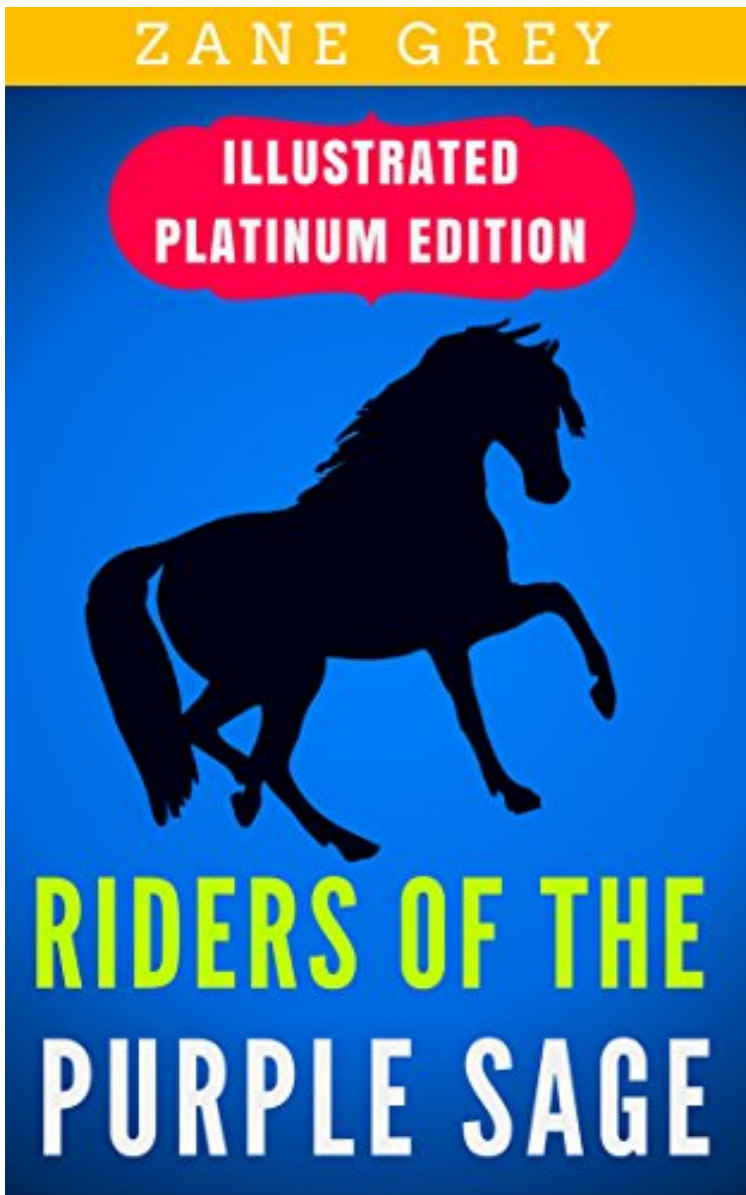


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Description : Description du produitTold by a master storyteller who, according to critic Russell Nye, combined adventure, action, violence, crisis, conflict, sentimentalism, and sex in an extremely shrewd mixture, Riders of the Purple Sage is a classic of the Western genre. It is the story of Lassiter, a gunslinging avenger in black, who shows up in a remote Utah town just in time to save the young and beautiful rancher Jane Withersteen from having to marry a Mormon elder against her will. Lassiter is on his own quest, one

that ends when he discovers a secret grave on Janes grounds. [Zane Greys] popularity was neither accidental nor undeserved, wrote Nye. Few popular novelists have possessed such a grasp of what the public wanted and few have developed Greys skill at supplying it.

