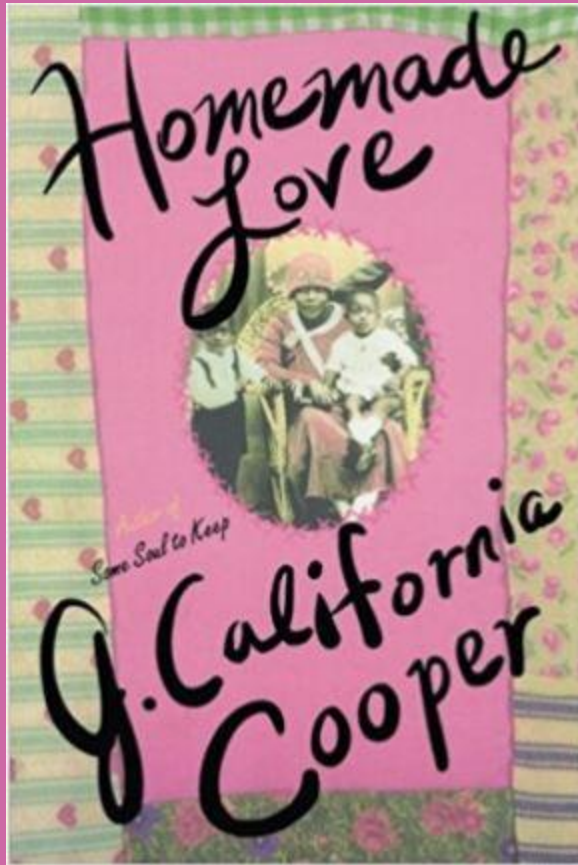


The stories in this second collection from the author of *A Piece of Mine* are all about love. About sex and family too, and life when it



is lived with wonder and relish.

Told in first-person, in a lively, unobtrusive black dialect, these tales, set in both country and city, are lit with wisdom and high-spirited humor.

In "Happiness Does Not Come in Colors," a black activist widowed in the '60s gradually allows herself to become attached to a white man,

while a younger black woman finds that activism has expanded her life in surprising ways.

In "The Magic Strength of Need," an ambitious girl of exceptional ugliness builds an empire of beauty products and services, is

finally wooed by the longed-for rich man and learns to value the love of a constant friend. "Spooks" is a sexual comedy in which two men enjoy the favors of a recent widow whose "husband" returns to her each night. Cooper is overfond of aphoristic commentary and exclamation marks, and her narrators may have similar-sounding voices, but she tells stories that move and dance about people who pop off the page to lodge themselves firmly in the reader's affection.