VOLUME 6 NUMBER 4

FEMALE MIMICS

AN EROS COLDSTRIPE PUBLICATION

$5.00

The cross-dressing game requires a catchy name!

ADAM'S EVE!

Dena straightens males out fast!

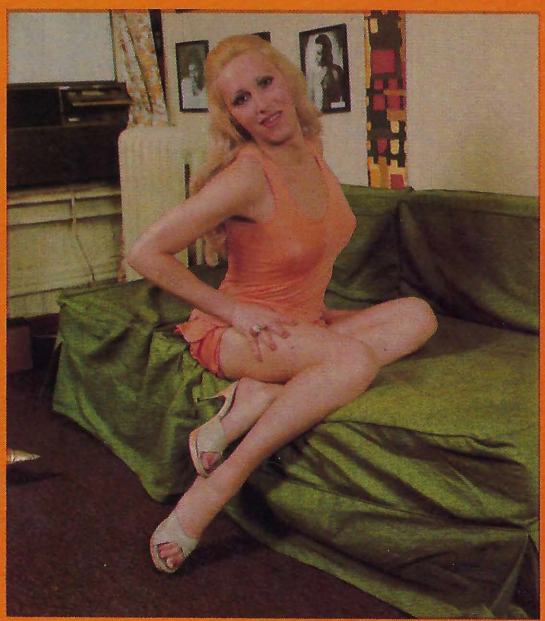
FOXY SHE-MALE

Eddie became "Edie"—wow!

"MISS GILDED GRAPE"

Danielle strives for a sexy "inner quality".

CINDERELLA FELLA



FEMALE MIMICS

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 4 FALL, 1975

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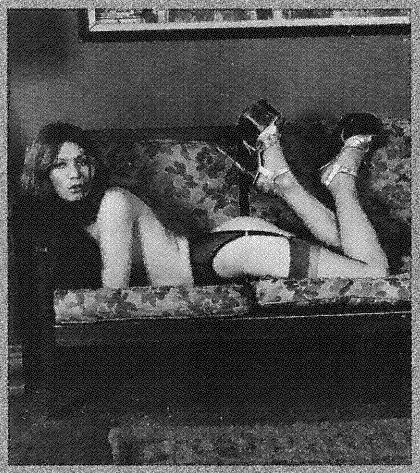

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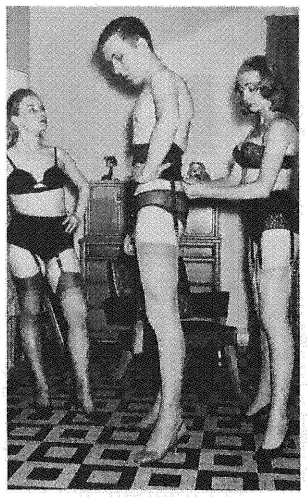
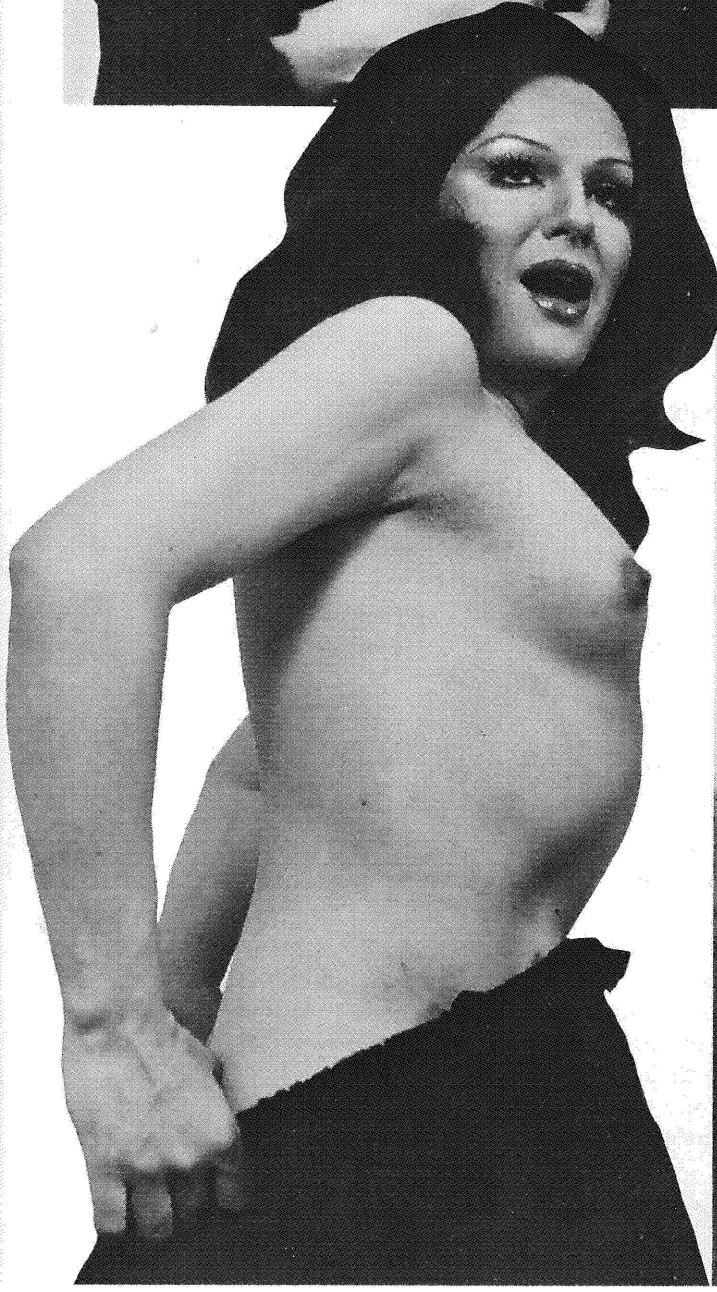
EDITORIAL

Once again FEMALE MIMICS brings you intimate glimpses into the lives of this nation's top female impersonators, in-depth interviews that probe the psyches of the fascinating people who contribute to the excitement of this spectacular area of show business. Among the stunning performers you will see in this issue are "Edie," winner of the coveted "Miss Gilded Grape" title in New York City, the incomparable "Eve," a former math instructor who abandoned long division to work as a cocktail waitress in Las Vegas, and, finally, a very foxy she-male, "Dena," whose performances dazzle the North Beach crowds in San Francisco. As a special bonus, we've also included coverage of the world-famous *Le Carrousel*, where female mimicry has reached art-form status to the delight of the avant-garde, free-wheeling Parisians! It's all here for your viewing pleasure—the spectacle and the hoopla of the bizarre and fascinating world that makes up the female impersonation scene. FEMALE MIMICS is your ticket to exotic adventure, so take a titillating trip you'll never forget!

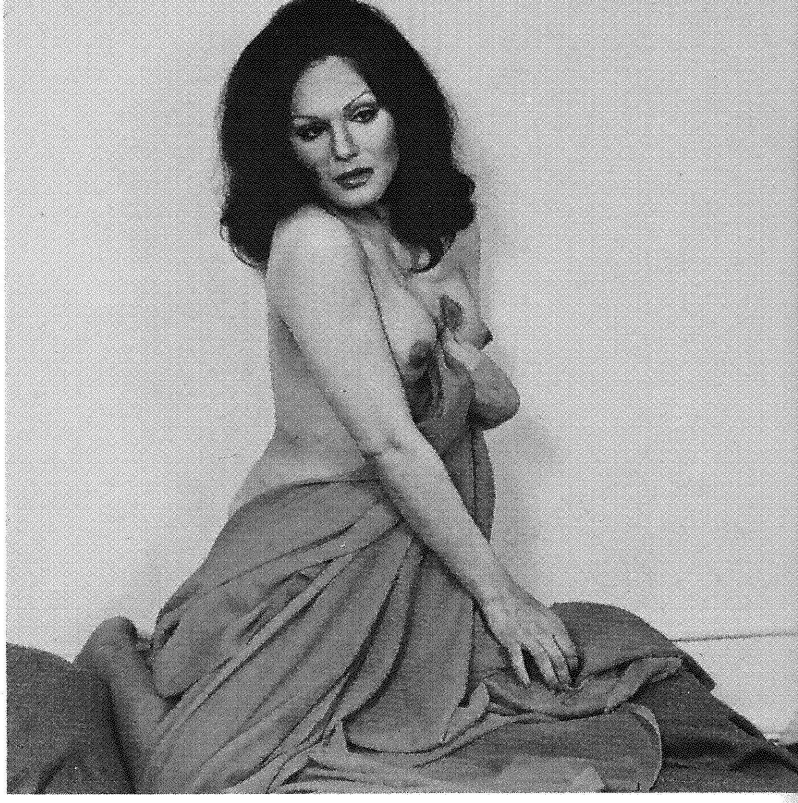


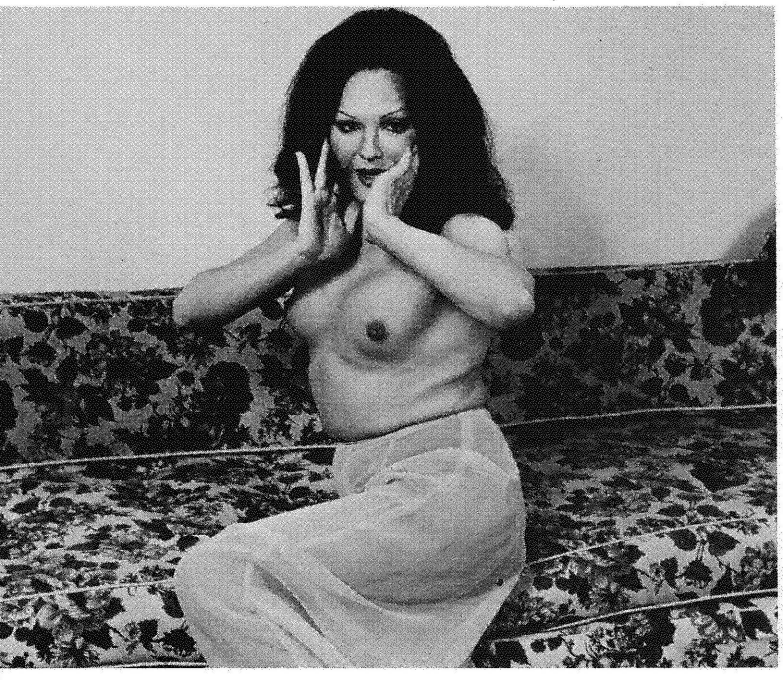
"MISS GILDED GRAPE"

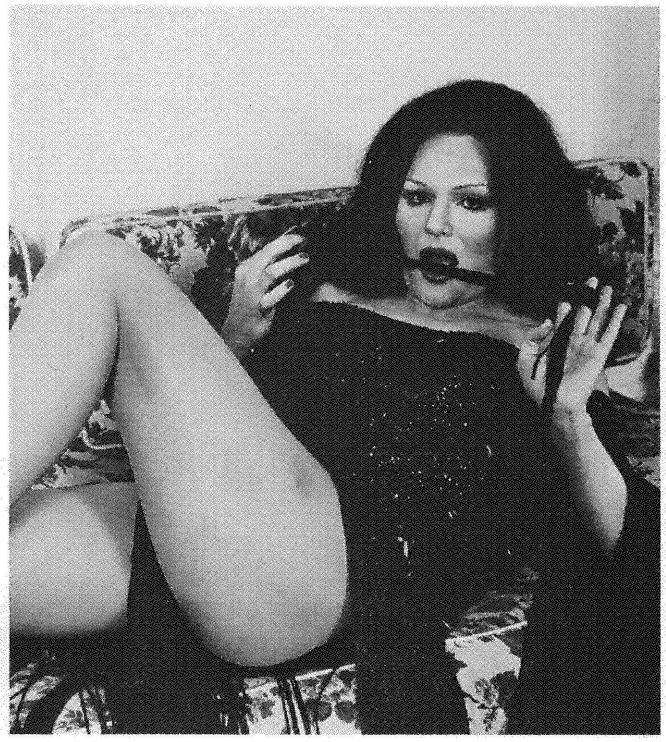
When "Edie" was Eddie, back a few years ago in Oakland, California, he learned that there were many advantages in playing the female role. It all began one afternoon while dressing up experimentally in his sister's clothing, wig, makeup. "There I was—in the family living room, preening—when my sister's brand-new boyfriend arrived without warning. He took one look at me, whistled lewdly, and invited me to the movies with him! I'd already spent my allowance, so I accepted his invitation."



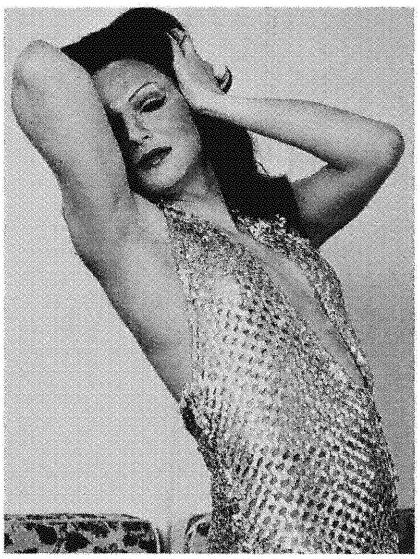
While it may seem incredible that one of the top female impersonators in this country, and recent winner of the "Miss Gilded Grape" title in New York City, began her meteoric career because of such a mundane coincidence, "Edie" assures us it is nevertheless true. "I wish I could invent something more glamorous, but that's the way it happened. I went to the movies with my sister's boyfriend, and since he was a very respectable young chap who was not inclined to get 'fresh' he didn't find out I was a *brother* till a week later! But I learned a valuable lesson that afternoon," Edie said very seriously. "I learned that it's marvelous to be taken to the movies, bought popcorn, even kissed."







As a result of that initiation to the wonderful world of "cross-dressing," Edie has built a most successful career as a female impersonator. Says Edie, "I adore my work. In fact, impersonating the so-called 'gentler sex' is both my avocation *and* my vocation. I don't understand this whole flap about Women's Lib at all. Good gawd, don't women understand they have everything going for them now?"



Gesturing expansively, "Edie" explained that she is presently at work polishing a new nightclub act. Her goal is to become a comedienne and work the finer clubs across this country, including Las Vegas. Her idols are Beatrice Arthur, Hildegarde, Barbra Streisand and Carol Burnet, and her goal is to incorporate the best of all four in a kind of campy song-and-dance act. Edie admits that this might prove somewhat difficult, though, since she intends to make no attempt to disguise the fact she's a male. "I guess all I want to do is make the best of the talents I possess," says Edie. "I mean, my ability to mimic females is something special. I just want to be the best *ever*!"

CROSS-DRESSING—UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS

There are cases on record where males have lived as females during their entire lifetimes. Such masquerades have included marriage to men.

The correspondence that follows consists of manuscript letters found in an old sandalwood box, bought at an auction sale when the contents of an old country-house were being sold in 1974, in rural England. There were many genuine and valuable antiques, which were at once snapped up by "rings" of bidders employed by leading dealers; a lot of Victorian junk which presumably ended up in the Portobello Road—such things as chamber pots decorated with flowers or little angels, which are used by "with-it" people as punch bowls or as centerpieces for dining tables. They did not appeal to me. However, there was one small lot, consisting of a bundle of walking sticks and croquet mallets, and a small polished sandal wood box, locked but lacking a key, which did appeal. I had no use for walking sticks or croquet mallets, but I did like the look of the box which still had about it a faint, lingering spicy perfume of the wood. So I bid up to two pounds, about $5, and was lucky. I was luckier still ten minutes later. I was trying vainly to get the bundle into my small car, when a young man wearing a sheepskin coat, an embroidered band around his wild hair and love-beads offered me $10 for the lot! I took the money gratefully, and saw him walk over to a big, very new white Rolls Royce and throw my walking sticks onto a heap of other junk on the back seat. There must be money in rubbish these days!

I took the sandalwood box home, cleaned and polished it and placed it on a small table, which it graced. Not having a key I could not open it and since, when I shook the box it seemed to be empty, I left it alone, not wishing to damage it by forcing the lock. About a month ago I was at another sale—I am

fascinated by seeing the sad dispersal of old homes—and I bought a beautiful old tantalus cheap. A tantalus is a stand for three cut glass decanters. The top of the stand is hinged to close over the lids of the decanters, and locks in position. This was to prevent the servants from drinking the Master's brandy and refilling the decanters with water! I took my prize home, not that I have any servants to keep under control, but it really was a beautiful thing, with cut glass bottles, mahogany stand and silver fittings. It was black with age, which is probably why the dealers did not bother with it. A friend offered me fifty pounds, about $120, for it a few days ago, so I guess I made a good bargain.

Above all, the tantalus had a lock and a key. A very small key. And within half an hour of getting it home, I tried the key in the lock of my sandal-wood box. It opened, and inside I found a collection of old, yellowed letters, almost a century old in fact, written in a precise but spiky copper-plate. These are the letters I reproduce below, having cut out a good deal of extraneous matter from them.

But before you read the letters, I must give you something of the background which you may not be familiar with. The letters stop in 1882. They were written by a Lady Governess to a friend "in service" in another big house in the English countryside. The Lady Governess was an unfortunate creature as a rule. Children of the upper classes were reared from birth by nurse maids, many of whom started as "wet nurses," feeding the child at the breast. At about nine or ten years of age, the child was taken from the nurse maid, usually a woman of the "lower orders," and almost always strongly attached in a sentimental manner typical of the class, and invariably illiterate. She was replaced by a Lady Governess, who was expected to care for her charges, to educate them in the case of boys until they were ready for boarding school at about age twelve, and in the case of girls until they were ready for marriage.