Prsentation de l'diteurHow is this book unique? 15 Illustrations are included Short Biography is also includedOriginal Unabridged EditionTablet and e-reader formattedBest fiction books of all timeOne of the best books to readClassic historical fiction booksBestselling FictionRiders of the Purple Sage is a Western novel by Zane Grey, first published by Harper Brothers in 1912. Considered by many critics[who?] to have played a significant role in shaping the formula of the popular Western genre, the novel has been called "the most popular western novel of all time." Riders of the Purple Sage tells the story of Jane Withersteen and her battle to overcome persecution by members of her polygamous Mormon fundamentalist church. A leader of the church, Elder Tull, wants to marry her. Withersteen gets help from a number of friends, including Bern Venters and Lassiter, a famous gunman and killer of Mormons. Throughout most of the novel she struggles with her "blindness" to the evil nature of her church and its leaders, and tries to keep Venters and Lassiter from killing the adversaries who are slowly ruining her. When she adopts a child, Fay, she abandons her beliefs and discovers her true love. A second plot strand tells of Venters and his escape to the wilderness with a girl named Bess, "the rustler's girl," whom he has accidentally shot. Venters falls in love with the girl while caring for her. Together they escape to the East, while Lassiter, Fay, and Jane, pursued by both Mormons and rustlers, escape into a paradise-like valley and topple a giant rock to forever close off the only way in or out.ExtraitCHAPTER I LassiterA sharp clip-clop of iron-shod hoofs deadened and died away, and clouds of yellow dust drifted from under the cottonwoods out over the sage.Jane Withersteen gazed down the wide purple slope with dreamy and troubled eyes. A rider had just left her and it was his message that held her thoughtful and almost sad, awaiting the churchmen who were coming to resent and attack her right to befriend a Gentile.She wondered if the unrest and strife that had lately come to the little village of Cottonwoods was to involve her. And then she sighed, remembering that her father had founded this remotest border settlement of southern Utah and that he had left it to her. She owned all the ground and many of the cottages. Withersteen House was hers, and the great ranch, with its thousands of cattle, and the swiftest horses of the sage. To her belonged Amber Spring, the water which gave verdure and beauty to the village and made living possible on that wild purple upland waste. She could not escape being involved by whatever befell Cottonwoods.That year, 1871, had marked a change which had been gradually coming in the lives of the peace-loving Mormons of the border. Glaze-Stone Bridge-Sterling, villages to the north, had risen against the invasion of Gentile settlers and the forays of rustlers. There had been opposition to the one and fighting with the other. And now Cottonwoods had begun to wake and bestir itself and grow hard.Jane prayed that the tranquillity and sweetness of her life would not be permanently disrupted. She meant to do so much more for her people than she had done. She wanted the sleepy quiet pastoral days to last always. Trouble between the Mormons and the Gentiles of the community would make her unhappy. She was Mormon-born, and she was a friend to poor and unfortunate Gentiles. She wished only to go on doing good and being happy. And she thought of what that great ranch meant to her. She loved it all-the grove of cottonwoods, the old stone house, the amber-tinted water, and the droves of shaggy, dusty horses and mustangs, the sleek, clean-limbed, blooded racers, and the browsing herds of cattle and the lean, sun-browned riders of the sage.While she waited there she forgot the prospect of untoward change. The bray of a lazy burro broke the afternoon quiet, and it was comfortingly suggestive of the drowsy farmyard, and the open corrals, and the green alfalfa fields. Her clear sight intensified the purple sage-slope as it rolled before her. Low swells of prairie-like ground sloped up to the west. Dark, lonely cedar-trees, few and far between, stood out strikingly, and at long distances ruins of red rocks. Farther on, up the gradual slope, rose a broken wall, a huge monument, looming dark purple and stretching its solitary, mystic way, a wavering line that faded in the north. Here to the westward was the light and color and beauty. Northward the slope descended to a dim line of caons from which rose an up-flinging of the earth, not mountainous, but a vast heave of purple uplands, with ribbed and fan-shaped walls, castle-crowned cliffs, and gray escarpments. Over it all crept the lengthening, waning afternoon shadows.The rapid beat of hoofs recalled Jane Withersteen to the question at hand. A group of riders cantered up the lane, dismounted, and threw their bridles. They were seven in number, and Tull, the leader, a tall, dark man, was an elder² of Jane's church."Did you get my message?" he asked, curtly."Yes," replied Jane."I sent word I'd give that rider Venters half an hour to come down to the village. He didn't come.""He knows nothing of it," said Jane. "I didn't tell him. I've been waiting

