabin. Happy Jack was whistling about the fire, knocking pans and otherwise indicating the proximity of supper.

"Howdy, Jack. What's tricks for today?" asked Jim.

"Glad you're back, Jim," declared the cook, cordially. "Anyone'd have thought you was goin' to dish the outfit—judgin' from Hays. He's been like a hound on a leash. Smoky rode in today full of ginger, news, an' a roll of long green that'd have choked a cow. But even that didn't ease the boss."

"What's ailed him, Jack?" inquired Jim, not without impudence.

"Dinged if I know. It had to do with your goin' to Grand, a darned sight more than Smoky's."

Heavy footfalls outside attested to the return of Hays. Without more comment Jim stood up and away from the table, to face the door. Hays entered. He was not the genial Hays of other days, yet it was hard to define the change in him, unless it consisted in a gloomy, restless force behind his stride. Smoky followed him in, agreeable by contrast.

"Hullo, here you air. I waited at the barn," said Hays gruffly.

"Howdy, boss. I took a short cut down," replied Jim.

"I seen Barnes an' had a word with him. So your trip come off all right? You shore made them blacks step."

"It wasn't as pleasant a drive as you'd imagine," returned Jim, darkly.

"Haw! You must be one of them women-haters. . . . Outside of the side of it, what happened to Jar you?"

"Nothing to concern you or your outfit. Smoky saw me yesterday before I got a line on him. He ducked off the road. At Grand Junction nobody paid any more attention to me than I'd expect."

"Ahh. That's good," replied Hays, and going over to the pack beside his bed he rummaged about to return with a packet, which he slapped down upon the table.

"There you air, Jim. On our first deal."

The packet unrolled and spread out—bills of large denomination.

"What's this for?" queried Jim.

"Quick action. That's how we work. Your share. Smoky fetched it."

Jim did not care to give the impression that he was unused to this sort of thing. Straddling the bench he sat down to run through the bills.

"Five thousand six hundred," he said, as if to himself, and he slipped the money inside his pocket. "Much obliged, Smoky. Now I'll be able to sit in a little game of draw."

"Jim, ain't you got any news at all?" inquired Hays, searchingly. "A feller with your ears an' eyes shore would pick up somethin'."

"Miss Herrick fetched a Wells-Fargo package to her brother," rejoined Jim, slowly.

"Then it's come," said Hays, cracking his hands. "Herrick was expectin' money last stage."

After supper Smoky was the first to break silence:

"Boss, now Wall is back you can make up your mind about what I'd like to do."

"Jim, listen to this: Smoky an' the other fellers, except Brad, want to make a clean sweep with this next drive. What you think?"

"Clean Herrick out?" asked Jim.

"That's the idee."

Jim pondered a moment.

"It'd be harder work, but save time, and perhaps our bacon as well. These cowboys are going to find out pretty soon that the cattle have thinned out. If Smoky drives a couple thousand more it'll be sure to be found out, sooner or later."

"See that, boss. Wall sees it just as I do. There's plenty of water along the road an' feed enough. . . . Let's make it one big drive."

"Wal, it'd mean leavin' Star Ranch sudden," cogitated the robber chief.

"Shore. An' that's good."

"But I don't want to pull out of here sudden," declared Hays.

"Why not, if we get away with ten thousand head?" queried Smoky, astounded.

"That ten thousand won't close the deal I'm on."

"What've you got up your sleeve, Hank?"

"That's my business. Yours is drivin' cattle."

"You mean to rob the English? Hank, don't be a hawg!"

"Hays, if you'll excuse me, I'm thinkin' Smoky talks sense," interposed Jim, quietly.

"My mind's made up. We'll stick

to our first idee. You fellers make drive after drive, goin' slow. . . . They'll give me time—"

"Ahh. So you'll risk goin' agin' the whole outfit," interrupted Smoky, with a curious gaze at his superior.

"Wal, yes, if you put it that way," replied Hays, and he stalked out.

"Smoky, will you start the second drive tomorrow?" asked Wall.

"I'll lay it up to my outfit. Wal, so long. See you soon, one way or another."

He went out. Jim heard a few sharp words pass between Smoky and Hays, and then silence.