The Lady Governess was usually recruited from families with upper class aspirations, but working class incomes, which meant that the majority of them were daughters of the parsonage. Quite well educated by literate parents, with the manners and graces of the upper classes but as poor as Church mice, these unfortunate women had very little hope of contracting a suitable marriage. It would have been disgraceful for them to marry "out of their class" into the working or even the yeoman-farmer class, although a good many of them, in desperation did, thus cutting themselves off forever from friends and families. The rest, lacking any other form of suitable employment, went "into service" in large households. It was, of course, impossible for them to take on the menial tasks of cook or parlor-maid; and equally impossible for their employers to use them in such capacities. So many Anglican parsons were the younger (and poor) sons of great families. It would have been intolerable to have a servant whose social standing might well be higher than one's own! So many of the wealthy of the 19th century were "jumped-up" manufacturers or merchants, and quite beyond the Pale socially!

So these underfed, over-bred, literate, tense and earnest young women took a position painfully between the servants' Hall and the Drawing Room. They were not "domestics;" at the same time they were evidently not "equals." They were invariably disliked by the servants because of their habits of demanding lightly boiled eggs and glasses of fresh milk for their charges at awkward hours, and because they did not "mix." They were looked down upon—and sometimes feared—by their employers; looked down upon because they were poor; feared because although poor they were probably socially superior! They ate in the "schoolroom" or in solitary state in a small sitting room sometimes provided. If they were of good appearance they might, on rare occasion be allowed to sit down to dinner with "the Family" to make up an odd number, or to avoid having thirteen at table. If very attractive, they were at risk of being seduced by the Master or a grown up son and then, if they got pregnant, of being packed off with a pension of $100 a year to cope with the bastard as best they could. The typewriter was a fine invention in more ways than one, because by the turn of the century it began to provide decent, well-paid occupation for such young women, for the first time in history!

As may be guessed, the general fate of such girls, undowered, was to remain single. A very few of them were taken care of by genuinely grateful children in later life. The rest lived solitary, sad, and embittered. Such a one, probably was Miss Agatha Cartwright.

I have altered names and places, but have otherwise changed nothing.

Hampshire.
October 24, 1877

My Dear Dorothea,

I am most grateful for your kindness in writing to me as I take up my appointment as governess to Master Thomas Redfern. The past two weeks, as you may guess, have been busy and filled with incident, and this is the first time I have had leisure to sit down to write a letter. How certain then, dear Dorothea that you should be my first correspondent.

I have found Sir Robert and Lady Redfern to be graciously condescending, and the Household to be well managed by an efficient housekeeper, a superior Person, but not of a class that one could make a confidante of, as you will understand. Master Thomas is not, I fear strong. He is tall for his age, but thin, with beautiful golden hair and a pink and white complexion, more suited to a girl than a boy. He has for some time been treated by the local doctor for lung trouble, but Lady Redfern confessed to me that she is anxious about him and that if he does not improve by spring,

Often the female impersonator is more feminine than a "true female." The reasons are obvious. The female impersonator, through observation, has captured the very essence of femininity and specializes in projecting true grace and poise.

he will have to be taken to London to see a specialist.

He is a child of winning manner, gracious and charming, but I fear that unless there is a radical change in him as he grows up, he will fit in ill with the hard drinking, hard riding Gentry of Hampshire. I shall, of course, do all I can to improve his mind, so that if he is unable to ride to hounds, at least he will be able to take solace in good books.

I do hope you have fully recovered from your heavy cold and that . . . etc.

Ever your Loving,
Agatha Cartwright

Hampshire.
January 12, 1878

My Dear Dorothea,

Thank you so much for your seasonal greetings! In fact, this is a sad time here at Oldenhall. Master Thomas has been very ill. About a month ago, the local doctor, who does not seem to me to be either very competent, nor very sober in his habit, gave the boy up for lost. As you know, I have seen my own dear sister and the younger son of Lord Humphries, my last employer, both die of consumption of the lungs, and Master Thomas's appearance is so like theirs that I fear the worst.

We are to travel to London next week, for which purpose Sir Robert has engaged a private coach on the railway. The London House is being re-opened, and we shall all stay there while the doctors see what can be done for the boy, who has already begun to twine his fingers around the heart of—

Your loving,
Agatha

London,
February 4, 1878

My Dear Dorothea,

Such news! So much to tell you—and such confusion and turmoil! Two important things have happened since we have been in town. First, Sir James Robertson, the eminent consultant on diseases of the lungs has announced that Master Thomas has incipient consumption. He has ordered him away to Switzerland where, it is hoped, the pure mountain air will bring him back to health. I was asked to accompany Lady Redfern, and as you may imagine, had certain misgivings. However, I am told that the Swiss are extremely clean and well-conditioned, so I agreed to go. I am to have my salary raised from twenty to thirty five pounds a year! (From $59 to $89!) And I am to have another twenty pounds with which to purchase suitable clothes for myself, which will be a veritable delight.

However, two days after the decision was taken, a bomb-shell struck us. Sir Robert, as you may know, is a colonel of the First Hussars, but has lately been on extended leave, awaiting retirement. He has now been made general, and given the appointment of

Marriages between men in which one partner acts out the female role throughout the course of the relationship is not so common as supposed.

Governor General of the Windward Islands, which I believe are part of the Lesser Antilles or West Indies. Her Ladyship is adamant that she must go with him—and who shall blame her? But the climate, being hot and humid would, in the opinion of Sir James Robertson, be fatal to Master Thomas. And there is further risk of malaria and yellow fever which, to one in his debilitated condition would be fatal.

So, I am to take his on my own to Lugarno in Switzerland! I trembled for days after this was announced, but after mature consideration I came to the conclusion that it was no less than my duty, and that for me it was an opportunity of a kind I am not likely to find twice in a lifetime. I am told there is a strong English Community in Lugarno and an Anglican church. I shall hope to learn to speak German! Because of the problems of having the boy in a foreign country, I am to have a power of attorney, whatever that may be, placing me in loco parentis, with all the authority of his parents.

We are to depart in a week, before Master Thomas's condition worsens, so the next you will hear from me will be from the shores of Lake Lugarno!

Ever your Loving,
Agatha

Switzerland.
March 14, 1878

My Dear Dorothea,

Well, here I am at last, duly installed in a darling little Swiss chalet, as virtual mistress of the house, with housemaid, parlor maid, cook and handy man! Although we traveled in great comfort in a private railway coach, Master Thomas was very ill for some days after our arrival. I think it was natural distress at being parted from his mama and papa as much as anything else that un-manned him. But already he is much improved. The hectic flush is gone from his pale cheeks, and begins to be replaced by a healthy glow. He is still short of breath after exercise, and he coughs more than I like to hear, especially at night. However, he is in good spirits, and I have high hopes for him.

We cannot, of course, expect to hear from Sir Robert and Lady Redfern for some weeks because there is no telegraph communication with the place they are going to.

You will perhaps be surprised to hear of a serious decision I have recently come to. I do not feel that Master Thomas will be in any condition for many exercises for a long time to come, but will need much protection, not merely from others who may try to involve him in such occupations when he begins to get about, but also from his own natural inclination to join in. Pondering this problem, I have decided that the very best way to protect him will be to dress him, and rear him, for some at least, as a girl! As I have told you, he certainly looks the part. And suitably dressed he will be accepted as one right from the start of our life here. In this disguise he will not be asked or expected to join in the dangerous occupation of climbing, to which the mountains are a continual temptation.

I have already found a suitable dress-maker, and she is to come up to the Kleinhoff tomorrow to measure Master Thomas and to confer about a suitable wardrobe. Under our changed circumstances, I have plenty of money at my disposal.

I shall write you further about the success of this experiment. Now let me ask about the health of your dear mother.

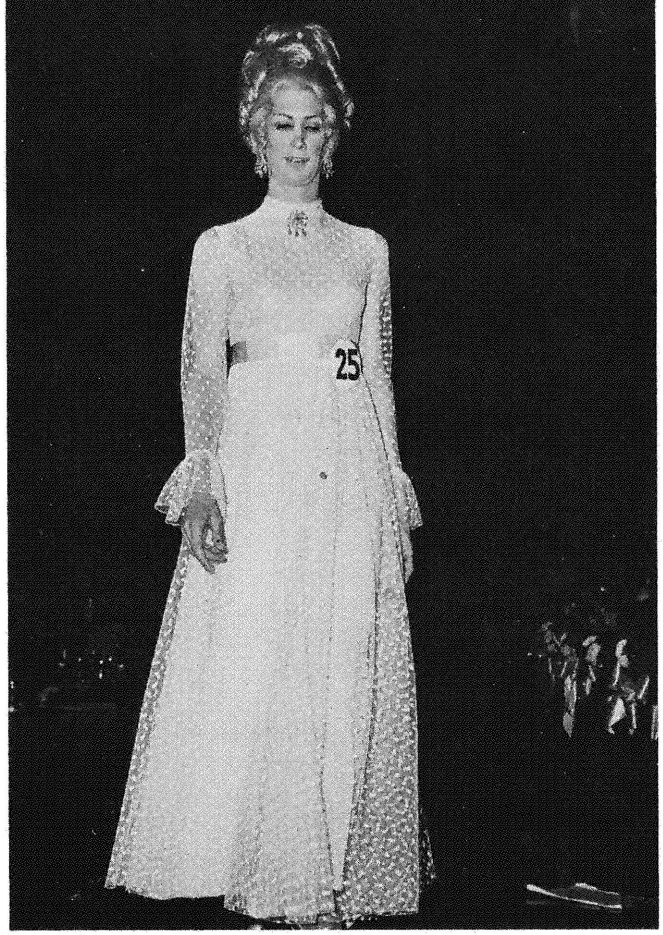
Ever your Loving,
Agatha

Switzerland.
April 3, 1878

My Dear Dorothea,

I appreciate the words of caution contained in your express letter in reply to mine of March 14, but I do not feel there is anything to worry about. As you know, my motives in dressing Master Thomas as a girl are of the very highest. As his only protector in a strange land, I see it as my duty to do everything possible to ensure his return to health. Excessive exercise is forbidden to him, and this seems to me to be an excellent way of ensuring that he does not indulge in it.

The dress-maker came on March 15, and proved to be a competent woman of middle age, who soon understood what I intended, and thoroughly ap-



Most frequently, the female impersonator merely practices an art form in the same manner that other entertainers perform for their audiences.

proved. It was a surprise to me, and also a comfort to find that about half the natives here are French-speaking. They refer to the town as "Lucerne." My French is very "schoolroomish" I am afraid, but I have a good vocabulary and basic knowledge of the grammar. I hope soon to improve my accent. It is a surprise to me that French does not sound the same when spoken by a French person as when spoken by an English one. This, of course may be due to the fact that they are also Swiss! Certainly Miss Jones who taught me did not speak French as they do—and not so quickly either! However, I am able to communicate with Madame Dupont, and shall undoubtedly improve as time goes by.

Of course, she had to have Master Thomas undressed in order to measure him. He blushed prettily as he disrobed, but when he stood before us clad only in a white silk singlet and his little white silk shorts, he looked so very beautiful, "Like a little angel" as Madame Dupont said, that tears came to my eyes. It reinforced me in my feelings that I ought to do everything possible to protect him from the harsh knocks of the masculine life as long as possible. He was very good, as he always is, and most sweetly polite to Madame. He quickly won her heart, as he won mine so soon after I took charge of him. Madame Dupont has brought a white cardboard box full of garments, all of which were, of course far too big. But they made it possible for us to discuss details without problems of language.

I was most impressed by the quality of everything. The Swiss peasant women are very skilled at embroidery, and all the underthings were beautifully embroidered with little sprigs of pink or blue flowers and edged with the most delicate lace I have ever seen—and at such reasonable. prices. We decided that the boy, being young, not yet eleven years old, need not wear long skirts, and settled on a length only just below the knee as being suitably modest and elegant at the same time. On that decision, everything else of course depended. I ordered for him, six pairs of bloomers, of a length to reach to above the knee, and edged with lace. These are to be made in real silk, all white, with embroidery of flowers in pretty pastel shades. We had a problem with his waist because, although he is painfully thin, being a boy he has no real waist. Madame suggested a light corset, which seemed to me to be sensible. She does not make them, but has a friend who does, so she was able to take the order. It will do no more than nip in his waist, and with some stiff boning at the back, give him some support which will help to ease his fatigue.

This, of course, necessitated some corset covers, which I ordered in white silk to match the bloomers. We decided upon some chemises also in white silk, again matching the more intimate garments. Then we had to have a considerable number of petticoats to wear under dresses, in order to flounce them out in the current elegant fashion suitable for young girls.

These are to be made of taffetas, again all in white, and with lace edging. I chose for him two party dresses for best, one all white with white embroidery and lace, and a wide, pale blue satin sash; the other in palest green, with a bright yellow sash to match his hair. For indoor morning wear, I ordered several simple gowns, some in Hollands cotton, some in a light wool jersey for cold days, and two in blue Chambray cotton for "rough wear" in case he should wish to indulge in some such occupation as painting in water colors!

I ordered from Madam Dupont, who will procure them, six pairs of white silk stockings for best, six pairs of brown wool, and six pairs of black wool. We shall have to buy shoes in the town from an obliging friend of Madame Dupont. I have also ordered a very warm coat in a delicate fawn wool, and a dark green cape, edged with real fur. This will have a hood to cover his head in the cold days.

Master Thomas's hair is already quite long, and Madame most kindly said she would send me up several lengths of white and colored satin ribbon for it.

As you may see, my plans are now quite complete, and we are both waiting with eager anticipation for the arrival of Madame Dupont's messenger in the next day or two. As soon as I have him properly accoutered, we shall be able to go out, which will be pleasant because although still cold, the weather is bright and sunny.

Now, I want you to tell me all about the new appointment you told me about in your last. It would be a wonderful step up for you to enter a Ducal household! You would make me, with a mere Knight of the Bath and Governor General feel quite Insignificant . . . etc. . . . etc.

Ever your Loving,
Agatha

Men who wish to abandon the masculine lifestyle *entirely* do exist, but they are the exception.

A great deal of preparation goes into creating a drag queen's striking appearance of elegance.

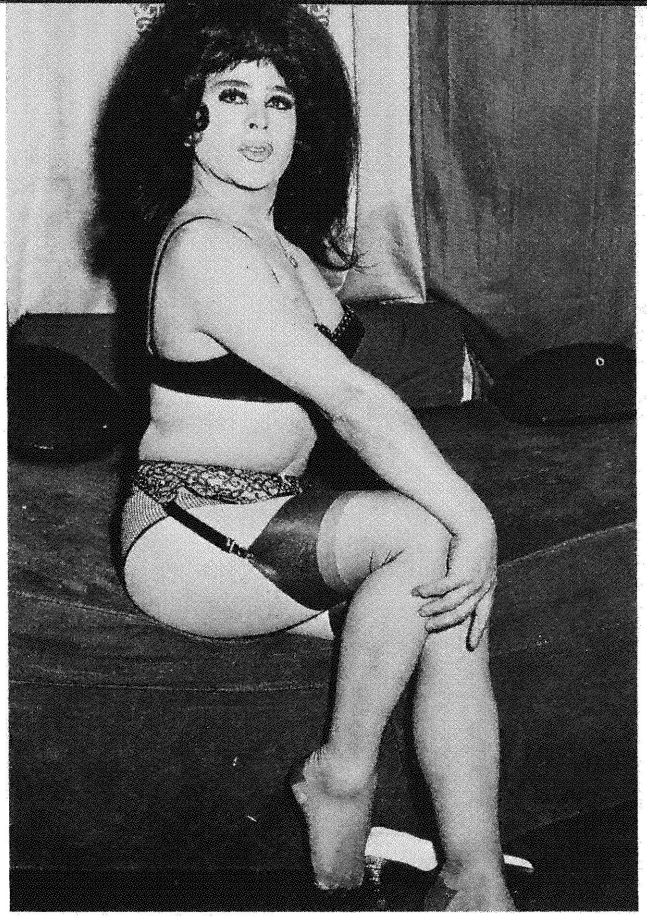
Switzerland.
April 15, 1878

My Dear Dorothea,

I was so pleased to hear that your new appointment has been confirmed! You must write and tell me all about it as soon as you can.

My charge has now effected the great change! Madame Dupont worked wonders, and delivered everything I had ordered on 8th. The messenger arrived at 10 a.m., and by 11 a.m. we had transformed Thomas into the most beautiful little girl you ever set eyes on! He tried on everything, with evident pleasure, and after lunch we set out for our first walk outdoors. He was warmly clad in a dark brown wool dress, with his warm cape over it, and his lovely golden hair hanging down his back from under the dark green hood, which framed his face and emphasized the tawny color of his eyes.

I had bought several pairs of shoes and boots against the great day, and because it was still cold and he had not been out before, we let him wear a pair of soft brown kid boots, with ten buttons to above the ankles and little heels about two inches high. He had been practicing with them indoors, and was able to



While it is true that many members of the "gay community" indulge in "cross-dressing" for gay balls, beauty contests and other social events, most of the attendees view these gala affairs as merely an opportunity to "let their hair down."

trip along beside me in a very girlish way.

