SHE-MALE

The Sex-Reversal True Life Story of COCCINELLE



FULLY-ILLUSTRATED

CARLSON WADE



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SHE-MALE

by

Carlson Wade

"I want to change my sex!" These words were spoken by a handsome young man, barely in his 20's. The surgeon who heard him now looked up to see one of the best-known cabaret performers in Europe.

Thus begins the story of one of the most astonishing sexual events of the 20th century. Here, for the first time, is the true life story of Coccinelle — famed French entertainer and night club personality. Born a male, "she" suffered humiliation, loneliness and frustration. Even as a famed "travesti" (female-impersonator), "she" felt out of place with the rest of the world.

"I was a female with the body of a male," she claimed. Finally, when life became too unbearable, Coccinelle underwent a complete sexual transformation. Today, "she" is legally recognized a female, and is happily married.

What are "her" sexual responses? Does "she" regret having made the change? Does "she" enjoy the female role? Can "she" have children? These and many other questions are fully answered in Coccinelle's own words as given during this exclusive interview in "her" luxurious Paris apartment.

SHE-MALE is the first and only real life story of a trans-sexualist. Written with surprising candor, it exposes the true nature of such persons. Complete descriptions of the operations, the mental and physical transformation, hormone treatments, etc. are presented in minute detail. Astonishing, unbelievable . . . but TRUE!

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The Amazing True-Life Story
of Coccinelle

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New York Epic Publishing Co., Inc. 1963

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First Edition

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Pages 33 through 64 and 129 through 160 contain photographs covering Coccinelle's entire adult life. For convenience, these photos have been divided into separate groups dealing with her early life, her work as a showgirl, as a model, her marriage, as a housewife, and a unique collection of illustrations taken from Coccinelle's own private collection.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

To the best of our ability, the illustrations in this book have been selected for their value of medical merit. The earliest photographs reveal with surprising clarity the extent of Coccinelle's maleness before her hormone treatments and eventual operation. Note her naturally flat chest, rather developed shoulders and upper arms and the narrow hips that seem devoid of all female curves. As treatment progressed, her entire physical appearance underwent a remarkable change. You will later note that all traces of masculinity were transformed into truly feminine curves and shapes.

We wish to express our gratitude to the managers of Madame Arthur's, La Carrousel and other leading French cabarets for so generously providing us with many of the photographs you see in this book. We are especially grateful to Coccinelle for so kindly loaning us a number of the other photographs, previously contained only in her private album. These highly personalized photographs give undisputable proof of this now world-famous medical phenomena.

PREFACE

Trans-sexualism is a condition in which a fully developed male changes his entire sexual status, including his body structure. The trans-sexualist has his male sex organs removed so that he can become a female. At first approach to the subject of sexual transformation, it is difficult to believe that post-embryonic reversal is possible. Not only are physical conditions involved but psychological changes must also be made. It is a *permanent* step from a male world into a female world. Can such a change be successfully made?

It was this question that prompted the thorough investigation of one such male who successfully and happily took the giant step of sexual transformation—namely, the famous Coccinelle. Here was a young male who reached puberty and already possessed sex characteristics of a developed male. How could this male's sex be so completely changed that today, Coccinelle is a normal female? There were many erroneous beliefs about Coccinelle's sex reversal. Little about her life was ever made public and wild rumors distorted the truth. It is hoped that this book —containing the true life story of Coccinelle—will bring enlightenment to a very misunderstood condition.

For this reason, the publishers have chosen to present this story in its original form, free from "literary polishing." In so doing, the true nature and personality of Coccinelle has been preserved. This will help you to better understand the most remarkable and astonishing sexual event of the 20th century.

CARLSON WADE

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Chapter 1

MY MEETING WITH COCCINELLE

When I first saw her, I was seated in a corner table at the famed *Crazy Horse Saloon* in the Avenue Georges Cinq, the main artery running through the sensuous Montmarte district of Paris. I was chatting with Mac Ronay, the internationally famous pantomime, gathering material for a series of articles on Paris night life, when *she* suddenly appeared. The entire house was hushed when the patrons caught sight of her. She was dressed in exquisite taste. She was a vision of perfume, fur and dazzling glitter.

At first, I thought she was Brigitte Bardot. The resemblance was remarkable. She had slender legs with perfect curves; her plunging neckline gave way to a soft shadow between two richly formed breasts. Her heavy mass of spun gold hair fell in a dazzling sunshine waterfall over her white shoulders. There was an undulating allure to the movements of her glorious figure wickedly

displayed to advantage by the turquoise two-piece from the house of Yves Saint-Laurent, the fashion king.

The girl was one of many beautiful creatures who fluttered through the *Crazy Horse Saloon*, the leading cabaret on the continent, specializing in the best of strip-tease and bare flesh entertainment. Yet something about this blonde Venus made me sit up and take notice. She possessed unquestionably superior beauty.

Mac Ronay smiled when he saw my fascination with this living dream. "*Monsieur* Wade, do you not recognize her?"

I shook my head. Nearly every *artiste* was known to me. I had already written dozens of articles for New York magazines on Parisian entertainers. "She must be new here."

"Don't you recognize her?" He paused deliberately before whispering her name—the name of a performer who has now become the most famous *artiste* in the world of entertainment. "*Coccinelle!*"

I was stunned, struck speechless like an errant school-boy caught in some forbidden act of mischief. *Coccinelle.* She was the most astonishing phenomenon, the best-dressed woman, the most celebrated, the proud possessor of sex appeal without compare. *Coccinelle.* To look at her once was impossible. She always received repeat stares. Why? Because this superbly beautiful woman—*was a MAN!*

She—I mean "he"—who had passed by was really a man. I had heard much about her. She was placed in a class of her own, high above all others as a beautiful high priestess of beauty in the *Crazy Horse Saloon.* Just one glance at Coccinelle convinced me that I *must* learn all about her. I confided my desire to Mac Ronay who smiled indulgently and shook his head.

"*Non, Monsieur* Wade. You cannot interview Coccinelle.

No American has ever been able to interview her. She feels rather sensitive about her condition and fears that an inaccurate understanding by a writer would cause her much unhappiness."

But the spark had been ignited. I was determined to meet *Mademoiselle* Coccinelle—born Jacques Charles Dufresnoy—to learn her life story from her own lips, to discover her innermost secrets, her fears, her loves, her hatreds. More than anything else, I wanted to discover if Nature had made a mistake. Or, had Coccinelle been at error?

Was I the victim of a hoax? How could that be possible? I watched the vision with its tantalising walk, the purely feminine appearance, the atmosphere of feminine sensuality that was unbearable. Coccinelle was a woman—or was she a man? My thoughts were assailed with so many questions that I resolved, at all costs, to meet this exquisitely feminine creature and discover the truth with my own eyes and ears.

For several weeks I kept returning to the *Crazy Horse Saloon,* writing magazine stories for my New York magazine publisher; at the same time, I kept hinting that I would soon present them with the story of the century. I was going to keep that promise. I was prepared to stake my entire reputation upon it.

Then I saw Coccinelle the second time. She was together with Alain Bernardin, the night club's manager and my closest friend in Paris. He was bringing her towards my table. As I stood up, not even listening to the courteous introductions being made, I felt my legs become hollow. I stared at this beautiful creature. I wanted to discover something in her voice, something in her manner, something about her timbre or quality that would expose this beautiful woman to be a man.

But there was nothing. She was completely incapable

of betraying the fact that Nature had made a gross blunder in allowing her to be born a "boy." No movement, no gesture suggested Nature's mistake.

This close-up meeting was shatteringly exciting. There were a few polite words spoken. Coccinelle expressed interest in my profession as a writer. She wished me a pleasant stay in Paris. Yet she said nothing about permitting herself to be the subject of an interview. She smiled, inclined her exquisitely shaped head a bit, then rejoined her companions who gathered about her in a worshipful circle.

Alain Bernardin sat down beside me at my table. "Astonishing, is it not? Coccinelle wears a size 5 shoe. She has a beautiful 18 inch waist. Did you notice her bosom? Oh, of course you did. How feminine are her deliciously rounded curves. As for her face, it is a peaches and cream complexion—not a single hair is growing. Yes, she is a beautiful woman."

He then confided in me that many of the other *artistes* go secretly to watch Coccinelle's striptease act. "They want to study the whole range of her movements and gestures. They imitate her feminine expressions. In fact, they regard Coccinelle as a teacher in lessons of sex appeal!"

Fantastic. Ironic—a female learning from a male how to be a female! Now, more than ever, I resolved that I *must* know the whole story. Was it Nature? Was it an imbalance of chromosomes? Perhaps a secret hormonal extract was responsible for splitting apart the twofold personality. Or it was a physical or mental malady. Questions, questions, questions. But no answers. They could come only from Coccinelle. Yet she had steadfastly refused to grant interviews or to give any clues about her mysterious past. Just how would I obtain the coveted life story?

For a number of weeks I visited another famous

cabaret along the Champs Elysées—the *Carrousel,* known for its specialty of *travesti* (transvestism or female impersonation) performances. In addition to collecting whole quantities of material for magazine articles on female impersonators, I also gathered research for a book that was later published as *Transvestism Today,* a psychosexual understanding of this form of behavior.

The director of the *Carrousel,* known simply as Lasquin, informed me, "Coccinelle will shortly appear as our star *travesti.* She is on tour now but as soon as she comes to the *Carrousel,* I shall show her some of your writings and try to arrange for a meeting. But, of course, I cannot make any promises."

Several weeks later, Lasquin telephoned me at my hotel. "Come to the *Carrousel* tonight at midnight. Coccinelle is in Paris. I believe I can arrange for a meeting."

I was overcome with a strange excitement. After so much anticipation, the long-awaited meeting was to be arranged. As I entered the *Carrousel,* about an hour before midnight, Lasquin was waiting to meet me near the cloak room. We shook hands. His face was wreathed in disappointment.

"Forgive me, *Monsieur* Wade, but I do not think Coccinelle is able to go through an interview." He shook his shoulders with a typical French gesture of helplessness that I had learned to accept with finality. Then he lowered his voice and moved closer to me. "She has been different, lately. She is going through a crisis. A dearly devoted boy friend has left her—for a woman. I think I should also tell you—but you must promise not to reveal this to the public—that she is seriously thinking of submitting to a painful operation—involving her manhood. Now do you understand why Coccinelle is a bit difficult to get along with? She is beset with problem after problem."

"But can't I just speak to her for a few moments?" I

pressed. It could be an opening for a follow-up meeting, I reasoned.

Lasquin thought this over. "A few moments, *Monsieur* Wade. That is all." He took me to a private little room, next to his office. Coccinelle was seated, superbly gowned as always. She seemed embarrassed at my close presence, avoided looking at me. She gave signs of having but one thought—to get away from me.

We exchanged a few words. I told her about the series of articles on *travesti* that I was writing, as well as my book. But she remained distant, aloof.

Lasquin nudged me gently. "*Mademoiselle* Coccinelle is tired; she has just finished an exhausting engagement on the Riviera, and would like to rest. *Monsieur* Wade, *s'il vous plaît?*"

It was over. I was ushered out of the private room, none the wiser about Coccinelle; that is, the *real* Coccinelle who was also Jacques Charles Dufresnoy. There was nothing else to do but to continue my usual writings on Montmarte cabarets. Since it appeared that a story on Coccinelle was postponed indefinitely, I devoted my time to Bambi —a very famous female impersonator who possessed extraordinary feminine beauty but of a distinctly different kind. My articles on Bambi emphasized the glandular condition of hermaphrodism. They were received with interest and satisfaction. But something was missing. *The "missing link" between male and female was absent. Only Coccinelle could provide that link.* It was a thorn in my side. It gave me no rest.

Three months later, Lasquin called me into his office at the *Carrousel.* "*Monsieur* Wade, I have been reading your articles and your book on *travesti.* I have also shown them to Coccinelle. You will meet her—and this time, you shall have your story!"

My heart began to pound. The interview was granted!

The most famous sexual event of the 20th century was now going to be revealed in every detail. The world was going to discover the truth about Coccinelle—the *she male!*

So, the meeting was arranged. It took place in the main dressing room of the *travesti* peformers. As soon as I entered, Coccinelle came toward me, her flutteringly soft hand extended in a gesture of friendship. Her dazzling smile illuminated her beautiful face, displayed her perfect teeth. While she wore stage make-up, her superbly molded features intensified her feminine sex appeal.

Let me state sincerely that this was not the first time I had met a female impersonator. As explained, I interviewed dozens, perhaps a hundred of such creatures and had become quite accustomed to males in female attire. But my meeting with Coccinelle left me breathless. In fact, ever since our close meeting, I developed doubts about everyone I met. When I would see any pretty girl walking along the street I experienced gnawing doubts. Was she a member of the fair sex, or were my eyes the victims of an illusion and the girl was really a *travesti?*

Outwardly, Coccinelle's transformation from male to female was so perfect that a few minutes of conversation convinced me that she was really a female, to begin with. Of course, I knew this was not true, but I found it difficult to draw the line between reality and illusion. Her "secret" may have been an excess of female hormones; perhaps her femininity was caused by malfunctioning of the ductless glands. Whatever the cause, she was so perfect a female that I found myself showing her the respect due to any woman.

I cleared my throat in an attempt to conceal my uncontrollable nervousness. "We've met before, *Mademoiselle* Coccinelle. I am happy that this time you have agreed to an interview."

"There is no ill feeling, is there?" she asked with a delightful little pouting of the bee stung lips that were so softly feminine.

"Of course not, *Mademoiselle*. I can understand that you are busy . . . and are constantly under pressure."

"There is more pressure than anyone realizes, *Monsieur* Wade. There is something which no one knows about, except a chosen few. I shall make this confession to you because I have read your articles and books on transvestism. You have a sympathetic and professional understanding about female impersonators. That is why I shall tell you this secret."

"What is it?"

She lowered her voice. "I have had an operation. Now —I am a complete female!"

She stared at me, watching my reaction. I do admit that I reacted strongly. This was the last thing I had expected to hear. She was saying,

"My father knows nothing about my change of sex. He thinks he still has a son. I have lost the courage to tell him the truth, as I vowed I would. The shock would be too great for him. Yes, I shall tell him, but not yet. He is entitled to know the truth."

As we talked in this atmosphere of mutual understanding, I began to detect the true nature of Coccinelle—she possessed a sense of honesty and obedience to certain scruples which was extremely rare in modern times. It was this inner strength of personal chivlary that prompted the interview. She was then saying,

"But I want to tell you more than just a few words for an article or two. I intend to tell you the whole truth about my life, my bitter childhood, my career, my love affairs, my surgical operations, and my plans. I will explain to you why and how I became a woman, what I now feel, what I used to feel both mentally and physically. You

will be the first writer to put my confession on record for the entire world."

An appointment was made. I met Coccinelle at her penthouse apartment in Montmarte. I rang the bell. A stout maid, wearing a starched white pinafore, black skirt and matching black apron, let me in.

The *salon* was a dream. There was a huge television set, a bar, Louis Quinze style sofa, marble-tiled floor. Cream colored gauze curtains billowed softly in the gentle breeze. The huge room was done in progressive shades of turquoise. My feet were half buried in the thick pile of the violet rug that covered one portion of the room. An ornately carved gold clock was perched on the mantel of the white marble fireplace, flanked by two Dresden shepherdesses.

Then I saw a bronze incense burner with a blue spiral of smoke floating to the gold painted ceiling. Inlaid, low tables and carved tabourets were scattered tastefully around the room. Piles of enormous cushions in vivid reds and blues were everywhere.

The penthouse was situated on the heights of Montmarte, facing the famed Athénée Theatre. As I looked out of the window, I was on a level with the great dome of the basilica of the dazzling white Sacré Coeur. It was easy to see why such a magnificent structure, with its majesty and impressive size, should arouse the admiration of so many Parisians and visitors. Far below, stretching away to the horizon, I saw the rooftops of Paris and Notre Dame Cathedral. Toward the right, the feminine slenderness of the Eiffel Tower.

I glanced toward another room, off to one side. It was a bathroom—a vision of pink. There was a pink tub, a pink toilet seat, a pink bidet; also, there were large and small matching towels of pink with the brilliant crest of a Gothic "C" on each of these. Over the pink basin was an elaborate gold leaf oval mirror.

I turned around. A man had come into the huge room. He was tall, athletically well-built with rippling muscles, a broad chest, developed arms and legs. His handsome tanned face was topped with a mass of thick, black hair. His feet were bare. In fact, the man was bare except for a tiny white bikini bathing suit. Much later I was to learn that Coccinelle truly appreciated the ultimate of masculinity in male bodies, just as she sought to achieve the maximum of femininity in her own body.

"Bon jour, *Monsieur* Wade," he introduced himself. "*Je m'appelle* François." He explained that he was the secretary of Coccinelle. Then he added that his *avant-garde* fig leaf bikini was his own idea. As the secretary of such a vivid personality as Coccinelle, it was expected that he, too, would be unusual. Bearing this in mind, I displayed little surprise.

Then the door opened and she came in. She was smiling radiantly; dressed in a canary yellow *déshabillé*, she was a perfect female. She gazed at me through a silken screen web of yellow mesh eyelashes. "François, will you open a bottle of champagne?"

We sat down. I made myself comfortable on a slim legged chair. Coccinelle's slender white hand poured the bubbling champagne into matching delicately stemmed glasses. We sipped. As she raised her glass, her green eyes with their brilliant sparkle were as scintillating as the bubbling nectar we were imbibing. She crossed her legs revealingly—one over the other. Her flawlessly perfect features became contemplative. Her voice was soft . . . as soft as pure velvet.

"I was born in Paris on the 23rd of August, 1935. My sex: male."

Monsieur Jacques Charles Dufresnoy was beginning his life story . . .

Chapter 2

A TRAGIC CHILDHOOD OF LONELINESS

"But *Madame* Dufresnoy, why do you dress your daughter like a boy?"

This was said to my parents with complete innocence. At first, they felt hurt. Later, they became adjusted to it. Everyone remarked that I looked like a little girl, even though I had been born a boy. My mother soon took to dressing me as a girl so that painful criticisms would not be made. At the very beginning, when my parents told inquisitive people or friends that I was a little boy, there would at once be a flood of complimentary remarks about my delicate features; also, my hair had a very silky texture. My mannerisms were, indeed, very effeminate.

From the start, I was different from other little boys of my age. I never played with toy soldiers. I found it more interesting to play with dolls. I loved to sew dresses for them, to make tiny bonnets and petticoats. I never ran around the streets as would wild little boys. I

never associated with other boys. They were too boisterous and rough for my tastes. My companions were girls and *only* girls. With girls, I felt a oneness that is difficult to explain. Also, let me add that the feeling was mutual. Little girls loved playing with me; they were unlike boys who ridiculed my gentle manner and would avoid me. When I was in the company of girls, I felt peace and contentment.

As for my parents, they did not understand the reasons for my behaviour. My father did not worry too much about it and would say, "When Jacques begins school, he will change." My mother was concerned about this contrary behaviour but she accepted it as just a phase through which many boys pass.

School did not change me. On the contrary, it only strengthened my inclinations. My friends were girls in the class. For some unexplainable reason, they permitted me to join their little groups where they accepted me as one of them.

The teachers observed this practice and would frequently take me aside to caution, "See here, Jacques, why not leave the girls alone? You are very young. You have your whole life ahead of you for running after girls. Why not strike up some friendship with a few boys in the school?"

"*Oui, Monsieur le Maître,*" I promised, but continued on with my friendship with girls.

As I grew older, I began to feel a mysterious attraction toward boys. It was an emotion that was more than friendship. It was, at times, embarrassingly intimate. The feelings were mixed up with fear, suspicion, guilt. I could not understand it. I was still at a tender age when an analysis of such contradictions was beyond my comprehension.

Truthfully speaking, nobody *could* understand that

what I sought, above all, was a duplicate of myself; someone with exactly the same natural disposition, the same tastes, the same qualities. The teachers who soon began to accuse me of imitating the girls and their feminine manner were completely wrong. My duplication of girlish manners was spontaneous.

Because of my strange fear and attraction for boys—an attraction that was strangely sensual—it was unthinkable for me to follow the good advice to associate with males. At the same time, with wisdom that is often possible only with the very young, I knew that I would never be happy in an atmosphere of a mixed classroom of boys and girls. Such a mixture made me feel awkward and confused with mysterious conflicts. All I really yearned to do was to get away, go home and help my mother with the cooking, some needlework or other feminine occupations. Most of my evenings were spent in playing with the girls, whose gentleness and daintiness so appealed to me.

When I was 13, my first crisis occurred. My father, while an ordinary working man, decided to transfer me from the local school and had me enrolled into a *lycée*, without even discussing it with me. Now, my class was composed entirely of boys! There were no girls allowed in an all-male *lycée*. This abrupt change forced on me the brutal necessity of becoming different. But it did not work. Try as I would, I could not become equal with boys.

For the first time I became aware of the real tragedy of my childhood—my painful *loneliness*. If there is one word to describe the early years of my existence to stand up as a symbol it is that one: *loneliness*.

Nobody wanted me. I wanted nobody. It was as if a mutual arrangement was prepared. Everyone avoided me and I avoided everyone. More than ever I began to long for the peace and gentleness, the harmonious tran-

quility of the girls I had known. But since I eschewed the company of boys, and since there were no girls in the *lycée,* the inevitable consequence was my complete isolation.

