

## Portrait of Any Senior Fraternity Woman

(Continued from page 335)

"The prom—yes, only a few days ago . . . dated up weeks ago . . . don't be sil. (She had a habit of wrinkling her nose, than which there is nothing more supercilious) . . . my sixth, no seventh prom . . . time passes . . . and the first one off the campus, too." And so on—until she was dancing with Jerry again.

She was conscious that the infatuation he had for her had turned to mere duty. Several times she had noticed his eyes following the little ginger-haired figure in green from the Applied Arts College. Smart, yes. For the first time in her life she sensed that she was going to be thrown over for a younger girl. Perhaps she was losing her grip on herself. Was she going to allow her youthful vivacity to fade at twenty-five? It wasn't that Jerry was rude. But she could see that he wanted to dance with the other girl. The fresh eagerness of his face, his eyes. Clean. Clean eyes. A wholesome lad, too good for her. When she looked at him an almost irresistible impulse arose in her to smooth back his hair, to run her finger along lips. But she was afraid to let him know she cared. Always careless indifference masked her face. How ironical that when real love came, it should be this—this boy. She who had played with the affections of so many.

She saw how relieved he was when she excused herself on the pretense of going to the dressing room. She lost herself behind the stag line, and watched him seek the girl in green. She stepped into the vestibule, feeling just a little down-hearted. And borrowed a cigarette. Why was it she hadn't noticed those pictures on the walls before? She scanned over them. How many she knew. Old friends. Here was Pete, star of the football team when she was a sophomore. She had adored him so. And good old—she remembered the face but couldn't recall the name. And here was her partner in that dance skit in "Now I Ask You"—here he was in a track suit. Many familiar faces. Faces from the dim past . . . And here was last year's basketball team. Forgotten events came to her. She turned away—it was too much. The music throbbed within. She stood in the open door; the lights were off now.

She walked onto the floor, amid the moving figures, shadows clinging closely together. Suddenly she felt miserable, neglected. She must get out! Somewhere, anywhere!

The young sophisticates were gone from the corner when she rushed past. The blond young man with the faint suggestion of a mustache was helping the comedienne of the Fresh Painters to some punch, a frosh was blushing tying someone's shoe string. Oh, hurry, hurry, hurry. She reached the dressing room. Luckily it was deserted. She closed the door behind her. Suddenly she was crying, crying pitifully, crying because she felt old . . . utterly irrevocably *finished*—out of it. A sudden hush while a violin softly murmured the strains of *Soliloquy*. Her life rushed by her, kaleidoscopically. Her pulse hammered. Oh *please!*

Having done her best to repair her make-up and to remove the circles from under her eyes, she slipped upstairs to get her wrap, and came down again without being observed.

The cool night air rushed to meet her. The drive was filled with parked cars. Life is so cruel . . . Like a faded yellow rose, pressed between the leaves of "All the Sad Young Men". Was she a victim of her own folly? Damn! Don't become maudlin.

The stadium steps had never seemed so high to her before. Not that she had climbed them often. The green lantern creaked in the wind, high above the dark tavern. Seeing a bus coming along, she immediately decided to board it. A bus had never been necessary to her, for someone was always picking her up. She fumbled in her purse for money. Noting this the driver muttered, "Pay as you leave, lady". She sank to a seat. "Lady"! As if she were a middle aged matron! And "Pay as you leave"! Yes, she was paying, paying with her heartaches and agony, and when the nights were long she would pay, as an old actor pays when he sees younger favorites replace him, Pay—a tap on her shoulder caused her to turn around.

"—Why, Ben!" she exclaimed, "I haven't seen you since you graduated!"