We had passed some of our time discussing a suitable girlish name for him (We could hardly continue to allude to him as "Thomas" when he was dressed in his new clothes!) I favored the name "Victoria," in honor of the dear Queen, but Thomas had distinct ideas of his own. I have no idea where he got it from, but he was adamant that he wished to be known as "Aileen," even to the unusual speeling. Of course, I concurred at once, glad that he had made a choice that would please him. So now he is Miss Aileen Redfern, to all and sundry, and apart from myself—and you, dear Dorothea, no one knows about our little deception.

Let me hear soon about all your adventures in the Ducal Palace! I should be terrified to be in your place, but you have always been so self confident.

Ever your Loving,
Agatha

Switzerland.
May 27, 1878

My Dear Dorothea,

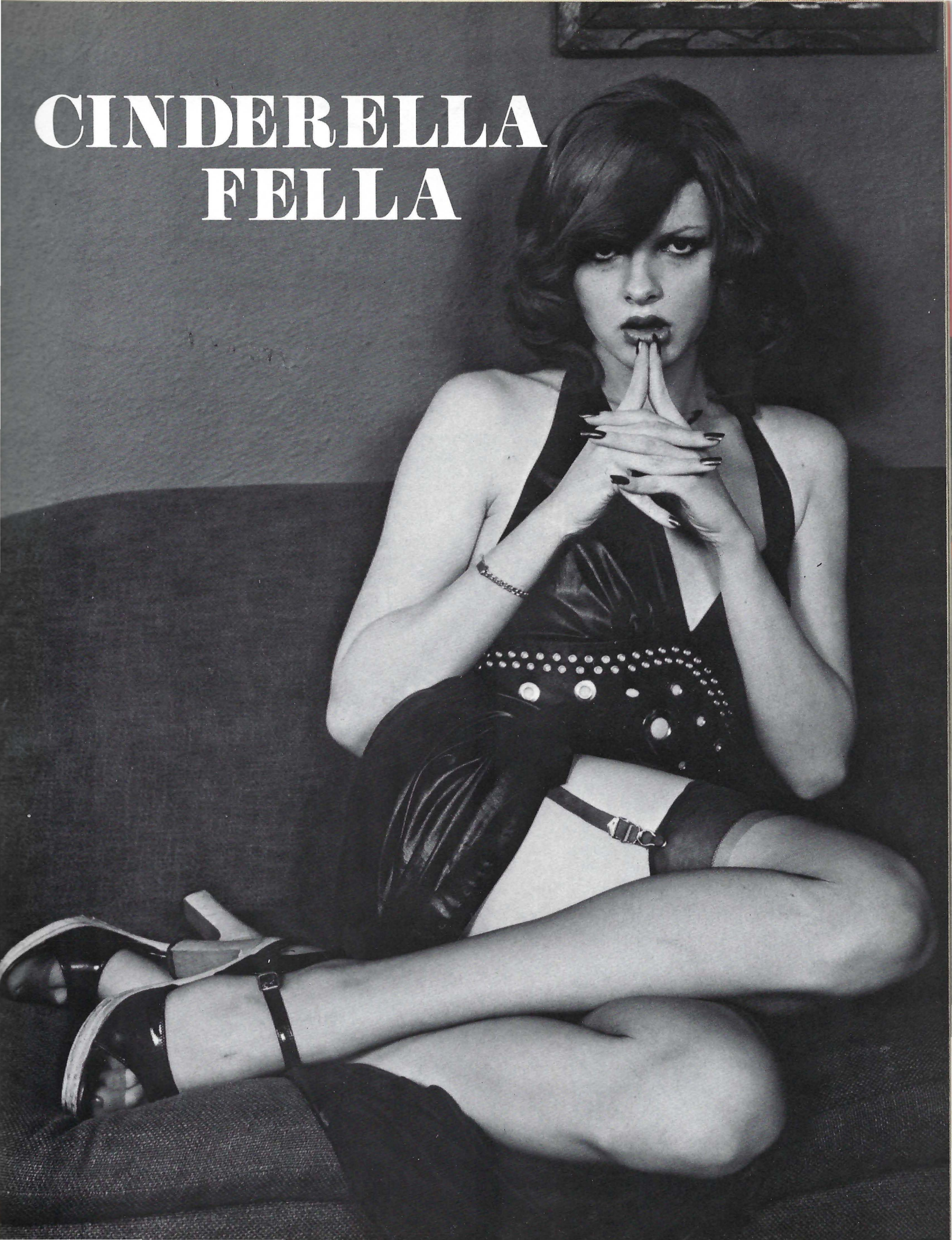
Such terrible, desolate news! I was growing worried about the long delay in hearing word from Sir Robert and Lady Redfern. Three days ago I received a letter from Sir Robert's lawyer, informing me that these dear people have been lost at sea! I can hardly bear, even now to think upon it! It seems that the steamer which was carrying them arrived safely at Port of Spain, Trinidad and that, after a few days' delay they re-embarked on a small ship to sail to Antigua. This was at the tail end of what they call the hurricane season, and the weather should have been good. Unfortunately, without warning, a terrible wind storm blew up from the Mona Passage, and presumably engulfed the ship. Bits of wreckage have been found, but no survivors. The lawyer is coming to Lugarno to consult with me at the end of the week. I shall hold this letter until he has been and gone, as I do not feel equal to finishing it now. For myself, I am all at sixes and sevens. I do not know what the future holds for me—just when I was happy for the first time since leaving home ten years ago. As to poor Aileen, she is quite prostrate with grief. I do all I can to comfort her.

I must remember to change her back to Thomas before the lawyer arrives!

Mr. Cosgrove has been and gone. He was a pleasant, elderly man, much bowed down by years, and the weight of the grief he evidently feels. He has left me with a heavy responsibility from which I shall not shrink. Sir Robert, always prudent, left a codicil to his will before he departed for the Antilles. He knew, poor man, that in such parts of the world, life is cheap, and that a man may die at dawn and be buried by dark. Advised by Sir James Robertson, the famed consultant from Harley Street on whose suggestion we were despatched here in the first place, Sir Robert

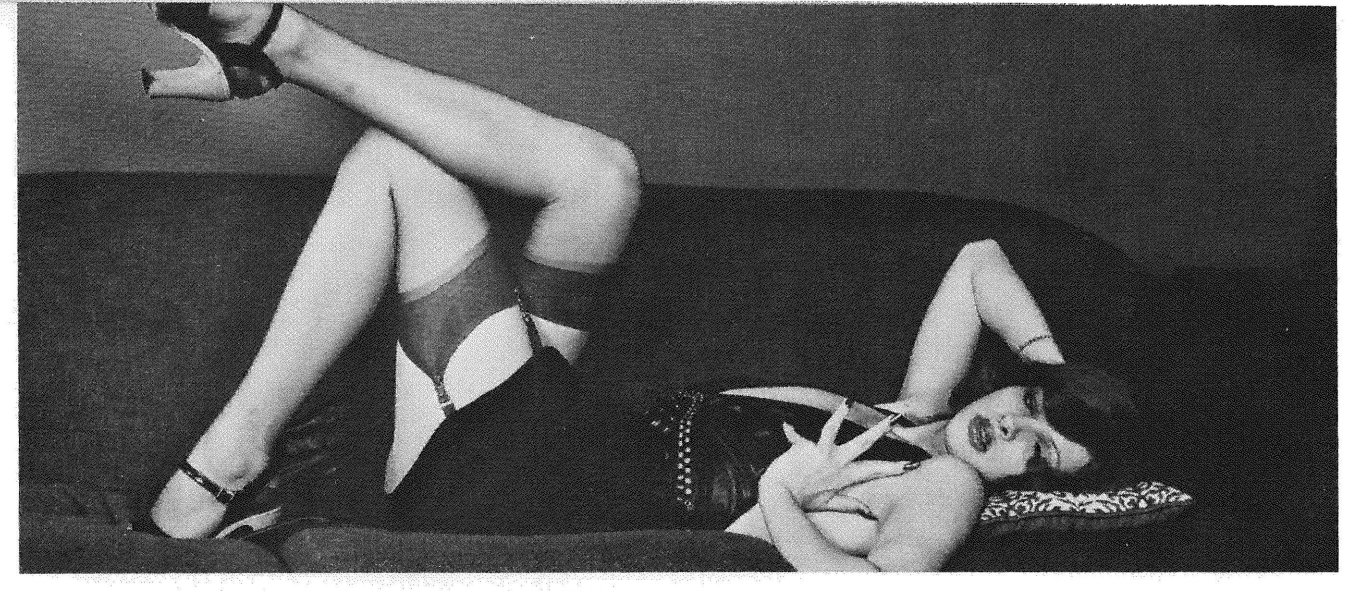
Continued on Page 50

CINDERELLA FELLA

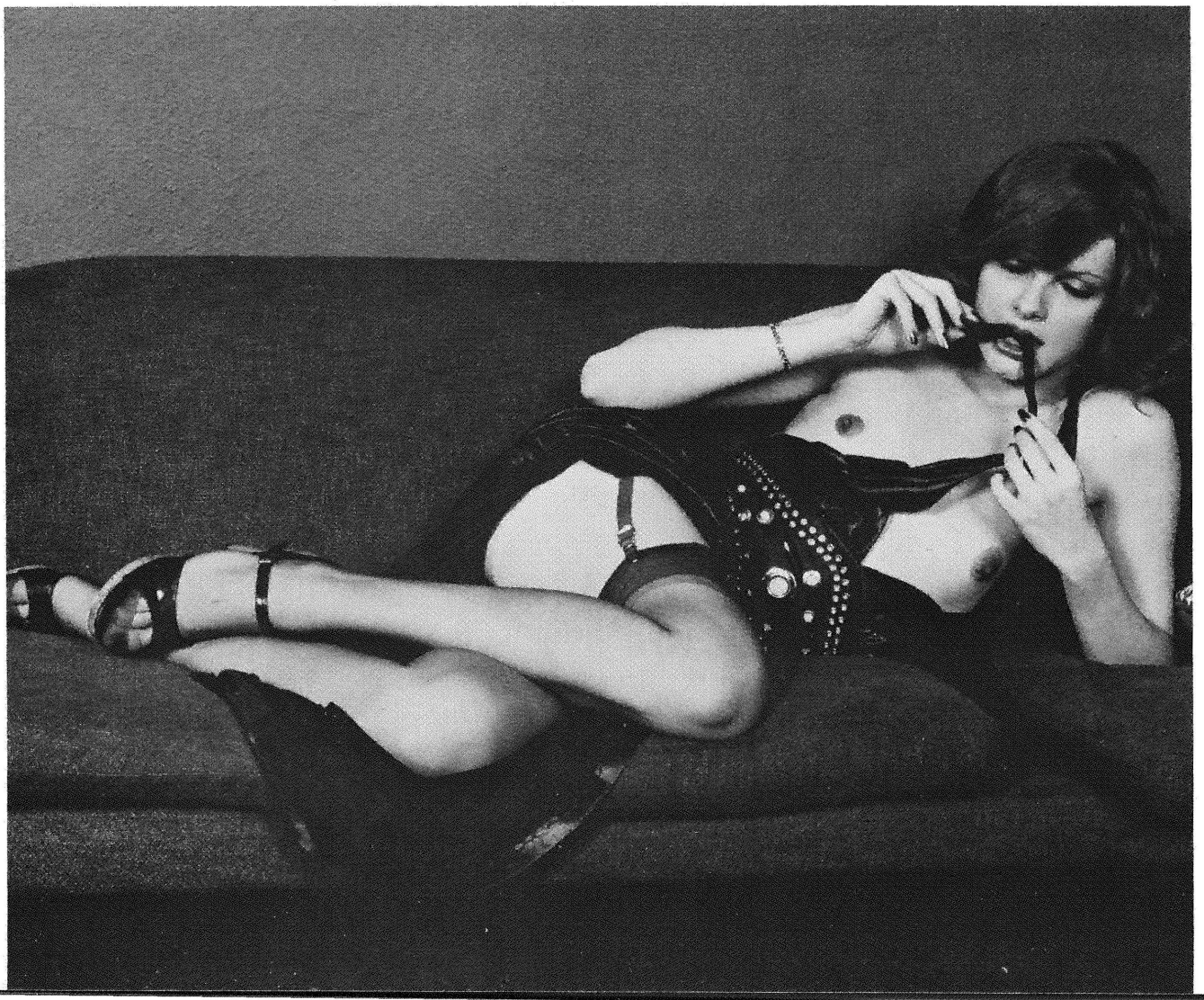


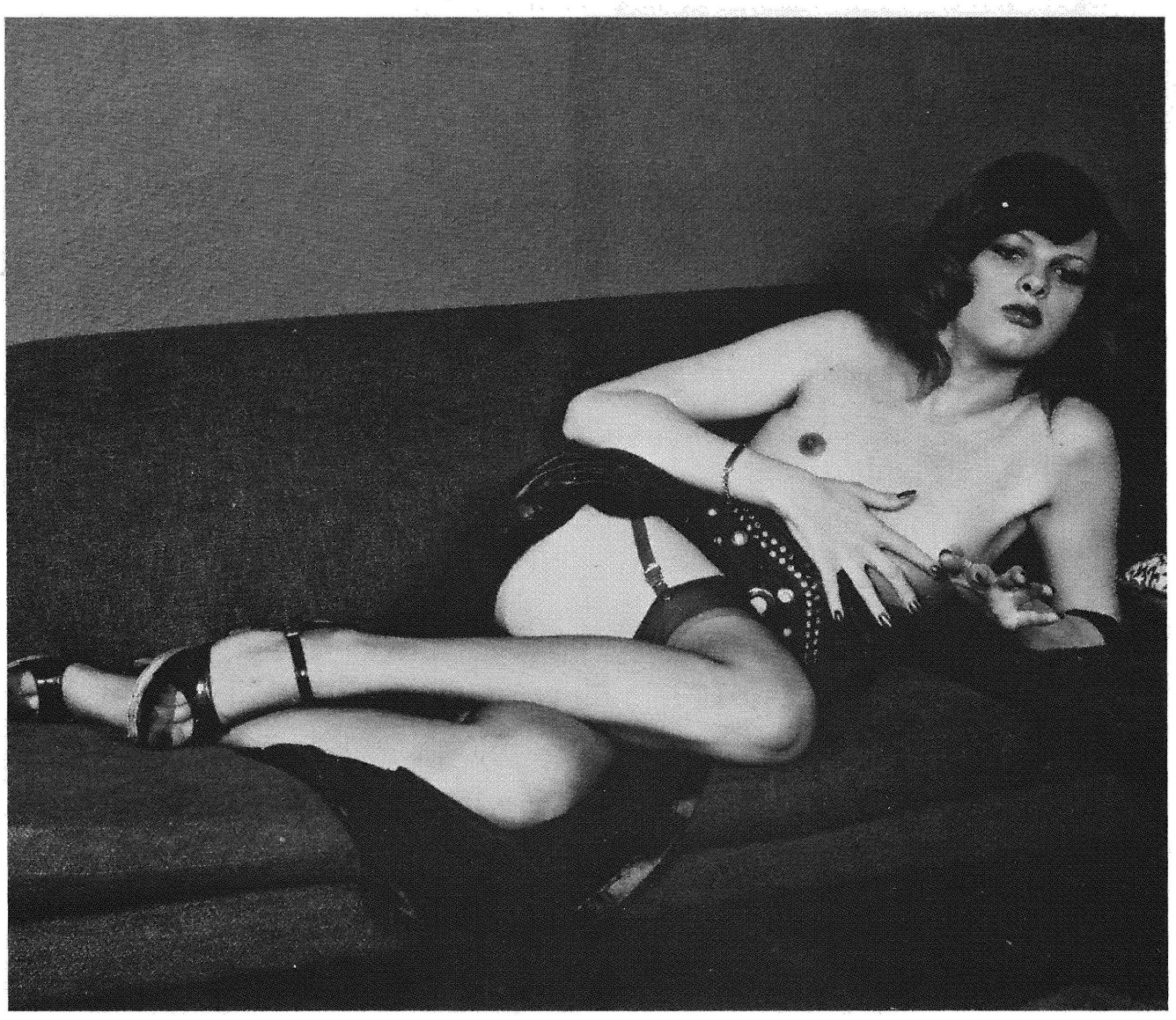
It is Danielle's firm conviction that successful female impersonation stems from an "inner quality" that has very little relationship with "externals." Still, as any pair of eyes (male *or* female) can plainly see, Danielle does not neglect the female facade in order to prove a point! By day, Danielle is a tennis pro at one of LA's most exclusive clubs!

"As a tennis player and instructor," says Danielle, "it's no problem for me to stay trim-looking and agile. As a matter of fact, it was because of the many compliments I received for my gracefulness and slim appearance that I decided to dabble in this most fascinating area of female impersonation. Unlike some impersonators I know, I am not at all interested in making "impersonation" a lifestyle. The truth is, I hadn't the slightest inclination to wear women's clothes until several women at the club insisted I give it a whirl. They kept complimenting me on my figure, and then one day, as a joke, I wore a woman's tennis outfit and I was an instant hit. Frankly, it was an eerie feeling."