At the tender age of puberty, solitude is harmful. At this age, a living creature is emerging from a shell, so to speak; the creature is developing both mentally and physically. Affection from other people is more important than food. And precisely at this very delicate age, I was alone. If anyone took notice of me, it was to ask for a book, some ink, a little help. Down deep I was aware that they were secretly laughing at me, poking fun at my awkwardness, regarding me as something out of place in the scheme of creation. I was a freak, placed on show in a fair.

When you know that you are different, you long for solitude. But solitude is a terrible haven of refuge. It adds to your suffering and unhappiness. Yet, I craved solitude so that I could hide myself from the prying eyes of the other boys—and yet, at the same time, to still be there in the midst of them.

I was torn from all sides. I sought solitude to escape the jibes and silent insults; at the same time, I yearned for affection and self-expression. Unable to find a way out of this maze I began to evaluate myself. I asked, "What kind of creature am I?"

Many times I would gaze at myself in the mirror, contemplating the handsome youth who looked back at me with perfectly normal features. So where was the "difference" which set me apart from others?

My whole childhood was a huge question mark. Its mystery could not be solved. My anxiety made me sullen. The bitter years passed with misery. All the while, I began to fear the reactions of boys who soon became bolder, less inhibited, more masculine and aggressive. They became hostile. I had to endure painful taunts,

jeers, insults. Why? Because I was poor at gymnastics. I never played sports. When I walked, I took short steps.

By nature, I was gentle. My reading material consisted of fashion magazines, not the blood curdling adventure or detective stories that boys like. Most of all, I was different because I was easily hurt . . .

"Be careful you don't fall, Jacques. You'll break like a porcelain doll . . ."

"Don't touch Jacques—fragile . . ."

"Your veins have perfume . . . not blood . . ."

"Oooo . . . look: there's a little girl dressed like a boy . . ."

"*Alors,* here comes Jacques—the savage terror of the school . . ."

Already, the boys saw that I was a misfit in their sex. Since they knew nothing about such things as hormones and glands, they made their own explanations. They were cruel. Their remarks cut me to the quick. I was at a loss on self-defense. It was impossible for me to cry out that they were wrong because deep inside I was not convinced that they were. What could I say to them, except,

"Go away! Leave me alone!"

This only spurred them on. They made me their scapegoat with a sense of cruelty which only the very young can display. They ridiculed me, humiliated me, laughed at me until I was afraid to walk down the hallways. It was a curious thing that several boys soon came to my rescue. Oddly enough, these boys were the husky, strong, superior masculine ones. They protected me as if they were instinctively aware of the female in me . . . but they did not become friendly toward me . . . that is, a true friendship, as if they, too, were aware of my difference.

My teen-age years were filled with complexes. I now became fully conscious of myself. I recognized the fact

that I was neither boy nor girl; while girlish company was pleasant, the company of boys was suddenly very attractive—even of the boys who had spurned me!

Were there others like myself? The newspapers, which we hardly bothered reading at home, never discussed sex. It was still forbidden territory. The word "homosexual" was alien to me. As for "hermaphrodism," this was completely unknown. There was no talk of André Gide, Marcel Proust, Jean Genet. I knew nothing about *amitiés particulières, couples de Sodome,* the arguments set out in *Corydon* or the couple *homme-enfant* in the Verlaine-Rimbaud relationship.

But at the age of 15, a deep force within me suddenly urged me to make a complete break with the ways that I was used to. I sought to destroy my desire to be with girls. From now on I would be with boys. A tremendous upheaval took place inside of me. Certain things which had been buried deep too long now began to rise to the surface. Before long, all that was dark would be plunged into brightness.

Turning my back on the female element and deliberately turning towards the male element was a way of coming out of the shell in which I had been living. What was happening inside me was the exact opposite of what happens in other boys. Ordinarily, a young boy seeks self-realization in someone like himself. This form of emotional fixation is directed toward another boy of similar appearance and inclinations. This is the period of close friendships, a time in a boy's life when he likes and dislikes change with a delightful inconsequence.

All boys pass through this stage which scientists have labelled the "homosensual" phase. This unconscious platonic eroticism is of short duration. The boy then deserts his image and sets out to impress the opposite sex.

In my case, the being of similar appearance whom I sought was *not* a boy, but a girl—with whom I instinctively felt I had more in common. It was my unconscious interpretation of my "homosensual" phase. After that, instead of setting out to impress the fair sex, I turned toward the stronger sex. It was a reversal of sexual inclinations and development.

At this time, I underwent a physical change. My body hair stopped growing. My head hair grew more abundant. My feet remained a delicate size 5. My skin texture was very fragile and soft. My waist became extremely slim and my breasts showed a tendency to fill out. The intonation of my voice became higher in pitch with a musical lilt. I was, in short, becoming *effeminate!*

My mother would say to me, "Jacques, must you wear such flashy clothes right out on the street?"

Others would remark, "Jacques, you have a funny way of walking."

"Did you forget your visit to the hairdresser?"

My hair was so beautiful that I seldom went to a barber. Rather, I liked to let it grow long; it hung in ringlets down my neck. As for clothes, I was partial toward gaily colored silk scarves, close fitting jackets, tight trousers, pink or yellow shirts and soft, noiseless shoes. I loved perfumes and jewelry.

My father, as explained earlier, was a very hard working man, gone from very early morning until late evening. He paid scant attention to my rig-out, and occasionally would remark that I was just "too much." But he laughed it off by adding, "Jacques, you are going through that awkward age. You'll soon stop showing off."

As for my teachers, they developed a strong dislike for me. One even went so far as to publicly accuse me of "trying to corrupt the entire class." Of course, I did not

understand what he meant but to be held up as an object of ridicule made me feel very ashamed and more withdrawn and introverted than ever before.

This same hostile teacher was so aggressive that I dreaded attending classes because of him. I could never understand why he so hated me when I hardly spoke to anyone in the class and always did my lessons. It was with great relief when graduation day came. Now I would be rid of him.

On the last day of the school year he asked me to remain in the class room after everyone else had left. "I have a bit of advice to give you." No sooner were we alone than he closed the door, then turned the lock. He came toward me; for the first time, I noticed he was smiling. His usual animosity was gone.

Before I had any chance to wonder why his attitude had changed, he seized hold of me. His face was contorted in a peculiar expression. His hands were cruel, grasping. He gripped my soft flesh, fondled me intimately, tried to unbutton my blouse-like shirt, almost succeeded in pulling down my trousers. All the while he tried to kiss me.

I began to scream, "Leave me alone! Leave me alone!"

He stopped. "Keep quiet, you little fool. Everyone will hear."

I took advantage of this to get away from him; I arranged my clothes properly and before fleeing from the locked room, I called back, "There's something wrong with you!"

That was the last I heard of him. Shortly thereafter, he handed in his resignation, much to my relief. This first sexual experience left me shaken for a long time.

Chapter 3

A LESSON IN HAIRDRESSING

My frequent complaints about my treatment from school mates was a constant source of concern to my mother. One afternoon, when I was just 16 years old, and had come back from school, my mother came into my room. She was very excited.

"Jacques, if you want to get away from school, I have some interesting news for you."

"But Mother, you know that I must finish my studies and pass the final examinations."

"Come, come, Jacques, surely you realize that knowing the right people is more useful than passing examinations." Then she started to explain that she had just come from the beauty salon of the most famous hairdresser in the world—Antonio. The mere mention of his name was enough to provoke gasps and sighs. Mother had chatted with Antonio who said that he was looking for a very young apprentice—one who would be willing to learn the entire profession of beauty and hairdressing. He told

Mother that he would be happy to give me the job if I showed a desire to work.

Just why Antonio should be willing to grant me such an opportunity was never explained. I can only venture a guess that while Mother was under the hair dryer, gossiping as women usually do in beauty salons, she mentioned my flair for all things feminine. Much later I was to learn that many of the world's top fashion creators are males who have a strange taste for femininity. This peculiar combination of traits has produced some of the greatest designs. Small wonder that I was a desired apprentice.

"But, Mother," I protested, "I've had no experience . . ."

"Tush, tush," she waved aside my objections, "everything is settled. You can start tomorrow."

If I needed any incentive to take the job it was the desire to get away from the school. Perhaps it was escapism; or was it cowardice, running away from my tormentors? No matter what the reason, I knew that there was no other choice. The more I thought of it, the more delighted I was to think of starting off under someone as famous as Antonio. The very next day I informed the school officials of my decision. They speedily granted me a cancellation. No doubt, they were relieved to be rid of such an enigmatic student, registered as a male, but contrary to all that is male.

An appointment was arranged with Antonio at the Rond-Point on the Champs Elysées. There was a brief interview and he agreed to take me under his wing. To begin with, he introduced me to some of his congenial assistants who gave me rudimentary instructions. In addition, I went to evening classes to improve my professional skill and to master in theory what I had learnt in practice.

About three months later I was passed as proficient and

allowed to go into the sumptuous *salons* with the great chief himself. I watched the way he worked with amazing skill. He always chose a hairstyle that was exactly right for a woman's personality. He did this with unfailing good taste.

He would give some general instructions, start the work off, then let me carry on. I enjoyed the work more and more; Antonio was very pleased with me.

One morning he had to leave for a few moments and called me over to continue on with a bleach. The customer, a middle-aged dowager with wrinkled folds of flesh, watched me walk and noted my rather effeminate manner. She giggled and exclaimed,

"Goodness, look at the little page boy—right out of the Middle Ages! Oh, pardon me, are you a little page *girl*?"

The blood rushed to my cheeks. My ears burned. Everyone was looking at me. I mumbled something, glanced at Antonio who was used to such jibes and hardly paid notice, then started my work. The lady, incidentally, was an unpleasant sight. The ravages of time had done so much damage to her face and body that it was plainly a waste of money to visit any beauty salon. As I worked on her hair, she kept staring at me. Then she began to be abusive:

"See here, young man. You better change your attitude!"

I stared back in amazement. What attitude? Not wishing to get involved in any arguments, I made no answer but continued working on her hair bleach. But this show of indifference only provoked her still more. She declared,

"Young man, it's useless for you to try and make yourself more of a woman than I am!"

Now it was clear. My natural girlish manner was an-

noying the lady by making her feel inferior. The whole thing was so grotesque that I could not control the burst of laughter. It would be useless to try and justify myself in her eyes, to explain that my way of talking and walking was completely natural to me, and that I certainly had no intention of making fun of her.

When she saw my smile and that I said nothing, she was all the more exasperated. "The very idea! You—silly thing! Putting on airs and graces . . . hmpf!"

All the while she spoke, she kept raising her voice. Since she was under the drier, she could brarely hear what she was saying. Therefore, she shouted and was being heard by everyone on the floor. She accused me of everything she could lay her tongue to, asserting that I was abnormal, a pervert, that I was a poor worker and insulted customers by trying to mimic them.

To myself, I thought, "What conceit. Just fancy anyone being fool enough to want to imitate such an ugly and ridiculous creature."

Then she screamed out, "I shall complain to the management. I demand your dismissal—or else I shall never again set foot in this establishment!"

This time I could no longer restrain myself. "*Madame* would be more at home in an animal zoo. Antonio is a hairdresser, not a miracle worker."

This enraged her so much that she tossed all decency to the winds. She began to let fly a deluge of abuse that exposed her inferior upbringing. Everyone—the staff and customers—enjoyed this little tirade. Now I attacked her on her own ground. I told her how useless it was for her to come to any beauty salon, that not even a miracle could make her look like a human being again.

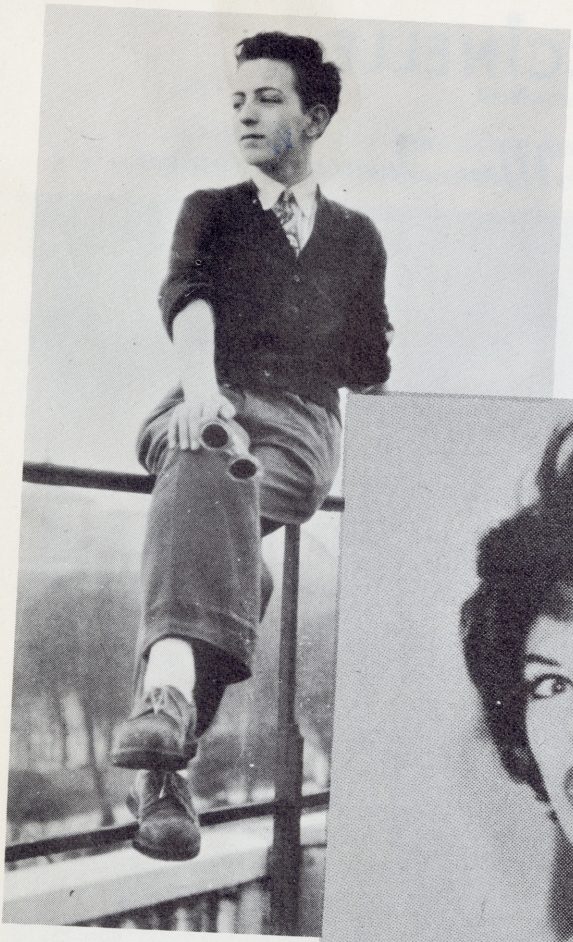
The loud shouting brought Antonio to the scene. The customer fairly threw herself into his arms, burst into sobs and cried out how she had been insulted. She ended

COCCINELLE

. . . The Miracle of Man Turned Woman . . .



Now famous, always beautiful, Coccinelle has one extravagance — expensive furs. Most of her fabulous collection were gifts from her millionaire admirer — whose name she discreetly refuses to disclose . . .



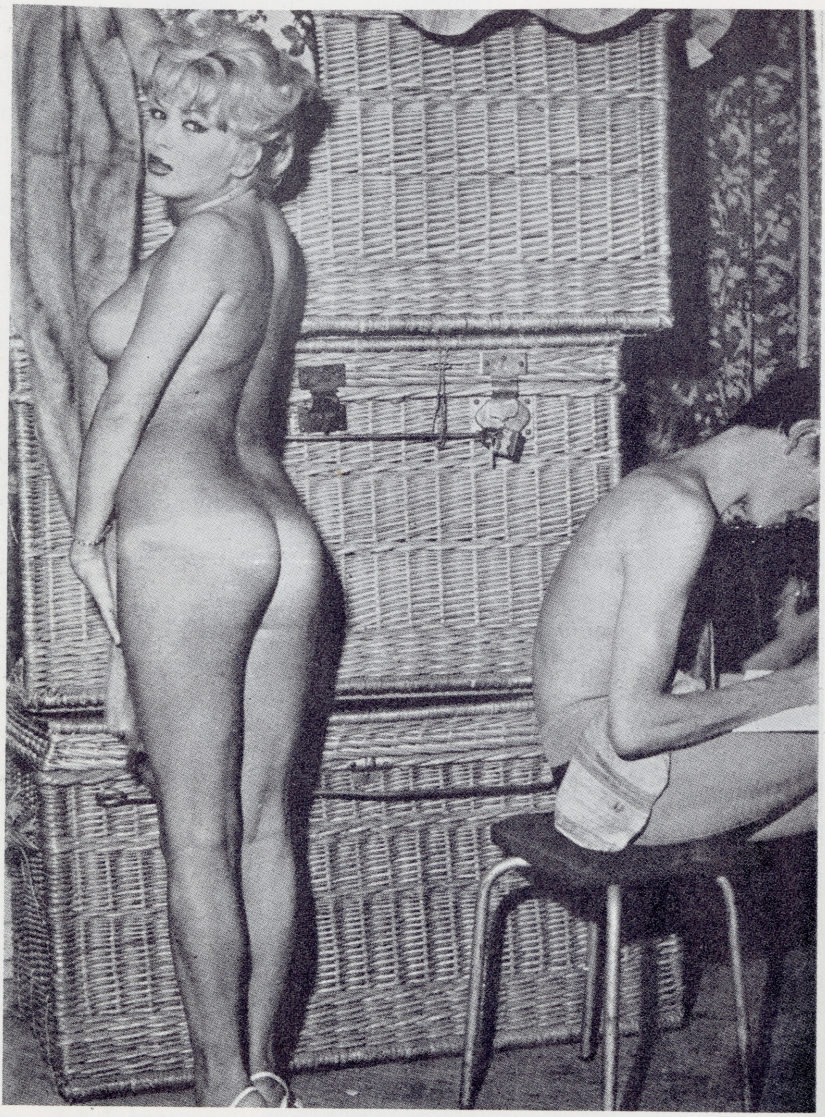


The photograph above shows Coccinelle at the age of 18 — obviously still a man with a male chest and beard. At that time the desire to become feminine became so overwhelming that Coccinelle escaped into the dream world of masquerade and became a female impersonator. In the remarkable photograph on the right, the degree of success of the hormone treatments in their early stages becomes increasingly evident . . .

. . . Coccinelle — As a Showgirl . . .



As Coccinelle's transformation progressed, so did the female impersonator's box office appeal. Shown here on tour, Coccinelle's name had only to appear to assure the management of a full house. Millions of the curious thronged to see her.



Photographs taken at the internationally famous Parisian cabaret, the *Carrousel,* are shown on these two pages. The figure seated on Coccinelle's right is a member of the cast (of which Coccinelle was the star performer) of female imper-



sonators for which the cabaret is renowned. Here is an excellent example of the contrast between Coccinelle, whose "transformation" by this time was almost complete, and a "normal" transvestite whose physiognomy reveals a definitely male chest and hair distribution.



At the age of 22, before the operation which finally made her a complete female, Coccinelle posed for this photograph which presents a striking opportunity to observe the difference in body lineaments between her and her extremely masculine companion.







