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Owen Wister



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THE VIRGINIAN

Owen Wister

THE GREAT CATTLE COUNTRY OF WYOMING IN 1874 LOOKED STRANGE AND WILD TO MY EASTERN EYES. I ALMOST DOUBTED THE WISDOM OF ACCEPTING JUDGE HENRY'S INVITATION TO VISIT HIM AT HIS RANCH AT SLACK CREEK. BUT IF I HAD NOT COME, I WOULD NEVER HAVE MET THE VIRGINIAN.



AS WE CAME INTO MEDICINE BOW, WHERE I WAS TO MEET THE JUDGE, MY ATTENTION WAS CAUGHT BY A LIVELY SCENE AT A CORRAL NEAR THE TRACKS.



NOT ONE OF THEM CAN ROPE THAT PONY.



FINALLY A TALL MAN CLIMBED DOWN FROM THE CORRAL GATE.



WITH A SMOOTH, EASY MOTION HE SENT THE ROPE SWIRLING AROUND THE HORSE.



THAT MAN KNOWS HIS BUSINESS.





WE HAD OUR SUPPER, AND SOME OF THE MEN SETTLED DOWN TO PLAYING CARDS.

WHO'S THAT ACROSS FROM THE VIRGINIAN?

NAME'S TRAMPAS HE'S NOT ENJOYING LOSING, EITHER



YOUR BET, YOU SON-OF-A-GUN.



THE VIRGINIAN'S PISTOL CAME OUT.

WHEN YOU CALL, ME THAT, SMILE!



SIT QUIET. THE VIRGINIAN WON'T PUSH TROUBLE, HE'S HANDED TRAMPAS THE CHANCE TO BACK DOWN OR DRAW HIS STEEL.



TRAMPAS, LOOKING SULLEN, SAID NOTHING. THE GAME WENT ON.



FINALLY THEY STOPPED. THE VIRGINIAN MADE A BED FOR ME ON A STORE COUNTER, AND THEN WENT INTO THE SLEEPING ROOM, REMEMBERING HIS BET WITH STEVE, THE REST OF US GATHERED SILENTLY AT THE DOOR.

YOU CAN HAVE HALF OF MY BED, OLD MAN



I CERTAINLY THANK YOU, IF I GET TO TALKING AND TOSSING, JUST DON'T TOUCH ME, IT DOESN'T LAST BUT A MINUTE.



I'M DREAMING OF INDIANS WHEN I DO THAT, IF ANYTHING TOUCHES ME THEN, I'M LIABLE TO GRAB MY KNIFE RIGHT IN MY SLEEP.

OH.



WHEN THE VIRGINIAN GOT INTO BED, THE OTHER MAN FLED FOR THE DOOR. SUDDENLY HE FELL NOISILY OVER A SUITCASE.

WHAT IS IT?

WHY, I RECKON IT'S DRINKS ON STEVE.



THE NEXT MORNING WE STARTED FOR SUNK CREEK. ON THE SECOND DAY OF OUR TRIP OUR HORSES BOLTED.



WE CAREENED WILDLY INTO A DRY GULLY.



WITH ASTONISHING SKILL, THE VIRGINIAN SWUNG THE TEAM INTO THE DRY BED.



HE HEADED FOR A THicket OF TREES, WHICH BROUGHT US TO A HARMLESS STANDSTILL.



LATER IN OUR JOURNEY WE MET A SEDATE LOOKING TRAVELLER.

MORNING, TAYLOR. ANY NEWS UP YOUR WAY?

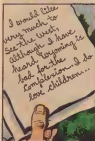


BEAR CREEK IS GOING TO BUILD A SCHOOLHOUSE

WELL, WELL. GOT YOUR EYE ON A SCHOOLMARM?



WE'RE THINKING OF A MISS MOLLY STARK WOOD OF BENNINGTON, VERMONT. HERE'S A LETTER SHE WROTE TO ONE OF THE LADIES AT BEAR CREEK



IT'S SIGNED, "YOUR VERY SINCERE SPINSTER." I GUESS THAT MEANS SHE'S FORTY.

I RECKON SHE'S ABOUT TWENTY.