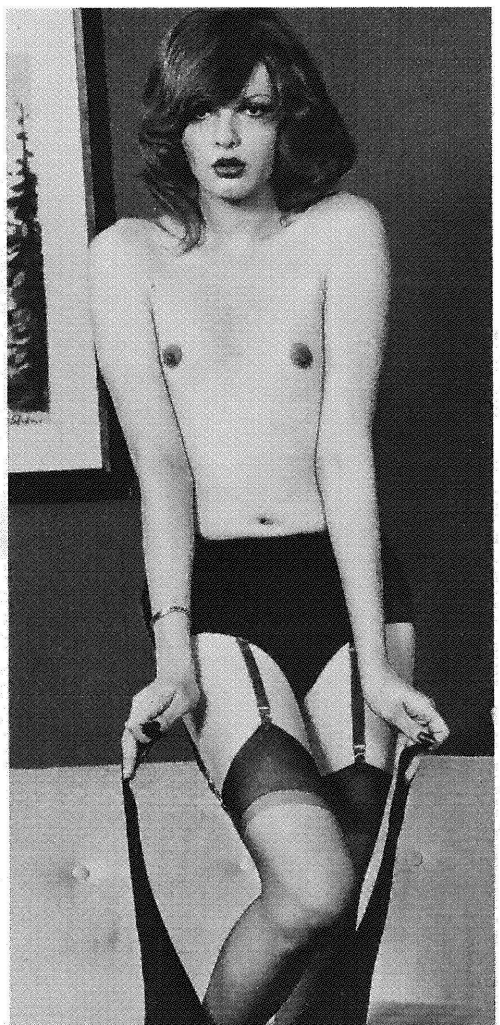


Why was it eerie? "Because none of the men at the tennis courts even recognized me. They actually thought I was a stunning new female member, and their whistles and ogling got me so furious that I tore my wig off and began swearing like a sailor. 'Course, that was a long time ago. Since then, I have shed this false, macho hang-up I used to have. I mean, now I just accept the fact that I'm damned good at impersonating a female. It's like a—a gift, you know? Ever since that day at the club I've been attending a lot of Drag Queen affairs. True, I've gotten more and more into that whole scene."

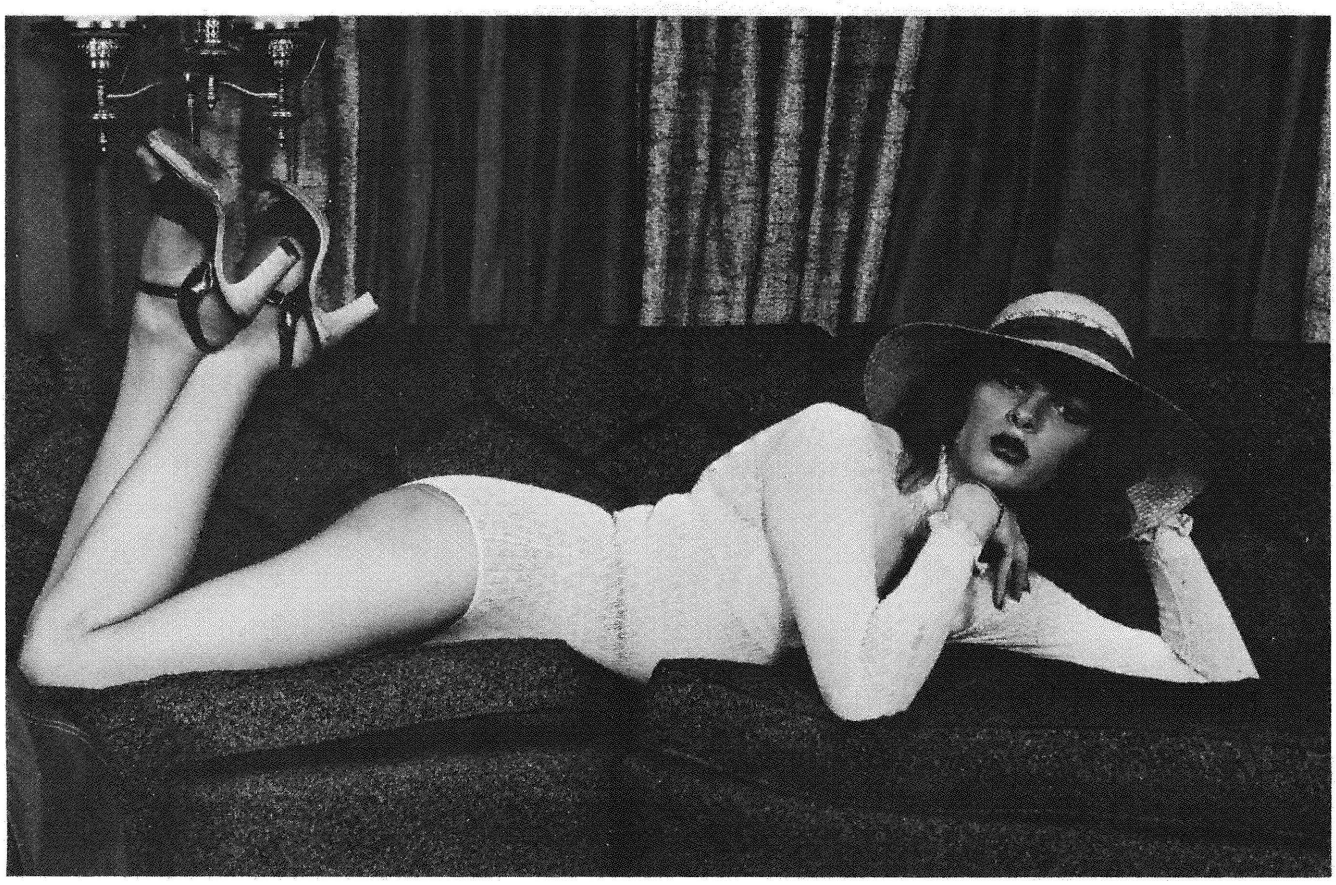




From the many contacts Danielle has made through her attendance at "cross-dressing" balls and parties, she has received encouragement to give up tennis and become a *professional* female impersonator. "I don't know, though," said Danielle, posing for us while the flashbulbs went off. "I might be good at impersonating a female, but I don't think I could ever be *great*, don't you agree? You see, being mediocre at something doesn't interest me. I'd want to be the best."

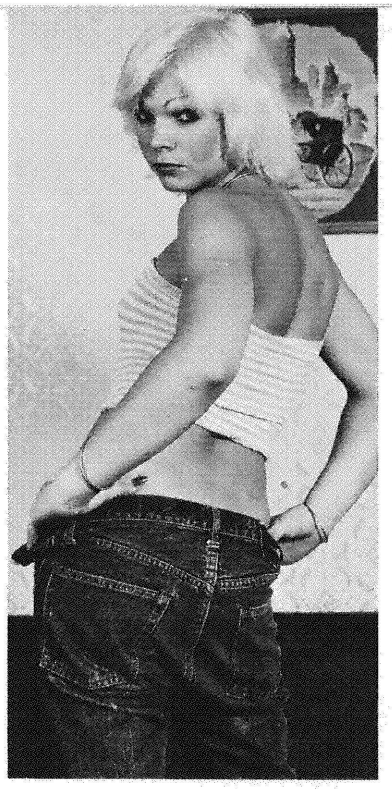


Danielle's dedication to her tennis game has instilled in her a tremendously competitive spirit. So strong is her will to win that she often finds herself envying females that men find attractive! "I know it sounds crazy," says Danielle, "but I simply have to be the best at everything. To tell the truth, there is one thing I wish for. I'd like to fake being female and beat Billie Jean King!"

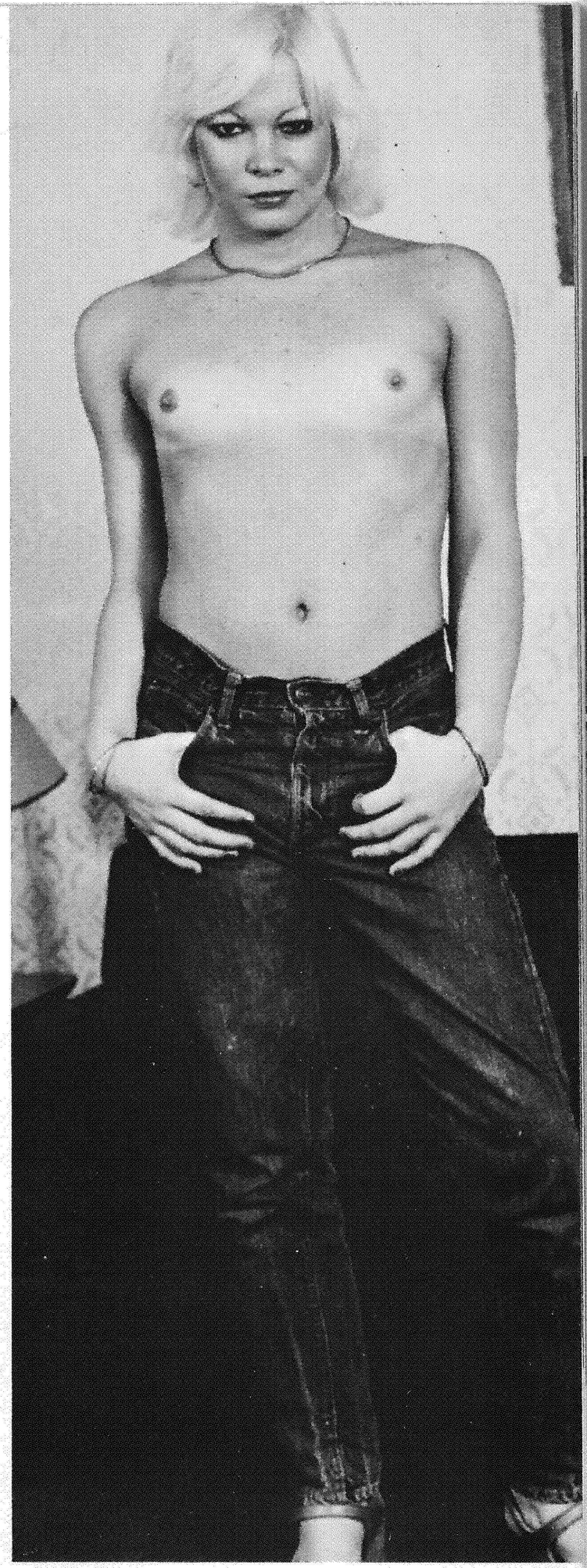


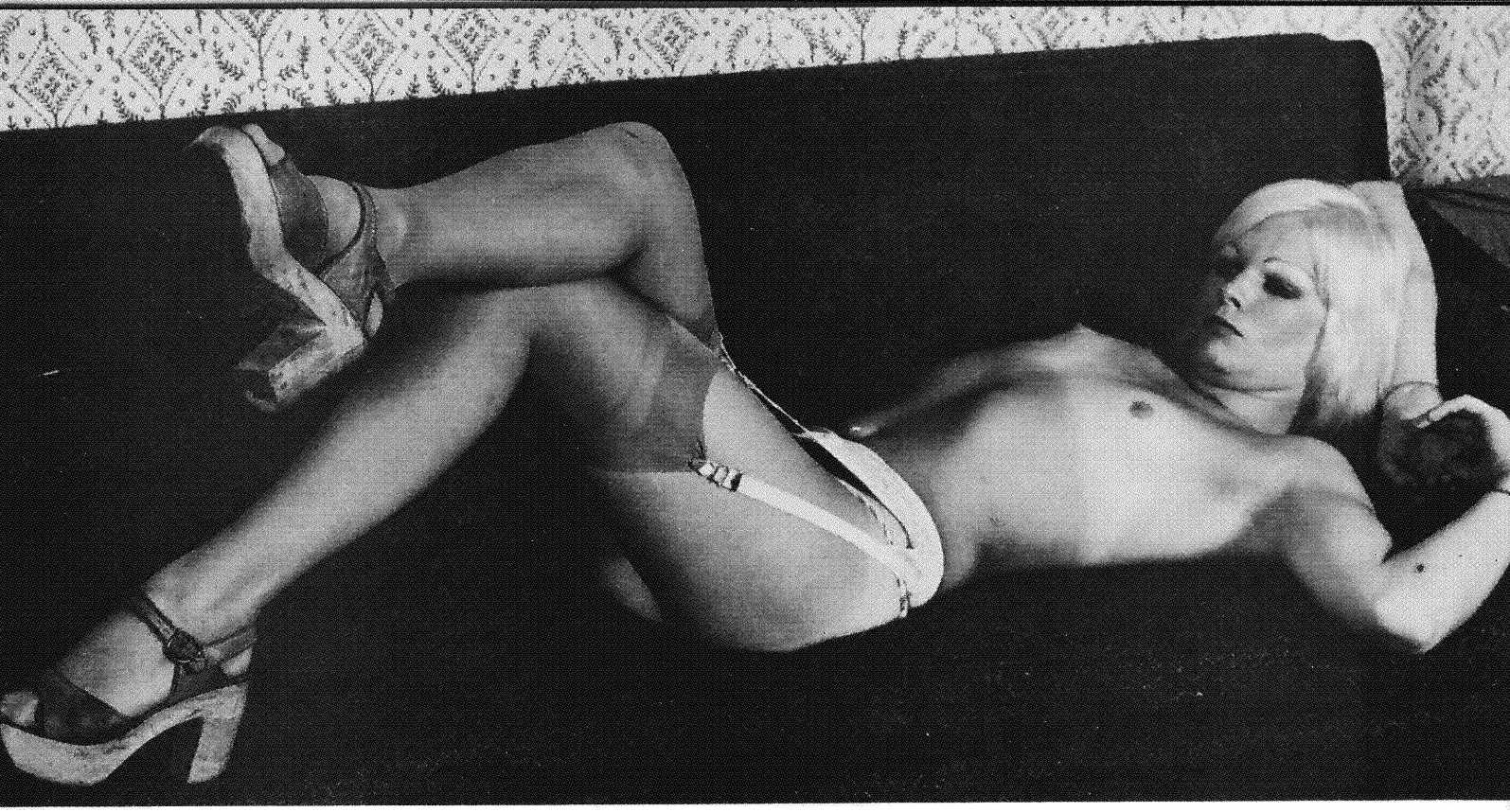
In the meantime, Danielle suffers frustration as she continues teaching tennis by day and getting more and more into the drag queen scene. "I mean, you have to admit I'm leading a pretty weird, double life. It's one of the strangest games of 'mixed doubles' imaginable! The other day, in fact, I found myself 'swishing' on the tennis courts, and then that night, acting macho at a Drag Queen ball."

It was not hard for this young man to grasp the idea that he would make a splendid female impersonator. You might say that the role of female was forced on Dean. Long-haired and naturally graceful, he was propositioned four times while hitchhiking from San Antonio to San Francisco. "Men kept thinking I was a girl," says Dean, now known professionally as "Dena" at the North Beach nightclub where she works. "I had to straighten them out fast!"