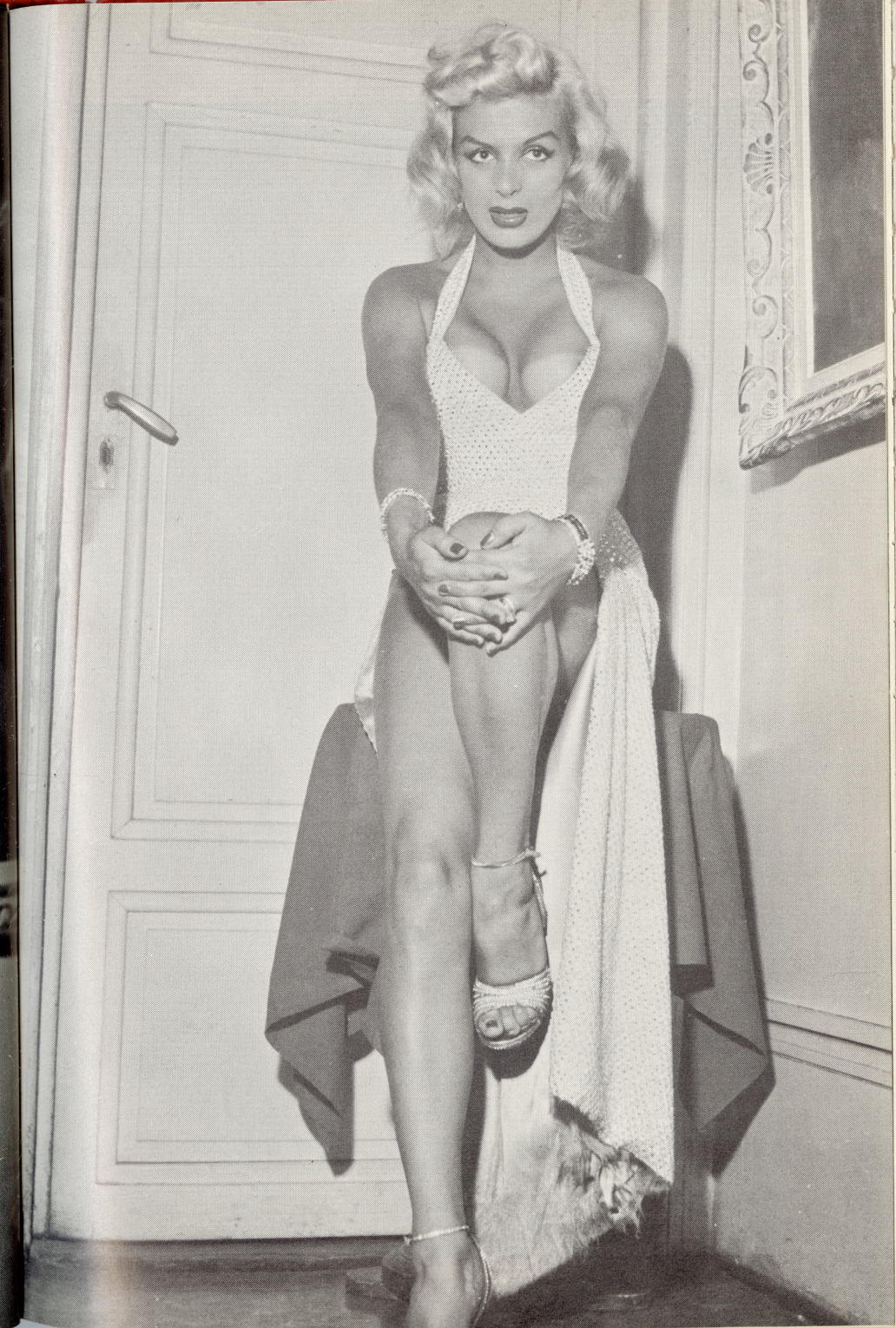


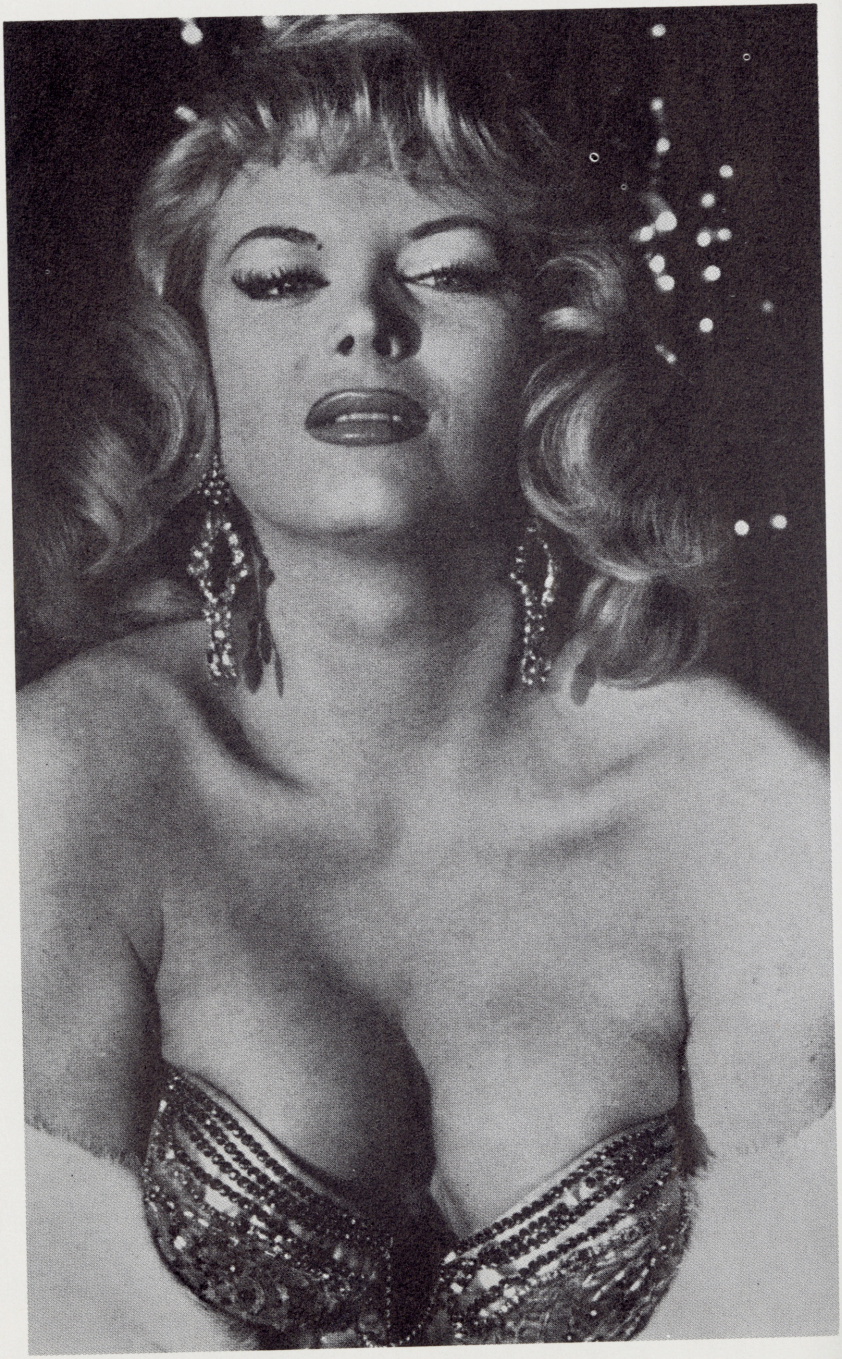










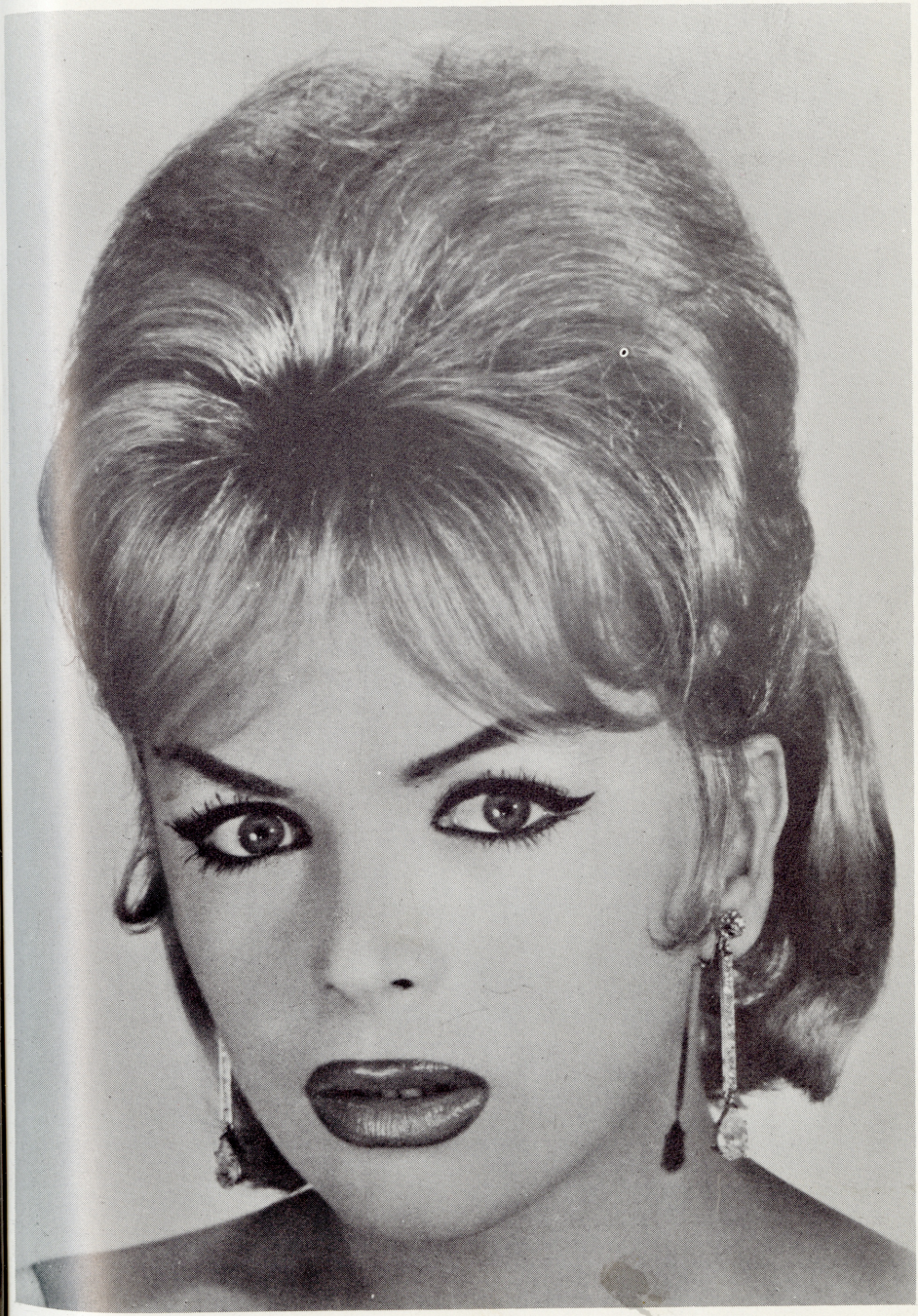


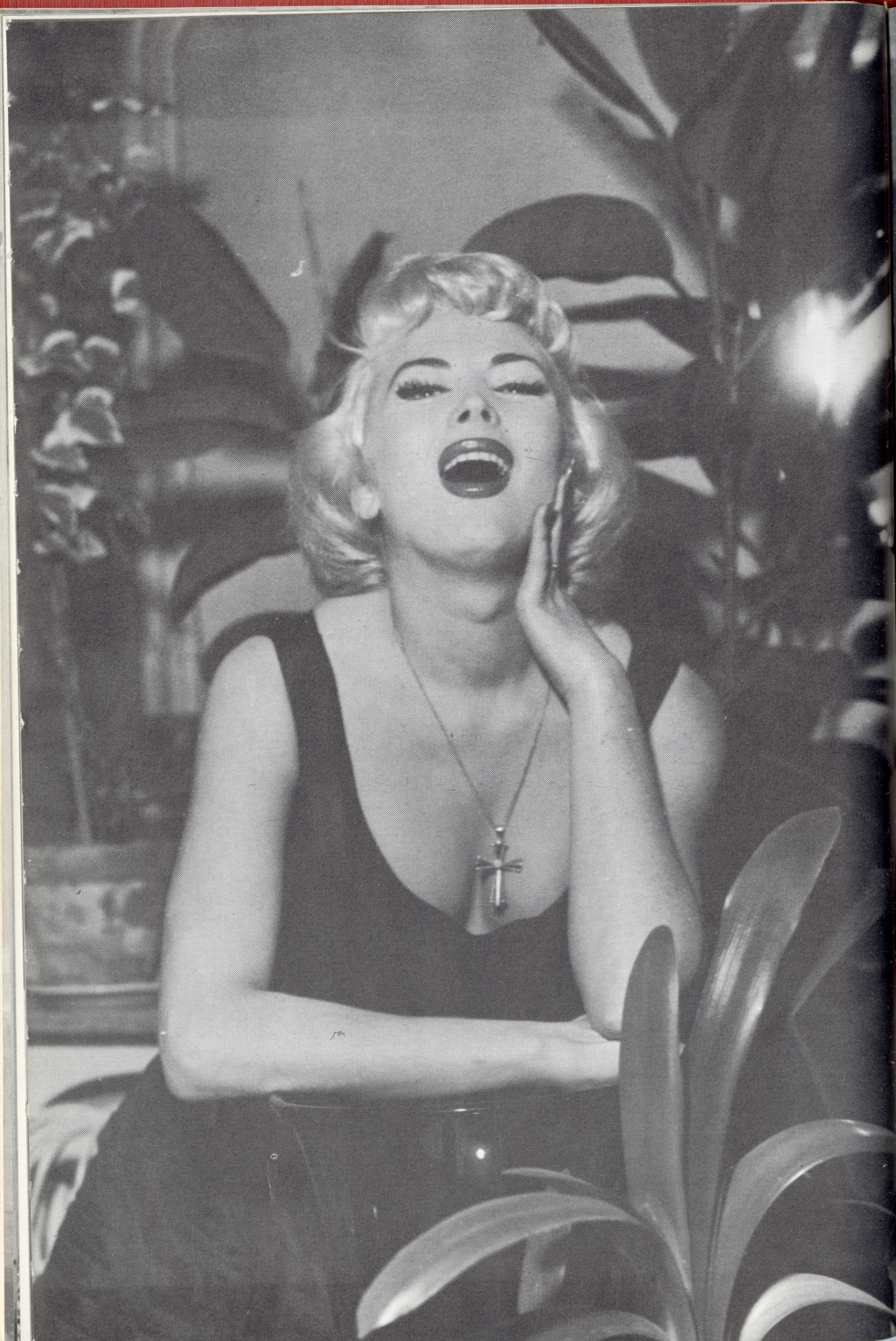
. . . Coccinelle — As a Model . . .

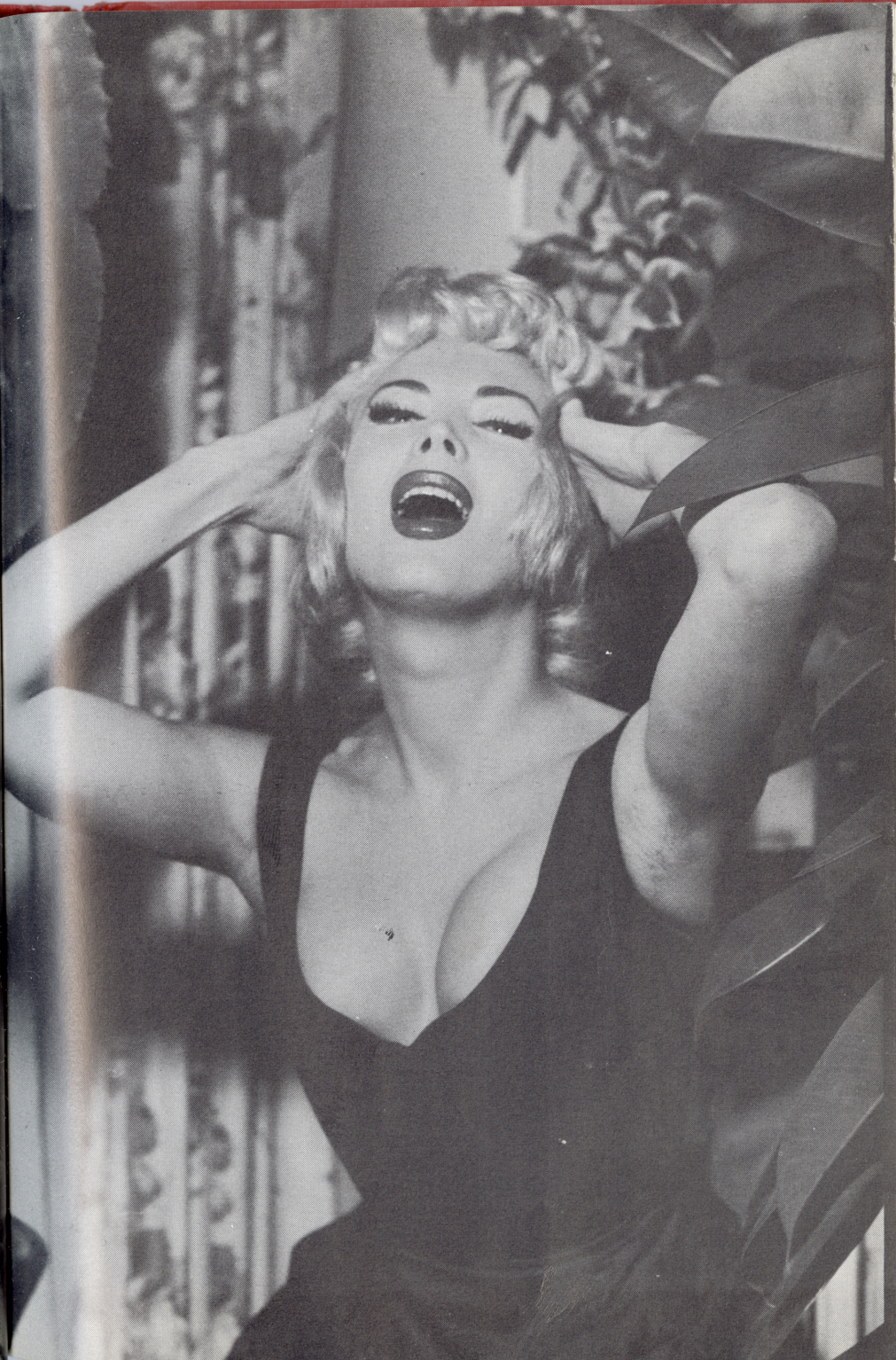


With the advent of her new publicity as a medical phenomenon, Coccinelle found herself deluged with requests from the top French designers to wear their creations in public and at important social functions. Soon she dropped her heavy acting schedule and embarked upon a new career — high fashion modelling, both for magazines and shows.

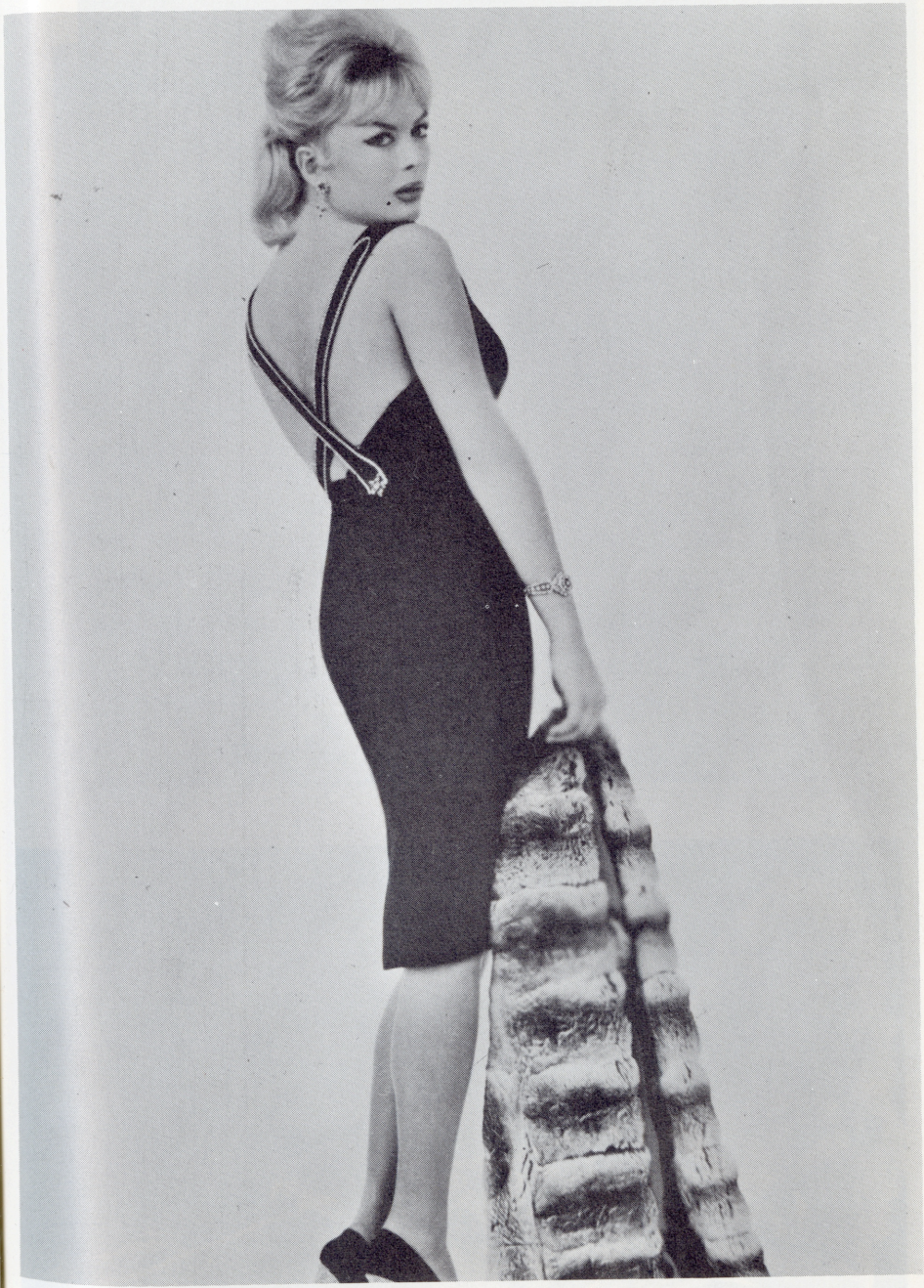














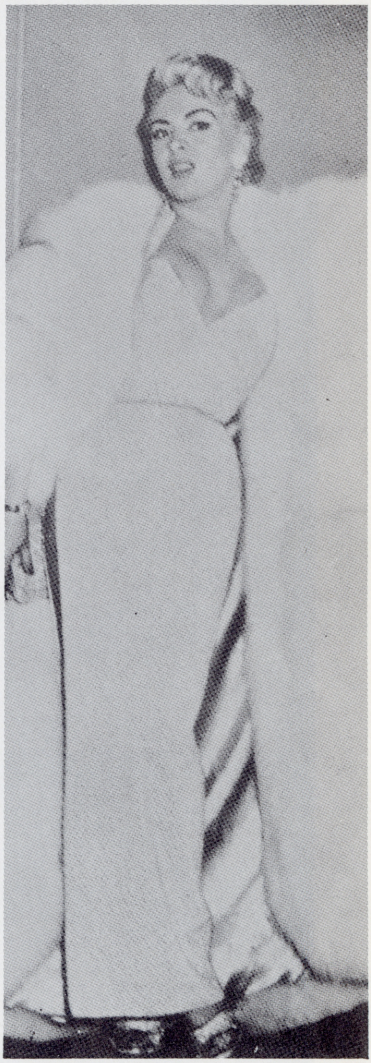




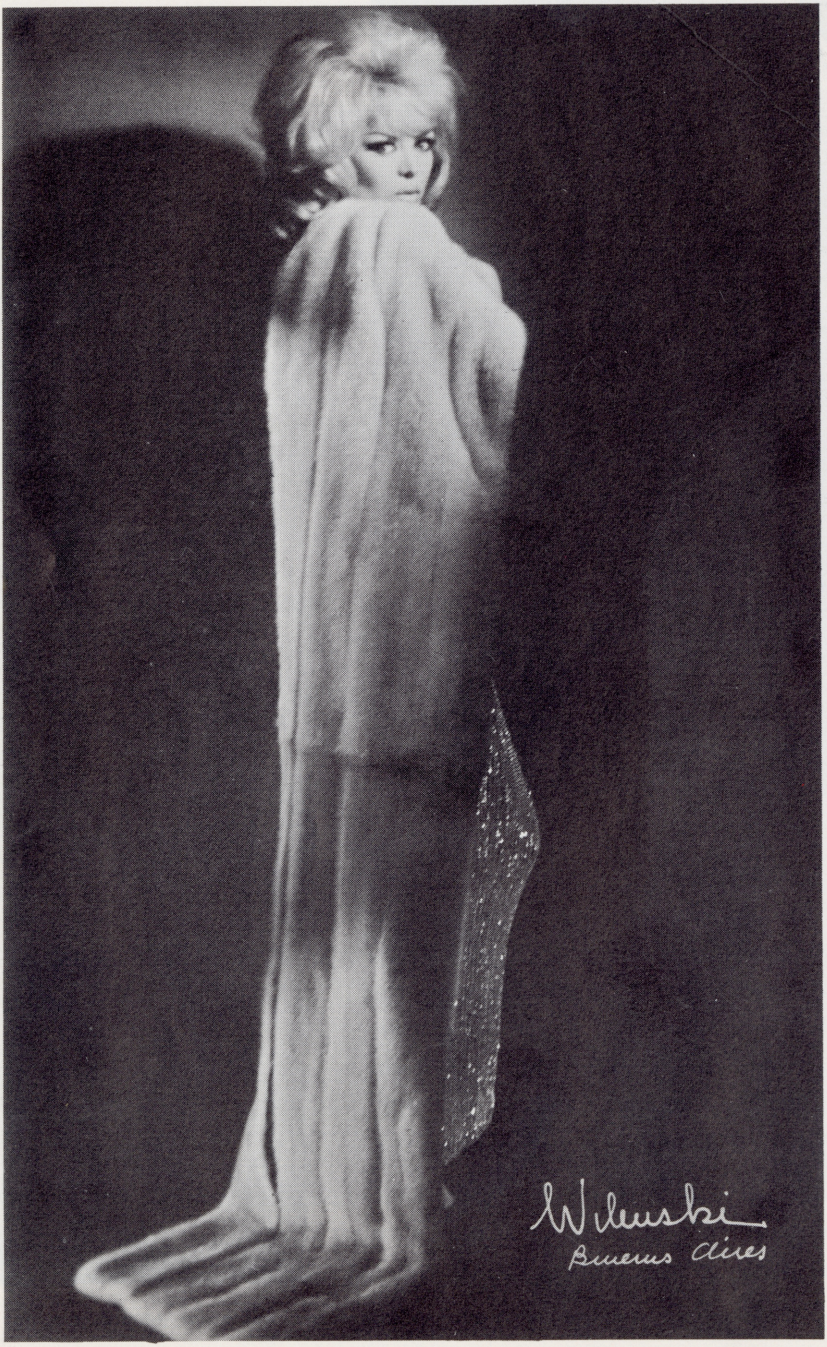


One of the immediate effects of the early hormone treatments was that Coccinelle lost all traces of male facial hair, and was able to discard the cumbersome wig of the impersonator when her own hair grew into luxuriant blonde tresses. The coiffure above (titled "The Ladybird") won raves at an International Hairstylists





showing; the gowns and furs pictured on the following pages not only received much deserved attention from the general public, but were imitated by motion picture stars and celebrities the world over. To be seen in the company of the beautiful and witty Coccinelle came to be a social *coup* . . .


