

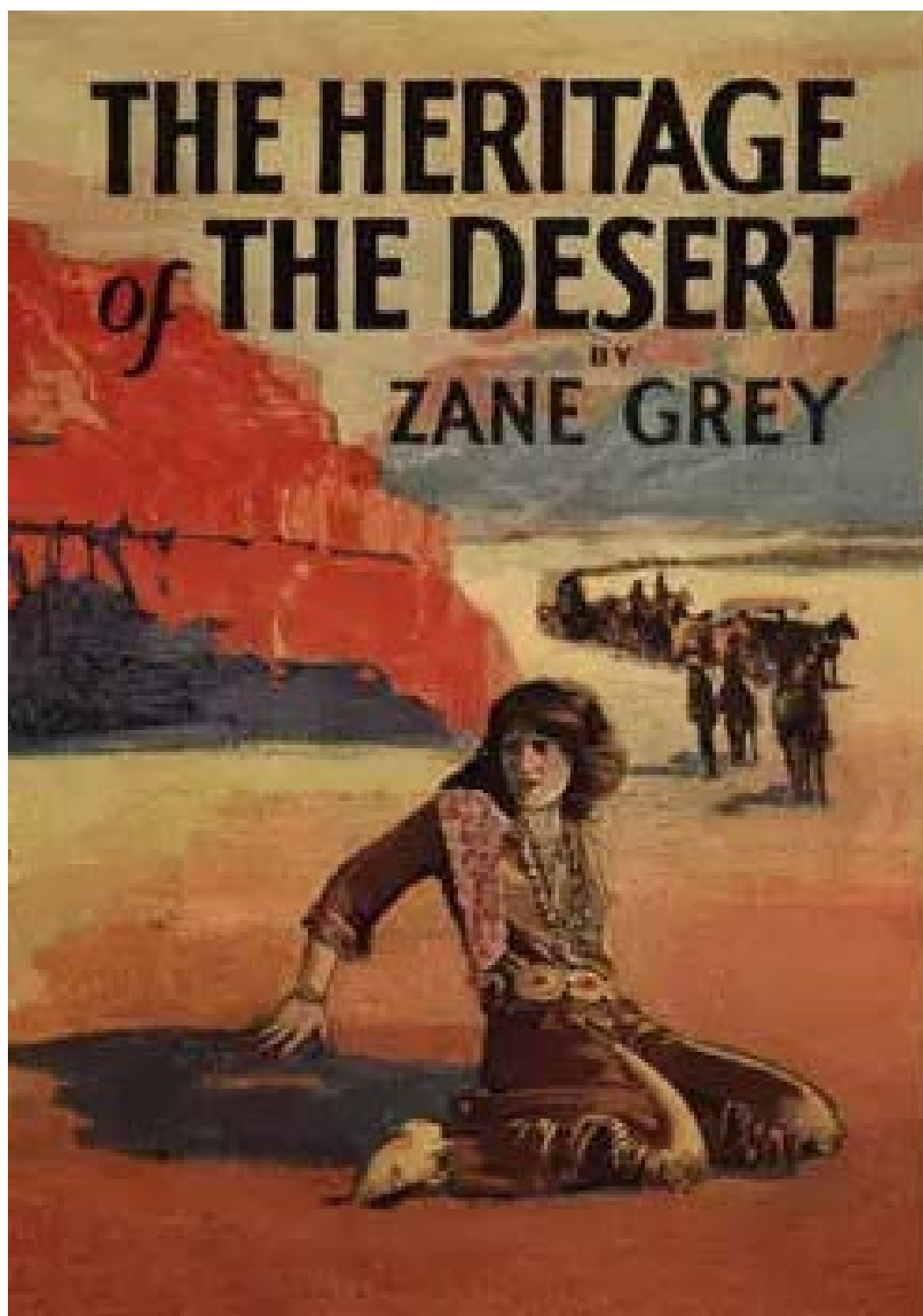
THE HERITAGE OF THE DESERT

Synopsis and Research Summaries

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Zane Grey's West Society



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INTRODUCTION

THE HERITAGE OF THE DESERT was Zane Grey's first Western novel. It was written in just four months during the time his first child was looming as Grey was completing his first winter in Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania. Some critics believe the novel's protagonist, Hare, was as weak and vulnerable as Grey himself felt during this period. The character August Naab was Hare's mentor in the same way Buffalo Jones and the guide Jim Everett had been Grey's mentors.

LIST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

(XX) Denotes the pages where each character first appears, or where quoted text appears in the Black's Readers Service Company edition of *The Heritage of the Desert*.