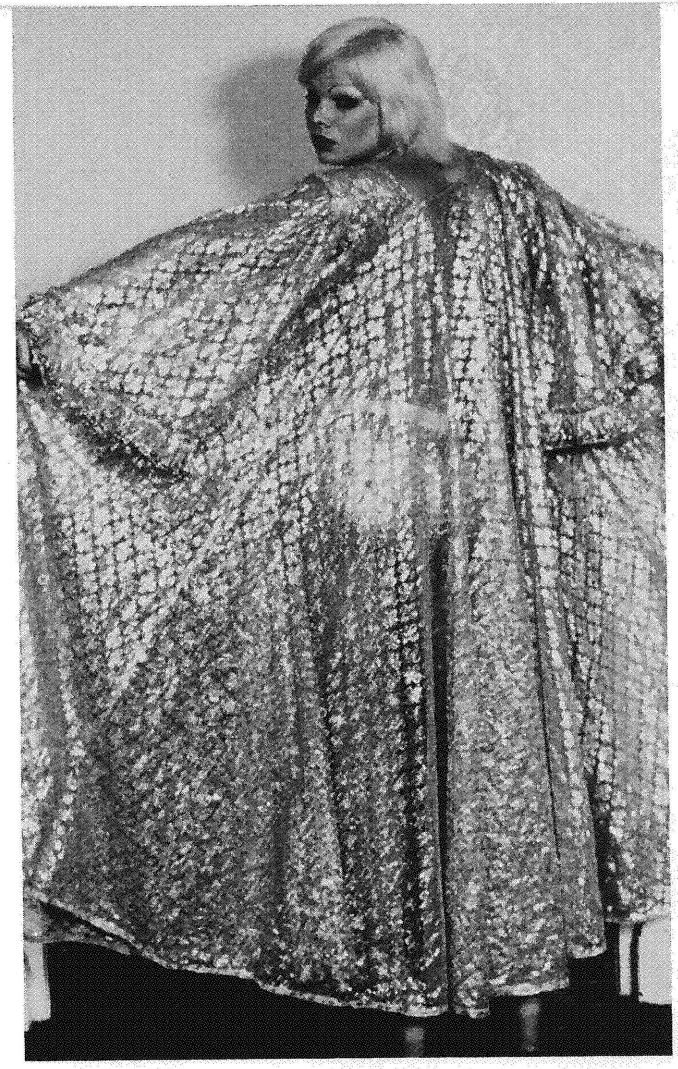


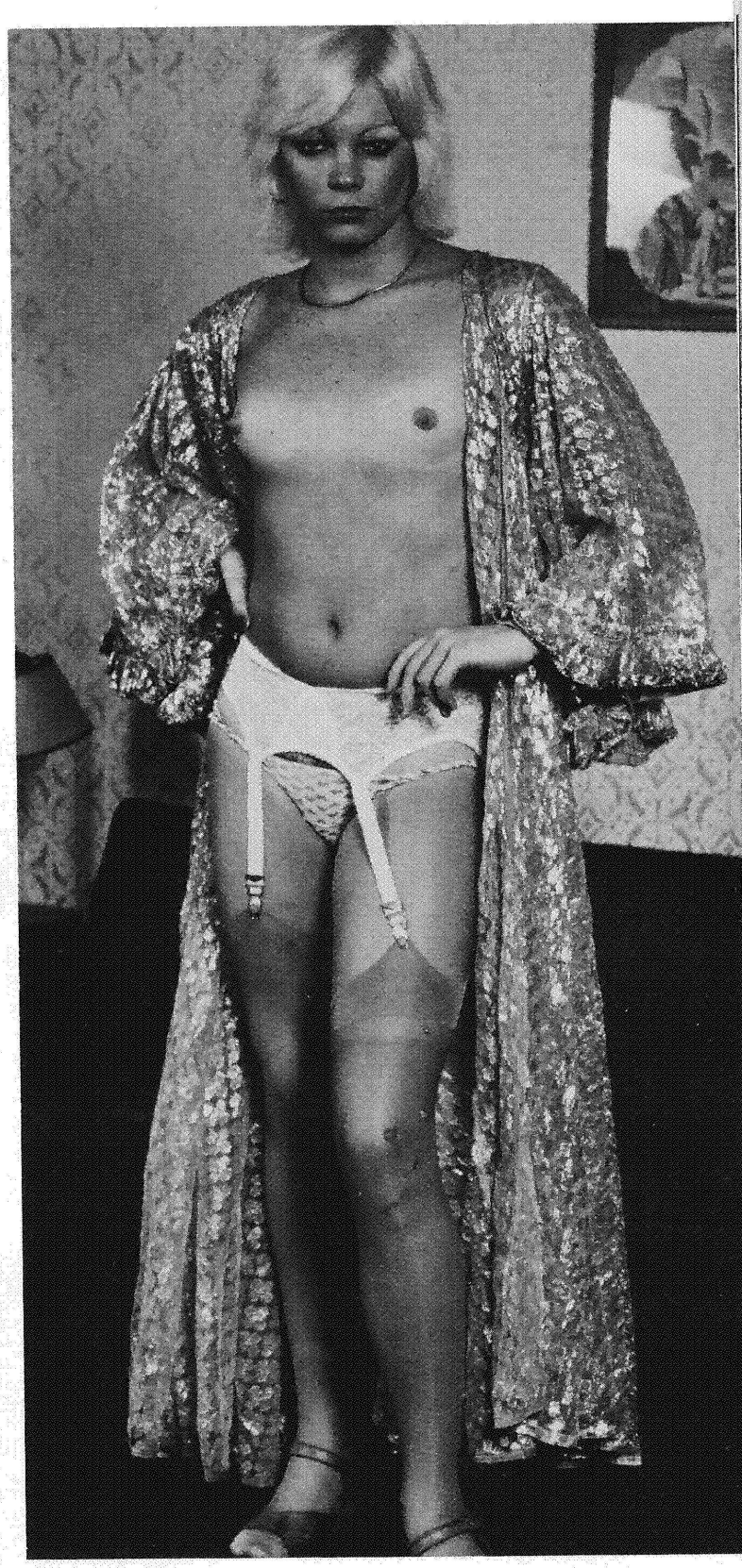
FOXY SHE-MALE

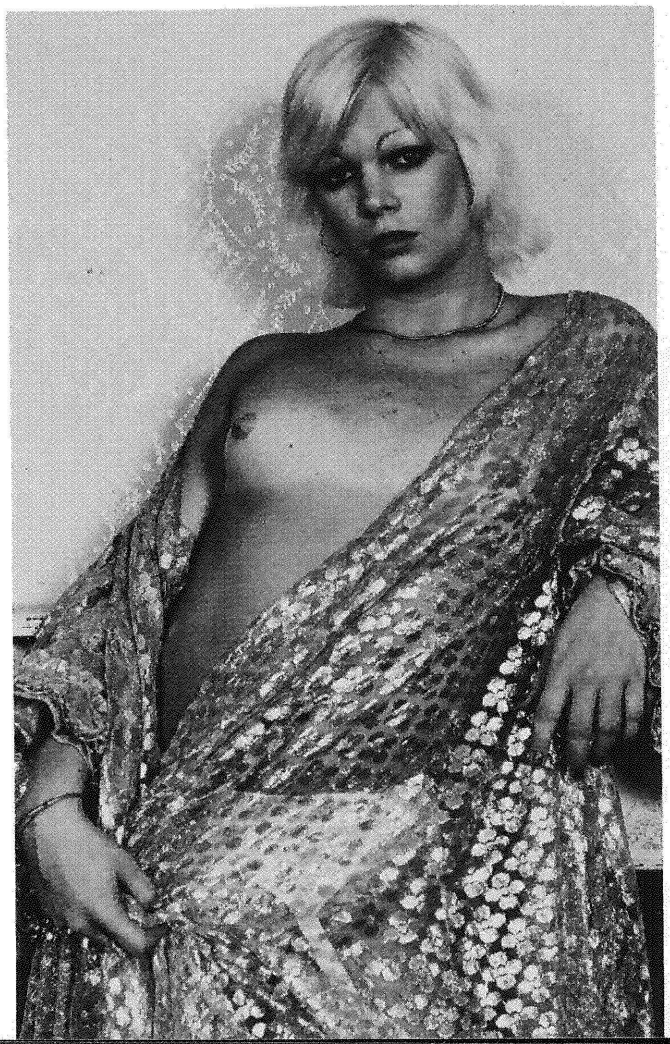




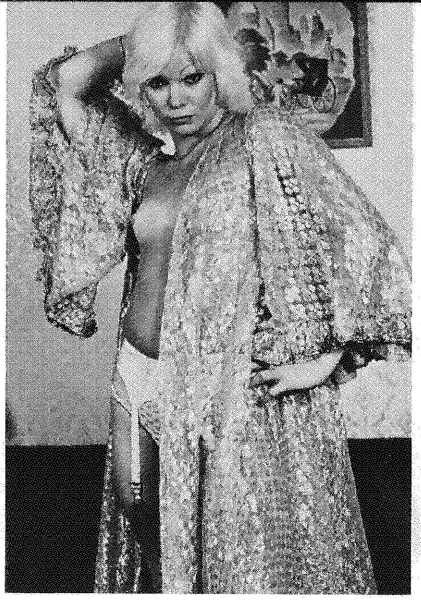
When the shock of being repeatedly mistaken for a female had worn off, "Dena" discussed his very interesting experience with several sympathetic friends in San Francisco, who advised him to try his hand at female impersonation in one of the many clubs that feature "cross-dressers." Dena landed the first job she applied for, and she has been playing to packed houses for over two years now.

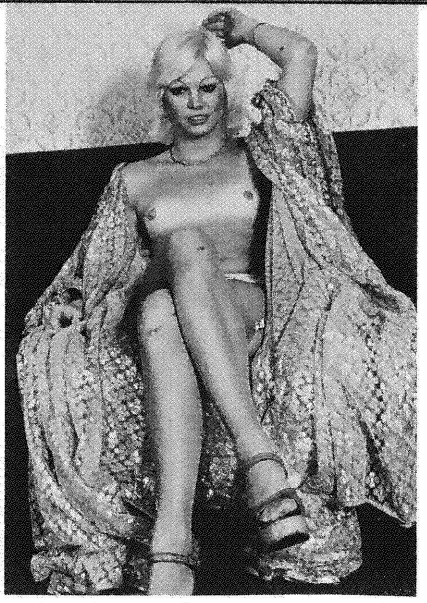






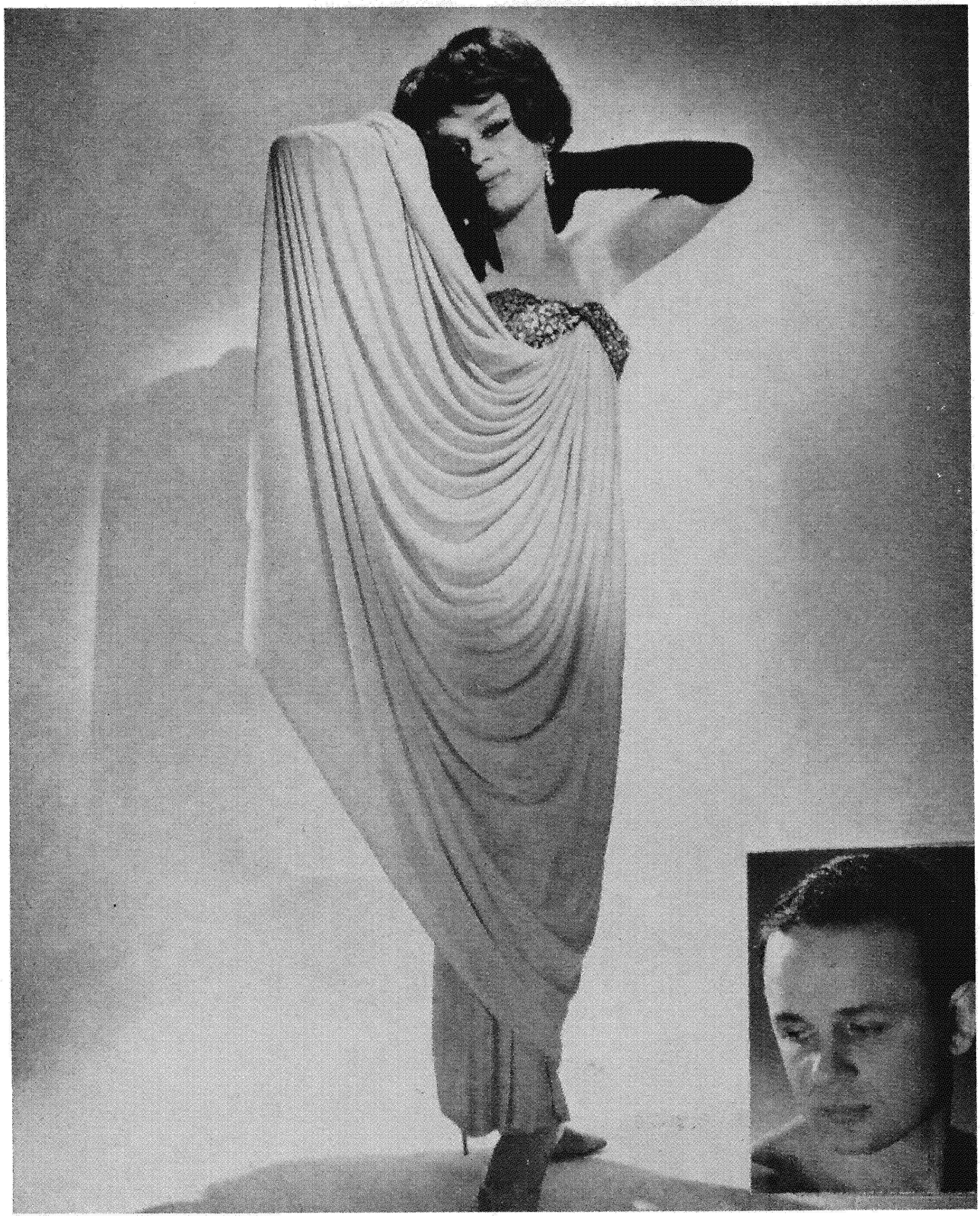
Posing for us in one of the robes she wears in her nightclub act, "Dena" was a charming and gracious hostess, totally candid and uninhibited about her fascinating lifestyle. "The number of men who see and respond to me as a female is unbelievable," Dena says. "Every night my dressing room is filled with flowers. This gorgeous robe was a gift, too."

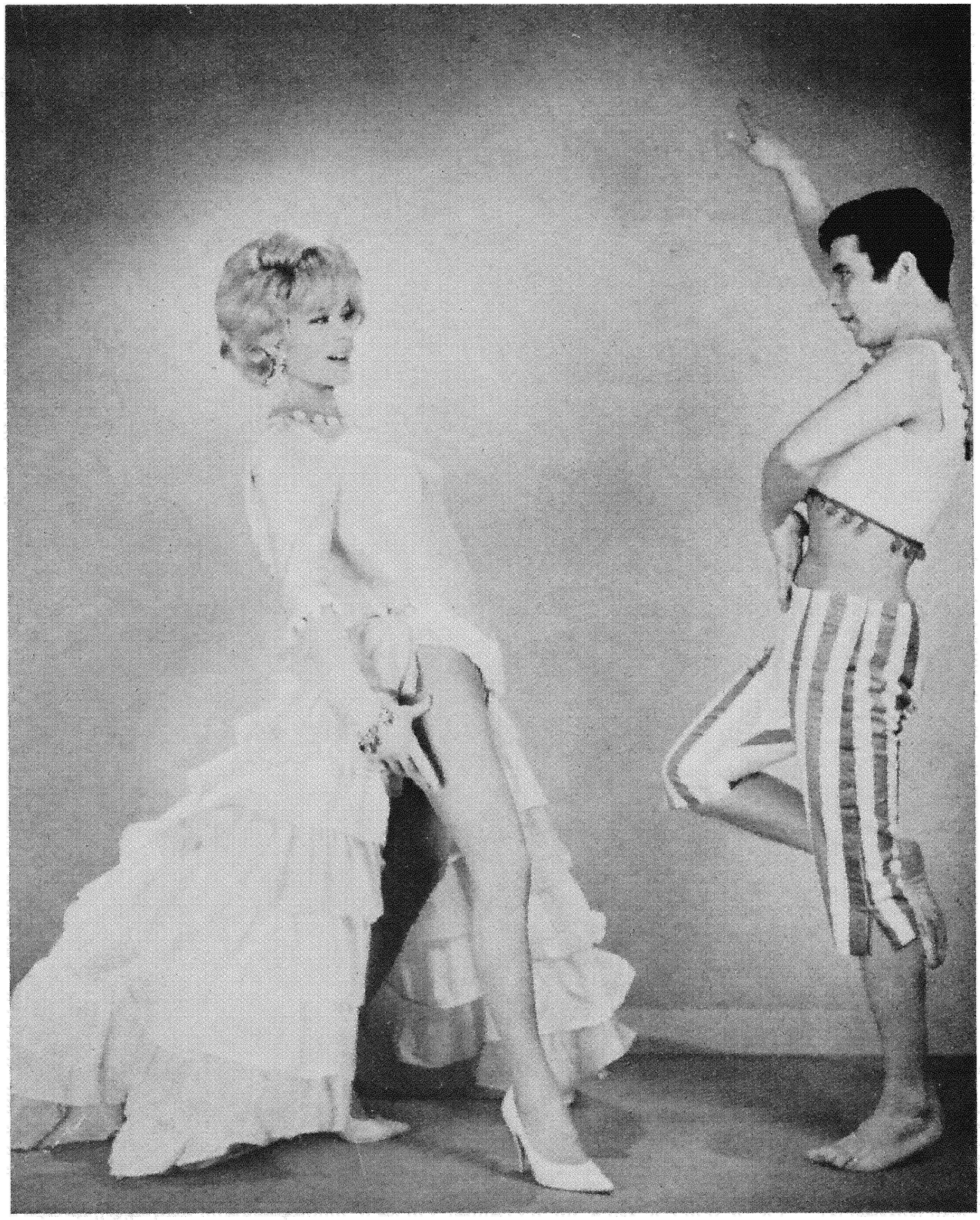




Dena confesses: "I must admit that my family was a trifle shocked at the news I was working as a female impersonator. I mean, my mother never wrote in her diary: *Dear Diary: Please let my son grow up and be a famous transvestite!* Yes, it did come as quite a shock to mom, not to mention dad! Do you know that I played baseball in Little League, and my dad had hopes I'd become another Mickey Mantle?" Dena grinned, running her lacquered nails through her blonde tresses. "Well, at least Mickey Mantle and Marilyn Monroe have the same initials, don't they?" Dena shook her head. "you should have heard my father when I laid that line on him. He didn't find it funny at all.