WHEN WE REACHED THE RANCH, I SAW LITTLE OF THE VIRGINIAN OCCASIONALLY HE WOULD COME TO WATCH ME BUILD A NEW CHICKEN HOUSE FOR MY HOST.

SEE THAT MEN OVER THERE? HER NAME IS EM'LY. SHE THINKS SHE CAN HATCH OUT ANYTHING.

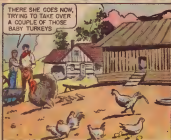


I'VE FOUND HER SETTING ON POTATOES, AND LAST WEEK I CAUGHT HER ON TWO BALLS OF SOAP.

SHE SOUNDS PLUM ADDLED



THERE SHE GOES NOW, TRYING TO TAKE OVER A COUPLE OF THOSE BABY TURKEYS



THE MOTHER TURKEY'S NOT HAVING ANY OF IT, THOUGH.



THEN ONE DAY, THE JUDGE'S SETTER HAD PUPPIES. THE DOG NEGLECTED THEM SO EM'LY SEIZED HER CHANCE.

AT LAST SHE'S FOUND SOMETHING TO RAISE.



I LEFT SUNN CREEK SOON AFTER, BUT LETTERS FROM THE RANCH BROUGHT ME THE NEWS THAT HOLLY WOOD WAS ON HER WAY TO BEAR CREEK TO TEACH SCHOOL.

SHOULD I HAVE STAYED AT HOME? THIS WILL BE SO UNLIKE THE LIFE I HAVE KNOWN.



THE LAST LAP OF HER JOURNEY WAS MADE BY STAGE.

I WISH THE DRIVER WOULD STOP DRINKING.



WHEN THEY CAME TO A FORD, THE STAGE COARED WILDLY AND TWO WHEELS SLIPPED INTO THE RIVER.



SUDDENLY A TALL RIDER APPEARED AT THE WINDOW.



HE SWIFTLY PULLED THE GIRL FROM THE TILTING STAGE AND SWUNG HER ONTO HIS HORSE.



GENTLY HE DEPOSITED HER ON THE BANK.



THEN HE RETURNED TO THE STAGE DRIVER, SPOKE A FEW WORDS AND HURLED THE WHISKEY BOTTLE INTO THE STREAM.



WITH A LAST LOOK AT THE GIRL, HE RODE OFF



THOROUGHLY OBLIVIOUS, THE DRIVER HELPED MOLLY WOOD INTO THE RIGHTED STAGE AND DELIVERED HER SAFELY TO BEAR CREEK. SOME TIME PASSED. THEN . . .

YOU GOING TO THE SWINTON BARBECUE?

YES. I'D LIKE TO SEE HOW THEY'RE GETTING ALONG UP IN BEAR CREEK.



THERE'S A MIGHTY PRETTY NEW SCHOOLMARM UP THERE.

SHE'S GOT ALL THE MEN CRAZY FOR HER. WHY, I CAN TELL YOU THINGS ABOUT HER THAT—



ALL RIGHT, TRAMPAS, YOU CAN RISE UP NOW AND TELL THEM YOU LIE.



TRAMPAS' HAND MOVED TOWARD HIS GUY.

OUT THAT OR I'LL BREAK YOUR NECK.





A AT THE BARBECUE, THE VIRGINIAN SOUGHT OUT MOLLY WOOD.



B BUT BEFORE HE GOT BACK, MOLLY WAS DANCING AGAIN. THE VIRGINIAN RETIRED TO THE WHISKEY BARREL.



JUST THEN ONE OF THE BABIES WHO HAD BEEN DEPOSITED BY THEIR PARENTS IN THE NEXT ROOM CRIED DROWSILY.



THEY LOOK SO AWFULLY ALIKE. I'VE GOT A RIGHT QUANT MOTION



THE VIRGINIAN STOPPED AND WITH WONDERFUL DEXTERITY REMOVED THE COLORED SHAWL FROM ONE BABY AND PUT IT AROUND ANOTHER.