Buenos Aires


Wilenski
Buenos Aires





up by demanding that "the scoundrel be fired at once."

I tried to intervene to give my version of what had happened but the lady kept interrupting and threatening to tell all her friends of the rude hairdressers in Antonio's.

Now, Antonio was a clever businessman. He was suave, courteous, tactful. He obeyed the American business ethics which regard the customer as sacred, without fault, and spoke sharply to me, in front of everyone in his carefully modulated voice:

"Jacques Dufresnoy, you heard what the lady said. Why are you standing there with that apron? You are no longer on my staff!"

My blood fairly boiled. It was too unfair for words. Nobody had given me a chance to defend myself against her lies. But Antonio knew that he could always get another employee, but the loss of a long time customer (who could spread ill will among close friends) was a serious financial loss. Furthermore, the entire floor was filled with other customers and Antonio could not lose face by telling the lady she was wrong, even if that was what he really thought.

Without a word, but still on the point of exploding, and with a venomous look of hatred, I ripped off my apron and threw it right in front of the gloating customer. I went out, slamming the door so violently that a windowpane somewhere was shattered.

It was a blow to my pride. This was my first job. I had worked hard and studied well into the late hours of the night and in a few words by an irate customer, was told to get out. There was nothing I could do. This first minor problem was to remain in my conscience for several years. Revenge would come . . . some time later.

. . . I will get ahead of my story for a bit to tell you what happened, a few years after, when my femininity was truly developed. I arranged an appointment to have

my hair done by Antonio and went into his *salon.* I insisted upon having the work done only by Antonio. When I came into the *salon,* I wore my smartest dress and expensive jewelry. They all treated me with great consideration and immediately waited upon me.

I was ushered into the private *salon* of Antonio. As he saw me enter, he greeted me, made a formal bow and kissed my hand. It was all I could do to control my laughter. Then he studied my hair, carried out a few tests, discerned my personality and started to describe a hairstyle which he considered to be most suitable. There was an attentive, but very professional look on his face.

"But Antonio, before you begin, would you tell me about one of your assistants? I believe his name is Jacques Dufresnoy. I don't see him about."

Antonio wrinkled his brow in thought. Then he remembered. He replied most tactfully, "Ah, yes, Jacques. . . . uh . . . left us . . . for a better job."

"Really? Have you seen nothing of Jacques since then?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Well," I said with a broad smile, "you are now looking at Jacques Dufresnoy."

"What's that? There's nobody here. I don't see anyone."

"Look at me, Monsieur Antonio. Now do you recognize me—Jacques—whom you fired so ingloriously, a few years ago?"

Antonio stared at me closely. He couldn't believe his eyes. He was utterly taken aback. But, bit by bit, I felt he was beginning to recognize me.

"But it can't be!" he declared. "Where did you get that hair?"

He gave it a sharp little tug and found it was firmly attached; it was my own hair. This added to his dismay. "*Par les cornes du diable!* Your hair is real!"

"Of course," I was thoroughly enjoying the fact that I was talking quite familiarly to my former exalted employer. "I wish to have your personal attention. You must not let any of your staff touch my hair. I've no wish to be taken liberties with . . . if I am not satisfied, I shall tell others to stay away from your *salon.*"

Antonio immediately replied, "Of course. Your instructions shall be carried out." He was polished and obsequious but still unable to overcome his astonishment.

He had fired me. Now he was waiting on me, ready to obey my slightest command, anxious to please me.

My long awaited revenge had come . . . and it was very sweet.

Chapter 4

MY FIRST EXPERIENCES: TRANSVESTISM AND PROSTITUTION

My dismissal from Antonio's made me realize one awesome truth. Wherever I would go, no matter where I lived, my *naturally* feminine habits would create problems. What could be done about this? Who could help me? There seemed no one to whom I could turn.

It was out of the question for me to return to school; finding another job was now my moral obligation. My father earned a limited income and he was not expected to support me. It was most essential that I become self-sufficient. After answering several newspaper ads, one job appealed to me; it was a switchboard operator in an organization similar to the *Touring Club de France.* Although the salary was satisfactory and the work rather tedious, it was adequate for someone in my circumstances.

It was pure chance that I would take a stroll, one late afternoon when my working day was over. It was a warm,

pleasant day and I decided to go shopping for a pair of shoes (a man's pair!) in a nice little shop in the famed Strasbourg-Saint Denis district of Paris. This quarter is well known for being the headquarters of prostitutes. It is impossible for anyone, male or female, to venture more than a few dozen yards without being propositioned by the innumerable streetwalkers in tight clothes.

Let me explain that at my tender age of 18, I was really very innocent about life. I had not yet experienced anything of love, either physical or emotional. I was even ignorant about flirting, petting, kissing on the mouth. Although I was a male, I felt absolutely *no* attraction toward females. In actual truth, my subconscious was still drawn to both my male and female tendencies, creating such a biological conflict that it turned me into an incomplete creature; my emotional development was unavoidably frustrated.

Before a man is able to enjoy a complete relationship with a woman (or even with another man), he must have two absolutely necessary characteristics: *first,* he needs complete mental development. *Second,* he needs complete sexual or organic development. One is useless without the other. Both are complementary. That is, they must exist side by side at one and the same time. In my case, this was impossible; I felt myself to be a *female*—but in actual fact, I was a *male!* This created a contradiction which made me innocent insofar as actual sexual fulfillment was concerned. Moreover, in sex matters I was very poorly informed, not to say naive!

For this reason, as I went to the top of the Rue Réaumur and the Rue Saint-Denis, when five women accosted me, I felt myself completely lacking all interest insofar as sexual appetite is concerned. Actually, their presence caused an inexplicable feeling of alarm. It made me aware how backward I was in the practical side of

an art which these "experts" practiced every day. I tried to avoid them, was about to cross over when, foreseeing my intention, the five attractive prostitutes surrounded me, cutting off my retreat.

"*Eh bien,* my little *lapin,* do we frighten you as much as all that?"

I stammered a reply that meant "no" but the nearest one gripped my arm and asked loudly,

"Would you like to have a good time?"

A deep red flush spread over my face. "A good time? How?"

They roared in laughter, made ribald jests. They were delighted with my timidity and awkwardness. "How old are you, dear?" another asked.

"18."

"Wonderful!" declared one of them. "We like young ones. You are coming with us."

"But where to?" I began to feel more and more worried.

"To the hotel, of course."

I felt panic. The five women were actually dragging me off with them. I had never yet been with a woman and if I must begin my apprenticeship, I could hardly do so with *five* of them! But they had so surrounded me, so seized hold of me that escape was impossible. There was a woman on either side, one from behind who gently but firmly urged me forward, and the other two were in front. It was a classical case of kidnapping.

Stunned, I let them lead me away; as we walked, plans of resistance were forming. Once we were in the hotel, if my initiation must be made, it was *not* going to take place in such promiscuous and amoral circumstances. There was another fleeting problem. How would they manage to take advantage of my young manhood when, under my special circumstances, I lacked the de-

sires of a man—and this meant that my male attributes were valueless and useless?

We made it to a small four story hotel and went into a little apartment. Inside, one of the women started to rummage among some suitcases in the closet. She took out some clothes. Seeing my look of distress, this woman said,

"Do not worry, young fellow. We want to have our *mardi gras* just like everyone else."

Mardi gras, according to the French tradition, is a day which marks the end of Shrovetide (a period limited to Shrove Tuesday and sometimes extended to include the three days immediately preceding Lent) and involves eating little pancakes and dressing up in all sorts of gaudy finery.

"You don't object, I hope, to letting us dress you up?" asked another one who scrutinized me most carefully.

Another cooed, "Ooooh, isn't he sweet! With those green eyes, tiny nose, wasp waist and small feet, there is only one way to dress him."

"And what is that?" I asked nervously.

"As a woman, of course."

I gave a start. Let me explain with sincere honesty that this idea gave me a feeling of excitement. Why? I cannot explain it even to myself. But it did thrill me. Perhaps I had instinctively realized that the moment of truth had at long last arrived; now I would be revealed to myself in the garb of the creature who should have been born instead of me: a woman. Perhaps, without being fully aware of it, my encounter with these women, the outcome of which—the dressing in female attire—would decide the future direction of my life—as a *travesti*—until my complete surgical transformation into a female. To this day, I believe that Destiny revealed itself in the guise of five prostitutes.

These women had a peculiar idea of feminine fashions: they brought out a clinging, emerald green silken dress, slit at the side half way up my thigh, a pair of black silk stockings, a suspender belt, dainty Italian shoes with slender spike heels, a silver fox fur across my bare shoulders. Since my bosom was still inadequate, this problem was easily solved. One of the women thrust her hand into the front of her dress, felt around for a moment, then triumphantly pulled out two artificial breasts made of some kind of rubberized material. Her own bosom became painfully flat—much flatter than my chest!

"I'll let you borrow my breasts," she said in utmost seriousness, "but you must remember to return them. They're the only ones I have. They are my means of livelihood."

After being fitted with the breasts, they applied my make-up—foundation cream, eyebrows, eyelashes, eyeshadow, rouge, lipstick and even a spray of perfume.

"Good! Now, just look at yourself." Her voice was mingled with astonishment and also admiration. They watched me walk toward the large mirror and just one glance at the exquisitely gowned female looking back at me was enough to make me feel faint.

Was it possible that the woman—yes, the very pretty woman—in the mirror was the reflection of the real me? Could it be true that a dress, some earrings, a wig and make-up could so completely transform the personality of a male, Jacques Dufresnoy? The others were just as astonished as myself.

"Well, I never . . . ! What an effect! She's the prettiest one of us all!"

"Incredible! To think that a man should be able to compete with us like that?"

Still another one remarked in a hushed tone, "She is more of a woman than we are!"

"Indeed, yes! If she went out in the street, she would quickly put us all out of work."

As for myself, it was now sheer enjoyment. I felt at ease, most tranquil, rather happy. Instead of trying to rob me of something which I had no desire to lose just yet, the women had decided to dress me up. None of us (including myself) expected such an astonishing transformation. We exchanged a few jokes and then one of them suggested that it would be great fun for me to go out and see how I could fool the men. She added hastily, "Of course, you needn't bring them into this apartment. That is our job."

"*Non, merci.* It is not my intention to take the bread out of your mouths."

"Mouth is hardly appropriate," remarked one of them ironically.

They brought me to a suitable corner, in front of a hotel entrance, then went out of view. They had also given me some last minute tips. "You see, there are a few techniques but all are effective. It is all a matter of judgment and psychology. There's the direct invitation: *Coming with me, dear?* Or, there's the indirect invitation: when a man passes by, just part your lips and put out the tip of your tongue . . . There is also the way you walk by exaggerating the swing of your hips. Your attitude should be contemptuous, unsophisticated, sexy . . ."

These suggestions were amusing but intriguing. It gave me great pleasure to take my first steps as a "woman," dressed as a prostitute. Mentally, being dressed as a woman made me feel like a woman and at once I felt at ease. In fact, it gave me such enjoyment that my companions could never have realized it. But at this youthful stage of my life, at the tender age of 18, I did not understand why this dual personality, this deliberate piece of play-acting, should make me so happy.

Shyly, I took a few steps down the street. Almost at once, a man presented himself. I made an excuse to get out of such a delicate situation. Again, a few steps later, another man talked to me. Then still another. Some were police. Another was vulgar. Another man blushed embarrassedly when he suggested something to me. And one more made a most shocking proposition. Then another asked for a reduction in price. The last man even asked me to pay *him* a certain sum of money in return for which he would give me the most thrilling sensation imaginable . . .

It was too much for me to take at one time. I made my way back to the hotel, knowing that I could not walk the street indefinitely, attracting clients, listening to what they wanted, then turning them down. In the end, too much attraction might have been created and trouble would be caused.

The experiment was successful. Not a single man had seen through the deception! After that little jest, the five women and myself became very close friends. We would get together in the little apartment as often as my time—and their time—permitted. They each treasured my friendship so much that they frequently suggested that I make use of their services for nothing. It would have embarrassed me to refuse them. Under these circumstances, I obliged with each of them. Nevertheless, I felt not the slightest inclination or satisfaction.

One evening, the oldest woman said something to me which made me think. "Jacques, do you know there is something about you that I cannot understand? You are different from the others. In my time, I've known just about all the types of men there are. But you do not fit in. Forgive me for saying this, Jacques, but something about you makes me think that you are not a real man!"

What could I say to such a statement? Could I have

admitted that I agreed with them? Could I have said that I, too, felt a misfit in life? How could this be possible when I, myself, was not certain of my position in the conflict between male and female?

They loved to dress me as a female whenever we had spare time. It did not take long for me to be able to do the transformation by myself. I would borrow their cosmetics, their clothes, and settle down in front of a mirror. It made me happy to change into a female. I remembered the days when, as a child, I played with a doll, fussed over it, dressed and undressed it.

Gradually, I became bold enough to dress as a tart and go out of the notorious Strasbourg-Saint Denis district. Of course, at the start, I fully expected to be found out. But the truth is that not a single man ever doubted that I was a female. Feeling even bolder, in my feminine disguise, I would go into a restaurant, enjoy being addressed as *"mademoiselle"* by everyone. The men would show admiration and respect; often, they became too familiar. To cut short their advances, I paid them no attention. It discouraged them, with one exception. This man was rather handsome, a few years older than myself. He started to follow me—into the cinema, the big department stores, the *metro* (subway), in the bus, even by taxicab. This continued for several hours until my patience was exhausted. I was at the end of my tether. Stopping dead in my tracks, I suddenly wheeled around and snapped out loud:

"Petit imbécile. Don't you understand?"

"Understand what?"

I took off my wig, my false eyelashes, removed my false bosom and even lifted my feminine trappings . . . and went so far as to lower my silken, lace-fringed panties—he looked upon my manhood!

He blushed. For a moment, he looked faint. He lost all

color, turning as pale as death. His lips trembled. He tried hard to speak but the words would not come. His eyes bulged from their sockets. Never did I realize that I could so shock a man, by nearly causing an illness. But it made me realize something again—how truly feminine I was in my appearance. There no longer remained any doubt in my mind that if I had so desired, I could have led him on, fooling him all the way and not until that crucial moment would he have known that I was a male.

Or was I?

Chapter 5

HOW I "DESTROYED" MYSELF

Standing up, Coccinelle asked that I follow her into the huge bedroom. An immense bed and an enormous wardrobe took up so much space that we hardly had room in which to move. The furniture, the wallpaper, the decorations were all in the Romantic style. Everything had been selected with exquisite taste. Pink was the dominant color.

Coccinelle opened the wardrobe, rummaged among the clothes and took out an armful of furs. She tossed them carelessly on the bed. Upon closer look, I saw that there was only one kind of fur—mink. Seeing my look, she explained,

"Mink . . . *oui, Monsieur* Wade, I have a weakness for mink. I adore mink and collect it. Do you see how wonderful they are? There are all kinds and all colors: white, silver, grey, beige, golden, chestnut, amber, pink. They are all so gorgeous, *n'est-ce pas?*"

I watched Coccinelle swimming, as it were, letting her-

self drift, in a beautifully soft and silky sea of expensive furs, warm and soft to the touch.

"You know, I have plans for breeding mink myself. I've inquired and found out that I can have some live minks brought over from Nevada."

"Where will you keep them?"

"On my farm."

"*Your farm!*"

She nodded. "Yes, my farm is out in the country, near Dreux in Normandy. I have a big house with very extensive grounds. Although I have no mink as yet, I am content with cows, pigs, ducks, chickens and the sweetest little chicks—and, of yes, a horse. Does it surprise you to know that I have a complete farmyard?"

"Mmm, well, a little bit."

She burst out laughing. "Then you will be even greater surprised to know that I once had a farm right in the city. Oh, it was such a mad idea. I decided to bring all the animals to Paris with me . . . except for the cows and the horse. I put my domestic 'menagerie' on my balcony, near the Basilica. Imagine, if you will, a farm near Sacré-Coeur! It was something that Paris never before saw. In fact, I believe that I am the first Parisienne to have added a little rural picturesqueness to the Paris scene. It made true one of my wishes: to be in Paris and at the same time feel that I was in the country. But my neighbors were far from sharing this illusion with me. My pig would grunt throughout the night. At the crack of dawn, the roosters would begin their strident music. Soon after that, the chickens would do their part. The whole neighborhood could not sleep.

"As for the street, things were even worse. Pedestrians who passed under my balcony would frequently receive on their heads some rather odorous 'souvenirs' falling from above. This displeased them. In the end, the pedestrians

and the neighbors reported this to the police. It made me heartbroken. I had to send my noisy friends back to the country. Poor things—they were deprived of this beautiful view right across Paris."

As Coccinelle talked to me, she began her striptease routine. Later I would learn that it made her feel completely at ease when her naked skin was being caressed by the soft texture of mink. She performed her spontaneous striptease with considerable grace and elegance, in a style that was incomparably feminine. All the while, my camera was in focus, capturing each of her movements. Desperately, I sought to fix on film the infinitely sensual and harmonious poses assumed by her voluptuous and feminine figure.

She discarded her dress and *combinaison;* her legs sheathed in nylon were exposed—firm-fleshed, exquisitely curved, perfectly shaped. She removed her brassiere. Now, with my own eyes, I could discover that there was, indeed, no trickery. Coccinelle's breasts were real! It was not just a matter of an outgrowth of flesh; neither was it just a vague swelling on the surface, or a kind of filling out or jutting out of the chest.

Mais non! Coccinelle had two real breasts—two female breasts, rounded, firm, ripe, shaped to perfection, with conical shaped nipples at their tips—her full-fleshed breasts could arouse the envy of any female!

I confess that I was astonished when I saw this beautiful girl's body—free from the slightest defect or blemish. Nevertheless, at that time, she was still registered in official records as belonging to the male sex. *No matter how closely I scrutinized her naked body, I found nothing to reveal Coccinelle as a male.* She was a female! I admitted to myself that Nature had made a blunder.

Why be stubborn? Why insist that it was impossible? The proof was right in front of me and I was certainly in

no hypnotic state. Furthermore, how could you fool the lens of a camera? Now that she was deliciously feminine in nakedness, Coccinelle made a gesture of modesty by holding a mink stole before her thighs. "The feeling is absolutely marvelous," she whispered, closing her eyes, pouting her lips as if she wanted to bestow a chaste kiss on an invisible being.

