

to his skinny frame in maidenly token of surrender. Her left hand strayed upward and rested maddeningly on his frayed vest. "Oh! Honey. . ."

Better men than Semore Mashby have made greater tactical blunders in the embrace of soft round arms. He could no more have resisted the lure of the parted, upturned lips than he could have neglected to collect interest due him. He crushed her to him and quivered with the delicious novelty of a soul kiss such as had inflamed only a few of his wildest dreams.

When, two minutes later, they seated themselves on the sofa and entwined themselves again in each other's arms—the fourth finger of Vistar Goins' left hand flamed with the glory of Elzevir Nesbit's diamond!

Elzevir frowned as she massaged, with a hot iron, various rough-dried garments of the white folks.

She had plumbed the nethermost depths of misery—and she was scared: scared completely and thoroughly. During dinner the previous night she had intercepted countless glances directed by Urias toward her imitation ring. Conditions had been worse at the matutinal feast. It could mean but one thing:—Urias suspected the true state of affairs but was not sufficiently convinced to voice his suspicions.

Once before he had pursued such a course and been forced to retreat precipitately from the house pursued by a verbal barrage of terrible intensity. Elzevir knew that Urias was merely awaiting substantiation of his suspicions before loosing his initial tirade. The future seemed dark with impene-