Next day he went back to work on the new barn. A subtle change in Hank Hays augmented his suspicion of that individual. Jim let him alone.

Herrick was around as usual, interested in every detail of the building. Hays had gone off with the cowboys across the valley to put them upon

some job there, which no doubt was a ruse to keep them away from Limestone Springs, where most of the stock grazed. And the day had ended without one glimpse of Helen Herrick.

At breakfast the following morning Hays surprised Jim.

"Was the Herrick girl out yesterday?" he inquired.

"Didn't see her."

"You didn't say what kind of a looker she was."

"Oh, that," laughed Jim. "I forgot or didn't think you were interested."

"Wal, I'd like to see her once before our deal's off here."

Hays had his wish fulfilled next day. He was at work on the new barn, on the far side from where Jim was occupied, when Miss Herrick came down with her brother. Jim stared as if his eyes deceived him. An English riding habit was known to him only from pictures. She looked queenly. Jim did not look at her face. Besides, he wanted most to see the effect upon Hank Hays. That worthy's hawklike head was erect, but Jim could not see the telltale eyes, Hays stood transfixed.

Herrick and his sister walked toward Jim's side of the barn.

"Good morning," she said. "Bernie told me how you shot bob—no, Jack rabbits—from the saddle. I want to see you do that. And I want to learn how. Will you show me?"

"I'd be pleased, Miss Herrick."

"Tomorrow, then, you will ride with me?"

"I'm at your service."

"Wall, you'll oblige me by riding with my sister when it suits her," said Herrick.

"Yes, sir," returned Jim, gazing across at the statue-like Hays.

The couple moved off toward the open yard, where mounted cowboys were leading out saddled horses.

"I seen her, Jim," Hays said, as if the event were epic. "She walked right by me."

"What if she did, Hank?"

"Nothin'. What was she sayin' to you?"

"It seems Herrick told her about my shootin' jacks from my horse, and she wants to see it done."

"You're goin' ridin' with her? . . . The luck of some men!"

"Hank, shall I tell Herrick you'll go in my stead?"

"Nix, much as I'd like to. I can't hit jumpin' rabbits."

Hays hung around the barn, mostly idle, watching the valley, until the Herricks returned. The cowboys brought the horses down. Whereupon Hays abruptly left. And he did not come back. From that hour he became an elusive man.

That day ended Jim Wall's carpentry. On the next he was summoned early after breakfast to ride with the Herricks.

Under the stimulation of this girl's inspiring presence Jim gave an exhibition of swift and accurate shooting that surpassed any he had ever accomplished.

"Marvelous!" she exclaimed.

"Helen, he's a bally good shot," declared Herrick.

That night Hank Hays evinced slight but unmistakable symptoms of jealousy, occasioned, perhaps, by Jim's report of killing thirteen out of fifteen bound-



Straddling the Bench He Sat Down to Run Through the Bills.

ing Jack rabbits. Happy Jack, wide-eyed and loud-voiced, acclaimed Jim's feat as one in a thousand.

"Air you that good frontin' a man who you know is swift?" drawled the robber chief.

Jim stared. "Hank, I'm not so good then," he replied, slowly.

"Wal, somebody'll try you out one of these days," added Hays.

"I daresay," he rejoined, coolly, and sought his seclusion. He refused to let that linger in his mind. Something else haunted him. His slumber was troubled.

CHAPTER VI

Next day Herrick did not accompany his sister on the daily ride, a circumstance which, if anything, gave freer rein to her spirit. Jim had concern for her safety. He could not judge well of her horsemanship, because of the side-saddle she rode. Bluntly he disapproved of the atrocious thing and said it was worse than the "pancake" her brother rode. But she rode after the hounds just the same, and held her own hull she was thrown.

If she had fallen upon rocks or even hard ground she would have been seriously injured, if not killed outright. But when the horse stumbled she hurtled over his head and hit in the sand. Jim was off almost the instant she struck, and he yelled for the cowboy.

"Water, Barnes," he called, as the cowboy dashed up.

"There ain't none close," replied Barnes.

"I'm all-right," spoke up Miss Herrick, weakly. "I came—a cropper—didn't I?"