"Coccinelle," I had to interrupt her pleasurable feelings, "there is one thing which is important to make this life story of yours a complete one. I need photographs of yourself as a boy; it will illustrate your childhood and your early years; I need photographs to show the way you developed as you grew up."

Wordlessly, she got up, but still concealing herself with the mink. She went to the chest of drawers, removed a large box. She opened the lid, then spilled the contents onto the bed.

"*Voila,*" she said, "it is all there."

There was a full batch of press-cuttings, lots and lots of them. There were clippings of articles written about her, clippings showing pictures of her. The written matter was in all languages: Italian, French, German, English, Dutch, Scandinavian, Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese. Oddly enough, there was nothing in Spanish. Unlike all other nations of the world, Catholic Spain, prudish and prudent, had preferred to have nothing to do with the strange case of Coccinelle.

Examining the clippings and the photographs (which bore dates on the back) I noticed that the oldest date was 1952. All these photographs showed Coccinelle as a female, how she had developed as a female, how her features had become more delicate, her different hairstyles, the complete story of her quest for the physical personality of a female. Some photographs showed her as she had been before her hormone treatment; others were of the

years when she wore a wig and had to wear a false bosom. The collection did have documentary interest, but something was missing.

"I don't see anything about your childhood."

Her reply was instantaneous, like the crack of a whip! "You won't find anything! I destroyed it all!"

I stopped in my search and stared at her. This was the first time she had spoken with such vehemence. She was now saying,

"I destroyed it all—everything that would recall my life as a boy. I haven't a single garment, souvenir or photograph, nothing whatever about me, or about my early years, that might remind me of the person I used to be . . ."

For the first time since we met, I wondered whether Coccinelle was embittered about the early stage of her existence. Did she have a grudge against Nature for making a blunder right from birth? Did she blame Nature for making her a problem child, forcing her to seek refuge in lonely solitude, to seek isolation as the only escape from the cruel taunts of children her own age? As though reading my thoughts, she began to tell me her feelings:

When I destroyed this first stage of my life, it was Jacques Dufresnoy I wanted to eliminate. I had to destroy myself. Do you understand that Jacques Dufresnoy *had* to die in order that Coccinelle might live? But there was still another reason which made me determined to carry out my plans.

It all began when I met my mother. First, let me explain that after my little adventure in the Rue Saint-Denis, I fell into the custom of walking about the streets of Paris dressed as a woman. As a *travesti* (a transvestite, or female impersonator), I was happy. One day, the sort of thing occurred which inevitably will happen sooner or

later when you take such chances. Some people call it Fate. In the Rue de la Rochefoucauld, I saw a woman on the other side of the street coming toward my direction. From a distance, I thought I recognized her. Could I be mistaken? No, only one person in the world walked quite like that : *MY MOTHER!*

My legs felt rubbery. The blood rushed to my head. My heart pounded. A lump was in my throat. I was seized with panic. I was paralyzed. What could I do? Go back the way I had come? Run away? Hide in the nearest shop? It was so confusing, I could not make up my mind.

But worst of all, for the very first time: *I felt ashamed!* I was ashamed of the way I was dressed, ashamed of my insatiable urge to dress in a way that was contrary to a male, ashamed of pretending that I was someone else.

I had never seriously considered the possibility that one day, dressed as a female, I would find myself face to face with a member of my family; worse still—my mother! And on the street!

There was little time for further thought. Mother was a few yards away from me. She glanced up, looked me right in the eye. I felt as though I had been run through the body with a sword. Her eyes fixed on mine for a second or two, which seemed like eternity. I couldn't move. I was glued to the spot. Suddenly, to my complete astonishment, she looked away. She passed me by. She did not even turn around. I stood there, my mouth open, stunned into complete immobility. My mother had passed me, a few feet away, *and had not recognized me.* So, it was true! As a *travesti,* I was completely altered beyond all recognition!

"Mother!" Yes, I called her. Something within me rebelled, made me cry out instinctively. Something in me revolted against the idea that I could not be recognized by my own mother. It was totally unacceptable to me.

Mother turned around. She looked in all directions,

scanning the doors and windows, staring at the passersby, searching for the voice, her son's voice, which, of course, she had recognized.

For the fraction of a second, she caught my glance. But her eyes turned away. Suddenly, she looked at me once more, as if she had just belatedly realized who I was. I caught my breath. She stared at me, as if she had never seen me before, carefully studying my face feature by feature. She had to be absolutely certain. My lips parted. I smiled at her.

She recognized me. *But her face was a mask of horror!*

Why this feeling of horror? Perhaps, in those few crucial moments, my mother had suddenly understood the tragedy of my life. Face to face with this urge to disguise myself, to use a physical transformation as a kind of hiding place, she had reached the core of my misery. She understood everything about my solitude and my despair at feeling myself to be unfinished and incomplete.

I am certain that she now understood the reason for my disguise. It was, in truth, an attempt to give my personality a definite form by deliberately enclosing it in a costume which I felt instinctively was the best suited to my inner nature and my temperament.

"Mother," my voice was choked with emotion, "don't you recognize your son, Jacques?" Self-control was impossible. I burst out into tears.

Hesitantly, she came toward me, took my head, held me in her arms, comforting and speaking with tender gentleness as if she were soothing a little child. "Don't cry, Jacques, my darling baby. Don't cry. I understand everything. Please, don't cry . . . things will work out fine because I'll always be your mother."

It was an overwhelming crisis in my life, the first of many to follow. Now that my mother understood the problem of my life, a veil was lifted inside of me. I could now

grasp the essential truth about myself—I was a bi-sexual creature with a twofold identity, male and female at one and the same time.

In a flash, my childhood was exposed like a film. I could now explain my behavior, habits, tendencies, interests, likes and dislikes, everything from my infancy onwards that had, until now, seemed impossible to understand.

I began to hate my male status!

As a male, I had suffered untold agonies. Now I knew that there could be only one solution—to destroy my bitter past. When I reached home, I threw myself down on my bed, giving way to floods of tears. I have no idea how long I sobbed, feeling wretchedly miserable, but it must have been for some hours. I had locked myself in my room, refusing to see anyone, even my mother. It was dark outside, when I got up from the bed.

During these hours I reached the ultimate in my suffering; I came face to face with one awesome realization: *I was abnormal!* For the rest of my life I would be doomed to remain abnormal, seeking some brief moments of peace in an illusion created by wearing feminine clothing.

Through these dark thoughts came one shining hope. Perhaps I could sever myself in half. Perhaps I could destroy all that was male and keep all that was female. I hated Jacques Dufresnoy. He had stolen my real "ego." Yes, I decided to get rid of this interloper who forced me to assume a false physical outer covering.

On top of a bureau I saw a photograph of myself—as a boy. How revolting. I snatched up the frame, threw it down, trampled on it. Pieces of glass were scattered all over the floor. I seized the photograph, tore it up, feeling that I was destroying my male counterpart. This was just the start. I took out a whole pile of photographs and negatives dealing with my childhood, my family and my life as an effeminate boy. The more I looked at these photo-

graphs, the more I hated *him:* that creature of a sex that was not mine!

In this state of exasperation, I opened the door of my room, went into my parents' bedroom where I searched through their drawers. Whenever I saw a photograph of myself as a male, I seized it and tore it up in little pieces. In the end, not a single photograph was left in the house. All had been burned.

Coccinelle lay stretched out on the bed while a pretty little dog frisked happily about, trying to burrow cozily into the heap of precious furs. She shooed away the dog and looked at me with sparkling eyes. She was the very epitome of femininity, with long and shapely legs; her hips were well-rounded and inviting, sloping into a ship-shape slender waist that flared into a pair of flesh-filled breasts of succulent proportions.

"That is why, *Monsieur* Wade, you shall never come across a photo of me as a male," she concluded slowly, looking away.

But she was wrong! A few weeks later, during a talk with *Monsieur* Lasquin, the artistic director of the famed *Carrousel* cabaret, an important discovery was made. Among the various papers and documents he had collected, there was one that was unique, one saved from the deluge: *a photograph of Coccinelle as a young man.*

"Yes, *Monsieur* Wade, you may borrow it," agreed Lasquin after much argumentation, "but you must promise that you shall guard it with your life. There just isn't another one like it. So, I place my complete trust in you . . ."

I studied the photograph carefully. The heart-shaped face, with its delicately formed features, had an innocent look and a shy, rather sad expression. I couldn't help seeing a certain similarity between this young boy-man and the same person who, a few weeks earlier, in her Mont-

marte apartment, had answered my questions and allowed me to take some extremely revealing photographs of herself.

Looking at the photograph reminded me of the unforgettable *Cheri,* immortalized by the famed French writer, Colette. Here was a strikingly attractive youth who could be regarded as handsome—but beautiful would be the more appropriate word.

It appeared strange and incredible to me that, faced with Nature's mistake, one can actually make considerable alterations and adjustments, using a surgeon's scalpel, an anatomist's lancet, add the skill of a dress designer, the ingenuity of stylists who make women more beautiful, and create a wonderful piece of magic. Yet, all of these inventions did not fool that shrewdest of all magicians: Nature herself.

During the next visit with Coccinelle, she permitted me to take whatever pictures I wanted on condition that they be returned to her after they were used. She was even so cooperative as to give me details about each one as I placed it in my briefcase. Wisely, we both refrained from discussing photographs of herself as a boy.

As she lay there on the immense silken covered bed, thrilling to a voluptuous pleasure in the caress of fur against her satin-soft skin, she skillfully shielded her complete nudity with adroitness and finesse—I would even say, with true feminine modesty and refinement. As I gazed at her, watched her softly graceful movements with their wonderful rhythmic quality, one pose succeeding another, now feminine, now feline, each one perfectly timed, I began to understand Coccinelle's passion for music.

Her beautiful body with its grace and rhythm, the rich tonal qualities of the counterpane, the delicate tints of the color scheme of the room itself, Coccinelle's subtle choice

of exotique perfumes—all of these were the elements of a heavenly harmony. The harmony was essentially poetic, a perfect interrelationship of sound, flesh, perfume, color and movement; it is the same interrelationship suggested in Baudelaire's poetry, elusive, indescribable, beyond the power of mere words . . .

With sheer effort, I brought myself back to reality. Looking around the room, I discovered that the bedsheets were not the conventional white color but an exact match of the predominant color of everything else: flesh pink. Questioning Coccinelle about this, she remarked,

"Oh yes, I am glad you reminded me. I detest white sheets; they make me think of shrouds. I love colors, even when I'm asleep and dreaming. My sheets must be pink or turquoise blue, embroidered with delicate flowers. Long ago, I gave up trying to find them in shops. They just don't exist, so I have them made to order for me. Yes, they cost a great deal more, but my slumbers are that much more enjoyable. So I don't really lose on the deal."

Deep inside of me I had the feeling that Coccinelle was going beyond the customary limits of the feminine temperament. She was, perhaps, *too much of a woman.*

Her soft, perfumed voice was now telling me of another episode in her life . . .

Chapter 6

MY FIRST STAGE EXPERIENCE AS A TRAVESTI

One afternoon, another switchboard operator with whom I worked and who was friendly toward me, came to see me with a suggestion. "Jacques, I've got an idea. Last night, I went to a cabaret and I think it's just the place for you."

"What? Me? In a cabaret?" I explained. "What are you talking about? You might as well mention the *Folies Bergère* if you're going to be really ridiculous."

"But Jacques," she continued, "you do not understand. This is not an ordinary cabaret. They specialize in *travesti* shows."

(My friend knew all about me and my habit of dressing as a female. She knew what she was talking about.) "But really, Yvette, can you picture me as a *travesti* on the stage?"

"Give it a trial, Jacques. Just go along and see them. They can find a job for you, even train you. I'm sure you'll

make a success." She halted before adding, "And I'm sure you'll be much happier that way."

It sounded tempting. It was worth a try. The worst that could happen would be my rejection. So I agreed. I decided to dress myself up as a female so that when I entered the *Chez Madame Arthur,* I would already be a *travesti.* Only one person could help me make the complete change to the utmost perfection—a lady of pleasure from the Rue Saint-Denis.

When she let me in her room, I came right to the point. "Please, you must make me up as a woman—but this time it must be outstandingly well as you've never done it before."

She lost no time in creating the transformation. It was perfect. I had gone in as a man . . . and come out as a woman. Not even the loungers on the street were aware of what had happened. The hotel (if you could call it that) in which this lady of pleasure conducted her business, was a place in which *everything* happened. My lady friend said that all nationalities, all races—and all vices—came to this hotel. There had even been a Danish-speaking Eskimo who found the *bidet* in his room so practical that he had unfixed it, at the risk of putting all the plumbing out of gear, so he could bring it back to his native land and use it in an igloo!

Other pleasures were available to those who paid for them. Such pleasures could include flagellation, different varieties of masochism, torture, voyeurism, exhibitionism, coprophilia, homosexualism, lesbianism and occasional sodomitic activities.

All sexual deviates, all the people with strange sexual obsessions, the denizens of the half-world of sex, went into this same hotel on the Rue Saint-Denis. Small wonder that if anyone *did* recognize me as a travesti, they would

hardly give me a second look. My peculiar preference was mild in comparison to everything else that went on.

A taxi brought me to 75, Rue des Martyrs. Standing before the doorway, I looked up at the cabaret sign which read: *Chez Madame Arthur.* Yes, I was in the right place.

The man who answered the door, and my request to speak to the manager, nodded his head. "I'm sorry, *mademoiselle,* but *Monsieur* Marcel cannot see anyone just now. Today is reserved *only* for auditions." He was about to close the door when I exclaimed:

"But that is why I have come here—for an audition!"

He looked surprised, then hesitated. He replied with a slight touch of sarcasm. "Sorry, *mademoiselle,* but *Chez Madame Arthur* never holds auditions for ladies—that is, not as far as I know."

I felt complimented. My transformation was so first class that even a man who worked in this famed cabaret could make such an error. "Please, tell the manager that I am here." My voice was firm, decisive.

My determined manner must have aroused his curiosity. "Very well, *mademoiselle.* What name shall I say?"

"*Monsieur* Jacques Dufresnoy."

He shrugged his shoulders, thinking I was poking fun at me. He went away; he returned in a few moments with a dark, little man who wore a frown on his face. He seemed worried and in a hurry. No doubt, this was the manager. Just one glance at me and he said curtly,

"*Mademoiselle,* I'm too busy now. Come back and see me another time." He turned toward the man who had opened the door and asked, "Well, where is the young fellow you told me about, this Jacques Du . . ."

"Dufresnoy!" I cut in. I felt pleased with the way things were going.

"Do you know him?" asked the manager.

"Of course," I replied with a mischievous smile.

"I see. He is a friend of yours . . . perhaps, your husband?"

"Better than that," I fluttered my eyelids now that I really caught his attention.

"Your father, then?"

"Much closer than that, *monsieur.*"

The manager, *Monsieur* Marcel was staring at me; there was no mistaking his annoyance. He was in the midst of auditions and had little time to spare on guessing games. But he was curious and had gone this far, determined not to give up.

"Ah, now I understand—you are twins—Jacques is your brother."

"Closer still," I said quietly, while the other man stared at me with his mouth open.

The manager was exasperated. "Don't tell me that you are Siamese twins."

"Almost." Now, I could no longer control my emotions and burst out laughing which only added to *Monsieur* Marcel's annoyance.

"*Mademoiselle,*" he sputtered, "I am losing much valuable time. I did not know that *you* were here; rather, I thought some Jacques was waiting to see me. Now, will you be so kind as to tell me what you want? Or, let me have your name and telephone number so that my secretary can arrange an interview when I know why you want to see me."

"But *Monsieur* Marcel, it is very simple. *I* am Jacques Dufresnoy!"

He was petrified. "*Nom de Dieu!*" he gasped. "Can I believe it? Yes, yes, it *is* true. You had me confused. Let me explain that this is the first time I've been taken in like that."

He grabbed hold of my hair, tugging it violently. The wig was no longer on my head but in his hand. It made

me feel strange. He was saying, "That's very good indeed, *very good.* In fact, *mon petit,* it's perfect!" He freely explored my body, starting with my teeth, then ears, then discovered my breasts were artificial and finally compared the size of my foot with his own. He studied me the way a veterinary would examine a horse . . . from all angles. When he finished, he asked, "Do you want a job?"

"Yes," I replied nervously, expecting the usual questions about previous experience and what I could do.

"Good. You're hired."

Now it was my turn to be confused. I blurted out the truth. "But . . . I don't know how to act on the stage."

"What about this?" He held out my wig, pointed to my rouged lips and false breasts.

"But . . . that's all there is."

"That's the main thing. Anyone can sing, but few can perform as perfect *travestis.* Believe me, *mon petit,* after all the years in this business, you are the first one to fool me. Do you realize what that means? It proves that you are the best *travesti* I've ever met. If you can fool me, then you'll fool everyone in Paris, and will fool everyone who comes here to *Chez Madame Arthur.* Do you know why? Because you've got everything that's needed, from head to toe, to make a perfect *travesti,* and I mean a *really* perfect *travesti.*" *Monsieur* Marcel was bubbling over with excitement, showering me with compliments usually bestowed upon professionals.

"When would you like me to start?"

"This evening."

I couldn't say a word. I felt faint. "This evening?" I stammered. "This evening, did you say?"

He opened a door and courteously led me inside. He was already making plans. "I'll give you three hours to learn your job."

As he talked, I felt pangs of fear. Was he poking fun at

me? Did he want to expose me? Was he in his right mind? At that particular time, I didn't know that *Monsieur* Marcel was an extremely shrewd cabaret manager. His judgment had never failed him. Whatever he did was without delays, without beating about the bush. Meekly, I followed him without any show of resistance. Perhaps *I* was the one going mad! Could this be real—or just a joke being played on me?

The corridor turned sharply to the right. We went through another door and entered the auditorium of the cabaret. It was rather dark, but the stage was brightly illuminated. As my eyes became adjusted to the half-light, I saw that the chairs were all stacked up and that the empty champagne buckets had a forlorn appearance. A sweeper moved lazily along the rows. In the orchestra section, a young pianist, with uprolled shirtsleeves, was trying a few bars. An electrician was fixing a spotlight. I recognized Albert Morandi, the famed choreographer; he was taking a male dancer, wearing only a slip, through a solo dance.

It was fascinating. As I looked around, I felt that I had discovered a new world. For the first time I felt as if I belonged. I loved the atmosphere. The half-light and the stage lights reminded me of the breaking of dawn. I had the sensation that something was being prepared, something was going to happen and . . . most important of all—*this was the dawn of my new life.*

Something had distracted my absorption. A small insect was flying around me, settling on my sleeve. I dislike insects because they scare me. But there is one exception. The insect on my sleeve was anything but scary. It was a delightful little insect, harmless and pretty. Scientists classify it as one of the coleoptera. Its usual name is *coccinelle,* or a ladybird. (A small black or reddish insect, spotted with red, yellow or black.)

This little creature did not frighten me. It had settled on my sleeve. Just at that moment, the manager glanced at my arm. These were three coincidences which I would forever remember because *Monsieur* Marcel was saying,

"I am trying to think of a stage name for you." He paused a moment before baptizing me, "We shall call you *Coccinelle.*"

The name appealed to me from the start, even though this little insect and myself had nothing in common.

"Now, Coccinelle, do you know any songs by heart?"

I replied that I did.

"*Bon.*" He snapped his fingers, signalled the pianist and introduced me. "This is Coccinelle. Run her through a few songs. Make sure that she knows them well. Coccinelle is making her début this evening."

For two hours we rehearsed and went through the rudimentary routines of the *travesti.* The work was not hard; rather, the surprise acceptance left me bewildered and still unsure of myself. No sooner did I leave the cabaret than I put through an anxious phone call to Yvette, my co-worker on the switchboard who deserves credit for having introduced me into the theatre life of the *travesti.*

In a few sentences I told her what had taken place. "But Yvette, I cannot resign from my job just yet. First, *Monsieur* Marcel must hear me perform in public. Then, he must find out the reaction of the audience. If he is satisfied with my *travesti* performance and hires me, I'll then resign from my job."

Yvette was very excited. "Do you see, Jacques, I was right after all."

"It's now Coccinelle and *not* Jacques," I corrected, already feeling anxious to sever myself from my male half. "But no matter what happens, Yvette, I'll make it up to you."

Not only was I uncertain about *Monsieur* Marcel's reaction, as well as that of the audience in the cabaret, I was much in doubt about my own ability. I had serious fears that this was just a big build up for nothing. Nevertheless, being practical, it comforted me to know that if this did not work out, I'd just return to my old job and continue on as before. Yvette was most kind in working several hours extra to make up for my absence.

Promptly at nine o'clock that same evening, I returned to 75, Rue des Martyrs and again entered *Chez Madame Arthur.* The manager who was standing in front of the entrance, talking to the commissionaire, saw me. He came toward me immediately, welcomed me, took me backstage to the main dressing room. He brought me around to all the other *travestis,* introduced me to all of them as Coccinelle, a new performer. Everyone welcomed me warmly and I felt happy to be with them.

There was just one difference. The other *travestis,* being men, were dressed as men since they had not yet gotten into their feminine costumes. As for myself, I was already dressed as a female. This attracted a great deal of attention. They all congratulated me upon such a successful transformation. There were several who even doubted that I was, physically speaking, a male. It flattered me.

