

Rain

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yankee. Hey y'all. Come here and let's sing Dixie to Jo Ann until she forgets she's a damnyankee." While Dee led the singing, Jo Ann laughed. She told me later that she wished she had had the nerve to sing "Yankee Doodle". But she didn't.

"Guess you're initiated," Dee said.

"I should say so", Jo Ann answered. Do people in the south always sing that loud?"

Dee snorted, "People in the south are just like people in the north. Rich men drink Whiskey Sours and sing loud. Poor men drink beer and sing loud."

"Do you like beer?"

"Gosh, yeh."

"What does your mother say about that?"

"Oh, nothing. She doesn't care how much beer I drink."

"Oh."

"Does yours?"

"Does my what?"

"Does your mother care if you drink beer?"

"I don't guess so."

The two were silent for a moment. Dee sat up and crossed her legs. She blurted, "My mother was a H. C. graduate and she graduated cum laude."

"That's wonderful. Did she meet your daddy there?"

"No, she met Dad in a night-club, and they ran away and got married. Say, do you know the new President?"

"Yes, I do."

"How did you rate meeting him?"

"My mother is on the board of

trustees and she introduced me to him." Jo Ann looked at the buttons on her blouse as she talked.

Dee stared at Jo Ann carefully and pushed her hair out of her face again.

"Listen Jo. Let's you and me be friends—best friends I mean."

"But Dee, I don't . . ."

Jo Ann had gone into Dee's room and found her lying on the bed.

"I'm sorry you lost the class president election, Dee".

"Forget it."

"Tired" Jo asked.

"No."

"Do you have a cold?"

"No."

"I just wondered. You were sniffing so—"

"Hell, can't a person sniffle for any reason but a cold?"

"Sure."

Jo Ann looked at her. "You're crying", she said.

Dee slammed the cigarette case on the floor. "I can't do it. I can't stay here. The alumnae secretary will never say 'What an

asset Dee Lawrence was to Hallsboro College'. Instead she will think, 'Tsk, tsk—I remember the records say the girl's parents drink. I hate everyone who has a mother and father to bring them to college. I hate everyone who doesn't have to go to college on a scholarship. I hate you.'"

The next day Dee had come down stairs, laughed, and told all the girls she was sick and damned tired of school. She left that afternoon.

Dee and Jo Ann were getting up from the couch. Dee was mumbling about how nice it had been as she walked heavily toward the door.

"You'll get wet", Jo Ann said.

"I don't mind. I'm used to it. It always rains."

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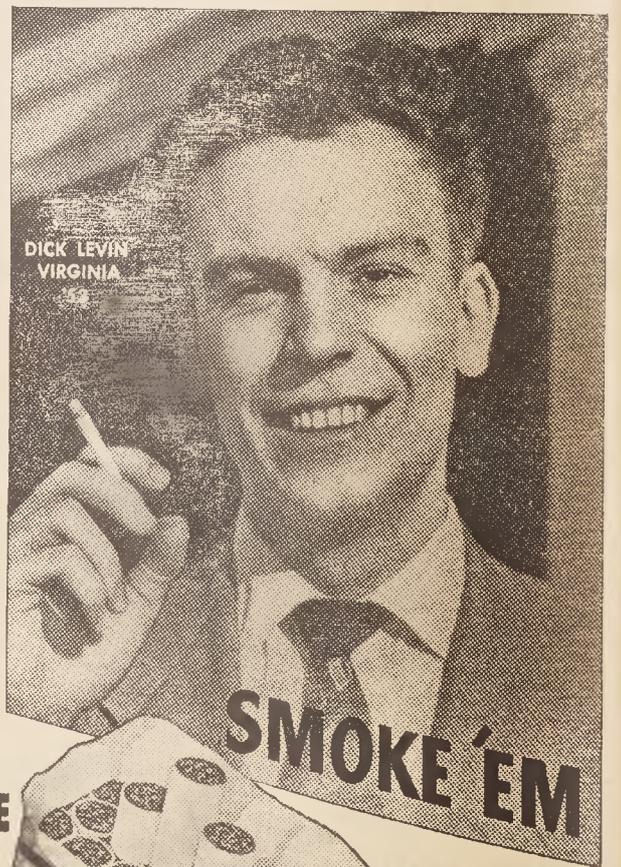
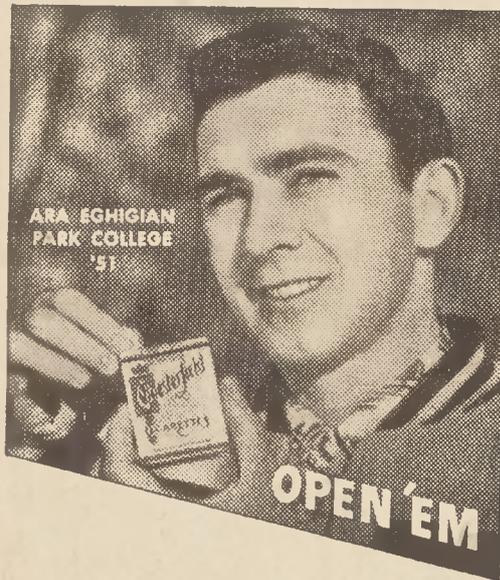
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