She sat, evidently not hurt, though she clung to Jim's arm. With his scarf he wiped the sand from her face, aware that his hand was not steady. Her hair had come partly loose to fall in a golden mass on her shoulder. She rearranged it and put on her hat, deftly despite gloved fingers.

"Help me up, please," she said.

Jim placed a strong arm under hers and lifted her to her feet. Then something cold and tight within let go, and his reaction was to take refuge in anger: "Miss Herrick, I told you that saddle was no good. It's a wonder you were not killed."

"Oh, don't exaggerate. I've come many croppers cross-country riding at home."

"Barnes, back me up in this," appealed Jim to the cowboy.

"Miss, he's tellin' you true," said Barnes, earnestly. "You was ridin' fast. If this hyar had been stony ground, like it is lots of places, you'd never knowed what hit you."

"I believe I did strike pretty hard," she admitted, ruefully.

"You want a cow-saddle with a double cinch, and overalls," concluded Jim.

"Overalls!" she exclaimed, and she blushed rosy red. "You mean like these blue trousers Barnes has on?"

"Yes. Then you can ride. This is the West, Miss Herrick. You like to run a horse. It's dangerous. I shall have to speak to your brother."

"Don't. I've never ridden astride, but I'll do it, since you are so very fearful about it."

That experience left Jim shaky, probably a good deal shakier than it had left Miss Herrick. But it was not fear for her. Jim revealed in the torturing sensation engendered by contact with this beautiful girl. He shook like a leaf at the staggering realization that when she lay on the ground with her arms spread wide, her hair gold against the sand, he longed to snatch her to his breast. A natural impulse, under the circumstances, but for him—idiotic!

Miss Herrick took to the Western saddle like a duck to water. She could ride. Moreover, that spirit of which she had hinted certainly overtook her. More than once she ran off alone, riding like the wind; and upon one of these occasions it took the cowboys till dark to find her. That with Hank Hays and Heeseman there to see her gallop away unescorted! Herrick did not seem to mind.

As far as Jim Wall was concerned, however, these rides with her centered him upon the love which had come to consume him; and the several she took alone were more torturing because they aroused fear of Hank Hays. It could not be ascertained whether or not Hays followed her, but when the day came that Jim discovered Hays had been riding the trails frequented by Miss Herrick, it seemed time to act.

This placed Jim in a worse quandary. To act, for a man of his training at such a time and place, was to do only one thing. But how could he kill his leader upon mere suspicion of sinister intent to kidnap the girl? It was a predicament for a man who had always played fair, alike to honest friend and crooked ally.

Jim paced under his dark sheltering trees, in the dead of night, when he should have been sleeping. Days had passed without his once seeking to avoid disaster; and he had not sought because he knew it was of no use. To wish to be with his blond girl seemed irresistible. More than once he had caught himself in the spell of a daring impulse—to tell Miss Herrick that he loved her. The idea was sheer madness. Yet the thought persisted, and when he tried to shake it—the result was it grew stronger in a haunting maddening way.

TO BE CONTINUED

Body Needs Supply of Salts

When Planning Meals, It Must Be Remembered That Phosphorus, Working With Calcium, Provides the Material Required.

Phosphorus is the one of the three minerals for which we must take most thought when planning meals. Phosphorus works with calcium to supply the salt which make the bones and teeth strong and sturdy.

These two minerals are so inter-twined that it is not only necessary to have a full quota of each, but to have each in such a proportion that it balances the other. In the absence of this the skeleton of the body may grow normal in size but not in strength, and the consequence of this lack is bowed legs and other bone deformities.

Phosphorus is also a necessary contribution to every cell in the body, but is especially important in the nerve cells. Perhaps this is what led to the ancient superstition that phosphorus stimulated the brain. It is, however, a factor in the utilization of food and in maintaining the neutrality of the blood stream. By weight we need about twice as much phosphorus as calcium. Children need a large supply of both of these minerals, of course, because of demand upon food to build new structure. A mother during the month before the birth of the child, and while she is nursing him, will also need an extra supply. If this is not supplied she may show the effect of the lack through the breaking down of her teeth. If, for any reason, she cannot take plenty of food rich in these minerals, she may take certain salts which are more or less effective.