- **John Hare (aka "Jack") (1)**...a 24-year old Gentile found in the desert near death and rescued by August Naab. Hare was from Connecticut, and he had gone west for health reasons. Naab pledged to teach Hare to ride horses, shoot guns, and live in the desert. Many accused Hare of being a spy for the outlaw Dene.
- **August Naab (1)**...a compassionate and devout Mormon Patriarch who owns a ranch and controls land where he raises sheep and cattle.
- **Martin Cole (1)**...a younger generation Mormon who worries about the outlaw Holderness who is creeping in on Naab to steal his land and water as he had done with others.
- **Mescal (5)**...adopted daughter of August Naab, the daughter of a Navajo woman and a Spanish man. She had been promised as the second wife to Naab's son Snap, a promise she felt compelled to obey against her wishes since Naab had rescued her and educated her and raised her as a Mormon. Naab assigned her to care for Hare. Her name means "Flower of the Desert".
- **Dene (10)**...an outlaw cattle thief who uses spurious means to trick Mormon land owners.
- **Chance (aka "Two Spot Chance") (12)** ...a member of Dene's crew who had threatened Hare when he worked at Marysvale at a place called Lund.
- **Mother Mary (17)**...August Naab's first wife.
- **Judith, Esther, and Rebecca (17)**...August Naab's daughters.
- **Abe (22)**...store owner who sells supplies to August Naab.
- **Snap Naab (22)**...August Naab's eldest son, known to have drinking and gambling problems. Snap kills Jeff Larsen in a dispute over a horse deal gone bad. Initially Snap dislikes Hare, thinking he had been a spy for Dene. He later competes with Hare for Mescal.
- **Holderness (24)**...threatens the Mormons by attempting to purchase their land and water springs or attempts to run them off their land and interferes with cattle and sheep herds. He has asked August Naab to allow him to marry Mescal, which Naab had repeatedly refused to do.
- **Dave, George, Zeke, Billy (32)**...August Naab's sons.
- **Scarbreast (39)**...Navajo war chief.

- **Eschtah (39)**...Navajo chief, grandfather of Mescal.
- **Silvermane (44)**...a wild stallion broke by a Navajo and given to Hare by Naab.
- **Black Bolly (55)**...Mescal's horse.
- **Charger (55)**...August Naab's horse.
- **Mother Ruth (57)**...August Naab's second wife.
- **Hester (60)**...Snap Naab's first wife who is jealous of his intent to marry Mescal.
- **Wolf (63)**...Mescal's half-wolf sheepdog.
- **Peon (67)**...mute Navajo hand of Naab who serves as watch person to warn of outlaws.
- **Piute (68)**...one of Naab's hands.
- **Snood (149)**...Holderness's foreman who resigns after learning that Holderness damaged Naab's property.
- **Joe Stube (185)**...a rider friend of Zeke's who works for Holderness.
- **Bishop John Caldwell (251)**...Mormon Bishop who hides Mescal.

SYNOPSIS

Chapter 1. August Naab finds a very ill man, John "Jack" Hare, in the desert. Mormon members of August Naab's group advise against helping Hare, as many believe he was sent as a spy to spot on behalf of cattle thieves in southern Utah, especially an outlaw named Dene. Naab's Mormon companions believe Dene will be looking for Hare. Naab believes it is his duty to care for a helpless man. Martin Cole warns Naab that the outlaw Holderness will attempt to steal Naab's cattle and seal off his water source. Part of Naab's party departs for White Sage, the Bishop's ranch, led by Martin Cole. An Indian girl named Mescal is assigned by Naab to care for Hare, and Naab instructs her and Hare to act like a romancing Mormon couple if Dene comes to their camp. Hare, who has learned to hate Mormons, finds himself being rescued and cared for by Naab, a warm loving man. Hare, age 24, had relocated from Connecticut for health reasons, and he had found a job with a cattle company. He ran off from his job because people accused him of being a spy for outlaws. Mescal tells Hare that August Naab had raised her and educated her, her mother being Navajo, her father a Spaniard. Hare learns the Navajos are friends of August Naab. The outlaw Dene visits the camp, but doesn't recognize Hare. Dene threatens to someday attempt to steal the Naab's cattle, and he says he is interested in Mescal. Dene and Naab exchange threats, then Dene's party leaves.

Chapter 2. Snap Naab meets Hare and dislikes him. Snap recently was cheated in a horse trade with Jeff Larsen. Cole tells Naab that his son, Snap, has been friendly with Dene. Hare learns about a Gentile man named Holderness who has cheated Mormons out of land and water springs. Strife between Gentiles and Mormons enters the picture. Naab arranges a "laying on of hands" Mormon healing ceremony for Hare. Naab orders his first wife, Mother Mary and daughters Judith and Esther, to wait on and take care of Hare. Naab tells Hare he wants him to go home with him to his Utah ranch, where he wants him to learn to shoot and take care of himself in the desert. Hare learns about the "blue paper" form of money exchange used by the

Mormons. Holderness visits Naab at White Sage, and says he believes Hare is a spy. Holderness asks Naab for Mescal, and Naab says no. Holderness offers to buy Naab's ranch and spring, Silver Cup and Seeping Springs. Naab refuses to sell. Holderness threatens Naab. Naab learns his son Snap killed Larsen in a gunfight. Dene appears and tries to draw on Naab, but Naab outdraws him and chases him away.