here for you." "Where is Venters?" "I left him in the courtyard." "Here, Jerry," called Tull, turning to his men, "take the gang and fetch Venters out here if you have to rope him." The dusty-booted and long-spurred riders clanked noisily into the grove of cottonwoods and disappeared in the shade. "Elder Tull, what do you mean by this?" demanded Jane. "If you must arrest Venters you might have the courtesy to wait till he leaves my home. And if you do arrest him it will be adding insult to injury. It's absurd to accuse Venters of being mixed up in that shooting fray in the village last night. He was with me at the time. Besides, he let me take charge of his guns. You're only using this as a pretext. What do you mean to do to Venters?" "I'll tell you presently," replied Tull. "But first tell me why you defend this worthless rider?" "Worthless!" exclaimed Jane, indignantly. "He's nothing of the kind. He was the best rider I ever had. There's not a reason why I shouldn't champion him and every reason why I should. It's no little shame to me, Elder Tull, that through my friendship he has roused the enmity of my people and become an outcast. Besides, I owe him eternal gratitude for saving the life of little Fay." "I've heard of your love for Fay Larkin and that you intend to adopt her. But-Jane Withersteen, the child is a Gentile!" "Yes. But, Elder, I don't love the Mormon children any less because I love a Gentile child. I shall adopt Fay if her mother will give her to me." "I'm not so much against that. You can give the child Mormon teaching," said Tull. "But I'm sick of seeing this fellow Venters hang around you. I'm going to put a stop to it. You've so much love to throw away on these beggars of Gentiles that I've an idea you might love Venters." Tull spoke with the arrogance of a Mormon whose power could not be brooked and with the passion of a man in whom jealousy had kindled a consuming fire. "Maybe I do love him," said Jane. She felt both fear and anger stir her heart. "I'd never thought of that. Poor fellow! he certainly needs some one to love him." "This'll be a bad day for Venters unless you deny that," returned Tull, grimly. Tull's men appeared under the cottonwoods and led a young man out into the lane. His ragged clothes were those of an outcast. But he stood tall and straight, his wide shoulders flung back, with the muscles of his bound arms rippling and a blue flame of defiance in the gaze he bent on Tull. For the first time Jane Withersteen felt Venters's real spirit. She wondered if she would love this splendid youth. Then her emotion cooled to the sobering sense of the issue at stake. "Venters, will you leave Cottonwoods at once and forever?" asked Tull, tensely. "Why?" rejoined the rider. "Because I order it." Venters laughed in cool disdain. The red leaped to Tull's dark cheek. "If you don't go it means your ruin," he said, sharply. "Ruin!" exclaimed Venters, passionately. "Haven't you already ruined me? What do you call ruin? A year ago I was a rider. I had horses and cattle of my own. I had a good name in Cottonwoods. And now when I come into the village to see this woman you set your men on me. You hound me. You trail me as if I were a rustler. I've no more to lose-except my life." "Will you leave Utah?" "Oh! I know," went on Venters, tauntingly, "it galls you, the idea of beautiful Jane Withersteen being friendly to a poor Gentile. You want her all yourself. You're a wiving Mormon. You have use for her-and Withersteen House and Amber Spring and seven thousand head of cattle!" Tull's hard jaw protruded, and rioting blood corded the veins of his neck. "Once more. Will you go?" "No!" "Then I'll have you whipped within an inch of your life," replied Tull, harshly. "I'll turn you out in the sage. And if you ever come back you'll get worse." Venters's agitated face grew coldly set and the bronze changed to gray. Jane impulsively stepped forward. "Oh! Elder Tull!" she cried. "You won't do that!" Tull lifted a shaking finger toward her. "That'll do from you. Understand, you'll not be allowed to hold this boy to a friendship that's offensive to your Bishop." Jane Withersteen, your father left you wealth and power. It has