



The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains (Penguin Classics)

Owen Wister

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The epic novel of the American West and the heroic cowboy

Owen Wister's powerful story of the tall, silent stranger who rides into the uncivilized West and defeats the forces of evil has become an enduring part of American mythology. Set in Wyoming Territory, *The Virginian* depicts the loneliness and challenge of an unknown land where the whistle of a freight train sounds across great miles of silence, where easy camaraderie—and sudden violence—are found around the campfire, and where the rough honesty of "frontier justice" is just beginning to impose a sense of society on an unruly populace. For Wister, the West represented a territory of adventure that tested the worth of a man. His hero, as John Seelye writes in his Introduction, has his roots in the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott and James Fenimore Cooper; he is a man who lives by the classic code of chivalry, ruled by quiet courage and deeply felt honor.

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