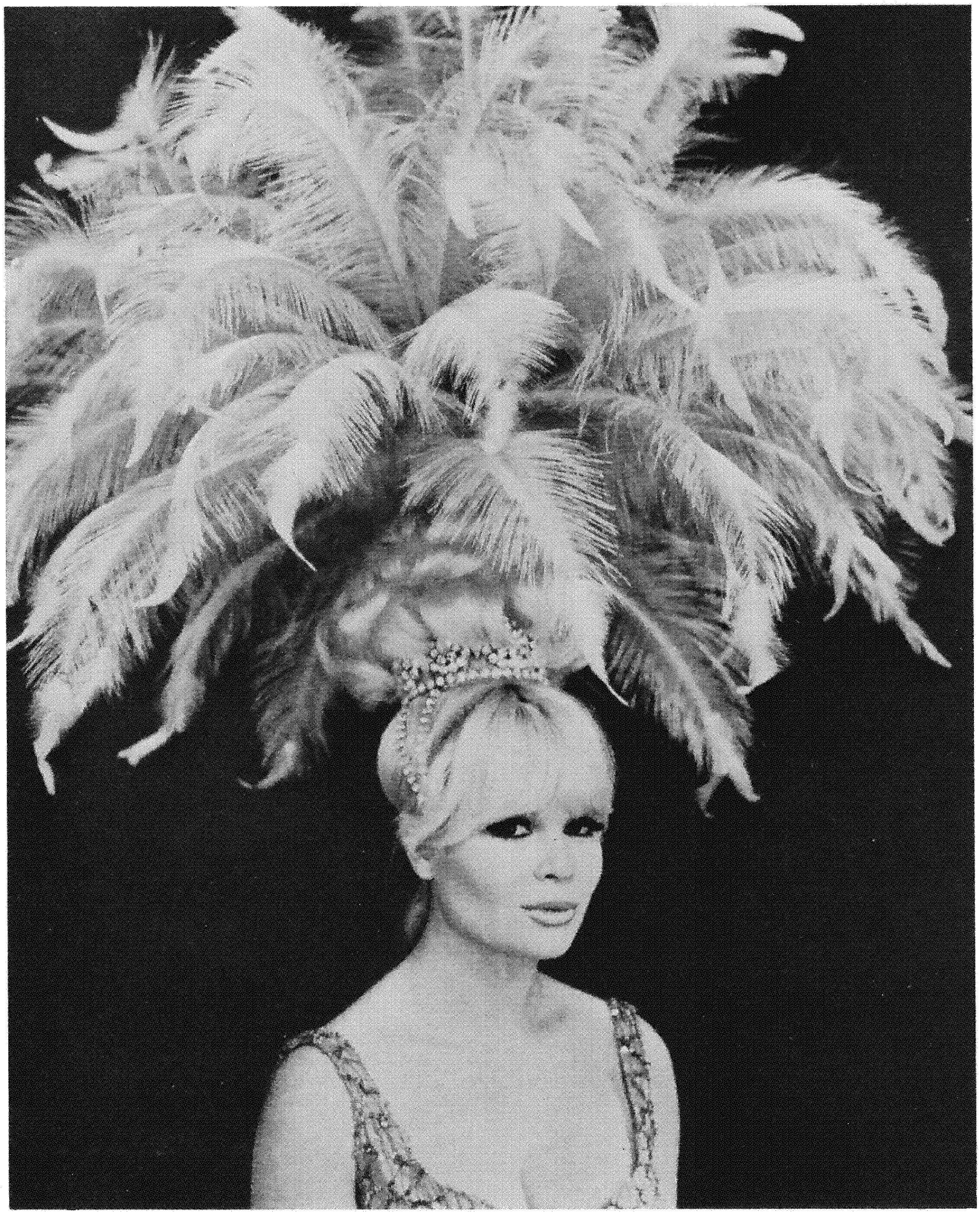
LE CARROUSEL





Paris has always drawn avant-garde artists like a magnet. The reason for this cyclical, historical phenomenon is the traditional acceptance the artist receives in the Parisian cultural environment. It seems that through tradition, or instinct, or perhaps simply because of a positive, life-loving attitude, the Parisian population and the French patrons of the arts have always welcomed those artists of merit who may have simply suffered the fate of being ignored by the established art circle in their original community.

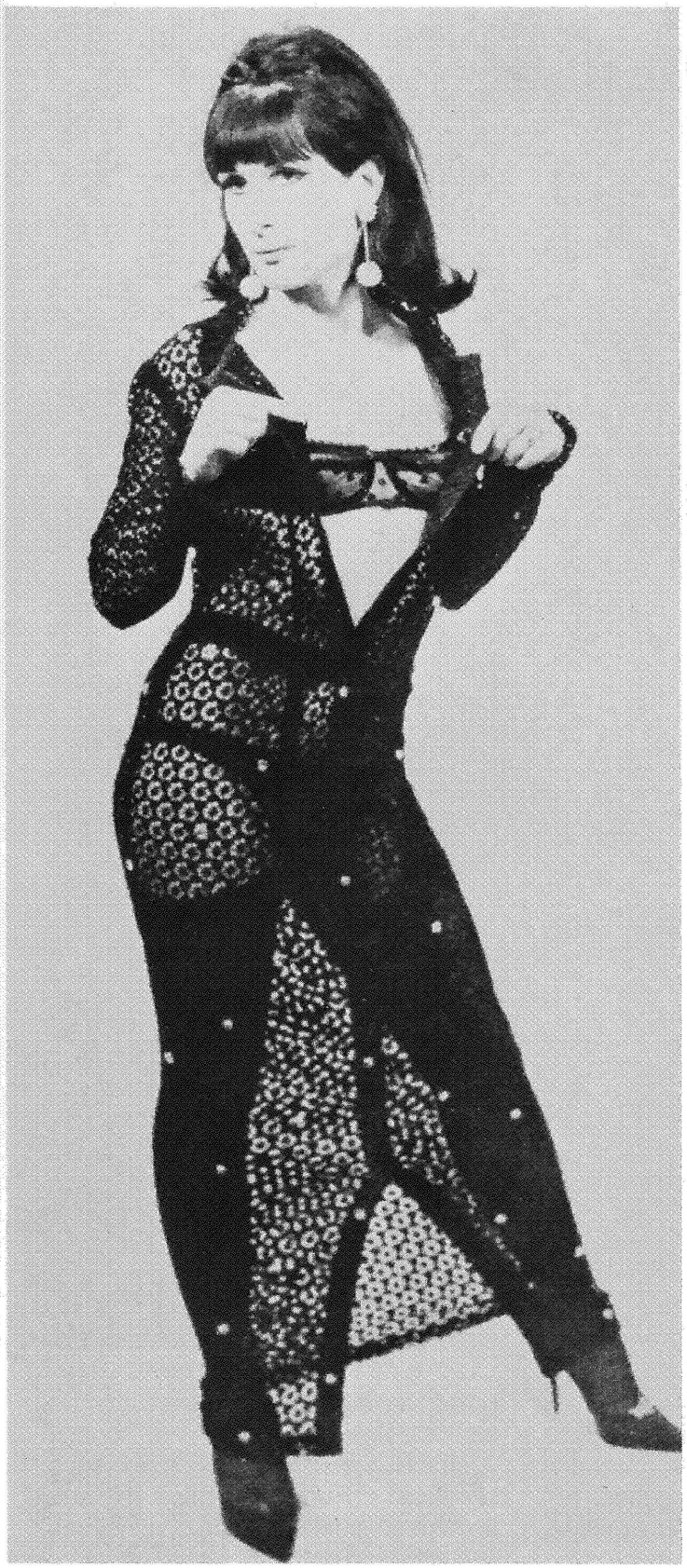
The important benefit the city receives from its tolerance of the avant-garde is, of course, a cultural climate unrivaled in the Western World in terms of diversity, originality and high quality. This further encourages more

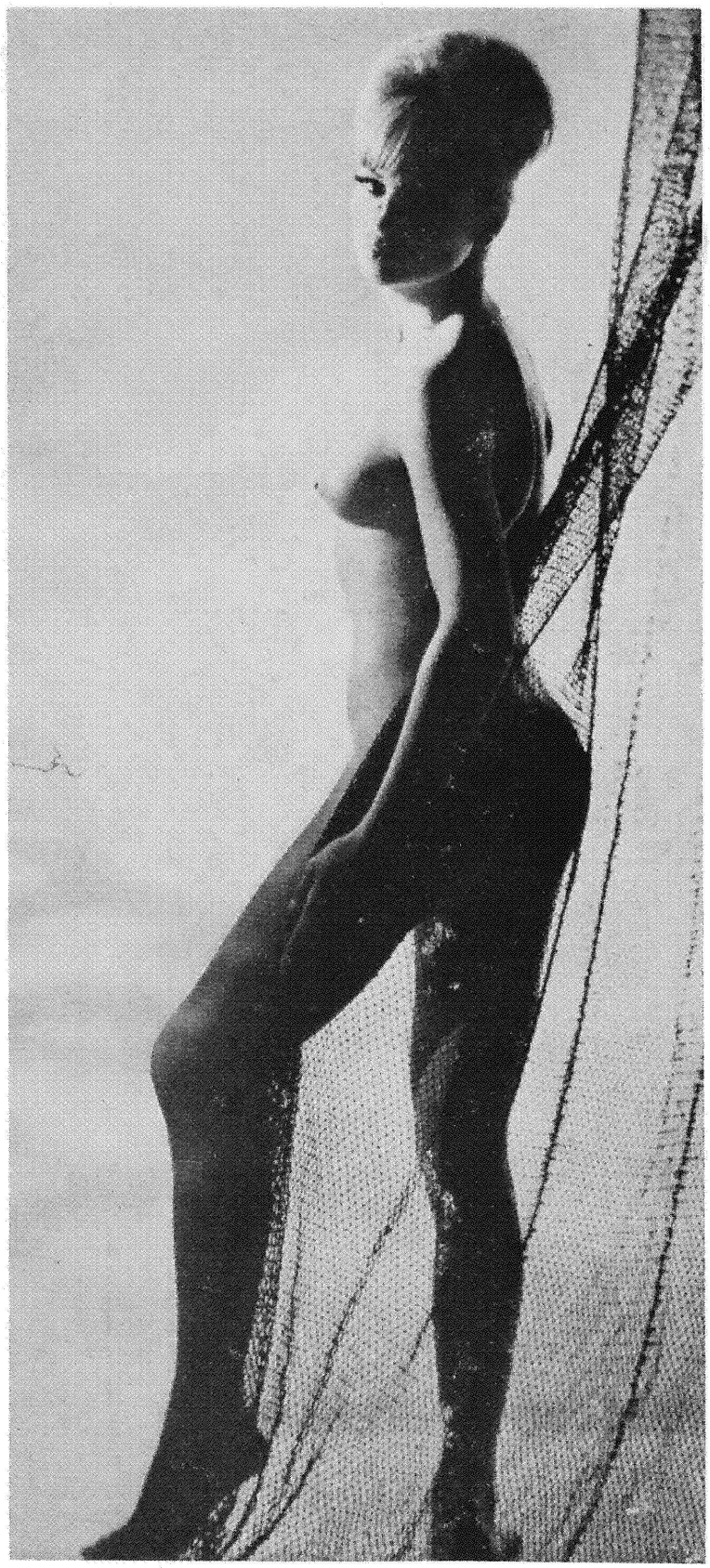


artists to expatriate to Paris, and thus, there is a never ending supply of fresh talent and fresh aspirations in the City of Light.

By accepting artists of all ranks and types, the environment is in no way "cheapened". That is to say, just because the unknown arrives in Paris, his recognition is not automatic. The fact is, the artistic climate of Paris is highly competitive, and because of the vast experience of the French critics and the general populace, as well as the critical presence of thousands of artists, true talent and originality are assured quick and adoring recognition, whereas the poseur and the charlatan are easily detected.

Female mimicry is recognized as an art by the Parisians, and Le Carrousel is the Parisian show-





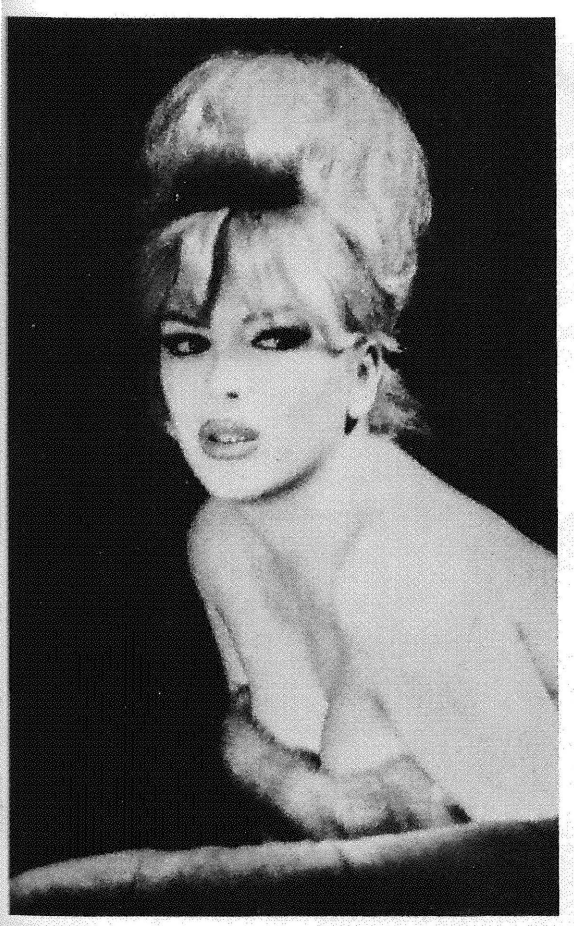
place for female impersonators. As a matter of fact, it is the showplace of the entire world for the female mimic; the absolute epitome of status and recognition is to have entertained an appreciative audience at Le Carrousel; it is a claim that only a handful of professional mimics can boast.

The Parisian appreciation of the avant-garde arts extends to the world of the theatre as well as that of the plastic arts and literature, and Le Carrousel may

best be seen as part of the tradition which includes the Theatre of the Absurd (in the Fifties, introducing the works of Beckett and Ionesco), the Grand Guignol, and a fusing of the old, traditional Comedie Francaise with Nineteenth Century spirit of the bawdy Cabaret and the Apache Dancers.

The international audiences appreciate quality theatrical talent and originality, and they are not at all afraid of a touch of the bizarre. At Le Carrousel, they get all of this, and at the same time, they see physical beauty that rivals the quality flesh on display at the Crazy Horse Saloon. Le Carrousel, one might say, could only exist in Paris, for that city is unique in its blend of artistic tolerance, high expectations, and a rich tradition of theatrical diversity and innovation.

The club, has, over the years, produced the finest and most famous of female mimics. Coccinelle, Bambi and Capucine are the three most beautiful, convincing and talented impersonators of the Twentieth Century, and all three of them made their names household words, working at Le Carrousel in the



stage show. These impersonators, and their descendants, set the standard for all female mimics throughout the world, and their platform, Le Carrousel, likewise stands as the hallmark of success for the professional impersonator. A star billing at the club, or even a place on stage in the chorus line, is the life's ambition of the dedicated mimic, and the road to stardom and recognition as an impersonator cannot be tread upon without at least a visit to the club to see the fine art as it is practiced by the masters.

As a final note, it should be mentioned that the atmosphere at Le Carrousel is one of easy-going sophistication. In the artistic milieu of Paris, the "straight" tourist feels perfectly at home in the club, and that is as it should be. The audience is international at Le Carrousel, a mixture between gay and straight, and plenty of women are always in attendance. All come to the club knowing that they can expect to see the finest female impersonation in the world, and their expectations, whether based on curiosity, or upon years of devoted interest in the subject, are always fulfilled. Both audience and entertainers, as well as the staff of the club, treat female impersonation as an art form, responding with enthusiasm and respect, and that is exactly the way it ought to be.

DRAGONFLY GUY

Jesse discovered the thrill of "cross-dressing" while serving as a supply sergeant with the army overseas. My outfit put on a musical skit, and my commanding officer assigned me the role of a girl called *Dragonfly*," says Jesse. "All the guys broke into applause and whistles when I stepped onto the makeshift stage. Needless to say, the next day all the guys called me "Jessica", and I loved it!"

"That performance changed my entire life. It opened up a fantastic range of bright, new possibilities for expansion," says Jessica. "Soon after my performance as a super-swishy femme fatal in *Dragonfly*, I was discharged from the Army. So I returned to New York City where I've been pounding on doors ever since, trying very hard to land a job as a female impersonator, or even as just a plain 'ol *female*. But that's a rough road to travel, you see, because so many companies require a physical examination. I'm trying for a governess job, though. I speak fluent French."

Paradoxically, even the "straight" female impersonator is judged by his seductive pose and appearance.

decreed that his only son, Thomas, should remain in Switzerland until his health was completely recovered in the opinion of Sir James, and that I should continue as his governess as long as I was willing or able to do so. Of course, Thomas inherits the estates and a substantial fortune, which is at the disposition of trustees, of whom Mr. Cosgrave is the principal, until the boy comes of age. The trustees are instructed, not merely to safeguard the inheritance, but also to deal generously with Thomas and myself during his years of minority.

If I remain with Thomas to care for him until he is twenty-one—or should he sadly die in the interval, I am to have—listen dear Dorothea—two thousand pounds! And a pension of five pounds a week for the rest of my life! What fantastic, and totally unexpected fortune! Frankly and sincerely, I would have stayed with Thomas for my bare salary alone as long as he needed me, so closely has he attached himself to my affections. But to have that and so much money besides is more, I fear, than I deserve.

I agreed at once to take up this heavier responsibility, not without a heart-felt prayer for support to that Power which guides us all in our need. When I told Thomas, he was enraptured, and actually smiled for the first time since his sad bereavement.

"Oh, darling Agatha!" he cried, "And may I now put on my girl's clothes again, now Mr. Cosgrave has left us? I do, indeed, find these boys clothes most unbecoming. See the way in which my knees are exposed by my shorts!"

I at once concurred, but urged him when resuming his character as Aileen, to put on one of his more somber dresses. "We shall have to have Madame Du-

pont here again, I fear," I said. "You must have black mourning clothes, and so must I, in memory and from respect for your dear parents."

At this, Aileen, as I must now call my charge, began to cry, and I comforted her as best I could, although I felt more than a little down in the mouth myself, as you may guess.

I shall not be coming back to England for a very long time, dear Dorothea, so you must be sure to write me all your news.

