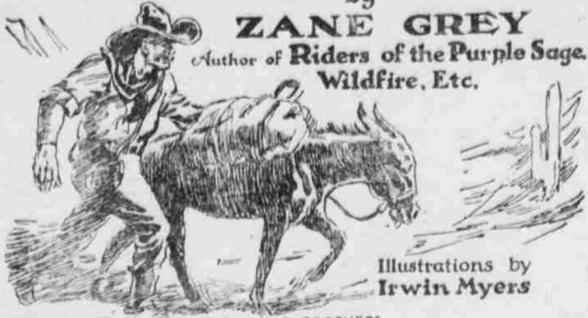


# DESERT GOLD

by **ZANE GREY**  
Author of *Riders of the Purple Sage*,  
*Wildfire*, Etc.



Illustrations by **Irwin Myers**

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Romance and the thrill of adventure have not departed from the West. There are recesses of the southwestern desert known only to Yaqui and Papago Indians. These ultra-arid sections contain perils as great as when the entire expanse was a trackless waste.



**ZANE GREY**

At times the border between the United States and Mexico becomes a veritable "No Man's Land," as dangerous as any territory that existed in pioneer days. There is a great unwritten history of the experiences of present-day settlers, rangers and soldiers that is fine material for the novelist, especially for one with the talents of Zane Grey, who loves his modern West, who has caught its spirit, and who sees it in all its aspects with a clear eye.

Zanesville, Ohio, was his birthplace, and he is descended from the famous Zane family which figured so largely in pioneer history. Although he passed through the public schools of his native place and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with credit, he had more fondness for outdoor sports than for studies, and became a distinguished player of amateur, college and professional baseball. After a short residence in New York City he became attracted to the West and adopting a writing career, has become about the most prominent exponent in America of virile, western literature. He is better able than any other novelist to present its more stirring phases romantically, interestingly and without resorting to exaggeration.

wash for water, he was brought sharply up by hearing the crack of hard hoofs on stone. There down the canon came a man on a burro. Cameron recognized them.

"Hello, friend," called the man halting. "Our trails crossed again—that's good."

"Hello," replied Cameron slowly. "Any mineral sign today?"

"No."

"They made camp together, ate their frugal meal, smoked a pipe, and rolled in their blankets without exchanging many words. In the morning the same reticence, the same stolidness charac-



"Hello, Friend," Called the Man, Halting. "Our Trails Crossed Again—That's Good."

### PROLOGUE

A face haunted Cameron—a woman's face. It was there in the white heart of the dying campfire; it hung in the shadows that hovered over the flickering light; it drifted in the darkness beyond.

This hour, when the day had closed and the lonely desert night set in with its dead silence, was one in which Cameron's mind was thronged with memories of a time long past—of a home back in Peoria, of a woman he had wronged and lost, and loved too late. He was a prospector for gold, a hunter of solitude, a lover of the dread, rock-ribbed infinitude, because he wanted to be alone to remember.

Then a sharp clink of metal on stone and soft pads of hoofs in sand prompted Cameron to reach for his gun, and to move out of the light of the waning campfire.

Figures darker than the gloom approached and took shape, and in the light turned out to be those of a white man and a heavily packed burro.

"Hello there," the man called, as he came to a halt and gazed about him. "I saw your fire. May I make camp here?"

Cameron came forth out of the shadow and greeted his visitor, whom he took for a prospector like himself. Cameron resented the breaking of his lonely campfire vigil, but he respected the law of the desert.

The stranger thanked him, and then slipped the pack from his burro. Then he rolled out his pack and began preparations for a meal. The campfire burst into a bright blaze, and by its light Cameron saw a man whose gray hair somehow did not seem to make him old, and whose stooped shoulders did not detract from an impression of rugged strength.