WITH A JOYFUL YELP, LIN SPRANG TO HELP HIM



WHILE THE UNKNOWN PARENTS WENT ON DANCING, THE MEN BUSSED THEMSELVES WITH THE SHAWLS AND QUILTS



THE NEXT DAY THE VIRGINIAN CALLED ON MOLLY.

WILL YOU COME FOR A RIDE, MA'AM?



AFTER WHAT YOU DID LAST NIGHT—MIXING UP ALL THOSE BABIES? SOME OF THE PARENTS GOT ALL THE WAY HOME BEFORE THEY DISCOVERED THEY DIDN'T HAVE THEIR OWN CHILD.



I OWNED UP TO IT. AFTERWARD, I RECKON THEY FORGAVE ME.



I PLAYED FAIR WITH THEM BUT YOU'RE NOT PLAYING FAIR WITH ME—PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW ME AFTER I PULLED YOU OUT OF THE STAGE.

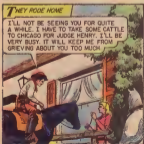


I DON'T THINK I LIKE YOU.



YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE ME BEFORE WE GET THROUGH.





THE VIRGINIAN DELIVERED THE CATTLE AND IT WAS ON THE TRIP BACK THAT I CHANCED TO MEET HIM

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



I'M ON MY WAY TO SUNK CREEK TO VISIT THE JUDGE AGAIN.

THEN YOU CAN TRAVEL WITH US, IF YOU'VE A MIND TO.



YOU IN CHARGE OF THE MEN?

YES, I'M DEPUTY FOREMAN. I'VE GOT TO GET THEM BACK TO THE RANCH, BUT THEY HAVE HEARD RUMORS OF GOLD IN RAMHIDE AND ARE PLANNING TO DESERT.



ISN'T THAT TRAMP— THE MAN WHO GOT USLY OVER CARDS IN MEDICINE BOW?

YES, HE'S THE LEADER IN THIS PLOT.



THE TRAIN WAS DELAYED JUST BEFORE IT PULLED INTO RAWHIDE! EVERYONE BUT THE VIRGINIAN WAS TENSE.

I'D SAY THIS WAS PRETTY GOOD COUNTRY FOR FROGS.



YOU THINK THERE'S MONEY AT RAWHIDE? WHY, IN TULARE, CALIFORNIA, AT A FROG RANCH I KNOW OF, THEY WERE PAYING A HUNDRED A MONTH FOR REGULAR HANDS.



AS TRAMMAS AND THE OTHERS LISTENED GREEDILY, THE VIRGINIAN TOLD A FANTASTIC STORY ABOUT THE MONEY HE MADE RAISING FROGS. FINALLY

BUT IF YOU EVER CATCH A FROGS RANCHER WAGG, YOU'LL FIND HE'S WEB-FOOTED. FROGS ARE DEAD, TRAMMAS, AND SO ARE YOU!



THE TENSION EXPLODED IN A BURST OF LAUGHTER.

RISE UP, LIARS, AND SALUTE YOUR KING!



JUST THEN THE TRAIN STARTED.

LAST CHANCE FOR RAWHIDE!

NO, THANKS! WE'RE WITH YOU!



WHEN WE GOT TO SUAK CREEK I TOLD JUDGE HENRY HOW THE VIRGINIAN HAD PREVENTED A MUTINY. THE JUDGE MADE HIM FOREMAN. SOME MONTHS LATER HE SENT HIM ON ANOTHER MISSION.

MR. BALAMM BORROWED A COUPLE OF HORSES SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. I'D LIKE YOU TO FETCH THEM BACK.



THE VIRGINIAN FOUND BALAM AT HIS RANCH.

THE HORSES ARE OUT ON THE RANGE. I'LL SEND A MAN FOR THEM.



I HEAR THERE ARE INDIANS ABOUT. SEE ANY OF THEM?

NO, THEY'RE REPORTED OVER AT BOW LEG RANGE SUPPOSED TO BE REACHEABLE, THOUGH.



WELL, I DON'T KNOW AN OLD TRAPPER DISAPPEARED A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO. HASN'T BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE.





THEY MADE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT THE SECOND DAY FOUND THEM IN A SHADY PASS IN THE MOUNTAINS.