Chapter 3. Naab, led by his son Dave, along with his son George, leave White Sage to go across Arizona on the Coconina Trail to Naab's Utah oasis on the Colorado River. Dave warns that Dene has vowed to kill all of the Naabs. Enroute they pass near Holderness' ranch, which he stole from Martin Cole. Two Navajo chiefs, Scarbreast and Eschtah, meet the Naab party along the way. Eschtah is Mescal's grandfather. Enroute they see wild horses, or mustangs, supposedly descendants of horses left in Utah by early Spaniards. Hare learns about Silvermane, a mustang admired by all who see him, and a viscous mustang named Whitefoot. They reach the place where the Colorado River plunges into the Grand Canyon.

Chapter 4. Naab calls the place "Crossing of the Fathers", the gateway to the desert, where many Mormons were killed in crossing during their exodus to Utah. They make the dangerous crossing and arrive at Naab's farm. Naab tells Hare that he has seen in a revelation a large gray horse with Hare riding it. This is the first mention of a "revelation", which is a communication from God to man, in this case to Naab. Naab works with Hare in teaching him to use a Colt revolver and a Winchester rifle. Naab's farm is replete with sheep and other animals that he had nursed back to health. Naab and Mother Mary argue over the teaching of the Mormon children; Naab believing, contrary to popular Mormon belief, children should learn about things about the outside world. Snap Naab's first wife, Heather, is jealous of and vindictive toward Mescal calling her "that Indian!". Snap threatens to kill Hare, and his father accuses him of being a drunk. Snap throws a bottle at Hare and threatens him. Mescal approaches Hare and tells him August Naab has instructed her to have Hare help her with the sheep.

Chapter 5. Mescal warns Hare to stay clear of Snap. Mescal on the horse Black Bolly and Hare on the burro Noddle, along with Naab, leave to go to tend the sheep at the Naab's oasis. Along the way they meet a peon, a mute Indian, who spends his time at Lookout Point watching for rustlers and outlaws that may approach the sheep on Naab's oasis, where Mescal and Hare will stay for weeks. Hare meets Piute, Naab's hand who had been a Piute outcast. Hare shoots coyotes, and Piute skins them for their pelts. Hare and Mescal spend evenings sitting on an outlook, and Hare enjoys telling her stories about his life outside the desert region. A bear approaches their camp.

Chapter 6. Hare kills the bear, saving Mescal's life. Following the last snowfall of June Mescal expresses pleasure that Hare has recovered his health, and he kisses her, then he flees into the forest. Hare realizes it has been Mescal that has given his life new meaning. He tells her he loves her, and he holds her hand and asks her if she cares for him. Her silent reply by not withdrawing her hand, her hair blowing against his face, is her answer.

Chapter 7. Hare and Mescal see an iron-gray mustang that Mescal identifies as Silvermane. August Naab returns, and along with Dave and Billy, they decide to try to capture Silvermane. After following Silvermane and wearing him down by chasing him with their horses, they finally capture him.

Chapter 8. Hare notices Mescal avoiding him. He tells her he wants to marry her. She tells him she cannot marry him, because she has been promised by August Naab as a second wife to Snap Naab after Mother Mary, August Naab's first wife, would not let him take Mescal as his own third wife. Mescal says the Mormons have told her that to marry Snap would give her greater glory in heaven. She says the Mormons teach duty to church first, and that love comes after marriage. She warns Hare that Snap will kill him if she marries him. Mescal says she believes August Naab would try to make a Mormon of Hare. Naab tells Hare he wants him to eventually have Silvermane, once he is broken. A Navajo breaks Silvermane, and Naab gives him to Hare.

Chapter 9. While working and watching Naab's sheep, Hare and Mescal are together from dawn to dusk, their only physical contact being holding hands, seldom speaking. The dry season arrives, and the sheep have no water. August Naab decides to drive the sheep. On the trail they come to a waterhole that has been destroyed by Holderness, the same thing he had done to Martin Cole's waterhole at Rocky Point. It causes Naab to fear the same might happen at Silver Cup and Seeping Springs. The water starved sheep detect the scent of desert water below the steep canyon rim, and they stampede. All of the sheep plummet over the rim and are killed, with only Mescal's pet lamb with its bell being saved.

Chapter 10. Naab accepts the fate of the loss of his sheep intending to go to the Navajos with his son Billy for a new flock. He sends his sons Dave, George, and Zeke to Silver Cup to brand his cattle, cautioning them to avoid Holderness and Dene. Hare goes to help with the branding. Dave believes Dene's men had plugged the waterhole. Snap returns, and Hare notices a marked change in him, since he had not had access to liquor when he was with the Navajos. When Hare and the others reach Seeping Springs they find the flume to the water hole fenced off and pine logs indicating someone had intended to build a cabin there. Hare decides to follow horse tracks leading away from the area. Hare finds a man named Snood, a foreman for Holderness. When Hare tells Snood of the mischief he believed Holderness had caused, Snood promises to quit his job with Holderness. Hare believes Dene's killing of Cole had been instigated by Holderness. Hare goes to the saloon to confront Holderness. Chance draws a gun on Hare, and Hare shoots Chance's gun away, and knocks him to the floor. Hare tells Holderness he destroyed the materials Holderness had assembled to build a cabin at Seeping Springs. He tells Holderness to leave the country before someone kills him. As Hare leaves on Silvermane, the horse nearly knocks down Dene, who then fires at Hare.

