

Lone Wolf

The lone rider heads South toward a reflection of the moon in the distance of the heat reflected landscape. Drawn to it, in the heat of high noon. He'd pray that it's not another mirage, if he were a believer. He needs a source of life to draw from. His body rises and falls with the pace of his heavy breathed beast. His horse gallops down the valley as a bell rings out in the distance calling the faithful to close ranks in obedience and worship of their God. The scent of dirt, metallic and salted burn the rider's nostrils. Sweat pours from his forehead and drips onto his nose and then from there into his moustache and beard, finally touching his chapped lips. Lips and surrounding skin as tough as old leather, beaten down by days of open exposure and harsh terrain. The brief taste of liquid reminds him that he needs to drink something other than whisky in the heat of this day. He reaches for his canteen, opens the lid and pours nothing into his mouth and over his head. Laughter hurts, it's dry but he can see that it's not far inside the valley where his eyes reflected the moonshine onto the surface...

"Or was it shuunn-shine? Yer, sun-shine... That's it..." he thought. He points out the way to the grey mare and she seems to comprehend his actions.

The bond between a wandering cowboy and his horse runs deep. It's almost what some mystics might be 'clined to say sikick. I 'member the first time I laid my eye on him. No. Wait. I 'member the third time I lays my eye on him, the first two times I not be 'memb'rin' much frcause t'all whisky I'd bin drinking during that period of my life. Yer, that third time, that t'wer' a doozie! All sorts of ruckin' and shuckin' and fuckin' bin going on that night. The travelling roadshow was in the town and they brought with'em buxom whores from ever' corner t'ov globe. Sitting here recollectin' I can tell you that ol' Buck here had his fair share of them pickin's that there week. They brung wit'm some Negros, Eye'tall'ians, Chinks, Injuuns and a few types of females I ain't n'er heard of or seen before nor since. But I tell you son, that there was a veritable buffet of sin and pleasure like no man had seen since the garden o' Babylon or soddit and gandora. I 'members old Buck here had just won a string of hands and was flush with pride, spunk and funding for months and I intended to waste as much of it as possible on whisky, women and testosterone fuelled ejaculations into the orifices of many a bosomed beauty that evening. I had just stood, taken my last shot of firewater and collected my belongings and my beloved for the night ahead, one Verna Bloom. Sassy bitch but a as a coyote in heat. Squawked just like one too, if ya grab my meanings... She rode me harder than Custer rode the Injuns out of our territory five years ago. I slammed my glass on table, tipped my hat in salute to my fallen companions and woman in arm and money in fist I headed towards the stairs of the hotel. Just as I ordered another bottle from the Inn keep' I throw him some coin and turn to the future ex missis Buck Broncho and winked. At that moment... BANG! I near piss my pants I wadn't 'specting it. I turn like a coon on the spot and see this dam rascal Gómez Toro yanking for his chest as he drops a blade onto the filthy shit stained floor of the saloon. The dirty Meh'ichan sonor bitch were 'bout ta empty my belly and my pockets and take my Verna for his own when the lone stranger opened up his chest with the bullet from his .45. That's the time I laid my eye on his and 'membered it. There ain't no forgettin' the time that your life is saved in good faith by a stranger. He could've just a left it and seen what happened. Heck, I might have been 'clined to do just that t'wer the boot on t'other foot so t'speak. I was awful grateful to Mitch Ryan from that moment onwards. I looked to the Inn keep' an' gestured towards Mitch, I reckon I said something like, "whatever the nigger wants... Put it on my tab". Mitch Ryan took kindly to it despite the slur. I ascended

the stairs and found solace betwixt the sweet embrace of Bloom's smooth tan legs. Not for long. But for long enough.

Next day, Mitch Ryan was gone. So was Verna Bloom and so was my winnings from the night prior. The landlord proprietor of my room was mighty grumpy when I was unable to present him with recompense for the extensive tab drawn up in my name... I had to scurry out of that situation real quick-like. Like out of the window and onto the manure pile below... Now that was just bad aiming on my part. An' missing out on my winnings and their locale... That t'was bad aiming on Mitch's part. Indebted to him I were, but I'm not a 'bout to t' t' t' to be saved and praisin' him one moment only to be bent over and mugged by him the next. I'm gonna find that damn negro and the vixonous Verna Bloom if it's the last thing I 'er do.

Lone rider will return...