

now Vistar had come to cut her social props from under, to smash her cosmic scheme in the solar plexus. How thorough a job she was performing, even Vistar did not know, for she did not dream that the ring which glowed from Elzevir's finger was born in a glass factory.

Elzevir was lavish in her praise. "Lemme see it, Miss Goins. I sho' does congratulate you."

Vistar slipped the ring from her finger and passed it over, exulting in her triumph. Elzevir inspected it languidly — then suddenly her eyes narrowed, her lips compressed and every muscle in her body tensed.

She recognized her own ring!

There wasn't a doubt of it. The worn and battered prong, the . . . she spoke merely because she was afraid that by prolonged silence she might betray her emotional seethe to Vistar's close and exuberant scrutiny. "Sho' is a han'some ring, Miss Goins."

"My inten'ed ain't no piker, Mis' Nesbit."

Elzevir did not know how Semore Mashby had become possessed of her ring. She didn't particularly care. All that she did know was that by some kind act of a merciful Providence the missing ring was once again in her possession and there she intended to keep it. Her conscience was clear: the ring had been stolen from her. It had come home to roost. It was her property — and her property she intended it to remain. To her legal right of possession she intended to add actual possession.

"Elegant ring," she murmured absently, turning it this way and that in the sunlight. "Prettier than mine, I reckon."