Chapter 11. Hare returns to Seeping Springs where August Naab and Dave are examining the smoking remains. Hare tells them Dene had killed Cole and he himself had confronted Dene and Holderness. Snap proposes he should confront Dene and kill him. Naab refuses to go to war, and he proposes to give up Seeping Springs with the hope that the valley and the water

will content Holderness. Mescal and Hare secretly hold hands beneath the table cloth. Mescal presents Hare with a scarf that she has made for him, and she confirms that she will never marry Snap. Hester, Snap's first wife, hides all of Snap's clothes and runs off as Snap is in his father's home openly courting Mescal. Snap forces his father to name the day for his wedding to Mescal. Mescal secretly tells Hare that she loves him and then she rides off.

Chapter 12. Naab and Hare leave to go to the Navajos to search for Mescal. Hare asks Naab to give Mescal to him. Naab says he will not give Mescal to Hare, but that it was man to man then between Snap and Hare. Chief Eschtah meets with Naab and Hare. He agrees to lend Naab some braves to help find Mescal whom he believes is with the Paiute slave, but he himself does not assist in helping them find her.

Chapter 13. When Naab returns home he finds that Snap has beaten his wife and attempted to wreck his cottage, only prevented from doing so by his brother Dave. Snap had then ridden off and hadn't been heard from since. Dave tells his father that he met Joe Stube; a rider friend of Zeke's who was working for Holderness. Stube told Dave that Snap had killed Snood when Snood took up for Hare in an argument. Snap and Holderness appear at Silver Cup. Snap tells them he is the new foreman for Holderness. Snap shoots at Hare, and Hare slumps over. Zeke goes to him and declares he has been shot dead. Snap and Holderness depart thinking Hare is dead. Zeke tells Dave that Hare is only wounded. Hare tells Naab he did not try to shoot Snap, since Snap was his son. Naab tells Hare he has no duty to him as Snap's father, and he releases Hare from any obligation in that regard.

Chapter 14. August Naab gives Hare permission to cross the river to look for Mescal with the hopes of bringing her back. Soon after that Mescal's dog Wolf appears, and he seems to be motioning for someone to follow him. Hare follows him and nearly succumbs to the desert, until in desperation he allows the dog and the horse to lead him further in hope of finding water.

Chapter 15. Wolf leads Hare and Silvermane to a thundering river in a canyon where they find Mescal.

Chapter 16. Mescal tells Hare the sound he hears is the Thunder River. She tells Hare her peon guide had died, and she had buried him. She became weak trying to hunt for herself, and she had sent Wolf off to seek help. Mescal declares her love for Hare and promises to marry him. He tells her he wants to take her back to Naab's farm, to which she agrees. They manage to cross the dangerous Colorado River and reach Vermillion Cliffs. They find steers with Naab's brand altered by Holderness. Hare and Mescal on Silvermane run into Dene's horse.

Chapter 17. Dene and his men fire at Hare and Mescal. Silvermane's swiftness evades Chance and Culver. Hare and Mescal reach Naab's cabin. They discover Silvermane has been wounded. Naab learns Holderness has taken over Silver Cup, and that he has over-branded some of Naab's steers. Naab argues against a battle hoping Holderness will be content with Silver Cup and the steers he stole. Naab tells Hare he hopes it will work out between him and Mescal,

who escapes. Holderness shoots Dave from behind Chance and Culver, and he rides away thinking Dave is dead. Dave kills Chance and Culver. They find Dene dead on the road trampled by Silvermane. He had tried to steal Silvermane. It is the second time Silverman attacked Dene. Naab tells Hare things are never as bad as they seem.

Chapter 18. Mescal escapes on Silvermane to ride to White Sage where she'll be kept safe by Bishop Caldwell. Snap leaves attempting to catch Mescal. George and Naab agree the time has come to fight the outlaws. Hare realizes what the desert has done for him, and how the desert trains wild things to survive. To kill or escape death – that was the dominant motive. Naab realizes that in past moments of revelation, which he had disclaimed, he had seen himself as faithful to the desert in the end. Naab calls in Eschtah for advice. Eschtah tells Naab he has been too slow in fighting the outlaws. He tells Naab to go after the outlaws, and if he does not return, then Eschtah and his men will pursue the outlaws and kill them. At that point Naab accepts *“his heritage from the desert”*. (Hence, the title of the book.) Hare decides to avenge the deaths of Naab's sons by killing Holderness. Hare rides off on Black Bolly to find Holderness.

Chapter 19. Hare goes to Silver Cup where he finds Holderness and his men at a cabin along with Snap. Hare plans to ambush and kill Holderness. The rustlers apparently had captured Silvermane and Mescal. Hare hides and hears Holderness tell Snap that he, Holderness, is going to claim Mescal as his own. Holderness shoots Snap through the heart. Two of Holderness' men, Mormon rustlers, are kind to Mescal and help her escape on Silvermane. Hare returns to Bishop Caldwell's cottage and learns that Mescal has been safely hidden. The next day Holderness rides into Caldwell's camp, and Hare confronts and kills him.

