



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The Bronzeman vol. 3 no. 7

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Twenty-two The BRONZEMAN

[[image - drawing of a women sitting on her front porch at sunset]]
[[drawing by]] Gerald Watson
[[caption]] "Every evening, just before the sun set, she can be seen sitting there with her head tilted back, a dreamy stare in her eyes." [[/caption]]

A Desert Tale

Fate Mixed in His Plans for Avenging A Murder
By Russel Garner

ARIZONA nights, warm, seductive, made beautiful by a silvery moon and a star-studded sky. Barrel cacti and yucca stand out ghost-like. Here and there the rays of the moon gleam on a whitened cattle skull, a grim reminder that death is here also. Somewhere in the distance, his nose skyward, a coyote howls; once heard, never forgotten.

It is the desert, where the slithering sands whisper long lost secrets. Where men go insane, where men live, far from the coating of civilization. For here only the strong, the courageous live. The weakling, the craven, cannot survive. Here death stalks, both fast and slow.

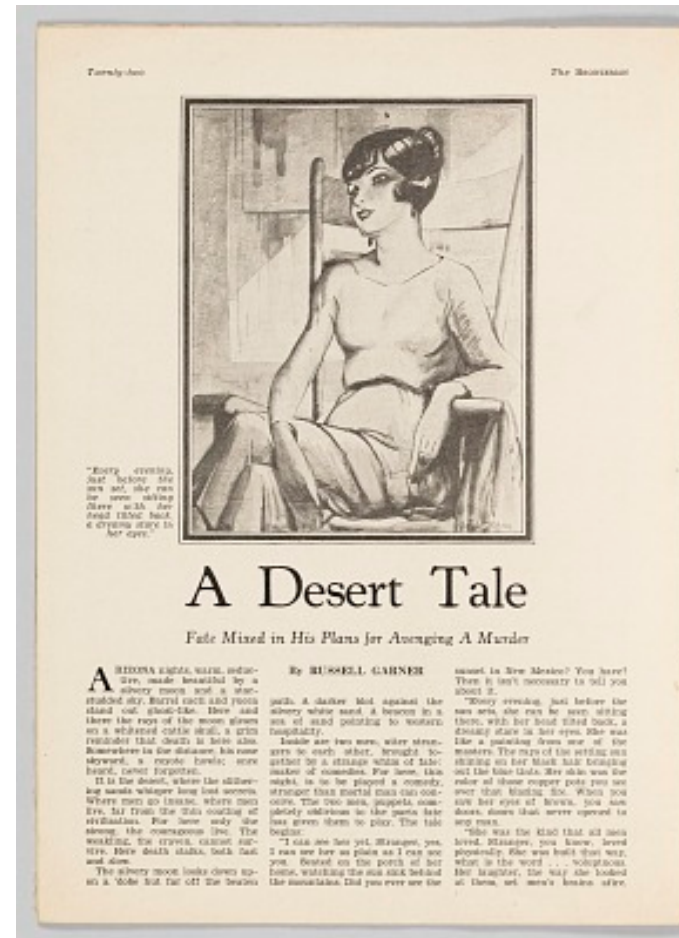
The silvery moon looks down upon a 'dobe hut far off the beaten path. A darker blot against the silvery white sand. A beacon in a sea of sand pointing to western hospitality.

Inside are two men, utter strangers to each other, brought together by a strange whim of fate: maker of comedies. For here, this night, is to be played a comedy, stranger than mortal man can conceive. The two men, puppets, completely oblivious to the parts fate has given them to play. The tale begins:

"I can see her yet, Stranger, yes, I can see her plain as I can see you. Seated on the porch of her home, watching the sun sink behind the mountains. Did you ever see the sunset in New Mexico? You have? Then it isn't necessary to tell you about it.

"Every evening, just before the sun sets, she can be seen sitting there, with her head tilted back, a dreamy stare in her eyes. She was like a painting from one of the masters. The rays of the setting sun shining on her black hair bringing out the blue tints. Her skin was the color of those copper pots you see over that blazing fire. When you saw her eyes of brown, you saw doors, doors that never opened to any man.

"She was the kind that all men loved, Stranger, you know, loved physically. She was built that way, what is the word... voluptuous. Her laughter, the way she looked at them, set men's brains afire.



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