

Xavier

RAMONA COOKE

COLLEGE, '44

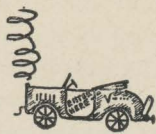
Four years ago I was a freshman, too, and the experiences of that year will long live in my memory. The most outstanding incident was the first big formal dance to which I had a date with the Prince Charming of the senior class.

I was all "hepped" up about going with such a "smooth guy," and I went down and splurged my whole month's allowance on a darling (if I do say so) fireman's red formal. With much coaxing, I got Mom to promise me her evening jacket, the red wool one, and waited for the day.

You know as well as I do that "tempus" doesn't "fugit" when you want it to, and this "tempus" was no exception, but Friday finally rolled around. I'd promised to meet Judy and Kate there, and all through ninth and tenth study halls I subsisted on divine dreams and visions of their faces when they saw me sweep up that night with my Romeo. I couldn't make up my mind whether we'd be going in a cream-colored convertible or a black Rolls-Royce with a chauffeur. If you will ponder a moment on this subject you will find it quite difficult. A creamy convertible is more modern, but if the guy is new and doesn't know his way around, and my sense of direction can't be relied upon one bit, maybe it's better that he doesn't drive. Anyway, a chauffeur is more ritzy. I finally arrived at the idea of letting "him" decide.

He lives in a big brick house on Sheridan Road and goes to school in the East. That ought to mean something! At least I thought it should. So when he came knocking at my door Friday night, can you blame me for telling the family to take a gander out the window at the swell car "he" probably had standing out in front?

I almost died when he led me out to a 1914 Packard gas buggy and proudly introduced me to Xavier. Get that. He introduced me to Xavier



"Xavier," he said, "I should like you to meet Ramona. You'll probably be seeing a lot of her from now on."

All this time I had been looking around for another cute guy—probably a foreigner from the sound of his name. Then it dawned on me. This—this rattletrap, this can-opener on wheels, this destitute, despicable tin cracker-box was Xavier, and Chris and I (no chauffeur), you'll notice, in fact, almost no car) were going to ride to the dance in it.

"Shake hands," Chris said to me, and motioned towards a piece of protruding fender that he evidently considered one of Xavier's hands. Somehow I became master of myself, and the situation, and grasped the metal and gave it a good pumping. Xavier was evidently pleased, for it jerked and rattled and squeaked conversationally for at least five minutes afterwards.

Meanwhile, figuring that if this phenomenal beast had hands, it probably had ears, nose, feet, I began to look around for something that looked like the back of its lap, so I could kick it.

So we got in. All along the way Chris howled praises of Xavier above the deep rumblings and shrill croakings that accompanied us. It seems it cost only fifteen bucks, runs as well with tires as without (only wish had said machine now).

We charged up to the front of the country club, and the doorman stepped forward to open Xavier's door without cracking a smile. (Those fellows must have a bit of the great stone face somewhere back in their ancestral lines.)

Things weren't so bad at that particular minute. We were late enough to have missed the alighting crowd,

and maybe if I was lucky we could make it without being seen. Chris didn't seem to mind at all if we were seen near Xavier. The doorman laid hold of Xavier's front door and calmly lifted it off. I guess the darn car just didn't want it anymore. The doorman sputtered, went a bit wall-eyed, and then he and I died a thousand mental deaths together. Kate and Judy rolled up behind us in Jim's big, black Buick.

Chris chuckled, took the door from the doorman, tossed it into the back seat, guided me to the front steps, and charged off to park his problem child.

Now you wonder why I told Chris to go take a flying swan dive into Lake Michigan and to take his blasted buggy with him? Oh, I know he's a swell dancer and, gosh, he's a nice guy, and, gee, how did I know that his new blue coupe was being shipped from the East, and that Xavier was only a temporary measure? But when Xavier's bolts dropped out going over that bump in Sheridan Road, and I had to drive the roaring, reeking raspberry cart home while Chris sat on the hood to keep it down—well, that was the last straw.

Maybe I was a bit unreasonable, though, and maybe I shouldn't have referred to Xavier quite as harshly as I did, but it's all right now, because Chris came over in a week with his sky-blue convertible, and we both apologized and smoothed things out. And we also kept Xavier—but not to go to dances in.

Imprisoned

LOUISE LASSETER

College '43

The waves lash their anguish
Hard against the steep
Of cliffs relentless
To waters that should weep—

The last torrent ebbing
As deathless tears die—
I hear my heart's crying,
And still can't cry