Ever your Loving,
Agatha

Switzerland.
June 17, 1879

My Dear Dorothea,

Over a year has gone by since my dear Aileen was orphaned. As you know, we have just returned from Vienna, where we spent the spring in one of the most beautiful cities of Europe. It was so lovely, and so very gay. Aileen, now almost 13 years old, and very tall for her age, was considered on all sides as the most adorable creature in Vienna and, despite her youth I had all I could do to keep her many admirers at a respectable distance. Indeed—you may find this hard to credit—a fat little German Princeling, master of a Duchy in Bavaria, sent to enquire of me whether I would accept an offer of betrothal to her! Apart from the fact that he was at least three times her age, and fat, there is, of course an additional complication because although legally Aileen could marry at fourteen, she is not exactly suited to bear a line of little fat princes!

I felt it better at that stage to retire from the scene, so we have returned to our dear Kleinhoff for the summer. I am afraid that my beloved Aileen is going to break many an ardent masculine heart before she is much older!

I was anxious to return home for another reason, which had occasioned me some little anxiety. Recently, Aileen has shown some reluctance to undress in my presence, and quite by accident, coming unexpectedly into her room, I discovered that she had undergone a certain transformation! Having brothers of your own, as I had, you will know what I mean. I determined to discuss the problem with Madame Dupont before it got any more serious. She is a woman of great sense. Other English residents here say she is a great scoundrel, and only plays up to me because I pay her prices without bargaining. But she has always been consideration itself to me, and I will not listen to such calumnies! At least no one ever dares suggest that Madame Dupont does not dress my lovely Aileen to perfection, and that is all I care about.

She said at once that Aileen must have a new and more severe corset, slightly padded at the chest to create a certain illusion; and that it must be provided with a flap in a certain place which can be strapped down tight, to hold her in control. In two weeks it was made and fitted. Aileen is pleased with it, and it has completely overcome the difficulty that had arisen.

Aileen is now becoming exceedingly proficient in both French and German, and her drawing and watercolors are really worthy. She does not much care for sewing and embroidering, but we cannot be proficient in everything, can we? The most important thing is that her health is now completely restored. But we are in no hurry to return to England, because Aileen knows that if we do she will have to change back into Thomas—Sir Thomas Redfern now—and will be sent off to boarding school with a lot of rough boys—something which would, I know distress and terrify her. So here we stay, whiling away the months in quiet pleasure. In the fall we are to go to Paris for six weeks, which will be delightful.

And now, tell me how you are getting on with that naughty boy, the Duke's youngest son—Lord Amhurst, is it not?

Ever your Loving,
Agatha

New York
September 8, 1882

My Dear Dorothea,

I do not know how to write this letter. My poor heart is quite broke. As you know, Aileen was mad to come to this appalling city. My dear! The manners! Do you know they have cuspidors—they call them "spitoons" on the floors of public places, even in the best circles for the men to spit in? Horrid creatures! I know now, too late, why this was. There was a young American in Paris during our last visit in May this year. He was supposed to be painting, but I think it was an excuse for loose living away from the watchful eyes of his parents, who live in Albany. His papa is some kind of legislator, I understand, and I am told he is "running for Governor," whatever that means. He is also described to me as a "railroad man," and I understand that he is exceedingly rich. But my dear Dorothea, wealth is not everything. To my way of thinking, papa is extremely vulgar. He would certainly not be received in London in any house with a claim to breeding.

The long and short of it is that Percy and Aileen fell in love in Paris, although I was kept ignorant of the fact. In consequence, when Aileen suggested coming to New York with such urgency, I felt it was a mere folly on her part and agreed, because as you know I would do anything for her. Two weeks after our arrival, Aileen disappeared from the hotel, leaving me a note. She had gone with Percy Ailsford to a place called Buffalo to get married! I have been half out of my mind. How could she have been so foolish? How can she marry Percy: What will happen when—when the inevitable happens? She will be the laughing stock of New York, and if ever the news leaks out to England, will be ruined there too.

I have such a headache. I must lie down and rest.

There is no harsher critic of make-up and female apparel than the female impersonator, for his deception is dependent on a flawless masquerade.

Will resume this letter tomorrow, dear.

This is now three days later. I have had such a trying time, and am very confused! The day after I started this letter, Aileen and Percy came to me at the hotel. I had not expected to see them together again; above all, I had not anticipated that they would be positively radiant with happiness. Aileen threw her arms around me and kissed me, crying and apologizing for causing me so much worry. Percy stood patting my shoulder reassingly. Then he sent for tea! Tea, my dear in this barbaric country which seems only to know coffee! It was not fit to drink, but I was glad of it. When at last he left the suite ffor a few minutes, I asked Aileen outright—and only you can know what torture it was to me to have to raise such a subject—how she thought it possible to maintain the illusion, for that, alas, it is, of her girlish charm when she is married. "For Percy will expect certain things from you, my darling," I said, my face crimson.

Aileen laughed outright. "But, dear Agatha, Percy knows already! He knew when we were in Paris! I posed for a picture in his studio!"

"Not in the—?" I asked.

"Of course; as naked as an egg!"

"But how . . . I mean, why . . ." I was so confused. Aileen's answer did nothing to reduce my confusion.

She laughed again. "Oh, that's all right," she said. "Percy prefers boys to girls. No problem there!"

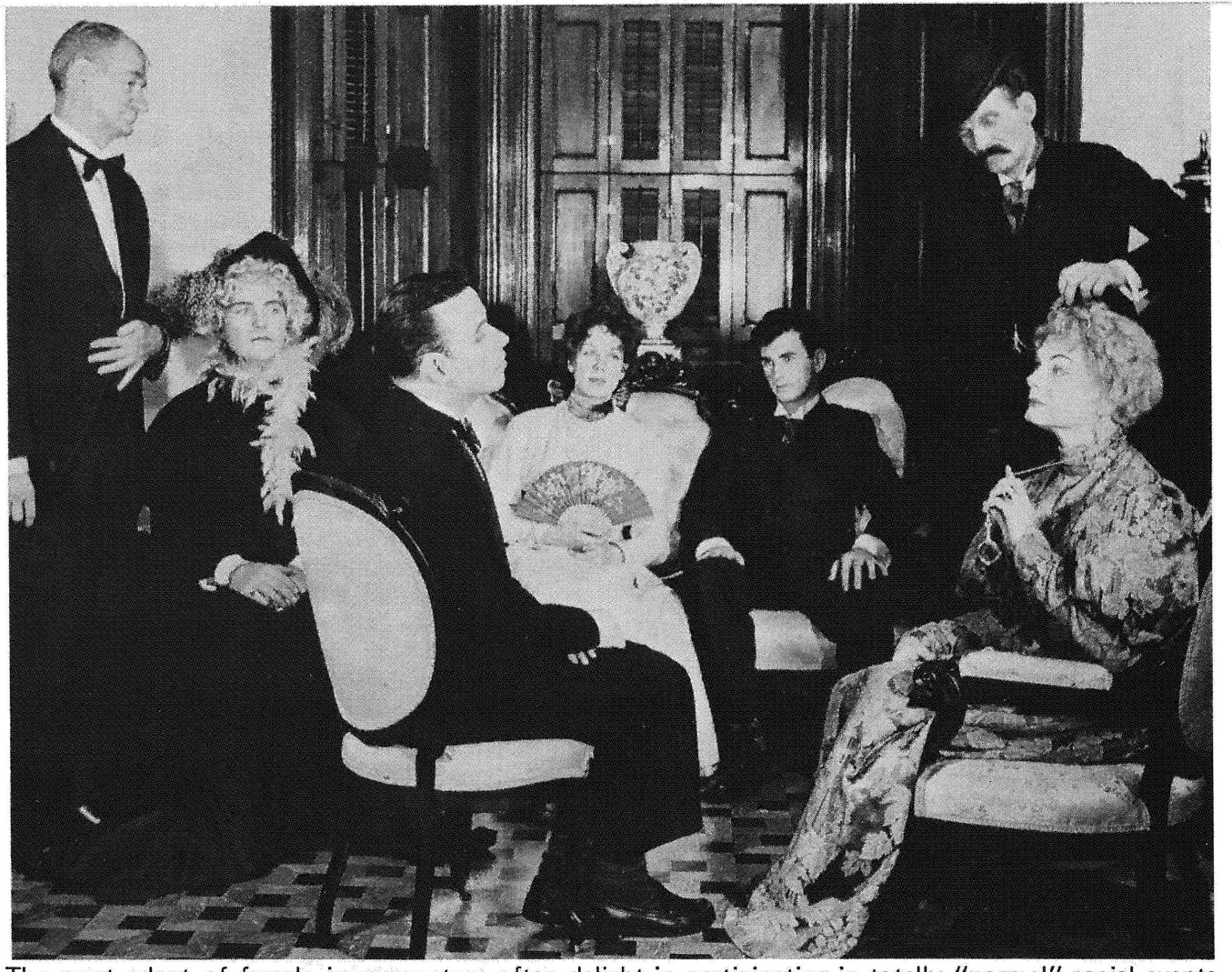
I did not know what to say nor where to look. Percy came back carrying an enormous bouquet of roses for me, and the opportunity passed.

It is all arranged now. They are going to live in America for some years at least, and of course no one will be told that Aileen is a boy; least of all Mr. Ailsford senior who, as Percy put it, "would bust a gut" if he found out. I resisted all attempts to keep me here. I am too desolated at the loss of my darling. I shall return to England. I am to have my two thousand pounds and my pension. I shall buy a house in a polite place, possibly Tunbridge Wells in Kent, of which I am fond, and there I shall live. I am almost fifty years old now, my dear, and my heart is too heavy for further adventuring.

When you have finished your duty with His Grace's family, which should be inside a year or so, perhaps you would like to consider coming to live with me. I think we could be quietly happy.

I am somewhat reconciled now to what has happened, and if I cannot altogether approve, I must say that my darling Aileen, dressed in the height of New York fashion which is smart but not, in my opinion elegant, being rather too flamboyant to my taste, does do me credit as she sweeps through New York Society—such as it is—gaining admiring glances on all sides.

Do not write to me here again, dear Dorothea. When I leave the steamer I shall proceed to Bath to



The most adept of female impersonators often delight in participating in totally "normal" social events.

collect my things and wind up our arrangements there. Then I will come to London and when I am settled in a hotel will get in touch with you.

Ever your Loving,
Agatha

COMMENT

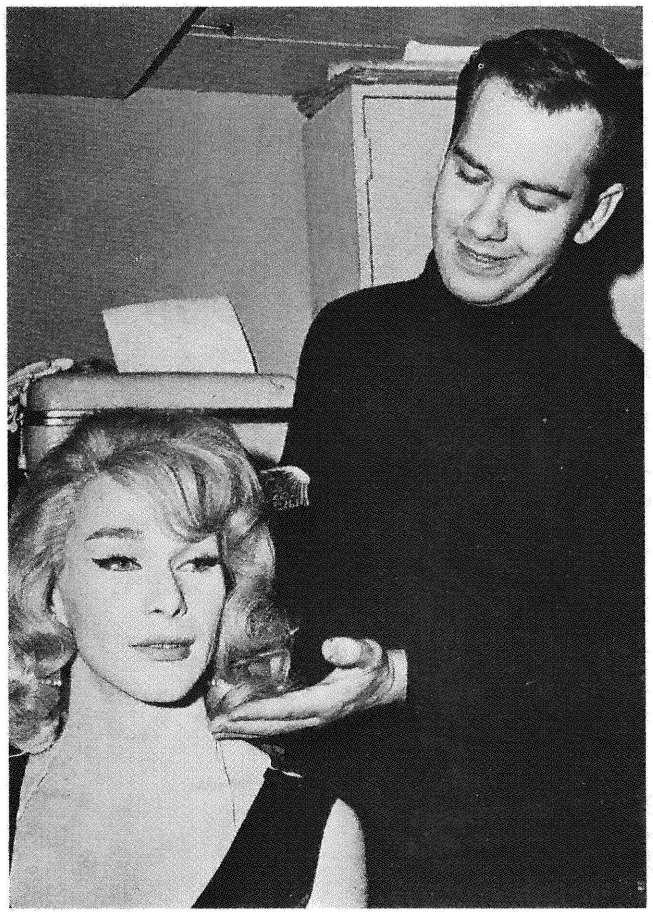
That is the last of the letters. Except for the chit-chat about family and personal matters which I have cut out, they stand as they were written. Presumably Dorothea kept them as a souvenir of her friend. I have no trace at all of Dorothea, and I do not even know Agatha's surname, nor anything more about her background than you have read.

I can only conclude that she was slightly unbalanced, although she seems to have impressed Sir Robert and Lady Redfern well enough—and also old Cosgrave the lawyer—to get them to put very great trust in her. Probably she was normal enough in every respect but one. Certainly she writes a good letter, with an air of normality about even her most fantastic behavior which savors of "the lighter lunacy!" She was evidently deeply attached to Sir Thomas, who must have had quite a winning personality. One gets the impression of a rather dried-up old maid, sexually repressed, finding an outlet for some kind of fantasy in turning the boy into a girl. That she did it extremely effectively is proved by the way in which, at sixteen he managed to marry a young, rich American. That Percy was evidently homosexual helped, of course, but even so, it must have demanded a great deal of wit and skill to maintain the illusion.

I have no doubt that Sir Thomas—or Aileen if you prefer—was at least a latent homosexual too, and if so this would account to a great extent for the way in which he fell in so readily with Agatha's weird ideas. He probably found the wearing of girl's clothes sexually exciting, and this would account for Agatha finding him, disconcertingly, "in a certain condition." Although with the aid of Madame Dupont she successfully strapped his penis down, she could not repress his strong sexuality, which had already manifested itself when Aileen was only just over thrirteen years old and a forty-year-old German Princeling became besotted with her. One wonders whether he, too, had already discovered Aileen's "secret" before he made his offer of betrothal!

The whole story intrigued me. I hate being confronted by scraps and pieces, and this was a scrap if ever there was one. One day I had to make a car journey which would take me within ten miles of Oldenhall, and on impulse I turned down the country lane leading to the village. About a mile from Oldenhall Villiage, I came across high wrought-iron

Like a fine actress, the skilled "cross-dresser" plays his role to perfection—thinking, living and literally being psychologically female in every respect. Clothing and accessories are only props which enable the male to project femininity.



gates, bearing a sign over them, "Oldenhall Health Farm". As I sat in my car staring up the drive to the lovely old white Georgian house at the end, and thinking about Agatha, Thomas-Aileen and Percy Ailsford the young American, a shiny black limousine swished past me, scattering gravel, and into the gateway, carrying a fat, sulky-looking woman in the back.

I guessed she was going to Oldenham Health Farm to pay $100 a day for a grate carrot and lettuce soup, trying to recover the youth she had once had and the beauty she may never have had! There was nothing for me there. I drove down to the village, parked my car outside the Public House, "The King's Head," with its sign-board carrying a portrait of the libidinous Charles II, who admitted that he was father of more of his people than he was aware of, and of whom the Duke of Buckingham once wrote an epitaph:

"Here lies the corpse of Good King Charles
Whose word no man relies on!
He never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one!"

The King's reply to that impudence was typical. He admitted that his words were wise, "because they are mine own," and that his actions were foolish, "because they are my Ministers'." Then he had the Duke of Buckingham thrown into the Tower of London for three months to cool off! I felt that the "Merry Monarch" would have appreciated the story about the marriage of Aileen and Percy. His picture in Oldenhall seemed somehow appropriate!

I was hungry, so I went into the Pub and ordered a sandwich and a glass of beer. Sitting in a corner by the fireplace was an old, old man, and on sudden impulse I took my food over to a table near him and asked him to have a pint with me. He may have been old, but the speed with which he accepted my offer showed he had all his wits about him.

"It's a lovely old village," I said. "Lived here long?"

"Ah," he said, taking his nose out of the glass tankard. "All my life, man and boy."

"That must be a fair time," I said, after taking a long pull at my own drink. Such folk like to travel at their own pace.

"Nigh on eighty years," he said.

"Then I wonder if you knew a family that my parents used to be friendly with? Lived at the big house up the road?"

"Oldenhall?" he asked.

"Yes. There was someone—I can't quite remember who it was—Sir Thomas Redfern, was it?"

The aged brow wrinkled with the effort of memory. "No," he said. "I don't remember no one of that name."

That seemed to be it. I ordered another pint for the old man and got ready to leave. He came out of the second pint with a gasp. "Used to be a Lady Redfern

there though, when I worked there."

"You worked there?"

"Yes sir. Head Gardener I were until Her Ladyship died. Then all the staff were turned away. Closed the hall up they did, until the war come. In 1940 some Army lot took it over. Then, about a year later a lot of them Yanks came. Leastways I suppose they was. Looked life Africans to me. All black, except the officers. Colored men they was called. I recall we used to have a joke about them. White officers with colored privates!" He began to laugh, and for a while I feared he would choke to death before he had finished telling me what I wanted to know.

"Lady Redfern," I prompted, "How old would she have been when she died?"

"Let me see. She died in 1931—no, I tell a lie; 1930 it were, the day my old mowing horse took sick and died, about two weeks before Her Ladyship. Regular broken up I was." He did not say whether he was "broken up" by the death of the horse or of Lady Redfern.

"Was that Lady Aileen Redfern?" I asked, "The one who married an American?"

He slapped his knee. "Right, sir. That it were. Aileen. A strange, foreign kind of name. And she talked like them Yanks we had here afterward too. They did say she had lived in America most of her life. Married to a Senior or some such."

