

"But s'pose I di'n't?"

Semore smiled enigmatically. "Well, if'n that was the case —" Something in his smile decided her. It was at one time a concession and an iron warning. It seemed to threaten: "Once you is married to me you is gwine *want* to wuk!" Reluctantly — knowing that it was her last chance — Vistar took the plunge. She shook her head —

"Reckon I cain't do it, Semore."

It was the first time her refusal had been unqualified by some ray of hope. Semore bent skinily forth in his red plush chair, gripping the battered arms with talon-like fingers. "You — you mean — you ain't nev' gwine marry with me?"

She sighed. "Reckon not, Semore. Me'n you wa'n't meant for each other."

A good deal of the calculating harshness disappeared. He was stunned by her refusal. It had never occurred to him that he would not eventually be accepted. He had fancied that the lure of his wealth was too much for any dusky damsel to resist. "Ise rich," he faltered.

"Guess so. But me — I is always said I was gwine marry for love. . . . Yo'd better go, Semore, 'cause this heah intumview is painful for the both of us."

He rose. "I is comin' back —"

"'Tain't no use. I ain't nev' gwine marry you."

"But, Honey. . . ."

"Goo'-bye, Semore. You is gwine fin' another gal soon what you will like her better'n me. Guess I ain't wo'thy of you, nohow."

He turned toward the door in a daze. He knew that her answer was final and he simulated a trag-