INDIAN
CAMP

ABOUT A
WEEK OLD.



SUDDENLY THE JUDGE'S HORSES BOLTED.



WHILE CHASING THEM, BALAAM'S PONY STUMBLER. BALAAM STRUCK HIM FEARFULLY.



THAT ISN'T GOING
TO HELP HIM.



DO YOU THINK YOU CAN
TEACH ME ANYTHING
ABOUT HORSES?

DOESN'T LOOK
LIKE I COULD.



BALAAAM KEPT BEATING THE PONY

I'D LET THAT HORSE ALONE.



FINALLY HE GAVE THE ANIMAL SUCH A BLOW IT SANK TO THE GROUND.



THE VIRGINIAN HURLED HIMSELF AT BALAAAM.



A FEW SLEDGE-HAMMER BLOWS OF JUSTICE STRETCHED HIM ON THE GROUND.

I HAVE NOT KILLED YOU, THOUGH YOU DESERVE IT.

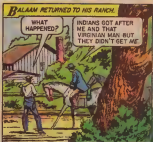




THE VIRGINIAN RODE OFF, AND BALAAM SAT LISTENING TO THE CRIES OF HOOT OWLS.



THEN THE HORSES SHOOK WITH FEAR.



MEANWHILE, MARY WAS PACKING HER THINGS TO RETURN TO VERMONT.

YOU WILL BE BACK, WON'T YOU, DEARY?

I DON'T THINK SO, MRS. TAYLOR. I BELONG IN VERMONT, NOT HERE.



YOU MAY FIND FOLKS THAT USE BETTER GRAMMAR IN VERMONT, DEARY, BUT YOU'LL NEVER FIND A MAN LIKE THE ONE YOU'RE LEAVING.



DO YOU THINK HE'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU? WELL, IF YOU CAN'T SEE WHAT A PRIME ONE YOU'RE LOSING, YOU'D BETTER GO BACK EAST.



PLEASE, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE. I'M GOING OUT FOR A RIDE.



MOLLY SWINGS A SADDLE ON HER HORSE AND GALLOPED OFF.



SOON

WHY, THAT'S MY HORSE. WHAT CAN HE BE DOING HERE?



SHE RODE AROUND A ROCK AND CAME UPON THE VIRGINIAN.



SHE RAN TO HIM.

BLOOD! HE'S BEEN SHOT!



SHE BATHED HIS HEAD AND THE WOUND WITH COLD SPRING WATER



WITH STRIPS FROM HER DRESS SHE BANDAIED HIM



FINALLY HIS EYES OPENED.

YOU MUST NOT STAY THE INDIANS WILL GET YOU TOO.



SHE REACHED FOR HIS PISTOL AND RELEASED IT.

LISTEN, NOBODY SHALL GET YOU AND NOBODY SHALL GET ME.



YOU MUST GET ON YOUR HORSE, I WILL TAKE YOU HOME.



IT'S ONLY FIVE MILES.
WE CAN MAKE IT.



HE SWAYED WEARILY IN THE SADDLE.



ONCE HE FELL, BUT SHE HELPED HIM
BACK ON THE HORSE.



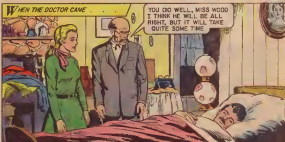
FINALLY THEY REACHED HER CABIN.

LIE QUIETLY. I MUST
FIND SOMEONE TO GO
FOR THE DOCTOR.



WHEN THE DOCTOR CAME

YOU DID WELL, MISS WOOD.
I THINK HE WILL BE ALL
RIGHT, BUT IT WILL TAKE
QUITE SOME TIME.





SO MOLLY AND THE VIRGINIAN BECAME ENGAGED. NOT LONG AFTERWARD, AT THE VIRGINIAN'S BIDDING, I SET OUT TO MEET HIM AT HORSE THIEF PASS.





THE NEXT MORNING THE MEN AND THE PRISONERS LEFT AT DAYBREAK. IT WAS SOME TIME BEFORE THE VIRGINIAN CAME BACK.