Another of those strange desert prospectors in whom there was some relentless driving power besides the lust for gold! Cameron felt that between this man and himself there was a subtle affinity, vague and undefined, perhaps born of the divination that here was a desert wanderer like himself, perhaps born of a deeper, an un-intelligible relation having its roots back in the past. A long forgotten sensation stirred in Cameron's breast, one so long forgotten that he could not recognize it. But it was akin to pain.

When he awakened he found, to his surprise, that his companion had departed. A trail in the sand led off to the north. There was no water in that direction, Cameron shrugged his shoulders; it was not his affair; he had his own problems. And straightway he forgot his strange visitor.

Cameron began his day, grateful for the solitude that was now unbroken, for the canon-furrowed, cactus-spined scene that now showed no sign of life. While it was yet light, and he was digging in a moist white-bordered

terized the manner of both. But Cameron's companion, when he had packed his burro and was ready to start, faced about and said: "We might stay together, if it's all right with you."

"I never take a partner," replied Cameron.

"You're alone; I'm alone," said the other mildly. "It's a big place. If we find gold there'll be enough for two."

"I don't go down into the desert for gold alone," rejoined Cameron.

His companion's deep-set, luminous eyes emitted a singular flash. It moved Cameron to say that in the years of his wandering he had met no man who could endure equally with him the blasting heat, the blinding dust storms, the wilderness of sand and rock and lava and cactus, the terrible silence and desolation of the desert. "I may strike through the Sonora desert. I may head for Pinnacle or north for the Colorado basin. You are an old man."

"I don't know the country, but to me one place is the same as another," replied his companion. Then with gentle slaps he drove his burro in behind Cameron. "Yes, I'm old. I'm lonely, too. It's come to me just lately. But, friend, I can still travel, and for a few days my company won't hurt you."

"Have it your way," said Cameron. They began a slow march down into the desert. At sunset they camped under the lee of a low mesa. Cameron was glad his comrade had the Indian habit of silence. Another day's travel found the prospectors deep in the wilderness. Then there came a breaking of reserve, noticeable in the elder man, almost imperceptibly gradual in Cameron. And so, as Cameron began to respond to the influence of a desert less lonely than habitual, he began to take keener note of his comrade, and found him different from any other he had ever encountered in the wilderness. This man never grumbled at the heat, the glare, the driving sand, the sour water, the scant fare. He was tireless, patient, brooding.

Cameron's awakened interest brought home to him the realization that for years he had shunned companionship. In those years only three men had wandered into the desert with him, and these had left their bones to bleach in the shifting sands. Cameron had not cared to know their secrets. But the more he studied this latest comrade the more he began to suspect that he might have missed something in the others. In his own driving passion to take his secret into the limitless abode of silence and desolation, where he could be alone with it, he had forgotten that life dealt shocks to other men. Somehow this silent comrade reminded him.

One afternoon late, after they had toiled up a white, winding wash of sand and gravel, they came upon a

dry waterhole. Cameron dug deep into the sand, but without avail. He was turning to retrace weary steps back to the last water when his comrade asked him to wait. Cameron watched him search in his pack and bring forth what appeared to be a small, forked branch of a peach tree. He grasped the prongs of the fork and held them before him with the end standing straight out, and then he began to walk along the stream bed. Cameron, at first amused, then amazed, then pitying, and at last curious, kept pace with the prospector. He saw a strong tension of his comrade's wrists, as if he was holding hard against a considerable force. The end of the peach-branch began to quiver and turn, kept turning, and at length pointed to the ground.

"Dig here," said the prospector.

"What?" ejaculated Cameron. Had the man lost his mind?

Then Cameron stood by while his comrade dug in the sand. Three feet he dug—four—five, and the sand grew dark, then moist. At six feet water began to seep through.

"Get the little basket in my pack," he said.

Cameron complied, and saw his comrade drop the basket into the deep hole, where it kept the sides from caving in and allowed the water to seep through. While Cameron watched, the basket filled. Of all the strange incidents of his desert career, this was the strangest. Curiously he picked up the peach branch and held it as he had seen it held. The thing, however, was dead in his hands.

