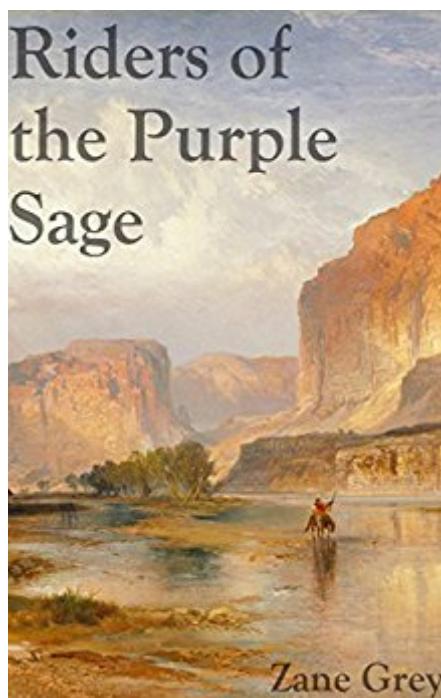


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Riders Of The Purple Sage: Filibooks Classics (Illustrated)



Synopsis

Riders of the Purple Sage is a western novel by Zane Grey. The book is widely regarded as the most popular western of all time. The story revolves around Jane Withersteen's struggle against a Mormon fundamentalist church. Withersteen's friend Lassiter, a famous gunslinger and Mormon hunter, helps her in the struggle.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I picked this up after a long read of a Gilded Age history when I was looking for something light. I read this based on the recommendation from a long-time friend. I started in skeptically - westerns are not usually my thing (Larry McMurtry excepted). Jane Withersteen is a wealthy, Mormon, single woman living on a ranch in Utah. The elders and the bishop want her to marry a Mormon and stop having anything to do with the gentiles of the area. They continually ramp up the pressure until violence is the only way out. She is befriended by the Mormon-hating gunman Lassiter when he

saves her friend Venters from a whipping and worse. We get classic romantic Western tropes like "Ventners laughed in cool disdain" [loc 109] and fainting damsels: "She leaned against him, and her body was limp and vibrated to a long, wavering tremble" [loc 2076] At first I was put off by this but then realized this was written in 1912 so I accepted (and grew to enjoy) the romantic characterizations. I had more difficulty with the dialog. I recall Danny Deck, the author protagonist in Larry McMurtry's "All My Friends Are Going to be Strangers" reflect that he had difficulty with nature descriptions but feels strong when he gets his characters talking. I think Zane Grey is the opposite. We get awkward and passive passages such as "I watched him with eyes which saw him my friend" [loc 393] and "When his eyes unclosed, day had come again" [loc 725]. Why not just: "When his eyes opened"? And I'm not even sure what this sentence means: "She believed fate had thrown in her way the lover or husband of Milly Erne." [loc 1137]. But get Zane Grey out in the countryside and we see his real strength - beautiful descriptions of nature. "Half a mile down the slope they entered a luxuriant growth of willows, and soon came into an open space carpeted with grass like deep green velvet. The rushing of water and singing of birds filled their ears. Venters led his comrade to a shady bower and showed him Amber Spring. It was a magnificent outburst of clear, amber water pouring from a dark, stone-lined hole." [loc 539]. As the novel progressed the writing becomes less awkward; perhaps Grey just needed to warm up a bit. I also took issue with some of the narrative. Venters found a beautiful valley after climbing up steps hacked into stone by the cave dweller Native Americans (Sinagua?) who had been there ages ago. He had to take his boots and guns off to get over this part of the trail, but he later was able to hoist a calf on his shoulder and make the same climb. [Warning: spoiler alert] Given that this is a romantic novel - as in pastoral depiction of nature - I was unhappy with the ending. While the four main characters come out fine, Jane Withersteen had to sacrifice her ranch. I was impressed by the straightforward way Grey approached the Mormon issues and opinions of the day (1910's). He was also a forward thinker having such a strong woman character. [End Spoiler alert] All-in-all, if you approach this novel on its terms rather than modern terms of a century later, you may find you enjoy it. This book is in the public domain and there are a few options for reading it. I paid \$0.99 for one e-book edition which was unreadable due to its formatting. The one I finally read (another \$0.99) was better but the chapters didn't seem to be numbered correctly. After a quick review, I think the free (e-book) version <http://www..com/Riders-Purple-Sage-Zane-Grey-ebook/dp/B004TP5JXA> would be the better bet. None have page numbers.

Grey
Narrated by: Ann M. Richardson
Length: 11 hrs and 49 mins
Series: Riders of the Purple Sage, Book 1
Unabridged Audiobook
Release Date: 04-18-16
Publisher: Post Hypnotic Press Inc.

Riders of the Purple Sage is a classic western from author Zane Grey. It was published in 1912 and has remained in print and popular to this day. The story is set in 1871 in the Utah territory. There is no separation of church and state. The Mormon church and its patriarchal society hold all power. The main character Jane is very non-traditional for the time period and for Mormon women. She is unmarried in her late twenties. She is also wealthy because of inheriting her father's estate. She further defies convention by refusing to marry one of the Mormon elders in the area who demand she get in line with church teachings. Worst of all, in the eyes of her Mormon neighbors, is her belief in treating all men, whether Mormon or Gentile (non-Mormon) with equal dignity. Her property is very valuable since it has a reliable water source. Her horses are also well known and sought after. Elder Tull wants to marry her, her wealth equal in his eyes to her beauty. The local Bishop, Dyer, supports Tull in his attempt to make Jane into a respectable Mormon wife. When Jane does not jump at the chance to become another of Tull's wives, Tull and Dyer set about forcing her by attacking her Gentile ranch hands. Without her trusted hands, Jane cannot keep the ranch functioning. As Jane continues to fight for what she feels is right and not what the Mormon men tell her is right, help comes from an unexpected and very dangerous source. Lassiter, a gunman known for his antipathy towards Mormons and accused of killing several Mormon men, arrives at Jane's ranch. His reputation precedes him and causes the to resort to even more violence in an attempt to force Jane into marriage. Lassiter is an anti-hero. He is a man who has willingly killed other men. He has a very open hatred of all things Mormon. Yet he demonstrates more honor than the religious men trying to rob Jane of her independence and wealth. The pairing of a gunslinger and a Mormon woman drive the plot to an unexpected and thrilling conclusion.

I enjoyed the book, the first Zane Grey I have read or listened to. My only disappointment was it took Jane so long to realize that the Elder and Bishop were not motivated by religion but by greed. She was naive. Other than that, all the characters were well rounded. I had previously listened to the version narrated by Mark Bramhall. I was interested to hear the book narrated by a woman, Ann M. Richardson. Different narrators can bring different tones or emphasis to the same book. I was very interested whether the gender of the narrator would affect the story itself. I found the gender of the narrator in this particular instance did not make a difference. Ms. Richardson did a very fine job of narrating the book. After listening to the same passages read by the two different narrators, I found I enjoyed them both. If this is an edge at all, it goes to Ms. Richardson. Her voice is very pleasant and she handles the range of voices, male/female, very well.

Rating: Story (Plot) 4
Rating: Performance

5Rating: Production Quality 5Rating: Attention Holding 4Rating 4.5Ã¢Â€Â“ ABR received this audiobook for free from the Publisher, Submitted in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect our opinion of the audiobook or the content of our review.

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