LET'S PACK AND
QUIT HERE.



DO YOU EVER
DO THIS BEFORE?

NO BUT THERE
WASN'T ANY
OTHER WAY.



IT'S TOO BAD
ABOUT STEVE.

YES, YOU HAVE A FRIEND AND
HIS WAYS ARE YOUR WAYS.
THEN ONE DAY YOU FIND
HIM PUTTING HIS IRON ON
ANOTHER MAN'S CALF.



HE KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN
IF HE GOT CAUGHT. HE MADE
THE CHOICE.



WERE THERE
OTHERS IN
THE GANG?

TRAMMAS AND A DUMB KID
NAMED SHORTY. BUT THEY
GOT AWAY.



WE RODE ALL THAT DAY. THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON . . .

LOOK ---
FRESH
TRACKS.

A MAN AND
A HORSE.



HOW DO YOU
SUPPOSE THEY
GOT HERE?

OVER ONE OF THE
OTHER TRAILS. BUT
THERE AREN'T MANY
THAT KNOW THEM.



WE FOLLOWED THE TRACKS.

IT'S QUERER THE MAN KEEPS
WALKING BESIDE HIS HORSE.
HE DOESN'T GET ON HIM.



I KNOW. THERE ARE TWO OF THEM.
ONE RIDES THE HORSE AND THE
OTHER WALKS.



WE RODE ON UNTIL DARK AND THEY MADE CAMP.

I'LL BE GLAD WHEN
WE GET OUT OF
THESE MOUNTAINS.



THE VIRGINIAN TOSSED AND CRIED OUT IN HIS SLEEP, AND I KNEW HE WAS DREAMING OF STEVE. THEN THE SOUND OF HORSES SNORTING BROUGHT HIM WIDE AWAKE.

WHAT IS IT?

OUR HORSES. SOMETHING SCARED THEM.



A BEAR, I SUPPOSE.

MAYBE.



THE NEXT MORNING WE HEARD THE FAINT SOUND OF A GUN.

MAYBE THOSE TWO MEN AHEAD OF US HAVE SHOT THAT BEAR.



WE TOOK TO THE TRAIL, SOON . . .

THEY CAMPED HERE, THEN ONE OF THEM SPOTTED OUR HORSES—MAYBE TRIED TO CATCH ONE SO THEY COULD BOTH RIDE.



A LITTLE FURTHER ON THE
VIRGIAN STOPPED AGAIN.

SEE, THE HORSE IS GALLOPING
NOW, AND THERE'S NO SIGN OF
THE ONE WHO WAS WALKING.



THEN WE CAME UPON THEIR CAMP.

IT'S SHORTY. HE'S
BEEN SHOT IN
THE BACK.



I RECKON HE MADE A
BAD MISTAKE. HE TOLD
TRAMPAS ABOUT
FINDING OUR HORSES.



TRAMPAS GOT SCARED. HE HAD TO GET
AWAY FAST, AND SHORTY WOULD ONLY
HAVE BEEN IN THE WAY.



WE BURIED SHORTY AND CONTINUED OUR
JOURNEY. THE PRINTS OF THE
GALLOPING HORSE SOON DISAPPEARED.

THERE ARE DOZENS OF PLACES
WHERE A MAN CAN HIDE IN THESE
MOUNTAINS. WE'LL LIKELY NOT
COME ON HIS TRAIL AGAIN.



THE STORY OF THE HANGING OF THE RUSTLERS GOT BACK TO BEAR CREEK BEFORE THE VIRGINIAN DID.

YOUR MAN SHOULD BE HOME SOON, MISS WOOD.

I'VE FOUND OUT THE SORT OF ERRAND HE WENT ON, JUDGE HENRY. IT'S TOO DREAFUL.

I SENT HIM MYSELF ON THAT BUSINESS, AND I'M PARTLY RESPONSIBLE. BUT YOU MUST NOT MISUNDERSTAND US.

THE HANGING MAY SEEM TO YOU TO OBEY LAW AND ORDER. ACTUALLY IT ASSERTS IT. YOU SEE, HERE IN WYOMING, THOSE WHO SHOULD ENFORCE THE LAW DO NOT DO SO.