Since my make-up had to be made much bolder for the stage, a few of the *travestis* eagerly lent me their cosmetic kits, advised me about a few tricks of the trade. They even helped me select a special costume which would really emphasize my unbelievably feminine figure. I must admit that while I was happy in these surroundings, I was also nervous. I was a beginner; never had I appeared on the stage. Wisely, they decided to put me on first since a prolonged duration would only intensify my nervous condition. This helped to calm me because cabarets are never

crowded before midnight. But later I would learn that *Chez Madame Arthur* was always filled up in the early hours of the evening.

The other *travestis* sought to give me confidence, carefully explaining that there was nothing to worry about, that they, too, had gone through a beginner's stage fright. It was comforting to have their sympathy.

"Stand by, Coccinelle!" called the stage manager. "Get ready. You're on in 15 minutes!"

I was on the verge of tears. Before anything could be done, the tears indeed started rolling down my carefully made up cheeks. Seeing this, *Monsieur* Marcel lost his temper, threw his hands up in the air. "Really, Coccinelle, you impressed me as being much more mature. This is no time for a breakdown." He handed me a tissue, asked another *travesti* to repair my make-up. But when that was done, my legs developed cramps. *I could not walk!*

This time, *Monsieur* Marcel became rough with me. "You're going on, even if we have to drag you on."

"No!" I was panic-stricken. "No, please, I don't want to go on! I want to go home!"

"No!" he shouted, much to the annoyance of the other *travestis* who were trying to rest before the hard work that lay ahead of them. "You *are* going to perform, Coccinelle! You are going to be a great performer even if I have to pull you on the stage and *force* you to act." Then, in a suspenseful hush, he asked, "You *do* remember your songs, don't you?"

"No, no!" I shrieked hysterically. "I don't . . ." Although, inwardly, I knew I remembered each song by heart.

There was little time for further backstage dramatics. *Monsieur* Marcel was pulling me toward the curtain. I was just a few feet away; yes, a few feet away from what was destined to be a turning point in my whole life. Those

few feet reminded me of the last mile to be walked by a convict about to enter the electrocution room in a prison. At that painful moment, those few feet seemed like a huge mile. I was trembling. I felt myself bathed in perspiration. My arms and legs ached, not to mention my pounding head.

A handsome young man came up to me, took me gently by the arm and introduced himself. "*Bon soir,* Coccinelle. *Je m'appelle* Robert Dalbret. I am *compère* of the show. You need not be frightened. Once you're on, you shall feel quite different. The first few moments are the most terrifying . . . but try to forget everything except your performance. Think of nothing else . . ."

With severe effort, I tried to follow his advice and some of my terror subsided. Just then, *Monsieur* Marcel winked at the stage manager. The orchestra struck up the familiar bars of the opening number. The handsome Robert Dalbret went on the stage, stood before the microphone and welcomed the audience in French and then English. His voice was beautiful.

"The management of *Chez Madame Arthur* take great pleasure in presenting our latest attraction; we introduce the most beautiful *travesti* ever to appear—unknown today, but destined for fame tomorrow. I introduce to you—Coccinelle. He is a bit scared and rather shy. That is why I ask you to give him an extra special welcome. I'm sure you'll understand how Coccinelle feels, appearing on stage for the first time. Now, let us have a little music and song—and here is Coccinelle!"

The curtains parted. I felt rooted to the spot. While the *compère* had given me a flattering buildup, it made me all the more nervous. Why did he have to admit that I was a newcomer? Now the audience might be more discriminating about my act. Suddenly, I discovered that the stage was empty. Everyone was waiting—*for me.* I had missed

my cue! Behind me, *Monsieur* Marcel nervously clapped the palm of his hand against his forehead; he swore. Someone pushed me but my legs did not move.

"*Par tous les diables de l'enfer!*" swore *Monsieur* Marcel, placing both hands upon my back and pushing me forward.

Hardly had I regained my balance when a dazzling array of lights nearly blinded me. But I was no longer alone. The audience was in front of me, on either side, all over. Every pair of eyes was upon me! A ripple of murmurs broke out; suddenly, the entire cabaret was filled with applause and loud cries of ovation. While another star would have welcomed it, I had a fleeting question: Was this ovation made because Robert Dalbret had asked them to greet me thusly?

There was little time for further thought. I took deep gulps of breath, fought against waves of trembling. Desperately, I prayed that my legs would not collapse beneath me. Did they all notice how trembly I was? Stage fright was petrifying me.

Later, they told me that I had forgotten to announce the title of my song; also, I forgot to go through the patter and chit-chat known as "warm up" which had been taught to me during the two hour rehearsal that same day. Instead, just staring away, I began my first song. Even the musicians had to skip a few bars to catch up with me. But when I sang, everything was oblivious—audience, spotlights, stage, music—I sang from my heart. The years of repressed desires now gushed forth and my soul was emptied of its fears and torment.

The audience started a polite applause, at first, when the song was over. Then they began to storm, to shout their approval, to cry out their pleasures. I bowed to them, waved daintily, feeling more confident. When I went on

with my second and final song, my voice was still a bit unsteady, but the nervous trembling had subsided.

When the little performance was over, I bowed to the audience, managed a smile and fled backstage. The audience continued to applaud until I had made three curtain calls. Backstage, *Monsieur* Marcel was beside himself with joy. He put his arms around me, soothed me as though I were a tender child.

"Ah, *mon petit Jacques,* you were *magnifique!* Never have I seen such a performance—and from someone who has never appeared on the stage." He patted me warmly. "You are now one of us. You belong here—you are a real *travesti.* Do you know why? Because it is you! That's right. *It is you!* It is not an act! Let me make this one guarantee, Coccinelle—you are destined to become the best *travesti* in the world. Your heart is in it!"

Others crowded around me, delivering exaggerated flattery and superlatives. It helped my nervousness and I managed a smile. Robert Dalbret smiled. "Did it hurt, Coccinelle?"

"No, not really."

The manager led me to my dressing room. "Well, the worst is over, Coccinelle. Go and get changed and go home. You've had enough for your first evening." His parting words were, "Remember, Coccinelle, it is my prophecy that you will become the best *travesti* in the world."

A prophecy that was to come true—a prophecy that was to be filled with happiness—and tragedy!

Chapter 7

DISOWNED BY MY FATHER

Being a *travesti* was my third profession and I loved it. No efforts were spared in improving myself in rehearsing, studying, endless directions and lessons. I had already decided that I would apply myself to the fullest to become, indeed, the best *travesti* in the world.

As time went on, my *repertoire* became improved. My appearance changed. Seasoned performers taught me the secrets of make-up. They explained how to make use of the stage lighting to emphasize special features; they also taught me how to enlarge my eyes, how to make my mouth look sensual. Proper clothes and underwear were also important lessons. Several of them devoted endless hours in teaching me how to make a tantalizing gesture, or a movement that was either alluring or sophisticated as required. While much was carried out by instinct, I knew that I had to be polished. There was a certain refinement that I had to grasp and willingly, I submitted to all the rigors imposed upon me, without complaint.

Each appearance was greeted with admiring applause. Never did the audience fail to express wonderment at my truly feminine appearance. Their appreciation did something else for me. It made me discover my *real personality.* More than that, that discovery was made before tens of hundreds of onlookers. You might add that the presence of an audience confirmed the reality of the changes I underwent. Furthermore, as a *travesti,* I felt freed of all guilt feelings. Perhaps it was a form of therapy to ease the pangs of my complexes. But being a *travesti* on stage was an outlet for me . . .

My stage fright soon melted away. I now began to regard my stage career as more than just a means of making money; it was mental therapy. Daily, I went through singing lessons, elocution, acting, dancing, acrobatics—but these were not really lessons. They were "treatments," so to speak. They "cured" me of my terribly introverted condition and helped me emerge from my cocoon—my terribly lonely and frightening world of isolation.

In show business, success is measured by something different than stripes on a sleeve. Rather, the more successful a performer is, the better arranged is the order of the act. For instance, a rank amateur is put on at the very start of the program. The stars are presented in the middle or at the beginning of the second half. This gives them more prominence; they may also arrive later than the others, enjoy more time off, and give the cabaret a chance to fill up. It did not take long before the artistic director and the choreographer decided that I deserved the middle of the program spot. *I had arrived.* I had become the star of *Chez Madame Arthur!*

After a while, they transferred me to their other cabaret on the Champs Elysées, the *Carrousel.* My name, Coccinelle, was in bright lights. All of Paris talked of me. All tourists wanted to see me, to decide for themselves that I

was the best *travesti* in the world. None of them ever registered disappointment!

But all was not glittering gold. Let me explain that during this whole cycle, my *travesti* was kept a secret from my parents. Never did I go home and let my parents, especially my father, see me dressed as a female. Sometimes, when I was too tired to remove my make-up backstage, I would go out in my feminine apparel, call at a very close friend's house where I would remain overnight.

My mother was aware that I had a penchant for being a *travesti;* but that first experience when she saw me on the street was still a raw wound and I could not get the courage to let her see me again. I made up a story that I was working as a barkeeper for a small night club in order to make a little extra money, hence my late hours. My father, being a simple working man with simple tastes, accepted this excuse. He would never have understood my problem. Neither would he have the slightest sympathy about the bi-sexual conflicts, the constant agonizing pull between two clashing urges; least of all, could he ever understand that Nature had committed a cruel blunder upon me. I was a boy. That was all he would recognize. So, it was easier to fabricate an excuse about my late hours.

It was inevitable that he would discover the truth. Perhaps, if I had endeavored to explain it to him, the consequences would have been less tragic. But, on the other hand, it might have been even *more* tragic. None of us can look into the future.

The moment of truth occurred one night when I was about to enter the house. I was dressed as a male, since there had been time to change backstage. As I put the key in the lock of the front door, I glanced up at the window and saw that the light of my parents' room was still on. Why were they awake at this late hour? Were they ill?

I quickened my pace, rushed upstairs. It was deathly still. I became more uneasy. Entering my parents' room, I saw my father. His face was pale and expressionless. His mouth was a tight, thin line. Something was wrong.

"*Bon soir,* Papa. What is wrong?"

Suddenly, he stepped forward, his mouth still a tight line. He stared straight at me. Then, with all his might, he slapped me hard, twice, across the face. The pain was sharp and stinging. My cheek flamed. Then he threw a magazine at my feet. I glanced at it. Immediately, I recognized the pages. A set of photographs of myself in my feminine costume—together with a story—but the story contained my real name! By what unfortunate mischance had he discovered this fully illustrated feature was never made known. Perhaps a co-worker had brought it to his attention.

The truth was out. I was prepared to tell him everything; but never, in my wildest dreams, had I expected such a violent reaction from him! Saying nothing, I picked up the magazine, straightened it with deliberate motions and put it back in its place on the sideboard. This calm response added fuel to the flames. He was further provoked.

"My own son wearing petticoats and bloomers!" he exploded. "Why? To show himself off in a haunt of queers, before people who are as perverted as they are sinful." Then he let loose with a barrage of unprintable epithets that made me flinch. "Aren't you ashamed! Aren't you humiliated for dishonoring the name I gave you? Jacques is what you are called. Jacques is what you'll stay—you are the son of a working man. You are Jacques without any bloomers, slip or ladies' dresses. I can't believe it. In all my life, I've never seen anything like it. Nobody would ever think of dressing as a lady in my family. But it has to

be *you*, my son Jacques!" He swore again in the heat of anger. "Remember this, Jacques—I gave you a male sex and you're not going to change it twice a day!"

"Papa, please give me a chance . . ."

"I gave you the male sex . . ."

"You gave me the *wrong* sex, Papa."

The silence that followed was excruciatingly awesome. "What? What are you saying? You carry your sex with you from birth to death. Sex isn't something you leave in the cloakroom each evening."

I saw that he would not understand. "Please, Papa, do not upset yourself. It is beyond your comprehension."

That made him more angered; he threw his arms up in despair. "That's it—call me crazy. I'm the one who has to be examined. I'm crazy, *n'est-ce pas*?"

Never had I seen my father in such a rage. He was raving like a madman. "I understand plenty, my *boy*," he emphasized the last word. "I understand that my boy is a slut, a common streetwalker who cannot be like other boys but has to dress up to show off, to wiggle his behind like a side show attraction."

"You are wrong. I don't dress myself in feminine clothes to please others. I do it to please myself. It's psychological as well as physical. Please, Papa, try to understand. I don't want to hurt you."

He came toward me, extending his hands. For a moment, I thought he was going to strike me again. He spoke between clenched teeth. "See these rough hands? Look at them carefully. These rough hands brought you up, they made you grow; the work of these two hands made money to feed you. The whole world was not built with your stupid phrases but with these hands—a man's hands. What kind of talk is this about psychology, physiology? It is ruining everyone. It has ruined you, my *boy*. You could

not be like other boys. No, you had to act like some . . . some . . . fairy!"

It was useless to argue. My stubborn father was using the same argument made by any misinformed person. Not only that, he refused to make the slightest effort to understand. He had already made the erroneous conclusion that I was not a special case, that it was not an accident due to a chromosome imbalance; no, I was sinful and "dirty." Papa saw things too simply. He fell back on the easy conclusion of seeing things on their surface, judging their effects without going back to the causes.

When he had calmed down a bit, I made another effort to talk to him. "Papa, I beg you to try and understand—Nature does make mistakes. There *is* a mistake in my case. I should not have been born a boy."

He burst out in laughter. No, it was not the laughter of joy. It was the laughter born of tragedy. "Ah, then you seek my apology for making the mistake. I'm sorry, Jacques, but no one gave me the formula for determining the sex of my child. Love is not made in a test tube or one of *Monsieur* Rostand's books. No, Jacques, love just happens. But you just blame me that you were born a boy instead of a girl. Hmpf. Perhaps you should thank me for having brought a human into the world rather than an ape . . . after all, you believe it is all up to me."

I shook my head. "I never suggested it was your fault, Papa. That would be stupid."

"Pity . . . pity . . . that you are my only child. I wonder whether your brother would have been like you; or, perhaps, your sister would have been a heavyweight boxer!"

"Papa, did you ever look at me closely when I was a child? Did you ever notice what I looked like? No, you hardly even saw me. You went to work in the morning, came home at night, then gave your money—earned by

your fine hands—to Mama, and sat down to read the paper or listen to the radio. I hardly even existed. No, don't interrupt, Papa. I speak the truth. Did you ever notice that I was afraid of boys, avoided them from the start? No, you never saw that. You never wondered why I preferred the company of girls; you never saw that I liked sewing, cooking and playing with dolls. Did you ever notice these things? Did you ever wonder if something was wrong? Most of all, Papa, did you ever try to help me? Did you ever try to advise me?"

My father turned ghastly pale. My remarks had hit him hard. In my own way, I had punished him as he had just sought to punish me by the slaps and the cruel remarks. Believe me, I did not want to so wound him. The words poured out of me, free after years of repression. But these words had driven him into a corner, put him on trial and found him guilty. He looked down. No, he was not ashamed. He was proud—he did not want me to see that his eyes were damp and brimming with tears. He turned his head away. There was no need for me to look. I knew that my father was crying.

All at once, I felt stricken with remorse. Why had I hurt him this way? Was it my desire to revenge myself for his obstinacy, his refusal to try and understand me? No matter what the reason, I found myself wishing I had never said anything to him. To see a man cry, especially your own father, and know it is your fault is just too much to bear. In an effort to make up for it, I said in a gentle tone,

"Of course, many things are difficult to understand at first. But even so, my life *had* to be this way. Even if Mama had insisted that I play with boys, and live a boy's life, it would never have altered my true nature. No, Papa, nothing would have stopped my inevitable destiny."

He was proud—too proud to let me feel sorry for him. He was too proud to be pitied. He pulled himself together.

There was only *one* role he would ever accept: he would affect the pose of a wronged father. "No," he blurted out, "nothing would be different, you say? You're wrong. I'm going to change all this. I'll tell your stupid stage manager just what I think of the way he's been exploiting you. Jacques, you are never to set foot in that terrible cabaret. I forbid you to wear anything that is the slightest bit feminine. You are a *boy*, Jacques, and you shall remain one even if . . ." he clenched his teeth and tightened his fists, ". . . I have to beat you every night of the year."

I was astonished. Words failed me. He was still stubborn. He was flying in the face of the irrefutable facts. Was he trying to delude himself, trying to believe that there was still time. "Papa, that's impossible. You know it is! This is my whole future—my whole life. I cannot endure life as anything else."

"Heavens above!" he raised both arms in supplication. "Jacques, is this your religion? Have you selected this as your vocation, wearing a brassiere, bloomers, silk stockings and a dress? Eh?"

"Say what you will, I must continue to obey my own instincts!"

His look tore into me. Neither of us wanted to admit defeat. He was the first to break the silence. "Very well, I see. Then I ask you to make a choice: give up this pretense of acting like a woman or . . . never again set foot in my house!"

Before I had a chance to answer, the bedroom door was flung open. My mother, wearing a nightgown and her hair done up in cloth curlers, appeared. She seized hold of my father's arm.

"No, no, you cannot say such a thing. Remember, he is your son!"

"My son?" he said bitterly. "That's what I thought until now. But Jacques insists he is anything but my son."

"I know," she wept tearfully, "I know. I heard it all. I've also known the truth . . . for a long while."

His anger was directed toward my mother. "You knew? Yet you kept it from me? Have I no voice in the way Jacques is brought up? My God, what am I—a machine for working and providing food?"

"Of course not," she managed to calm down, "but you are too strict. You just refuse to understand certain things. That is why you turn your back on Jacques. You will not understand . . . but threaten to drive him out."

He thrust out his chin, casting an infuriated glance toward me. "The decision has been made. I don't want anything to do with a boy who dresses like a girl, who humiliates the proud name of Dufresnoy, who takes the stupid name of an insect . . ."

Now it was my turn to flare up. My answer was like the crack of a whip. "You need not change your decision, Papa. I'll leave your house. I'll be a *travesti.* You need not be ashamed of me."

Before I had a chance to leave, my mother rushed up to me, seized my shirt and tore it open. She exclaimed, "Look! Now do you understand?"

My father turned deathly pale. He looked as if he were going to faint. He stared at my chest and saw—two well rounded female breasts with sloping curves and pointed nipples! (This was the result of hormone treatments that I had been taking.) He stared at my naked female breasts, at their soft flesh and pure feminine formation. He could not take his eyes away from them; at the same time, he wondered whether he was the victim of some hallucination.

"You are mutilated," he snapped with disgust and abhorrence. "Mutilated! Your breasts nauseate me. Do as you wish." But before he went out of the room, he said,

without turning, "I hope you shall leave my house." Then he closed the door quietly.

My mother embraced me, caressing me as though I were still a child. "You must remain here, Jacques. I *want* you to remain."

"Don't upset yourself about me, Mama. I'm earning a lot of money. Do not worry about me."

There was no choice other than to move out of his house. I moved to a small apartment and enjoyed living my own life. Of course, I would frequently visit my mother on Sundays. As far back as I can remember, my father never spent a Sunday at home. He would either go fishing, or have a card game with his friends. For two years I would visit my mother in secret, never once mentioning the outrage that took place between my father and myself.

Then, during one such Sunday visit, my father made a sudden return. It was such a surprise that none of us heard his key in the lock or his footsteps down the hallway. I was sitting in the parlor with my mother, idly chatting about show business. Needless to say, I was dressed as a woman. It was rare, indeed, when I wore male attire. My father came into the parlor, stopped dead in his tracks. He stared at me, the way people do when they despise someone in an up-and-down gesture. I was sitting on the couch, with my legs crossed. A strange feeling of modesty prompted me to pull my skirt down over my knees. I felt ridiculous—a strange feeling that was experienced only on rare occasions such as this one, meeting my father face to face for the first time in two years—and the first time as a *travesti.*

An irresistible urge made me get up. I took a few short, timid steps. My heart was beating wildly. My father's arm moved. Was he going to hit me? Hesitatingly, I moved

forward again. His other arm moved. In a flash I realized that he was waiting for me. He had been waiting for two years for *me* to make this first step toward him. I threw myself forward. His arms embraced me. I cried with happiness. He laughed . . . then I began to laugh and also to cry . . . and soon we were both laughing and crying at the same time.

"Jacques, my boy, my boy." Then he pushed me away. "I mean, my daughter."

My mother blessed the fate that made him return so unexpectedly on a Sunday. It seems that he wanted to go fishing and forgot his bait; that was why he returned home. But he *did* forgive me and we were once again united as a family.

It took more effort to make him understand the life of a *travesti.* At first he was reluctant, but gradually he succumbed to my suggestion that he come and see me at the *Carrousel.* Nightly, backstage, I would talk to him about hormones, chromosomes, genetics, psychiatry, physiology. I gave him books to read. Although he had never displayed much interest in the printed word, he now became an avid reader, devouring everything he could lay his hands upon that dealt with the *travesti* and trans-sexualism.

Ironically enough, when he understood what was the matter with me, his former shame turned into pride. Yes, he was proud to have a son whose sex was interchangeable! But he was still confused. There were times when he introduced me to his friends as his son; other times he said I was his daughter. Some of them did not know that I was, strictly speaking, *both* a son and daughter. They might see me dressed as a male (I donned male attire for my father's benefit since he liked to see me as a boy and also as a girl) and would ask about my sister and vice-versa.