Chapter 20. Bishop Caldwell organizes his Mormon neighbors to overtake the rustlers and take back the land and stock they had stolen. The Mormons decide to hang the rustlers, except for the two that Hare had secretly observed who had helped Mescal. When August Naab arrives and sees Holderness dead he asks who had deprived him of his vengeance for his son's death. He learns that it was Hare. He also learns that Bishop Caldwell's son had been one of the Mormon rustlers saved by Hare. He makes the other Mormons promise to never let Bishop Caldwell know his son had been one of the rustlers, saying that he had learned through a revelation the younger Caldwell would be a man again.

Chapter 21. August Naab offers Hare five thousand steers, which Hare refuses. Naab then says he would make Hare a partner along with his sons in the future on his farm. Hare agrees. Hare declines to become a Mormon, and then he and Mescal are married by Naab and Eschtah. Mescal's burro Noodle shows up after being lost at Thunder River. Naab calls Noodle Mescal's wedding gift.

HELPFUL RESEARCH AND STUDY SUMMARIES

Dr. Joseph L. Wheeler, *Zane Grey's Impact on American Life and Letters: A Study In the Popular Novel*, (George Peabody College for Teachers [Vanderbilt] – 1975)

References (87, 98, 137, 154, 156, 162, 241)

(87) Some of Grey's descriptions were filled with poetic imagery; many examples show great artistic and descriptive beauty. Some of Grey's passages of newly awakened love are hauntingly beautiful because they are so low key but still as meaningful as a passionate scene; one of the finest is this one from his first Western (The Heritage of the Desert). "He took her hand in his and whispered, 'For I love you. Do you care for me? Mescal! It must be complete. Do you care –a little?' The wind blew her dusky hair; he could not see her face; he tried gently to turn her to him. The hand he had taken lay warm and trembling in his, but it was not withdrawn. As he waited, in fear, in hope, it became still. Her slender form, rigid within his arm, gradually relaxed, and yielded to him; her face sank on his breast, and her dark hair, loosened from its band, covered her, and blew across his lips. That was his answer."

(98) The summary justice of the frontier (hanging) was accepted as an unwritten law and there was no appeal to a higher body. Men were blunt and straightforward and money was often unavailable so substitutes were arranged for. Grey describes the Mormon practice of using a slip of blue paper, a written check for a sum of money signed but without register of bank or name of firm. Every man gets his real money's value without paying an actual cent.

(137) Some think August Naab in The Heritage of the Desert to be Grey's greatest character. (This writer concurs.) Naab is Jim Emmett; Grey changed very little. Snap Emmett, the disagreeable eldest son, becomes the evil Snap Naab. Even the description of Naab's home matches that of Lee's Ferry. But Grey's greatest tribute to his friend, the man who influenced him most, was the description on pages 58 and 59, which begins with the sentence "August Naab was close to threescore years" and ends with the sentence "Hare found himself looking up to a great and luminous figure, and he loved this man." Readers are encouraged to read this entire description before moving on to the rest of the novel.

(154) *The Heritage of the Desert* was Grey's first great book....In it August Naab dominates the book; in fact he is one of the most magnificent characters in all Western literature. Naab holds center stage so much that none of the other characters, especially the villains, have much of a chance to upstage anyone. Mescal is one of Grey's lovelier heroines, but she is almost too perfect to be realistic; a little touch of naughtiness would have helped her believability. Jim Emmett is Naab and Segi Canyon is Deception Pass. The book centers around the Mormon Naab, an apostle of non-violence, who is gradually forced by circumstances to alter his code and seek vengeance on his own....The basic story is very pro-Mormon, except for the sections on polygamy....The West is so new to Grey that you can feel it in the pictorial masterpiece which is

The Heritage of the Desert. In fact, some critics claim this to be unexcelled because never again was the West as fresh to him, and it showed in subsequent books.

(156) How difficult it is to follow up success with another success. Grey had barely finished The Heritage of the Desert when he wondered what kind of book ought to follow it. In January 1910 he talked about writing his new book THE SPELL OF THE WILDERNESS, but since it is never mentioned again, no one seems to know which book it refers to. He didn't begin Riders of the Purple Sage till May 30, 1911. He started out slowly then gradually gathered momentum as he approached the climax. When ZG took the completed manuscript to Harpers he felt he had a sure winner, consequently he was unprepared for their rejection of it.

(162) Grey's three books, The Heritage Trail, Riders of the Purple Sage, and The Rainbow Trail were written during what Lawrence C. Powell calls Grey's greatest period. They all came from the impact of a single experience upon a sensitive man whose good fortune it was to fall into the hands of an able and believing woman.

(241) Critic scholar Samuel Peoples stated that he felt Grey's book Heart of the Desert(1915) (no collector has ever seen a copy) was possibly distributed in wraps given as a subscription-present used to promote newspaper circulation. However Peoples has always suspected that the book was a reprint of The Heritage of the Desert in wraps given as a premium.

Charles G. Pfeiffer, Zane Grey, A Study in Values – Above and Beyond the West
(Zane Grey's West Society, 2005) (ISBN 0-9768720-0-5)

References (8, 75, 106-107, 109-110, 116, 138, 187, 191, 212-213, 232, 242, 343, 345, 423, 434-435, 547-548, 561-562)

(8) There are a number of references to hunting in Grey's romances – such as a grizzly is shot while killing sheep in *The Heritage of the Desert*.