FOR YEARS THEY HAVE BEEN LETTING CATTLE THEVES GO. THIS MEANS WE MUST SOMEHOW ENFORCE THE LAW OURSELVES UNTIL CIVILIZATION REACHES US.



IT IS ALL SO TERRIBLE TO ME.

YES, BUT NOT SO TERRIBLE AS UNCHECKED THEFT AND MURDER WOULD BE.

WHEN THE VIRGINIAN RETURNED, HE AND MOLLY SET THEIR WEDDING FOR JULY 3. ON JULY 2 THEY RODE TO THE TOWN WHERE THE BISHOP OF WYOMING WAS TO MARRY THEM.

HOW BEAUTIFUL THIS COUNTRY IS! HOW I LOVE IT!



A HORSEMAN APPROACHED AND GRESSED THEM.



WHO WAS THAT MAN? HE LOOKED AS IF HE HATED YOU.



OH, JUST A MAN I SEE NOW AND THEN.



IS HIS NAME TRAMPAS?

WHY, YES, BUT WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?



I NEVER HAD, UNTIL NOW BUT I HAVE HEARD OF HIM AND SHORTY'S MURDER. WHY WAS HE NEVER ARRESTED?

THERE WAS NO PROOF— ONLY THE BODY AND THE HOOFPRINTS AND WHAT FOLKS GUESSED.

ONE THING'S SURE— TRAMPAS DOESN'T THINK MUCH OF ME. I HAD TO EXPLAIN MYSELF TO HIM ONCE OVER CARDS.



THEN I HAD TO SET HIM STRAIGHT WHEN HE STARTED MAKING UP STORIES ABOUT YOU, AND I KEPT HIM FROM LEADING JUDGE HENRY'S MEN TO RAWHIDE TO LOOK FOR GOLD.

NOW THERE'S THIS LAST BUSINESS OF THE CATTLE RUSTLING AND POOR SHORTY.

I HOPE TRAMPAS WON'T MAKE ANY MORE TROUBLE FOR YOU.



WHEN THEY REACHED TOWN, SOME OF THE VIRGINIAN'S FRIENDS WERE WAITING.



THE VIRGINIAN TOOK MOLLY TO A HOTEL, AND THEN REJOINED HIS FRIENDS.



HE'S HANGING AROUND, FILLING UP ON WHISKEY.

AND TALKING MENTIONED YOU



LET US RUN HIM OUT OF TOWN FOR YOU. SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE.

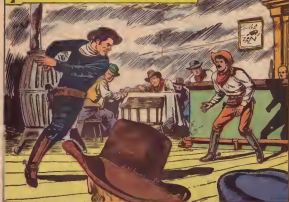




SUDDENLY THE DOOR OPENED AND TRAMPAS CAME IN, COURAGEOUS WITH WHISKEY



IN ANSWER, TRAMPAS HURLED A BOTTLE AT THE VIRGINIAN.



GET OUT BY SUNDOWN,
THAT'S ALL!



TRAMPAS WHEELED OUT
THE DOOR.

GENLEMEN, I KNOW
YOU WILL OBLIGE ME.

SURE, WE'LL SEE
EVERYBODY LETS
THIS THING ALONE



THE VIRGINIAN WALKED
OUT INTO THE STREET.

IT'S A TERRIBLE SHAME.
HE COULDN'T HAVE
POSTPONED IT.



THE VIRGINIAN WALKED ALONG IN THE OPEN AIR AS THE TOWN TALKED, FILLING IN THE TIME BEFORE SUNSET.

SHE HAS BEEN RAISED SO DIFFERENTLY



HE MET THE BISHOP OF WYOMING.

I HEARD ABOUT TRAMPAS. THIS IS HARD LUCK.



I WANT TO DO RIGHT TODAY MORE THAN ANY DAY I HAVE EVER LIVED. STILL, I CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM HIM.



THEN YOU MUST TELL MISS WOOD AT ONCE. YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN YOUR OWN FOR MANY YEARS BUT IT IS NOT YOUR OWN NOW. YOU HAVE GIVEN IT TO HER.