"I see you haven't got it," remarked his comrade. "Few men have. Back in Illinois an old German used to do that to locate wells. He showed me I had the same power. I can't explain. The old German I spoke of made money traveling round with his peach fork."

"What a gift for a man in the desert!" Cameron's comrade smiled—the second time in all those days.

They entered a region where mineral abounded, and their march became slower. Generally they took the course of a wash, one on each side, and let the burros travel leisurely along slipping at the bleached blades of scant grass, or at sage or cactus, while they searched in the canons and under the ledges for signs of gold.

Each succeeding day and night Cameron felt himself more and more drawn to this strange man. He found that after hours of burning toil he had insensibly grown nearer to his comrade. He reflected that after a few weeks in the desert he had always become a different man. In civilization, in the rough mining camps, he had been a prey to unrest and gloom. But once down on the great billowing sweep of this lonely world, he could look into his unquiet soul without bitterness. So now he did not marvel at a slow stir stealing warmer along his veins, and at the premonition that perhaps he and this man, alone on the desert, driven there by life's mysterious and remorseless motive, were to see each other through God's eyes.

One night they were encamped at the head of a canon. The day had been exceedingly hot, and long after sundown the radiations of heat from the rocks persisted. Cameron watched his comrade, and yielded to interest he had not heretofore voiced.

"Partner, what drives you into the desert? Do you come to forget?" "Yes."

"Ah!" softly exclaimed Cameron. Always he seemed to have known that. He said no more, but grew acutely conscious of the pang in his own breast, of the fire in his heart, the strife and torment of his passion-driven soul. He had come into the desert to remember a woman. She appeared to him then as she had looked when first she entered his life—a golden-haired girl, blue-eyed, white-skinned, red-tipped, tall and slender and beautiful. He had never forgotten, and an old, sickening remorse knocked at his heart. He rose and climbed out of the canon and to the top of the mesa, where he paced to and fro and looked down into the weird and mystic shadows, like the darkness of his passion, and farther on down the moon track and the glittering stretches that vanished in the cold blue horizon. In that endless, silent hall of desert there was a spirit; and Cameron felt hovering near him what he imagined to be phantoms of peace.

He returned to camp and sought his comrade.

"I reckon we're two of a kind," he said. "It was a woman who drove me into the desert. But I come to remember. The desert's the only place I can do that."

"Was she your wife?" asked the elder man.

"No."

A long silence ensued. The campfire wore down to a ruddy ashen heap. "I had a daughter," said Cameron's comrade. "She lost her mother at birth. And I—I didn't know how to bring up a girl. She was pretty and gay. It was the—old story."

His words were peculiarly significant to Cameron. They distressed him. He had been wrapped up in his remorse. If ever in the past he had thought of anyone connected with the girl he had wronged, he had long forgotten. But the consequences of such wrong were far-reaching. They struck at the roots of a home. "Well, tell me more?" asked Cameron, earnestly.

didn't come back. And when the disgrace became plain to all, my girl left home. She went west. After a while I heard from her. She was well—working—living for her baby. A long time passed. I had no ties. I drifted west. Her lover had also gone west. In those days everybody went west. I trailed him, intending to kill him. But I lost his trail. Neither could I find any trace of her. She moved on, driven, no doubt, by the hound of her past. Since that I have taken to the wilds, hunting gold on the desert."

"Yes, it's the old, old story, only sadder, I think," said Cameron; and his voice was strained and unnatural. "Partner, what Illinois town was it you hailed from?"

"Peoria."

"And your—your name?" went on Cameron, huskily.

"Warren—Jonas Warren."

That name might as well have been a bullet. Cameron stood erect, motionless, as men sometimes stand momentarily when shot straight through the heart. In an instant, when thoughts resurged like blinding flashes of lightning through his mind, he was a swaying, quivering, terror-stricken man. He mumbled something hoarsely and backed into the shadow. But he need not have feared discovery, however surely his agitation might have betrayed him. Warren sat brooding over the campfire, oblivious of his comrade, absorbed in the past.

