



Riders of the Purple Sage

Zane Grey (1872- 1939)

Read by:	Laurie Anne Walden	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case, jewel box, or paper sleeve; MP3 download
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Riders of the Purple Sage by Zane Grey has been called the most popular western novel of all time and is considered by many to have played a major hand in establishing the formula for the Western genre. Set in Southern Utah in 1871, it is a long novel with a complex plot and many threads. The central character is Jane Withersteen, a wealthy young Mormon woman who has inherited a valuable property from her father. When she refuses a marriage proposal from a church elder (who covets her ranch) she is openly persecuted by the community. She favors her friendship with Venters, a young Gentile rider. While Venters is off chasing a gang of rustlers that includes a

mysterious Masked Rider, a notorious gunman named Lassiter arrives in search of the grave and the child of his long-lost sister. The persecution escalates and Jane and Lassiter are driven off her ranch. They flee and fall in love. Meanwhile, Venters unmasks the Masked Rider and finds his own soul mate; together they find refuge in Surprise Valley before setting off for Illinois. Jane and Lassiter encounter them en route and set off for Surprise Valley themselves. The vindictive Mormons are in hot pursuit but are foiled when Lassiter sets off an avalanche to close off Deception Pass, the only access to the valley. The book was immensely popular upon publication in 1912 and was followed by a sequel, *Rainbow Trail*, in 1915. It has been adapted for film five times, most recently in 1996.

Zane Grey (January 31, 1872 – October 23, 1939) was an American author known for his Western novels. He was born in Zanesville, Ohio, a city founded by his maternal great-grandfather. He was an avid reader of adventure stories and dime novels as a boy and an enthusiastic baseball player and fisherman. He earned a baseball scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania and played for several minor league teams. He studied dentistry and after graduating established a practice in New York City in order to be close to publishers. In 1905 he married Lina “Dolly” Roth, who would edit much of his work and manage his career. His early writing met with regular rejection but gradually improved. Owen Wister’s *The Virginian* inspired him to write his first novel, *Betty Zane*, in 1903. In 1907 a lecture by a western hunter inspired him to take a hunting trip to the Grand Canyon, where he got the idea to write about the American West. This resulted in *The Last of the Plainsmen* (1909) and *The Heritage of the Desert* (1910), which became his first best seller, and *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912) his all time best seller. He moved the family to California in 1918. He alternated between dry spells and bursts of tremendous energy. He typically spent part of his time traveling and spent the rest of the year writing novels and articles for magazines such as *Outdoor Life*. His son Loren estimated that Zane fished 300 days a year and he traveled frequently to Long Key, Florida, and to New Zealand, where he established a lodge and camp in the Bay of Islands and won numerous world records for big-game fishing.