One time, when I was dressed as a man, a friend confided in me touchingly, "Jacques, you shall have to introduce me to your sister. I saw her last week with your father. What a beautiful girl! I can hardly sleep at night, just thinking of her. Tell me, is she a cinema actress? She's always dressed in the height of fashion, and so very beautiful. Forgive me for being so intimate about your own sister, Jacques, but those hips . . . and those breasts . . . where else can you see them in Paris. Please, Jacques, speak to her about me. Tell her how I feel. I just must . . . must . . . I mean, I have to . . ." He flushed beet red. "I mean . . ."

It was difficult to keep a straight face. Needless to say, I could not tell this to my "sister." I did not want to shock her!

My father and mother were again united with their son-daughter. Restoration of this family circle now brought some changes. It was decided that they should live in more comfort. There was no need for my father to continue working. I found them a lovely little house in a better district of Paris. My Dreux farm is available to them for a little holiday whenever they so choose. They have a generous allowance to meet all of their needs.

Chapter 8

NO BUSINESS LIKE TRAVESTI BUSINESS

My success increased. As a *travesti,* I was sought after by just about every cabaret in Europe and other world continents. In fact, one of the most interesting offers came from a famed night club in Las Vegas, Nevada. It was one of my closest friends, Marlene Dietrich, who made the arrangements. Yes, the contract that was brought to me promised a weekly salary of $10,000. Only America could be so extravagant. I wanted to take the coveted job, but decided that America has such high taxes that in the end, very little would be left. There was nothing else to do but to politely refuse the generous offer.

Most of the famed stars of show business became my friends: Michel Simon, Line Renaud, Jean Marais, Barbara Laage, Martine Carol and Charles Trenet. I mention Charles because his name was linked with mine when we were both involved in a near-tragic car accident. We both escaped with our lives, but we suffered serious injuries.

It happened when Charles Trenet (a popular French singer) and I were out for a little excitement in his expensive, bright green Mercedes. We were racing along a narrow winding road near Antibes, on the French Riviera, and decided to see how fast we could go. Charles pressed down hard on the gas pedal. The needle tipped 80. Rubber squealed as the car swept around a break-neck curve. Then . . . a blowout! The car flew off the road with a roar, smashing into a telephone pole. Charles was hurled full-face into the splintering dashboard. Both of us were unconscious. A passing motorist saw the accident, called for an ambulance. We were taken to the hospital.

Doctors and internes examined me carefully and were in a quandary. Should they put this golden-haired beauty in the women's ward . . . or the men's ward? They finally decided upon a private room. They soon discovered that I was Coccinelle. This was a "scandal" that headline-hungry newspapers seized with greedy fingers. The morning papers screamed the news that these two famous personalities were out on a date together, cruising in the romantic moonlight. The unshockable international cafe society set on the Riviera did not know what to make of this story. It was quite a puzzle.

As for myself, it was quite a problem! The accident had injured my face and I was frightened that the scars would remain. I sought out the famed Doctor Claoué, known for being a brilliant plastic surgeon. He not only erased all disfiguring marks, but suggested that I have my nose re-shaped at the same time. He gave me a beautiful "Parisian nose" which has aroused admiration ever since.

Charles Trenet and I both recovered from the near-fatal accident and he has, since then, become one of the most famous singers in France. As for myself, my fame

increased because my name appeared in headlines all over the world.

My new nose, a bosom, a *naturally* lovely head of *real* hair, fashionable clothes from the best shops on the Rue de la Paix—all aroused the astonishment of the public. Quite flatteringly, I was frequently mistaken for Brigitte Bardot or Martine Carol and even the American Jayne Mansfield. Usually, at airports as well as on the plane, it is inevitable that someone address me as *Mademoiselle* Bardot. There was one time on a flight from Paris to Rome when an air hostess immediately "recognized" me as Jayne Mansfield and spoke to me in English. At that time I did not understand a word of what she said, but replied with little gestures of agreement, murmurs, nods, glances of understanding. I continued this pretense throughout the whole trip. The hostess did not have the slightest doubt that I was Jayne Mansfield, the American, and could understand every single word she was saying.

Shortly after we landed, the hostess came toward me with a small notebook. "Would you please give me your autograph, Miss Mansfield?" She held out the book plus a pencil and I understood what she wanted.

"Yes," I replied in the only English word I could say. In very legible words, I signed: *COCCINELLE—vive la France.*

You should have seen her face. She nearly fell over. backwards. I felt sympathetic toward her—and rather annoyed with *my* pretense since I always tell the truth and dislike deceit.

Such mistakes can work two ways. Brigitte Bardot, whom I've known since the beginning of her career when she was happily married to Roger Vadim, told me this story. It had happened before the film *And God Created Woman* was released and destined to make her name immortal.

Brigitte and myself were good friends. Frequently, we would dine out together. It was fun to visit fashion houses, the cinemas and record libraries. We would confide in one another like two sisters. It was easy to tell Brigitte about my problems, my successes; and she loved to talk to me about her own problems and plans for the future. There was a simultaneous rise in fame for each of us. As she became much sought after in show business, my name was becoming extremely popular. At the same time, I was becoming more feminine. My hair was long. I might also add that the pony-tail fad—with the front hair brought forward in thick tufts and left free—was first created by myself. When Brigitte saw it, she decided to copy this hair-style and I helped her in the first setting. It flattered me to think that the sexiest girl in the French cinema was imitating my femininity.

One summer, while I was on tour with a travelling *Carrousel* road show on the Côte d'Azur, Brigitte and I lost contact with each other. When I returned to Paris, everyone stared at me. While this was not unusual, they included some remarks which reached my ears. The remarks always carried the same catch-phrase:

"Look at her. She's wearing Brigitte Bardot's pony-tail hair style. Copy-cat. What a copy-cat!"

How ridiculous! Brigitte had copied *me*. Yet, they called *me* a copy-cat! While this annoyed me, I had no desire to change my appearance. My hair, done in a pony-tail style which *I* had originated myself, was most suitable and it was not going to be changed. Several weeks after my return to Paris, Brigitte telephoned me.

"Coccinelle, I have some new records. Would you like to come here and listen to them together with me?"

Brigitte, like myself, was passionately fond of music and dancing. We often enjoyed listening to music together. In the midst of this enjoyment, Brigitte made a

delightful pout—the same pout which helped her on the road to fame. "Coccinelle, would you do me a small favor?"

"Of course, Brigitte. I'll do whatever I can."

"Then change your hair-style. We look too much alike, you and I."

My laughter burst forth. "Oh no, Brigitte darling. It was difficult enough to change my sex; I have no intention of altering my looks."

In the end, we parted as good friends but after that little scene, we stopped being seen about together. We were two separate, distinct personalities. Each of us strove to gain recognition by ourselves. Success was possible only if we were regarded as separate individuals. While we both clung to the pony-tail hair styles, we were rarely seen in public together.

Another problem arose. Brigitte loved to be the center of attraction. She held it against me and regarded me as her competitor. As a man-woman, or as a she-male, how could I have ever been considered a competitor for a purely physical female? While it did hurt me to have our friendship severed because of this, it also flattered me to know that the utterly feminine Brigitte Bardot regarded Coccinelle, the she-male, as her adversary in the field of sex! At that time, Brigitte was that sort of a person. In recent years, however, she has changed—for the better. She now displays a delightfully refreshing personality. She has not a single jealous thought in her lovely body. She deserves happiness and no one could wish her the peace and contentment she seeks more than myself. Why? Because I, too, seek the same elusive inner tranquility.

And still one more occurrence shall long be remembered. It was at the time of the *Kermess aux Etoiles.* This is an annual event for the benefit of the wounded French veterans of war. Just about every single French enter-

tainer donates his talents, not to mention any international star who happens to be in Paris at this time. Parisians *queue* up outside the Tuileries to catch a glimpse of their favorite artists; some of them have to wait for twelve hours before the first celebrity arrives.

On opening night, I arrived at the Tuileries, carefully gowned in a low-cut evening dress, a white mink cape and a glittering diamond necklace. No sooner did I get out of the car than I was between two rows of uniformed police who were struggling to keep back the enthusiastic crowds of people. Cries were heard:

"There she is! There she is!"

It was a never to be forgotten thrill. They had recognized me. Flooded with happiness, I blew kisses to all sides. The flashbulbs of limitless cameras nearly blinded me. From somewhere, the cameraman from the famed *Actualités Françaises* started to film my sparkling arrival at the beautiful Tuileries Gardens. Before I could walk few steps, a truck loomed up in front of me; on top of the truck were perched two enormous cameras. *Television.* A huge man, as famous as the personalities he interviews, pushed his way toward me, shoving a microphone to my mouth. This was so exciting that I feared my frantic heart pounding would be heard over the airwaves. *Television.* Never had I appeared on television. For a fleeting moment I experienced all the fears of my first debut at *Chez Madame Arthur.* This was going to be a live transmission.

Questions were thrown at me. Fighting my trembles and shivers, I replied as best I could, explaining that this was my first time to the *Kermess* and that I loved every bit of it.

The interviewer then asked, "Would you tell us what you think of Louis Trintignant?"

"Yes, he's a most talented actor. He's rather young, but he does have a great future ahead of him."

The interviewer smiled. "What plans do you have for the future?"

"To do a film with Blasetti. Also, I am thinking of a trip to Las Vegas. I've been given an offer and may accept it."

"But haven't you something in mind with Jules Duvivier?" The interviewer was plainly puzzled, exchanging glances with some of the other newsmen who heard my replies.

"No, of course not." What could he be talking about? It was confusing.

"But," the interviewer was saying, "*Monsieur* Duvivier told us that he plans to make a film with you, called *La Femme et le Pantin.* In fact, we just talked with *Monsieur* Stéfani, the world-famous expert on the French can-can. He said that he has agreed to supervise your dance scenes."

This was very puzzling. Everyone knew Roger Stéfani. Not only was he an accomplished dancer and a brilliant choreographer, but he had also planned a number of the *Carrousel* revues. But he never told me he was going to supervise my dance scenes! Furthermore, I had never even heard of *La Femme et le Pantin.* What film was he talking about? Before anything could be said to him, the interviewer was speaking into the microphone. "I believe you have already appeared opposite *Monsieur* Duvivier, haven't you, *Mademoiselle* Bardot?"

I nearly fainted. The crowds of admirers and the television people had all mistaken me for Brigitte Bardot! The tremendous ovation was *not* for Coccinelle—but for Brigitte Bardot! The tremendous ovation was *not* for Coccinelle—but for Brigitte! What could I do? Millions of French people were watching this gross blunder. No

doubt, Brigitte, herself, was watching this unbelievable real life drama. What to do?

Now I understood why mention of Louis Trintignant was made. This young man was a co-star of Brigitte in a few films; there were rumors that the two of them were in love while Brigitte was in the midst of divorce proceedings against Roger Vadim, her husband. Small wonder that the interviewer had smiled at my reply that I regarded Louis as "rather young."

Through no fault of my own, I had become involved in the most astonishing case of mistaken identity that had thus far happened to me. Millions were watching. I could not blurt out, "You've made a mistake. I'm not Brigitte Bardot. I'm Coccinelle, a *travesti.*" Who would believe me? They might even accuse me of deliberately misrepresenting myself (which was not true since I never even said I was Brigitte Bardot) and trying to get the publicity in her name. There was nothing else to do but continue this farce.

"Yes," I tried hard to sound natural, "both *Monsieur* Duvivier and I have played opposite one another."

"You referred to Las Vegas, *Mademoiselle* Bardot. What are you going to do there?"

"Str—" I stopped myself in time. How I could I say "strip-tease?" "I'm going to sing and dance."

Flashbulbs dazzled me. Before I could escape the melee around me, an American newsman, with a tape recorder, shoved another microphone before me. He spoke in English which I did not understand. He insisted that I, too, speak English but how could I? We exchanged a few words. Much later I learned that this same newsman had frequently interviewed Brigitte who always replied in English without having to be asked.

Finally, I managed to get away from the cameras, the

flashbulbs and microphones. I was literally overwhelmed by a horde of autograph seekers. Hundreds of hands reached out, each one holding a pen, a book, or a photograph (of Brigitte) and imploring me for a few words of endearment. It was very embarrassing. I recalled that I had experienced the same emotion when the airplane-hostess asked for an autograph—the autograph of Jayne Mansfield for whom she had mistaken me. But I could not sign *her* name. How could I sign the name of Coccinelle? That would be misinterpreted as an even greater fraud.

In a flash, the solution came to me. I scrawled—a real scrawl which could be mistaken for any name, even that of Napoleon. For the rest of the evening, odd situations, mistakes and misunderstandings so plagued me that when I returned home, I was a nervous wreck!

The following afternoon, I received a telephone call. It was my good friend, Martine Carol.

"*Bon jour*, Coccinelle. I called to congratulate you on your performance at the *Kermess*. Honestly, that was the first time that French television displayed a sense of humor. Good joke."

Martine Carol felt it was a television trick, that it was deliberately planned and, possibly, even rehearsed! As I hung up, I felt puzzled. It made me smile. Paris must be laughing at the joke. But what did Brigitte, herself, think about it?

Chapter 9

LOVE TURNED ME INTO A PHYSICAL FEMALE

Beneath the theatrical *façade* of laughter and joy lie the counterparts of tears and heartbreak. When performing as a *travesti*, I was the personification of sheer happiness. Backstage, I would often weep quietly as I removed my make-up, staring at myself in the bulb-ringed oval mirror, asking myself what sort of creature was this who looked back at me. While being a *travesti* made me happy, helped to ease some of my conflicts, it was an incomplete existence. Physically and mentally, I was part male, part female. As such, was I destined to remain apart from the human race?

It was love that changed my whole life. At 19, I experienced my first physical love affair. There had been many occasions when my male urges seemed to rally and the thought of seducing a female began to plague me. But each time, whenever such an opportunity presented itself, I had a feeling of revulsion toward the female as far as

sex was concerned. I convinced myself that if I performed the sex act with a female, I would be committing a homosexual act!

You would assume that my erotic desires would be directed toward men. In a manner of speaking, I enjoyed male company, but that was as far as it went. The indirect result of my antipathy toward women was a general lack of interest in sex; simultaneously, my sexual development was dormant. At 19, I had never been kissed!

When I first met Robert, he had just begun performing at *Chez Madame Arthur*. We exchanged a few friendly words. Gradually, our conversations were lengthened. Soon, we had dinner together. The friendship blossomed in warmth. He was a wonderful man. We loved walking together, alone, and watching dawn break, thrilling to the reflection of the bursting sunshine as it illuminated the sleek length of the Seine River. Robert was a handsome young man, broad-shouldered, powerfully built like an athlete. He had a boyish impudent look that made him irresistibly attractive. He was sensitive, sometimes *too* sensitive but that is especially the quality that makes a good *artiste*.

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Coccinelle was not exaggerating. Some time later, I went to visit Robert at the Elle et Lui cabaret in Montmarte. He was a powerfully built young man with a magnificently developed body. He would be at home on the football team. He told me that he had wanted to be a professional fullback but a knee injury forced him to abandon this ambition. Robert originally came from the champagne district of Epernay; he saw military service at Dakar where he would entertain soldier buddies with some acting and singing. They urged him to try a theatrical vocation and he came to Paris where he was quite successful.*)

Our friendship developed. At first, it was a purely pla-

tonic flirtation, so to speak. We held hands as we walked along. Incidentally, in public, I was always dressed as a woman when going with Robert so as not to offend anybody.

We first embraced in a cinema under cover of the semi-darkness. Robert lifted my hand to his lips and kissed it. This physical contact aroused me. Then he moved closer, bent his head toward mine and our lips brushed; in another embrace, our lips met in a tender kiss. For months and months after that first kiss, our little flirtation did not become more intimate.

Monsieur Marcel announced, one day, that he decided to send the best acts from his two cabarets, *Chez Madame Arthur* and *Le Carrousel* on tour for the approaching summer. This brought Robert and me even closer together since both of us were selected. We performed in a cabaret in Juan-les-Pins and lived at Cannes, a few miles away. Robert and I decided to follow the example of other artists by saving expenses in sharing the same room.

Now that we were both in the same room, our love affair could blossom into deep passion. Robert was handsome, fully masculine in every sense of the word . . . including his jealous attitude. He had several defects. He was self-centered and generous. He was easily offended but also very self-confident. At the same time he was enthusiastic and cautious. He enjoyed a practical joke; but he was sensitive. He was proud, yet very companionable with anyone. Such a combination made Robert a wonderful young man. I was swept away in a dream of pure happiness. But Robert had one defect for which I could never forgive him. He was unfaithful. When backstage gossip told me that he had dated a redhead from another cabaret, I lost my temper. I stormed into the dressing room, hit Robert on the head with a spiked heel shoe. His head was split open over one eye. His face was stream-

ing with blood. The doctor was summoned immediately and Robert had to spend a day in the hospital.

I did not really want to hurt Robert. I wept a thousand times since that terrible day, hoping and praying that he would forgive me. Underneath it all I felt hurt. Rather, my vanity felt wounded. You see, I suffered badly when I saw that Robert preferred those I was struggling so hard to imitate. It was this love affair that created the birth of a new idea. The idea was as wild as that of murder or suicide. Yes, I was going to commit both murder and suicide—of Coccinelle as a male!

This unhappy love affair convinced me that life as a she-male was destined to be lonely. The happiness I craved, the love of a man I so desperately sought could become mine only if I were a true female! So the idea of becoming a real woman now turned into an obsession.

How easy it sounds. It's quite the contrary. When you're born a male, becoming a female is not accomplished as easily as changing your shoes. There are fundamental characteristics that must first be present else the male turns into nothing else but a castrated male (one in whom the sex organs have been removed) dressed as a female. For example, I took inventory of myself. My face was smooth. I never shaved. My feet were small, wearing a perfect size 5 shoe. My hips were flaring and well-rounded. My waist was slender. My eyelashes were naturally long. My features were delicate. My build was far from rugged. Even my voice was so high pitched that one thought a woman was speaking. And, had I not been a man-woman or woman-man—or she-male—right from birth? Yes, I was a hybrid. The more I thought of it, the more aroused I became. I had heard it said that the right treatment together with a surgical operation could put everything right. Could such a transformation work upon my body and mind?

My situation was not unusual. Nature does make many errors. For example, there are those who are born and remain in the intermediate female-male condition who can be classified in three groups: *hermaphrodites* —possessing the characteristics of both sexes and undecided about which to select; *homosexuals*—physically, each sex has its separate development but mentally, the individual prefers members of its own sex for fulfillment; *physiological sex*—those who are either male or female, physiologically speaking, but possess minor traits of the other sex. This last-named group consists of individuals who want their sex changed in favor of the dominant sex.

I belonged to the third category. I possessed some male characteristics but the dominant sex traits were female. Taking a trip to the Côte d'Azur, I sought out an eminent gynecologist in Nice. At that time, I was dressed as a male and discarded my false breasts and wig.

The doctor greeted me formally, closed the door of his private office and sat down opposite me. "Now, *Monsieur*, what can I do for you?"

"I wonder. You see, I want to be a woman!"

He raised his eyebrows. "*Eh bien.* You are not the first one, certainly not the last. It is not enough to want, it's a question of being able."

This reply reassured me. I already knew that, in my case, the conditions were overwhelmingly favorable. "You shall find that out for yourself, Doctor, after you examine me."

I stripped down completely naked, submitted to a very complete and minute examination. The doctor made a whole series of tests; he studied every part of my anatomy down to the tiniest detail. When it was over, he told me,

"You are correct. Your chances are good and an operation can be performed. As far as your sex organs are concerned, you are completely male. But, that is limited only

to your groin; i.e., your penis and testicles which are fully developed and capable of, shall we say, extremely satisfactory function. Nevertheless, the rest of your body shows that you are female. Nature has hesitated in your case. Why? Medical science still knows too little about the subject to give a good answer." Then the doctor gave a summary about the vital points of genetics:

"Among the 48 chromosomes, or colored bodies, which are found in each person and which also decide the whole of his future physical makeup, there are two special sex chromosomes which decide his sex. This is a very complicated process. You must understand that at the beginning of a child's pre-natal development, the possibility that the child will be a male or female lies side by side. The child has the female Muller ducts and the male Wolff ducts. *Both are present.* At this pre-natal development, the human embryo that will become a child is regarded as a hermaphrodite. The embryo has both sexes. Nature has not yet made a choice. At the start of the fourth month, assuming that everything develops normally, the chromosomes experience a change in balance. The sex of the foetus is now decided.

"The foetus is no longer bi-sexual. The male factor atrophies while the female factor develops. Or, *vice versa!* This happens with a strict precision. Suppose we express this development in simpler terms of figures. Let us take 100 as our sum total. We find that when the development of the foetus male factor stops at 35, the development of the female factor is automatically 65. If we take the opposite case, or any other balance of figures, the sum total must always be 100. Under these circumstances, it is a scientific fact that the 100 man, the perfect man, or the 100 woman, the perfect woman, does not truly exist.

"Each person is a result of a combination of male and female factors. Variations of endless amounts are possible.

For example, you can be a male with a combination of only 70-30. In that case, certain female characteristics are strong—such as the voice, silky texture of hair, smaller size of the foot and the intensity of the libido.