"A senator?" I suggested.

"Might be. Anyways, when he died she came home again. Must have been about 1925 or so, in the influenza epidemic. She give a lot of parties in them days. Regular goer she were. And handsome? I tell you she was the most beautiful woman you ever set eyes on, with sparkling eyes, and a smile for everyone, including us servants. And kind! Why, she left us all something. I got two hundred pound! It were a fortune in them days—although it don't go far in beer now."

I took the hint and ordered another pint for him.

He supped, then added, darkly, "There were a bit of a mystery there somehow, though. I don't know much about it meself, but I reckon they made a mistake on her tombstone. It's in the churchyard."

I thanked the old man, paid the landlord for another refill for him and wandered out into the village and along to the churchyard. I found the stone, in white marble, deeply stained with green moss. The epitaph read:

In Loving Memory of Sir Thomas Redfern. Born 1867, Died 1930.

And underneath, incongruously,

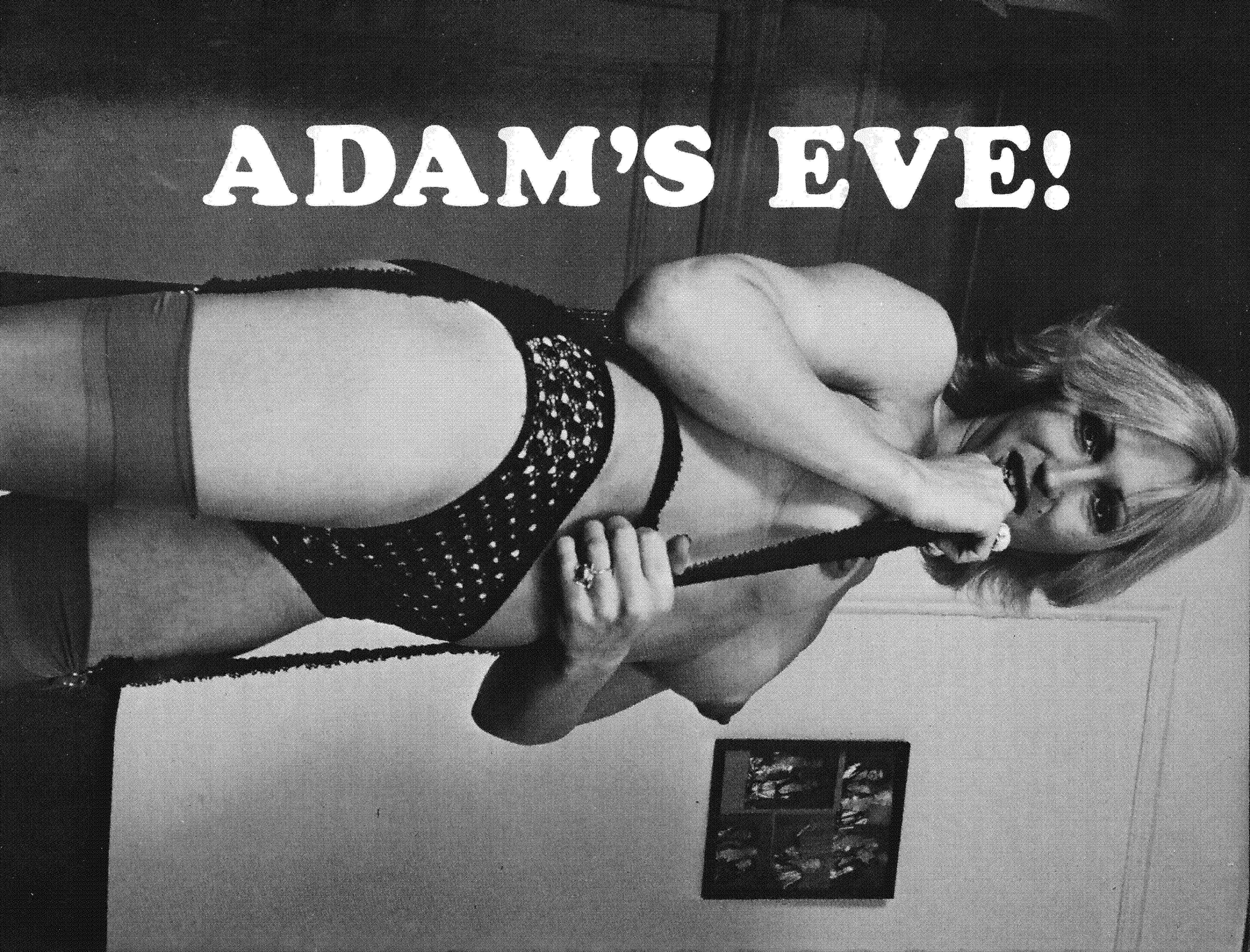
"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. . . ." (Proverbs 31, vv 10, 11)

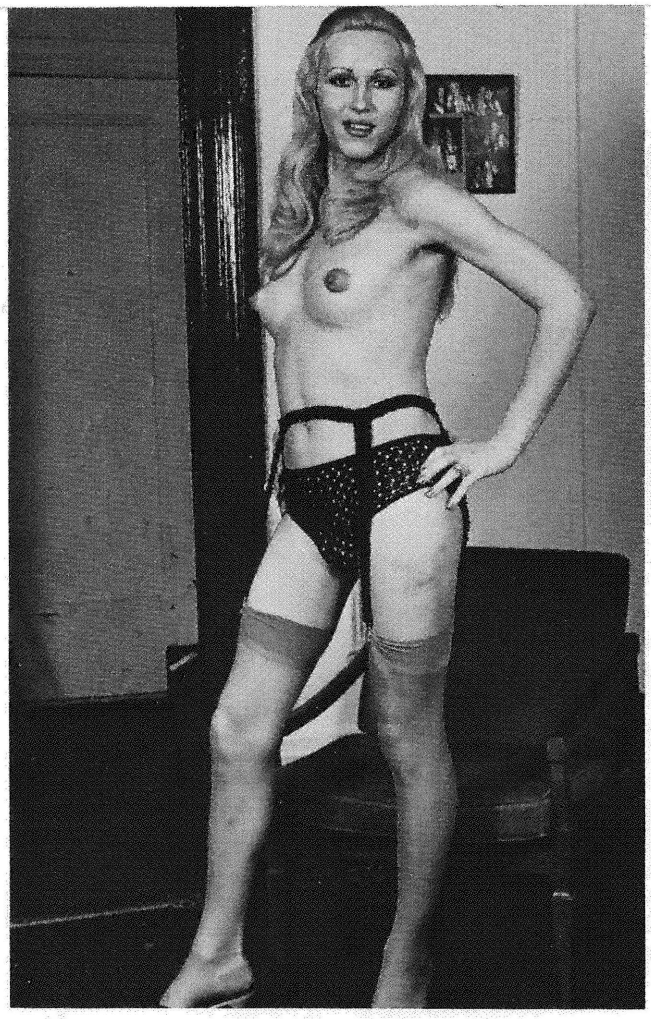
"This monument was raised at the posthumous instruction of Mr. Percy Ailsford, of Albany, New York in memory of a loving and ever faithful friend."

And that is all I know.

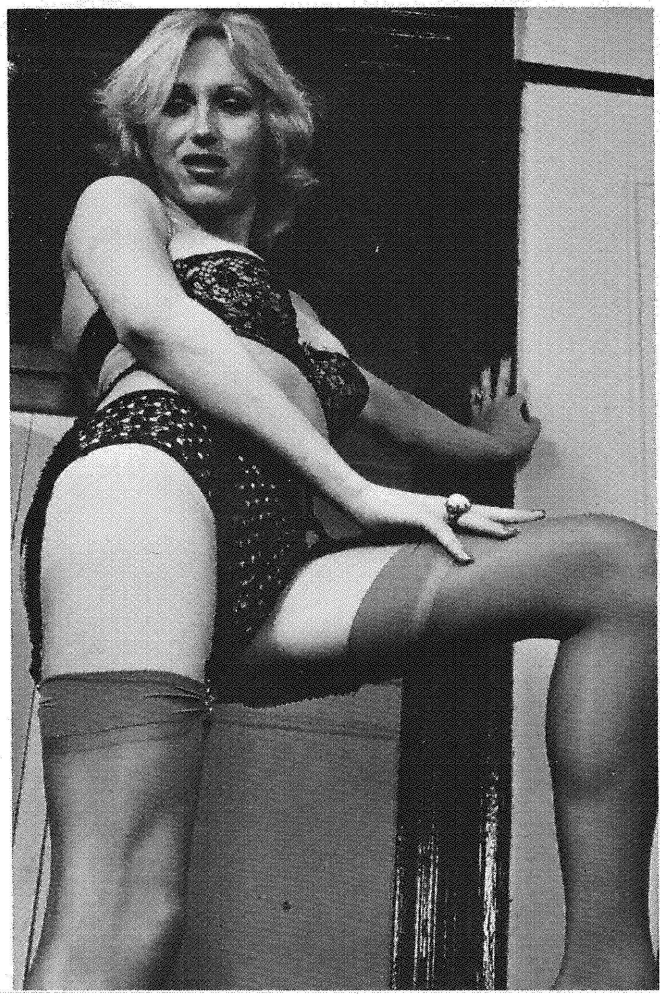
Traditionally, "cross-dressing" by males has been used extensively to achieve comedic effect, but the true female impersonator is more inclined to view his performance as a serious form of art.

ADAM'S EVE!





Traditionally, female impersonators are inclined to alter their male names only slightly. Thus, Joe becomes "Josie," Eddie becomes "Edie," Ralph becomes "Ralphael" and so on. But "Eve" was more inventive. His name is Adam, and reasoning that, biblically, Adam's rib created Eve, he became "Eve."



Since adopting her new lifestyle, "Eve" has enjoyed life more than did Adam, who taught math at adult vocational schools. "It's as though I became a butterfly," Eve says. "Beautifully free, independent, alive for the first time. I worked for a while as a cocktail waitress in Las Vegas, then as a private secretary for a top executive."

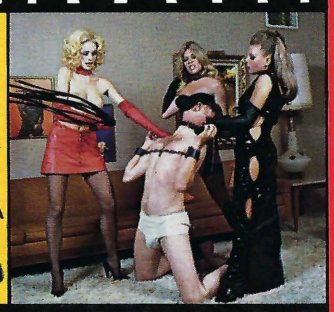
Eve finds living as a female in today's anxiety-ridden society far less pressurized than it was as a male. "I know it sounds terrible," she says, "especially with the Women's Lib thing so strong today, but the truth is people expect far less from a female. When I made a mistake on my job, all I had to do was smile and all was forgiven."

YOU'LL BE MY SLAVE

. . . when you see my new bizarre type films. They're quaranteed to make your flesh tingle with anticipation! You'll go stiff with desire as you watch these bizarre beauties perform in natural *Eroticolor!* I command you to order one or all of these exclusive films *today!* If you hesitate, you'll probably never feel the sting of my whip!!!

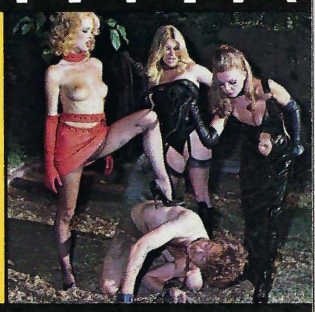
In part one of DOMINANT TRIO, Kim Christy, Jenifer Jordan and the blonde teen tease, Sirena, humiliate their victim!

BI-101A



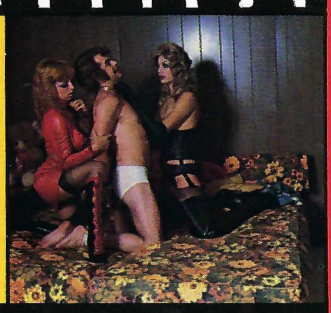
In part two of the DOMINANT TRIO, their victim is reduced to a pitiful hulk by his tormenting mistresses of pain and degradation!

BI-101B



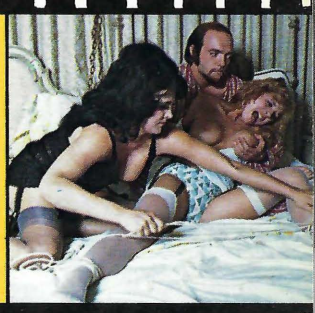
While Bill drinks himself numb at poolside his two beautiful companions are dressing in exotic leather -- and Bill soon finds himself in BIZARRE BONDAGE!

BI-102



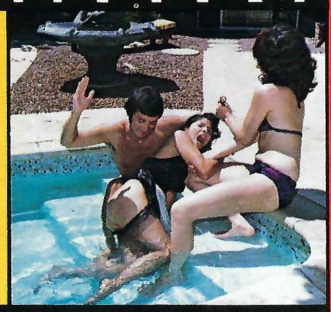
Sexy private nurse Paulette is BOUND TO PLEASE both Harry and his wife when she goes too far once too often. Rene Bond squirms in agony!

BI-103



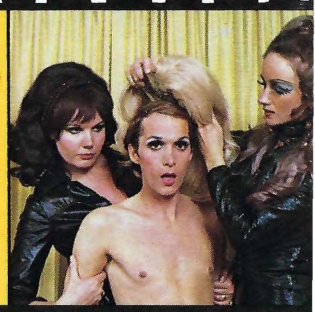
In DRENCHED & SPANKED, a beautiful French maid endures deep humiliation and pain when she is forced to suffer for spilling a drink on her master!

BI-104



TRAINED AND TRANSFORMED deals with two wantonly dominant females who transform a grocery boy into a stunning blonde against his will!

BI-105



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- ☐ TRAINED & TRANSFORMED BI-105

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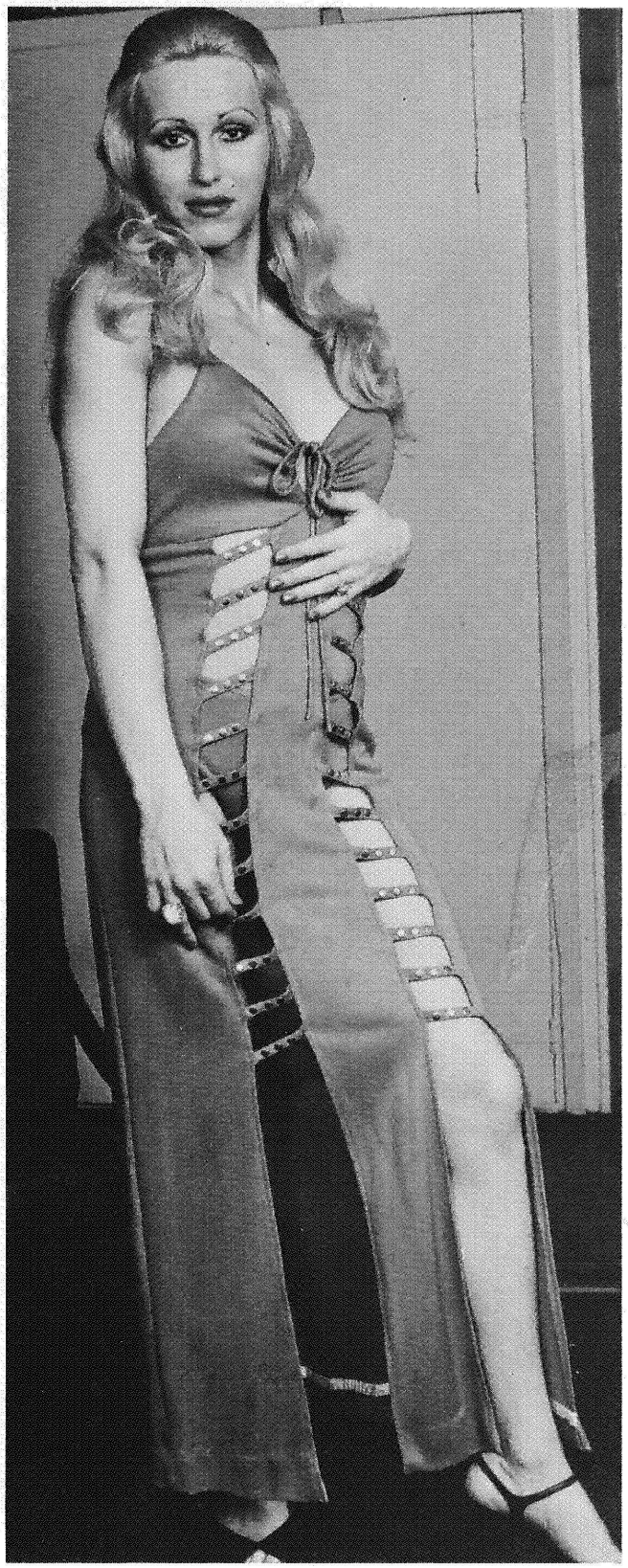
At the moment, "Eve" leads a life of total leisure. "I managed to save a bit of money," she says, "and so now I live frugally in Hollywood. I spend most of my time hanging around the clubs that feature female impersonators. I'd love to work as a female impersonator, but unfortunately it's a cliquish business. I've been performing free—to get a start."



Eve's standard of living is rather spartan. She lives in a modest bungalow, furnished with only the bare necessities. "Fortunately," she says, "I have a few very close gentlemen friends who take me out to dinner, the movies, plays. Nothing very serious yet, although I've had a few tempting offers. Men are such beasts, and I oughta know!