(75) Mescal in *The Heritage of the Desert* is one of three heroines in Grey's novels that are part Spanish. Grey was quick to let readers know that he was impressed by the beauty and carriage of the Spanish heroines. Mescal was "dark, supple, straight as an Indian."

(106-107) First Americans occupy a special place in Grey's thinking. No other non-Anglo group appears as frequently, nor has as many romances and short stories featuring them. In *The Heritage of the Desert* Indians stand ready to protect August Naab, the bride of John Hare is half Indian, and Grey introduces and then edges away from a problem he apparently preferred to evade: he first suggests 'passionate and unconventional love' between a rich Eastern boy and a half-Indian girl. John's marriage with Mescal is described in detail in *The Heritage of the Desert*.

(109-110) Grey does not have a complete rejection of the East, but a constructive interplay between East and West, such as with the education of Mescal by Hare in *The Heritage of the Desert*. Grey shows considerable sympathy for Native Americans and some understanding of the Indian's cultural bind caught between two conflicting world views, and he avoids confronting this issue directly and the result is the irony in the possessive remarks of August Naab. Insofar as the narratives approach and solution for Indian grievances, there is none really, only resignation, as in intermarriage in *The Heritage of the Desert*.

(116) Grey's first Western romance, *The Heritage of the Desert*, (1910), features First Americans in several different ways. For one thing, the heroine, Mescal, is part Navajo and part Spanish, and no Anglo could have made a better nor a prettier one. Mescal's constant companions while herding sheep on the plateau were a Piute, and a mute Navajo peon, whom I shall designate as "Peon." It was Peon whom Naab trusted with the important task of manning Lookout Point to protect the oasis from any surprise attack. It was Peon also who guided Mescal through the Painted Desert to Thunder River when she was escaping from a forced marriage to Snap. Naab had a close relationship with the Navajo war chief, Scarbreast, and with Eschtah, who is Mescal's grandfather.

(138) Intermarriage was of crucial importance to Grey, yet there are at least three passages in some of Grey's works that seem to contradict this. The first occurs in *The Heritage of the Desert* when Eschtah states that red and white blood will not mix – but later implies that red blood is the stronger. Two other contradictions exist in passages from *The Vanishing American*....Grey did not believe that Indian traits would disappear in intermarriage. He certainly did not think that this was true in his own case but traces to his Indian ancestry, his roving spirit, his love of the out-of-doors, and his ability to return to the birth of man. Likewise, all part-blood characters in his books profit from their Indian ancestry.

(187) It is unusual for an author of Westerns to speculate on what may take place after death, and it is more unusual when he extends that interest to the creation of other worlds and universes. It is most unusual when that author attempts to add some content and meaning to man's pre-history. This Grey does in his hypothesis of evolutionary memory. This theory appears in about one-third of his Westerns beginning with *The Heritage of the Desert*, and there are over two hundred references to the primitive element in the nature of man...Grey believed that man was a product of the evolutionary process, and that there remains a record of that development in his genetic makeup.

(191) Grey believed it was possible in those moments of suspended consciousness for man to go back to his human beginning....These moments were so vital to him that he not only attempted to make them a regular part of his life, but he encouraged some of his book characters to follow his example....The experience of suspended consciousness appears briefly in *The Heritage of the Desert* when Mescal is "...leaning against the rocks and kept a changeless, tranquil, unseeing gaze on the desert. The level eyes were full of thought, of sadness, of mystery; they seemed to look afar. Then she turned to him with puzzled questioning look and an enigmatical reply, "Thinking?" asked her eyes. "I wasn't thinking," were her words...."I don't

think at all till you make me. It's beautiful out there. But that's not what it is to me. I can't tell you. When I sit down here all within me is – is somehow stilled. I watch – and it's different from what is now, since you've made me think. Then I watch, and I see, that's all."

(212-213) Grey does not seem to place more credence in divination – seeing into the future or uncovering hidden knowledge – than he does in direct communication from the other world....In *The Heritage of the Desert* the supra sensory often took the form of Naab's seeing into the future.

(231-232) Grey believed that death should be faced bravely....In *The Heritage of the Desert* Mescal faces death for the man she loves.

(242) In *The Heritage of the Desert* there are references to trust in God....Prayer is frequently mentioned, and there are two simple short meaningful prayers that might well serve as models where Grey shows an assumption of the existence and reality of God.

(343) *The Heritage of the Desert* is one of Grey's books that were spawned by the trips Grey took to North Rim of the Grand Canyon in the company of Alvah James and Buffalo Jones....A period of time when he was struggling with his philosophy of writing and began to express strongly his sense of mission at which he had hinted earlier.

(345) His sense of mission was not confined to his early years of writing but carried over into the time when he was an established writer....His 1917 journal not only continues to show his wholehearted commitment to writing, but it also notes a sense of destiny and a conviction of the greatness of the task that has been entrusted to him: "There is a great and superhuman effort deep in me, and to achieve it and to sustain it will satisfy me, whatever the result."