The foods which supply phosphorus most liberally are milk, cheese, eggs, vegetables, nuts, some of the fruits, and whole cereals. All but the latter are sources of calcium to a greater or less extent. Among vegetables, navy beans, carrots, lentils and sweet potatoes are high. Among fruits we find peaches, bananas, grapefruit, oranges, pineapple, prunes and berries at the head of the list.

The quality of minerals in foods is not affected to any large extent by cooking. If the proper methods are used. One of the reasons for cooking vegetables in very little water is

to preserve the mineral content which may be partly drawn out into the liquid. A small amount may be lost by the heating of milk during pasteurization, but the amount is negligible if the daily ration of milk is plentiful.

A shortage of either calcium or phosphorus, a poor balance between them or the lack of vitamin D, which has the property of stimulating the deposit of these minerals in the bones, may result in rickets, mild or acute. A mild form of rickets is not uncommon among children, while acute rickets attack undernourished children, especially those who are not exposed to the sun. Children in families of the low-income class, who have come from the tropics, are more subject to this disease than are other children in New York.

Sometimes adults suffer from the results of milk rickets in childhood. The bones of a foot, for instance, sometimes break down in later life. As in the case of many other diet deficiencies, effect of a less than adequate supply of phosphorus as well as of calcium and vitamin D do not always show at the moment. In childhood the foundations of health are built.

Blanc Mange.

- 3 cups milk
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Scald two and one-half cupsful

milk, add remaining cold milk to cornstarch, stir to smooth paste and add to hot milk, stirring constantly. Cover and cook over hot water fifteen to twenty minutes. Beat egg yolks with sugar and salt, and stir into hot mixture. Cook five minutes, remove from fire and stir in vanilla and fold in beaten egg whites. Pour into one large or six small molds and chill. Serve with whipped cream.

Danish Bean Soup.

- 1 cup navy beans
- 4 cups water
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 2 tablespoons onions, chopped
- 2 smoked sausages
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons sugar

Wash beans and soak overnight with three cupfuls of cold water. Put on to cook in water in which they have been soaked. Add celery, onion and one cupful of water and cook until beans are done. Put through coarse sieve or potato ricer. Cook sausage in hot water for ten minutes, drain, slice and add to soup. Add seasonings and cook ten minutes.

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Her Sympathies

In the old days the general public was allowed at executions, nor were executions the refined art of today. There is a story told about a French youth who had attempted the life of a king, back in 1757, and sentenced to be torn apart by horses. One of the fine ladies present had her sensibilities aroused by the difficulty which the horses had in tearing their victim to pieces. "Oh, the poor horses," she said, "how sorry I am for them!"

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TELL HER IF SHE'LL WAIT ON THAT CUSTOMER THAT JUST CAME IN, INSTEAD OF BAWLING YOU OUT, IT MIGHT HELP!

JACK'S GOT ME SO WORRIED . . . HE HAS HEADACHES AND INDIGESTION . . . AND CAN'T SLEEP WELL!

MY JIM USED TO HAVE THOSE TROUBLES, BUT HE HAD COFFEE-NERVES!

HEY—I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THIS CONVERSATION'S GOING!

JIM'S DOCTOR TOLD HIM TO CUT OUT COFFEE AND SWITCH TO POSTUM . . . AND THE CHANGE WORKED WONDERS IN HIM!

CURSES! JIM'S WIFE KNOWS THAT POSTUM ALWAYS DRIVES ME AWAY!

GODDNESS! THAT'S AN IDEA . . . I'LL SEE THAT HE STAMPS ON POSTUM TONIGHT! JACK DOES DRINK A LOT OF COFFEE!

LATER

I'M COMING OVER TO PAY OFF THAT LOAN TODAY, MR. GRADY. BUSINESS HAS BEEN GREAT!

MY, BUT JACK HAS CHANGED. I'D RATHER HAVE HIM WAIT ON ME NOW THAN ANY ONE IN TOWN!

I'LL TELL YOU A SECRET—SINCE HE SWITCHED TO POSTUM HE'S FELT LIKE A NEW MAN!

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