turned your head. You haven't yet come to see the place of Mormon women. We've reasoned with you, borne with you. We've patiently waited. We've let you have your fling, which is more than I ever saw granted to a Mormon woman. But you haven't come to your senses. Now, once for all, you can't have any further friendship with Venters. He's going to be whipped, and he's got to leave Utah!" "Oh! Don't whip him! It would be dastardly!" implored Jane, with slow certainty of her failing courage. Tull always blunted her spirit, and she grew conscious that she had feigned a boldness which she did not possess. He loomed up now in different guise, not as a jealous suitor, but embodying the mysterious despotism she had known from childhood-the power of her creed. "Venters, will you take your whipping here or would you rather go out in the sage?" asked Tull. He smiled a flinty smile that was more than inhuman, yet seemed to give out of its dark aloofness a gleam of righteousness. "I'll take it here-if I must," said Venters. "But by God!-Tull, you'd better kill me outright. That'll be a dear whipping for you and your praying Mormons. You'll make me another Lassiter!" The strange glow, the austere light which radiated from Tull's face, might have been a holy joy at the spiritual conception of exalted duty. But there was something more in him, barely hidden, a something personal and sinister, a deep of himself, an engulfing abyss. As his religious mood was fanatical and inexorable, so would his physical hate be merciless. "Elder, I-I repent my words,"

Jane faltered. The religion in her, the long habit of obedience, of humility, as well as agony of fear, spoke in her voice. "Spare the boy!" she whispered. "You can't save him now," replied Tull, stridently. Her head was bowing to the inevitable. She was grasping the truth, when suddenly there came, in inward constriction, a hardening of gentle forces within her breast. Like a steel bar it was, stiffening all that had been soft and weak in her. She felt a birth in her of something new and unintelligible. Once more her strained gaze sought the sage-slopes. Jane Withersteen loved that wild and purple wilderness. In times of sorrow it had been her strength, in happiness its beauty was her continual delight. In her extremity she found herself murmuring, "Whence cometh my help!"⁴ It was a prayer, as if forth from those lonely purple reaches and walls of red and clefts of blue might ride a fearless man, neither creed-bound nor creed-mad, who would hold up a restraining hand in the faces of her ruthless people. The restless movements of Tull's men suddenly quieted down. Then followed a low whisper, a rustle, a sharp exclamation. "Look!" said one, pointing to the west. "A rider!" Jane Withersteen wheeled and saw a horseman, silhouetted against the western sky, come riding out of the sage. He had ridden down from the left, in the golden glare of the sun, and had been unobserved till close at hand. An answer to her prayer! "Do you know him? Does any one know him?" questioned Tull, hurriedly. His men looked and looked, and one by one shook their heads. "He's come from far," said one. "That's a fine hoss," said another. "A strange rider." "Huh! he wears black leather," added a fourth. With a wave of his hand, enjoining silence, Tull stepped forward in such a way that he concealed Venters. The rider reined in his mount, and with a lithe forward-slipping action appeared to reach the ground in one long step. It was a peculiar movement in its quickness and inasmuch that while performing it the rider did not swerve in the slightest from a square front to the group before him. "Look!" hoarsely whispered one of Tull's companions. "He packs two black-butted guns-low down-they're hard to see-black agin them black chaps." "A gun-man!" whispered another. "Fellers, careful now about movin' your hands." The stranger's slow approach might have been a mere leisurely manner of gait or the cramped short steps of a rider unused to walking; yet, as well, it could have been the guarded advance of one who took no chances with men. From AudioFile Zane Grey's first (1912) and most popular bestseller defined the mythical Wild West for subsequent generations. A saintly Mormon girl of Utah battling unremittingly evil "Mor-men" finds a protector and wooer in a chivalric, albeit homicidal, gunslinger, whilst another paladin of the plains shoots, then saves, then falls for a masked rustlerette, the pawn of the villain who's been stealing the Mormon girl's cattle. Possessed of a pleasant and manly baritone, John Hitchcock gives a straightforward and colorless rendition of the derring-do. Y.R. AudioFile 2002, Portland, Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, Maine