(423) With many of Grey's characters, there was a time to talk and a time to act. As a matter of fact, it was sometimes the talk that gave the hero the edge over the villain in the action that was to follow, as with Hare and Holderness in *The Heritage of the Desert*...an example being Hare's widening the horizon of life for the little Navajo-Spanish girl Mescal.

(434-435) Grey often writes of the cattlemen-sheepmen controversy in the West. In *The Heritage of the Desert* there are sheep and cattle grazing contentedly on the same ranch in defiance of the old western truism that sheep ruin the range for cattle.

(547-548) Many titles of Grey's book seem to imply that his books of the landscape are primarily about the desert. However, this is very misleading, for the true desert does not figure prominently in his writings at all....If one protests that I am quibbling over the definition of desert and insists on counting all the books transpiring in semi-arid regions, like those of the Arizona Strip and the Navajo Reservation, one will still come up with a total of only nine books....At most, only about one-fifth of Grey's romances can be classified as desert stories.

(561-562) The breasts, both male and female, but predominantly the latter, are used in nearly every book to either excite passion or to reveal it. The lips, too, are involved, as Grey uses the kiss as one of the primary means of arousing passion....In *The Heritage of the Desert* when Hare tells Mescal that he loves her: "The trembling of her fingers and the heaving of her bosom lent his hope conviction" that she loved him in turn.

Thomas H. Pauly, *ZANE GREY, His Life, His Adventures, His Women*, University of Illinois Press, 2005 (ISBN 0-252-03044-3)

References (81, 90-92, 96, 216, 217)

(81) The first Western novel Grey claimed to have started was *The Heritage of the Desert*, but he was unable to complete it until after he completed two more trips, the first being another hunt for mountain lions with Alva Jones from mid-March to mid-May 1908, and the second was a return to Tampico from January to March 1909.

(90-92) The finished novel, which was published as *The Heritage of the Desert* in September 1910, introduced the reader to a twenty-four-year-old Easterner named John Hare, who has journeyed to Salt Lake City to recover from a vaguely defined ailment that has left him as weakened and vulnerable as Zane was when he started his novel. (Pauly's very brief but informative synopsis on pages 90 through 92 of his 2005 book is highly recommended to any readers before they begin to read *The Heritage of the Desert*.)

(96) *The Heritage of the Desert*, completed between early November 1909 and late January 1910, was a product of his first complete winter in Lackawaxen. Snow came early that year and Grey wrote in a small cottage that had only a small stove and no insulation. The penetrating cold necessitated heavy clothing and every few minutes he had to hold his hand near the fire in order to continue writing.

(216) Grey had long wanted his novels to be filmed in the settings that inspired them, and Jesse L. Lasky (produced *The Vanishing American*) guaranteed that his first three films would be....*The Heritage of the Desert* used the scenery around Gap and Lee's Ferry.

Arthur G. Kimball, *ACE OF HEARTS the Westerns of ZANE GREY*, (Texas Christian University Press – 1993) (ISBN 0-87565-121-6)

REFERENCES (8, 9, 26, 28, 47-62, 86, 99, 134, 147, 150-151, 177-178, 210-211)

(8) Grey utilizes the ironic notion of possession in *The Heritage of the Desert*.

(9) One of Grey's critics, Kenneth W. Scott, praised *The Heritage of the Desert* as "a sympathetic picture of Mormon life, vivid description, and lack of sentimentalism" concluding that it had been "a long time since so good a novel of the Southwest in its wild rough days" had appeared. *Heritage* and *Riders of the Purple Sage*, which followed, got Grey off to a start high on the chart.

(26) Many of Grey's novels involve a hero and sometimes a heroine making a trek across the desert or other arid or mountainous landscape. John Hare, in *The Heritage of the Desert*, in his quest for Mescal is seen riding on Silvermane and following the dog, Wolf, into the arid waste: "...and Silvermane followed never lagging, sure-footed in the dark, faithful to his master....In and out, round and round, ever winding, ever zigzagging."

(28) In many of Grey's books the appeal of the superhorse plays an important role, such as Silvermane in *The Heritage of the Desert*, partly due to Grey's love for horses, and because he admired the traits of those horses – spirit, courage, endurance, physical strength, and a grace indicating nobility.

(47-62) Readers are strongly advised, before starting to read *The Heritage of the Desert*, to read Dr. Kimball's astute synopsis and critique contained on pages 47 through 62 of his 1993 book, a book that should be a "must-have" book in the library of every Zane Grey fan and reader.

(86) Any number of features in addition to the "literary eroticism" argue for Grey's appeal to women. Aside from the same heroes' action, adventure, and violence that appealed to men, women readers could admire specific heroines, such as Mescal of *The Heritage of the Desert*....It would be difficult to gauge how female readers of the decades between 1910 and 1930 would have reacted to Grey's sometimes sugary domesticity, or the way his heroines – under passionate attack by the hero – often fall limp, to say nothing of Grey's double standard which he described as his "appalling responsibility in these modern days of materialism to dare to foster idealism and love of nature, chivalry in men and chastity of women."

(99) Though Grey often prefers blondes for his heroines, through his first success, *The Heritage of the Desert*, he features the dark-haired Mescal.