BUT I BELONGS HERE IT'S MY LIFE IF FOLKS CAME TO THINK I WAS A COWARD, I COULD NOT HOLD UP MY HEAD AGAIN.



BUT TO KILL IN COLD BLOOD? NO, I CAN'T LET YOU! IF YOU DO THIS, IT WILL BE THE END BETWEEN YOU AND ME.



DO YOU REALLY MEAN THAT? THEN, GOOD-BY.



HE LIFTED HER GENTLY, TURNED AND LEFT.



THE SUN WAS SETTING AS THE VIRGINIAN WENT OUT INTO THE STREET.



HE FOUND A PLACE WHERE NO ONE COULD COME AT HIM EXCEPT FROM IN FRONT. SUDDENLY A WIND SEEMED TO BLOW FAST HIS SLEEVE.



HE REPLIED TO IT AND SAW TRAMPAS PITCH FORWARD.





NOW THAT YOU HAVE READ THE CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED EDITION, DON'T MISS THE ADDED ENJOYMENT OF READING THE ORIGINAL. OBTAINABLE AT YOUR SCHOOL OR PUBLIC LIBRARY.

OWEN WISTER



OWEN WISTER was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1860. He was educated at Harvard and abroad. By the time he was twenty-two years old, he had

traveled all over Europe.

Wister went to Wyoming because of his poor health. He was so impressed with the West that he turned to writing in order to express his deep feelings for the rapidly disappearing frontier.

Owen Wister not only wrote about the West, he had many exciting adventures while he was there.

One day, Wister and his Indian guide were exploring a section of the plains. As they went over the grass, they came to a gulch where a small stream flowed. They stopped for breakfast and the guide went ahead to round up the horses and bring them into camp. Suddenly, he appeared and gestured violently to Wister from his horse. Wister grabbed his rifle and ran through the brush toward the guide.

"Bear! Bear!" the guide shouted. He had seen a bear crossing on the edge of the timber. Wister mounted behind the guide, and they started off along the stony trail. Soon they came across the gulch they had just left.

The guide whispered to Wister that he

saw the bear. They dismounted and crept forward.

Then Wister spied the bear. The animal was huge and dark. Occasionally he would pick up a large piece of timber and look for insects. He moved slowly, completely unaware anyone was watching him.

Wister hurried forward quickly and quietly. The bear came to the grass one hundred yards ahead of where Wister was watching. Then he passed behind a tree that stood in the middle of the open plain.

Wister's guide motioned him to move in for the kill. Wister ran out on the grass. The bear's head peered out from one side of the tree. Wister shifted his course so that he and the bear were opposite each other.

Each time the bear's snout showed to the right of the tree, Wister edged to the left. When Wister got under the branches of the tree, the bear walked out into full view on the other side. Then the bear suddenly stopped short. He looked as though he was preparing to lunge at Wister. Wister's guide told him to shoot and he did. The bear fell dead.

When Wister returned to camp he found that some of his men were betting three to one against him hitting anything at all.

Owen Wister made several trips out West to the country he loved and wrote about. He died on July 21, 1908 in North Huntington, Rhode Island.

In addition to *The Virginian*, Wister wrote *Red Men and White*, *Ulysses S. Grant*, *When West Was West* and *Roosevelt, The Story of A Friendship*.



T. R. AND THE THIEVES

OWEN WISTER DEDICATED *The Virginian* to a friend whose courage and sense of justice he greatly admired. This friend was Theodore Roosevelt.

When Theodore Roosevelt was a young man, he had many exciting adventures in the Bad Lands of the Dakotas. Roosevelt found some land he liked along the Little Missouri river and built a ranch there. He brought two old friends, Bill Sewall and Will Dow, out West to be his partners.

One of Roosevelt's western adventures took place in the spring of 1886. The winter had been especially hard. By March, everything was frozen, and the Little Missouri river was high and jammed with ice.

One morning, Bill Sewall told Roosevelt their only boat was gone. Roosevelt had no doubt who had stolen it. He suspected three hardened characters, who lived in a shack nearby, were planning to leave the country before the vigilantes got after them. Roosevelt soon discovered the shack the men had occupied was deserted.