Cameron swiftly walked away in the gloom, with the blood thrumming thick in his ears, whispering over and over: "Merciful God!—Neil was his daughter!"

(PROLOGUE Continued.)



The flapper is gone. She said she wouldn't wear long skirts—still here she is, wearing it and looking very charming in a new rich blue, hand-painted davenport trimmed with wolf fur, and all topped with a canary yellow hat trimmed with silk roses.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate No. 1912 of John Lee Moran, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.  
The State of Nebraska, ss: Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said Estate is February 21, 1923, and for settlement of said estate is October 17, 1923, that I will sit at the county court room in said County on November 21, 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m., and on February 19, 1923, at 10 o'clock a. m., to receive, examine, hear, allow or adjust all claims and objections duly filed.  
Dated October 17, 1922.  
Wm. H. C. WOODHURST,  
County Judge.

**J. C. Hoffman, Attorney**  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate No. 1916 of William S. Dupuy, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.  
The State of Nebraska, ss: Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said Estate is March 12th, 1923, and for settlement of said Estate is Nov. 7th, 1923; that I will sit at the county court room in said County on December 12th, 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m., and on March 12th, 1923 at 10 o'clock a. m., to receive, examine, hear, allow, or adjust all claims and objections duly filed.  
Dated November 7th, 1922.  
Wm. H. C. WOODHURST,  
County Judge.

**Boeler, Crosby and Baskins, Attys.**  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate No. 1913 of Robert A. McKnight deceased in the county court of Lincoln county, Nebraska.  
The State of Nebraska, ss: Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said estate is March 8th, 1923, and for settlement of said estate is November 3, 1923; that I will sit at the county court room in said county on December 8 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m. and on March 8, 1923 at 10 o'clock a. m. to receive, examine, hear, allow or adjust all claims and objections duly filed.  
Dated November 3, 1922.  
Wm. H. C. WOODHURST,  
County Judge.

**NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT**

Estate No. 1856 of Bernard Winkler, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.  
The State of Nebraska, to all persons interested in said Estate take notice that the Administrator has filed a final account and report of his administration and a petition for final settlement and discharge as such administrator which have been set for hearing before said court on December 1st, 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m., when you may appear and contest the same.  
Dated October 31, 1922.  
Wm. H. C. WOODHURST,  
County Judge.

**NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION**

Department of the Interior  
U. S. Land Office at Lincoln, Nebr., October 17, 1922.  
Notice is hereby given that John O. Lindenmuth, of Wellfleet, Nebraska, who on November 27, 1917, made homestead entry, Broken Bow No. 011980, Lincoln, No. 02920, for W 1/4 NE 1/4, E 1/4 NW 1/4 and SE 1/4, Section 8 Township 10, North of Range 20, west of 6th Principal Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make final three year proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before W. H. C. Woodhurst, United States Commissioner, at North Platte, Nebraska, on the 27th day of November, 1922.  
Claimant names as witnesses:  
E. W. Gerkin, Jack Zigler, J. K. Browning and Earl Greenwood, all of Wellfleet, Nebraska.  
J. E. HAYS,  
Register.

**SHERIFF'S SALE**

By virtue of an order of sale issued from the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebr., upon a decree of foreclosure rendered in said Court wherein David H. Corbett is plaintiff, and W. L. Fristo, et al are defendants, and to me directed, I will on the 9th day of December 1922, at 2 o'clock P. M., at the east front door of the Court House in North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, sell at Public Auction to the highest bidder for cash, to satisfy said decree, interest and costs, the following described property, to-wit:  
West half of the southwest quarter (W 1/2 of SW 1/4) of section thirty-five (35) in township eleven (11) north of range thirty-one (31) west of the 6th P. M. Lincoln County, Nebraska.  
Dated North Platte, Nebr., Nov. 4, 1922.  
A. J. SALISBURY,  
Sheriff.