

tion allayed to some slight extent the doubts which clung, fungus-like, in Urias's congenitally guileless breast. He was forced to admit that he couldn't, to save his life, have distinguished the imitation stone with its plated setting from the genuine blue-white and its fourteen-karat mounting.

"Think Elzevir'll know the 'iffe'nce?" demanded Cass triumphantly as they left the store.

"Not less'n she's a wizzid," answered the considerably relieved Urias.

Knowing that he was on the eve of borrowing — without her consent — the gem which headlighted her way along the topmost social stratum, Urias Nesbit was unusually considerate of his wife's feelings that night. They walked to town and howled deliriously through four acts of a moss-eaten farce which was playing a two-day visit to the city. Their two tickets had cost all of four bits and their seats were in the front row of the super-gallery which does not exist in the north and which is known south of the Line as Buzzard Roost or Nigger Heaven.

The following morning Urias hung doubtfully around the garage where Cass Driggers was employed. Cass was labouring skilfully over what had once been a proud and valiant flivver. About eleven in the morning a distinguished, hatchet-faced gentleman swung into the repair shop and stood eyeing the wreckage with a baleful stare.

"What are you doing, Cass?"

Driggers straightened and bobbed his head — an inherited courtesy which he reserved for those especially distinguished southern white folks in the light of whose approval he desired to bask.