Three days later, Roosevelt, Sewall and Will Dow had built a new boat and started down the Little Missouri river after the thieves. It was bitterly cold. The region through which they passed was barren and bleak. On either side, beyond piles of ice, rose the scarred buttes, weather worn into odd shapes and blotched with spots of color.

They traveled for three days. Late the third day, rounding a bend, they saw their boat against a bank. Out of the bushes, a

little way back, the smoke of a campfire curled up through the air. Soon they were on the shore facing the thieves.

Roosevelt had the thieves surrender their guns. But he knew they would try to escape if they could. To prevent this he took their boots and hid them. Then he gave them a buffalo robe so they wouldn't freeze to death.

The following morning, the six men started downstream in the two boats. But before the day passed, they were stopped by an ice jam. For over a week they were forced to wait for a thaw that did not come.

Their provisions ran short. They went after game, but there was none to be seen. Sewall, on foot, searched the surrounding region for a ranch but found none. Then Roosevelt and Dow covered the country on the other side of the river. At last they came upon an outlying cow camp of the Diamond C Ranch. Roosevelt got a horse and rode fifteen miles to the ranch, where he got supplies, a covered wagon and a man to drive it.

Then for two more days Roosevelt and his captives traveled over the bleak prairie. Overnight they stopped at a frontiersman's hut. But Roosevelt didn't sleep. He sat up guarding his prisoners.

The next afternoon, Roosevelt delivered the three thieves to the sheriff at the local jail. It had taken him a total of seventeen days to find them and bring them to justice.



THE CAPTURE OF GERONIMO

IN APRIL, 1877, Indian agent John P. Clum received an order from Washington, D. C. to capture Geronimo and his band. Geronimo was at Ojo Caliente, in what is now New Mexico. Clum was four hundred miles away, at the San Carlos Indian Reservation in what is now Arizona.

Clum selected a posse of one hundred of his best Apache police and set out on the long, hard trek. They followed an old trail that led across burning sand and bleak mountains. Finally, after four weeks, they reached Ojo Caliente. It had once been an Indian agency. Nearby were mineral springs where Geronimo liked to bathe.

Clum had a plan to lure Geronimo from the springs. He had most of his men slip into the old agency buildings. At daybreak he boldly walked in with the rest of his men. He knew that Geronimo's scouts would see them and bring their chief to see why they were there. Clum had a signal that would bring his men from their hiding places when they were needed.

Geronimo's men saw Clum and ran to tell their chief. When Geronimo and his braves rode into Ojo Caliente to see who the white man was, Clum charged the chief with murder, horse stealing and burning ranches. Then he placed him under arrest. Geronimo laughed and started to raise his gun. Clum put his hand to his hat. This was the signal for his men to come out of their hiding places.

The Indian police quickly surrounded Geronimo and his braves. The crafty chief was forced to surrender. The next day an

army platoon arrived and Clum handed his prisoners over to them. This was the only time Geronimo was ever actually captured. John Clum had made the fierce chief prisoner without a single shot being fired.

Clum was a true friend of the Indians. He was always willing to aid any who wanted to live peacefully on the San Carlos reservation. Clum was appointed Indian agent at the reservation in 1871. He taught the Apaches to rule themselves and he taught them the arts of peace instead of the arts of war.

In time, Clum left the reservation and settled in Tombstone, in what is now Arizona. Tombstone was a rough and brawling city, but Clum became its first mayor. He founded and published its famous newspaper, *The Tombstone Epitaph*.

Then Clum left Tombstone and went to Washington to serve in the Postmaster General's department. In 1896, when gold was discovered in the Klondike, there was no way for miners to send mail or receive it. Clum volunteered to set up a post office system in the far North. He left Washington and headed for the gold country. There he found some of the gold seekers in Alaska were old friends of his who were silver seekers in Tombstone back in the old days. Clum set up a post office in the Klondike and the miners got their mail.

When Clum grew older he retired to write about his many adventures and the exciting people he had known. He died on May 2, 1932, at his home in Los Angeles, California.



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