(134) Grey often explores a combination of law and lawlessness, and the results can be highly ironic, as in *The Heritage of the Desert*, where Holderness and August Naab confront each other invoking "laws" to justify their determination to possess land and water. Their arguments run from "no law" to "desert law" to U.S. government law to Mormon law to squatter's rights – everything but Indian law. Grey utilizes these variants elsewhere as well.

(147) Grey expresses the need for his heroes to answer the challenges of their foes as a must for survival in the West, sometimes ignoring a more lenient or forgiving or accommodating approach. In *The Heritage of the Desert*, John Hare demonstrates the "desert law" to "strike first and hard". But then Hare doesn't strike first either, he retaliates. "Survival of the fittest"

here proves mostly window dressing; Grey tosses in the phrase, but the reader knows the hero will survive, even though he hesitates. The shootout illustrates; almost always the hero with code-like nobility waits until the opponent draws or at least makes a move. He sometimes ends up wounded (with Grey, most often a clean hole below the collar bone in the fleshy part of the shoulder) as he bores his rival.

(150-151) Grey's works include a gallery of outlaw types. They range from Mormons and Mexicans to missionaries and the I.W.W. They include gangs, gunslingers, bad fathers and bad sons. In *The Heritage of the Desert* Grey explored the phenomenon of Mormon Settlement. With August Naab he created a powerful figure, a man with great strengths but also weakness. His son Snap, however, is a thoroughly rotten apple who joins with a gang.

(177-178) Many of Grey's novels, from *The Heritage of the Desert* on, carry veiled threats of sexual violence. In *Heritage*, Snap Naab kidnaps Mescal but runs into trouble with gang boss Holderness. Snap tries to enter the cabin where they have Mescal, saying that he's taking her to White Sage (the Bishop's oasis), when Holderness stops him, saying, "Bah! You say that only for the excuse to get into the cabin with her. You tried it last night and I blocked you." Snap prepares to draw only to discover the rustler chief has "a trump card to play." (He has emptied Snap's guns.) Surely never before had passion driven Snap's hand to such speed. His Colt gleamed in the camp-fire light. Click! Click! Click! The hammer fell upon empty chambers. Holderness shoots Snap "through the heart", suggesting an erotic motive, its illicit nature underscored in that Snap has just bound Mescal's hands.

(210-211) In many of Grey's works, his descriptions of the western lands that he so loves creates in the minds of readers the concept of some sort of Garden of Eden. The frontier "Eden" was never such for Indians once the white man arrived. Grey shows considerable variety and irony in handling these Native Americans. In *The Heritage of the Desert*, August Naab has been dreaming for years of his own Navajo Oasis, no longer thinking of the West as the pristine, pure Garden of Eden of the chief Eschtah. Naab argues his claim with an assortment of "laws" against the more candid view of another land grabber, Holderness, who calls it what it is, "business".

Frank Gruber, Zane Grey: A Biography, Amereon Ltd., First Edition – September 1, 1969) (ISBN 0891907564)

References (83-84, 85-87)

(83-84) For an interesting discussion of the trials and tribulations experienced by Zane Grey in getting the publisher Harper to publish *The Heritage of the Desert*, the reader is advised to read pages 83 through 85 of Dr. Gruber's excellent 1969 book.

(85-87) Readers are encouraged to first read pages 85 through 87 of Dr. Gruber's 1969 book for a brief but learned synopsis of *The Heritage of the Desert*. In addition to the knowledge about publication and film rights that are regularly espoused by Dr. Gruber, his learned synopsis adds much to help the reader understand the symbolism and historical significance of Grey's first Western romance, another reason to add Dr. Gruber's wonderful 1969 book to the libraries of every Zane Grey reader and fan.

Dr. Carlton Jackson, ZANE GREY: Revised Edition, Published by Twayne's United States Authors Series Edited by Kenneth Eble, University of Omaha, 1989
(ISBN 0-8057-7543-9)

References (17-22, 35)

(17-22) Readers just beginning to read *The Heritage of the Desert* are encouraged to read Dr. Jackson's synopsis on pages 17 through 22 of his 1989 book. Dr. Jackson's analyses and insights are some of the most in-depth of any of the Zane Grey scholars, one of the reasons Zane Grey's son chose him to complete the unfinished Grey manuscript that was eventually published in 1994 as *George Washington Frontiersman*. If the reader had time to read but one synopsis for *The Heritage of the Desert*, this may be the best choice of all such synopses. Dr. Carlton Jackson's 1989 book is a "must-have" book for libraries of Zane Grey readers and fans.

(35) Grey's sense of history was enlarged by coming into contact with several Mormons in mountainous surroundings. He became much interested in Mormonism – what it had been and what it was becoming. In Grey's disdain toward Mormonism as an institution was implied in *The Heritage of the Desert*. Two years later when *Riders of the Purple Sage* was printed, his anti-Mormonism was complete. In this later book, generally acknowledged as his most popular, Grey elaborates on the price one must pay to retain personal beliefs, and he shows how tragedy can disrupt lives when a group refuses to believe that "good" and "bad" are relative terms.