"In a 50-50 combination, Nature has not decided. A woman may have a moustache. A boy will be effeminate, sometimes homosexual. Further sexual development is blocked. This can create serious consequences. Medical science is still pondering the mystery of the complete hybrid. It is possible that a man or woman with a 50-50 combination will desire to lead a normal sex life; but even under those circumstances, his (or her) sex urge will not be fully heterosexual. In fact, it is reasonably accurate to say that any person who has less than a minimum combination of 60-40 in regarded as 'intermediate.' Sexual development of the 'intermediate' is incomplete. The sex organs remain undeveloped, as in a child. The libido is weak or does not exist. Many such 'intermediates' become male or female homosexuals.

"Thus, we can see that retarded organic development may pre-dispose the person to homosexuality. But there is another vital aspect: namely, emotional development. Throughout the person's entire infancy and even into adolescence, his emotional development plays a decisive role in helping him select a direction: either male or female.

"As I have explained, medical science is still delving into the mysteries of the sexual hybrid. While surgeons and psychiatrists are not able to *prevent* these errors of Nature, they are able to *correct* such flaws." He folded both hands and regarded me with intense seriousness. "I assume, *Monsieur* Dufresnoy, that you understand your own position and that your sexual conflict can be altered."

The words of the doctor had opened a new world of hope. For the first time in my life, a ray of sunshine

pierced the unhappy darkness that had blotted out my peace of mind and peace of soul. "Doctor, under these circumstances, is it possible for me to undergo a transsexual operation so that I can become a woman—the sex that Nature should have given to me in the first place?"

He shook his head. "It is not that simple. France does not allow such an operation. The Church forbids it. The law is against it. A surgeon who performs the operation would be liable to a criminal prosecution and would be accused of theoretical manslaughter. From an administrative and medical point of view, the surgeon would have *killed* a man. Legally, the surgeon could be declared guilty and be subject to the death penalty. Of course, he would not be sent to the guillotine; that goes without saying. But he would probably be sentenced to a minimum of fifteen years imprisonment to make the punishment an effective deterrent to others. The penal code of France—and just about every other nation on Earth—makes it clear that this is a serious form of mutilation and subject to severe punishment."

Tears flooded my eyes. "But there must be some provisions made for those unfortunates like myself. In the name of humanity, some exceptions may be made."

He agreed. "Yes, some exceptions do exist. Legally speaking, if the man has a birth certificate which was erroneously prepared in listing him as a woman. Under those circumstances, the surgeon will not mutilate the man, but legally speaking, will be correcting a mistake by adjusting the patient's legal status. There are many such males born who possess female parts and are listed as females on their birth certificates; later, the male parts slightly mature and the person is raised as a male. Those who later decide to change their sex to female would not, technically speaking, be considered guilty of a crime."

I had reached an impasse. As a hybrid, I was the victim

. . . Coccinelle — As a Bride . . .



After the operation which at last made her both technically and physically a *bona fide* woman, Coccinelle achieved the supreme desire of her life — marriage to the man she loved, Francis Bonnet. The virile, handsome young groom is a Publicity Agent in France.



Above, the marriage of "the woman who was a man" drew a mob of curious spectators.

Below, the adoring groom, Francis Bonnet, bestows the traditional first kiss . . .





At the reception following the ceremony, Coccinelle sang a medley of torch songs from her old act at the *Caroussel,* to the delight of hundreds of celebrity guests.



Along with her transformation Coccinelle developed a childlike love of attention. Even the pop of dozens of flashbulbs at her wedding seemed to add to her radiance.



The bride and groom leave for their honeymoon. Coccinelle's "going-away" outfit was a black patent leather suit with black mink accessories created especially for her.



Never one to balk at publicity, Coccinelle willingly posed for photographers and pleasantly deflected the sometime embarrassing questions of reporters.

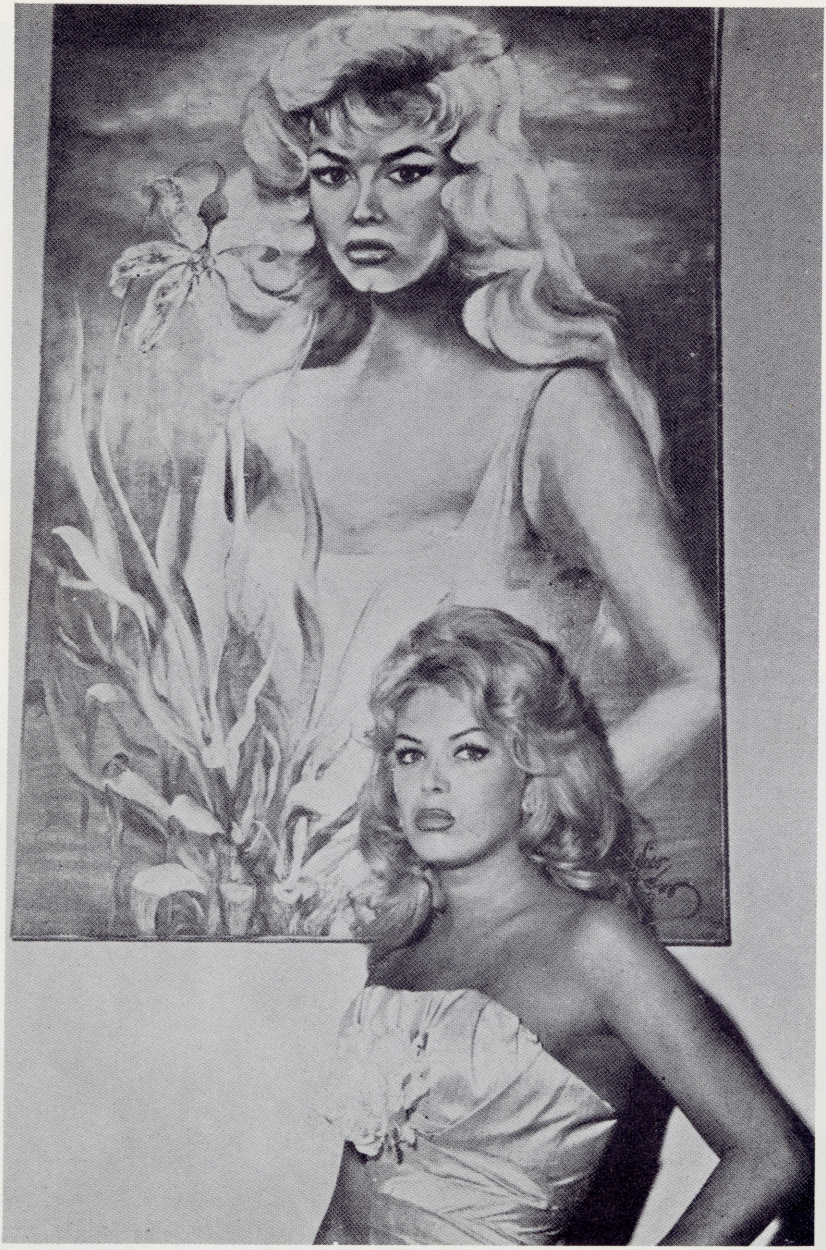
Below, Mr. and Mrs. Bonnet pose at home and drink a toast to their new happiness.



. . . Coccinelle — As a Housewife . . .



Domestic and culinary arts were no novelty to Coccinelle when she became a married woman. Even as a child she loved the activities of a little girl, played with dolls, and learned to cook and sew expertly at an early age . . .



Above, Coccinelle poses beneath the ethereal portrait, a gift from an admiring artist, which hangs in the living room of her sumptuous new home.





Although she is greatly absorbed with her new duties as housewife, Coccinelle has not forsaken her career, plans to star in a motion picture of her own eventful life.











If anyone could be a woman and know the feelings of a man and how to please him, it is Coccinelle! Therefore, she has not let domesticity rob her of her glamour.



. . . Photographs . . .

from Coccinelle's Scrapbook



In spite of the extreme mental and physical pain Coccinelle has endured, she's had her share of good times. On the following pages are photos she especially cherishes – pictures of the high spots of her career as showgirl and model, and *stripper.*



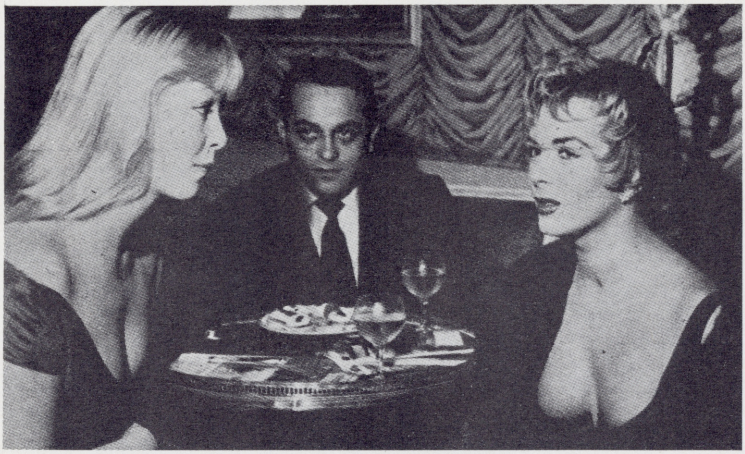
Above, "classmates" – members of the cast of female impersonators at the *Carrousel.*

Below and opposite, Coccinelle in the midst of one of her most popular acts.









Coccinelle can hold her own in the fastest repartee. Snapped here exchanging quips with Fernandel and Bob Hope.





Above, with Van Johnson and *below,* with Sabrina at the Carrousel.

























Coccinelle performed an impromptu strip tease for the following photographs. This delightful sequence proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that she is completely feminine and is unafraid to face the camera from any angle.













of legal, administrative, social and religious restrictions, not to mention prejudices. There was just one concession which the government would permit. My masculine name could be changed to one that is feminine. But it would cost me three million francs! It was absurd!

The gynecologist discussed some treatments he could give me to ease some of my anguish and physical torment. He would prescribe a female hormone treatment for an undesignated space of time: perhaps a few months, perhaps a few years. No assurance for success could be predicted. It would require patience, perseverance and courage. Injections and implantations are frequently painful. The doctor urged me to give it much thought, to which I replied,

"I have been thinking of it—all my life. I am ready to begin."

He started the treatment. It was based upon the two natural female hormones—folliculin and lutein—secreted by the ovary. These hormones also form the female breasts. The doctor injected these hormones regularly, sometimes alternately, for a long period of time. Occasionally, I was given local injections of oestradiol monobenzoate in the mammary glands.

It began a most difficult time in my life, but not as difficult (or agonizingly painful) as would soon take place when I would undergo surgery. To begin with, in addition to injections and implantations, special daily exercises were necessary to get the pectoral muscles to function properly. Steam baths followed by localized ice-cold douches would encourage certain muscles to contract. To make the breasts firmer internally, electrotherapy was used; this helped a special iodine treatment to become effective. Galvanofaradaic currents served to produce the necessary reflexes in the chest to educate it to play its new role in life.

The skin was toned up by use of an astringent with an alum base. The treatment was completed by massage with suction cups. My case was comparatively easy. After five months of intensive treatment, the gynecologist and myself were astonished. My fully developed breasts were deliciously beautiful. They were thrust forth, soft, with sloping curves. The nipples at the extreme tips were so delicate that the slightest friction would produce an exhilarating sensation, just as would any female nipples. I was delighted. These appreciably feminine breasts convinced me that I could soon become a complete female.

Furthermore, I now discarded my wig. The treatment was so successful that I grew a luxuriant head of light blonde hair; all my male body hair (what little there was) on my arms or legs had now disappeared. My waist, hips, shoulders, skin, voice—which already had possessed pronounced feminine characteristics—had now become completely female.

Now that this stage had been reached, I had to take another giant step—to have my male sex organs completely excised or removed. France could not provide me with a surgeon so I made extensive inquiries and learned that certain North African countries and also Denmark regarded phallectomy as legal. Now that I had seen the favorable results of female hormonal treatment, I was more determined than ever to undergo a complete and surgical trans-sexualism.

There were those who argued with me. Some said it was strictly against the *travesti* tradition. They said that a man who had a girl's breasts, takes a small size in shoes, had natural hair and no longer needs a wig, is really feminine; he is no longer a *travesti.* Usually, the *travesti* is a complete male in every respect who dons feminine apparel and feminine customs for a theatrical apparance.

When the show ended, the *travestis* reappeared as males. Many of them would remark, "What's the point in being a *travesti* or female impersonator if you're feminine to begin with? How can you play the role of a woman when you *are* a woman, so to speak?"

Several of them were so astonished with my real breasts that they asked for the name and address of my endocrinologist. Quite a few underwent the same treatments as myself. It did not take long before you could see breasts sprouting like mushrooms on male chests. Some were more successful than the others. Soon, two separate groups were formed: the *travestis* who were very masculine but dressed as females; and the essentially feminine performers such as myself. Our choreographer arranged some unique striptease numbers for the different groups. The audience reacted in various ways. Some stared at the naked full breasts and cried out that the *travestis* were a hoax. When they saw me appear on the stage with my long blonde ponytail, wearing spike-heeled shoes and a seductively low-cut blouse and short tight, hip-hugging skirt, they cried out loud, "That's no *travesti*. She's a real woman. This is just a joke! It's a swindle!"

Backstage, several friends and I would chat about the audience reaction. One remarked to me, "You know, Coccinelle, I'll wager that if any of them saw you completely naked, they would believe that you were a real woman but had a male organ grafted onto your body."

How true! Hormone treatment makes a male more feminine but leaves his sexual organs in full working condition. Contrary to what some people believe, the male organ does not atrophy; its functions are not abolished because of female hormones.

There were still more skeptics who could not be convinced that I was a male. They would wait for me at three in the morning when the show ended. They sub-

jected me to the most objectionable tests. They begged to touch my hair. Some even fingered my breasts; one was so brazen as to insert his hand in my bodice and pull out my breast; delighted at what he saw, he then fingered my nipple. This enraged me. It was uncalled for and indecent. I moved swiftly, slapped him across the face. "How dare you?" The gesture was so automatically feminine that the crowd backed away, convinced that they were dealing with a woman! They still doubted my masculinity—until one very rude man yanked up my skirt and declared aloud,

"Look, everybody, that's a man!"

Again, I slapped the indecent man—but this time, there was more assurance that I was, in a manner of speaking, a male. Nevertheless, my grief was not as potent as in my childhood. I was more convinced than ever to undergo the phallectomy and become the person I always felt I was—a female.

Chapter 10

A MALE WITH FEMALE BREASTS

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: *During my series of inquiries, I learned that Coccinelle, rather Jacques Dufresnoy, was the first male who had received such hormone treatments. At the* Carrousel, *I learned that in the past, there had been other* artistes *who wanted truly feminine breasts. For example, a decade ago, an English youth underwent a grafting operation; pieces of bones and flesh were inserted to give the lad a chest of feminine proportions. The operation nearly cost his life! He suffered from blood poisoning, abscesses and serious infections. Coccinelle deserves credit for being the first male in Europe, perhaps the whole world, who did indeed acquire a truly female bosom. Others have since then followed in her footsteps.*)

My female breasts brought advantages but many disadvantages as well. In particular, when I have to go

abroad on tour or a pleasure trip, the Customs officers look at me with puzzlement. They cannot understand it. My passport is made out to "Jacques Dufresnoy, Male," but they look at me—a person with a woman's hair, a woman's breasts of ample proportions and a woman's clothes.

"But *Madame,* this is your husband's passport. May we see yours?"

"I do not have a husband, gentlemen. The husband is myself!"

This confuses the Customs men even further. They examine the passport photograph which shows me dressed as a male. They look at me, dressed as a female. (Some time later, I had another photograph made, showing myself dressed as a female. But this only added to the confusion since a female is not known as *Monsieur Jacques Dufresnoy!*)

Some of the officials openly regard me as another Mata Hari. That is even less flattering than being called a lunatic who imagines he is Julius Caesar or Napoleon!

I tried to explain that I am a music-hall *artiste;* i.e., I sing and dance dressed as a female. "I am a *travesti*—a female impersonator."

This does not help the situation. On the contrary, the officials then remark, "Perhaps that is true—but what about your breasts? They belong to a female!"

Female breasts on the body of a male will obviously meet with many problems. But the crux of the situation involves my truly feminine appearance and genuine feminine gestures and movements. These are more difficult to acquire than female breasts! You see, any fool can undergo a series of hormonal injections; eventually, rounded contours will develop on his chest. If conditions are favorable, these are transformed into real

breasts. But—how many of them complete the picture by *acting* fully feminine? Rather, how many *act* feminine and how many more are *naturally* feminine!

One Customs official heard my explanation that I was a hermaphrodite—possessing the organs of both male and female. He understood the condition—or so I thought, until he asked, "So why don't you dress as a male?"

I went down to their level and replied: "With breasts like these? That would not be right. I would become a *travesti!*"

Usually, this remark causes the same reaction: the Customs man removes his cap, runs his hand through his hair in a worried manner. I have even seen a Customs man do this when he's bald; it reminds me of Pavlov and his conditioned reflexes.

The inevitable happens. A Customs man takes me into a private windowless room and orders me to strip down naked. This was out of the question. I have no qualms about stripping, but I do it for payment on a theatrical stage. I don't give private performances! I refused and pointed out that regulations state that only a woman Customs officer may see a woman as naked. This helped convince this official that I regarded myself as female. But he was persistent and brought in a female colleague. Again, I refused to so expose myself in what I regarded to be an indecent gesture. I told the woman that Customs regulations forbade her to see me undressed and if she insisted, I would report her to her superiors. Furthermore, I added, my passport listed me as *male*—and if word got around that a male was ordered to strip before a female Customs official, there would be serious consequences for the entire Government!

The woman was so upset that she fled to her colleague. They chattered in hasty Flemish, undecided what to do.

In asking for the return of my passport, I emphasized that although a Customs official should perform his duty with honesty, he must never infringe upon the rights of personal freedom—the same principles which were recognized as sacred by the Geneva Convention. These phrases had an effect on them. The man stared at me, while handing over my passport, and asked, "Tell me, shall I call you: *monsieur* or *mademoiselle*?"

In the finest Brigitte Bardot manner, I blew him a tantalizing kiss. "Say nothing, *chéri*. That is the safest thing to do . . ."

This was a minor problem compared to another one. In the midst of everything, I received my call-up papers. Jacques Charles Dufresnoy was ordered to report to the induction center of the French Army. When the notice was handed to me, I nearly fainted dead away!

What could I do? To ignore the papers would run the risk of being declared a deserter and liable to criminal prosecution. I telephoned my lawyer but he could not give any help. There was no answer to my problem in any of his regulations, civil or military. Napoleon who wisely prepared a code of laws to govern just about every single action, had never known that there was the possibility of a Coccinelle. My lawyer suggested I explain my situation to the military authorities.

A few telephone calls were made. The powers-that-be all listened patiently to me but they all had the same reply: "You are Jacques Charles Dufresnoy, legally registered as a male and subject to military call-up. You must report to the induction center."

And so, that is exactly what I did. When the sergeant-major saw me, his eyes opened wide. No doubt, in his 27 years of experience he had never come across such a situation. He stood in the entrance, stared hostilely at me:

"*Mademoiselle*, you may not come in here."

"Why not?" I handed him my papers. "I've been called up. I am Jacques Charles Dufresnoy."

The sergeant-major was evidently used to jokes. Many inductees make funny remarks and indulge in a bit of spoof. "*Eh, bien?* So you want to have a physical examination. Good. Come this way."

He pointed to a door. He, too, was determined to have a little joke; he was convinced that I was a woman and directed me to the room in which the medical examination would take place. As he opened the door, he made a guffaw of ridicule. But he who laughs loudest is he who laughs last . . . We would see!

No sooner was I in the room when there were appreciative whistles and cries of alarm. In astonishment, I discovered several dozen youths—some were stripped to the waist, but most of them were completely naked! The arrival of a woman—myself—created havoc. Remarks were tossed about before anyone could do anything.

"Hey, look—the general's daughter has come to greet us!"

"You're wrong—the army has sent us a mascot!"

"No, no! She's our physical training instructor!"

"She can train me all she wants—the Army is going to be more fun than I thought!"

Some who were partially clad then encircled me; others made a hasty retreat, blushing and even swearing, to the far corners of the room. Their hands were nervously placed to conceal the unmentionable. You would have thought that these youths, most of them in their late teenage years, had never seen a woman before. I was nothing special. True, I was pretty and well made-up; but that is not unusual in Paris. Perhaps it was because my figure outlined superbly beneath a full skirt and a clinging cash-

mere sweater. My blonde shoes had stiletto high heels; my hair was a shimmering shade of golden blonde.

One boy, attempting to be witty, said something that was absolutely true, without realizing it. "She's come for a medical so she can join us!"

"How right you are!" I brushed past them, went to another door, knocked and entered when a curt voice told me to do so. An officer, sitting at his desk, studying some papers, did not even look up. "Well, what are you waiting for?" Then he looked up. He shot out of his chair, clicked his heels, bowed as would Von Stroheim.

"Pardon me, *mademoiselle.* Please sit down."

With swaying hips, I sat down, crossing my legs revealingly. He stared at my silken clad knees and I made no move to cover them. It was my intention to clear up any possible misunderstanding. I was about to explain the purpose for my visit when he said,

"I know why you have come here, *Mademoiselle.* You are concerned with a young man who is near and dear to you . . ."

He looked at me, with an expression that makes a woman feel naked. Then he continued, "Is it a relative—your brother perhaps—or your fiancé? Do you know the number of his regiment? Oh, of course you must feel rather embarrassed, *Mademoiselle.*" He made a sly wink. "You must not be upset by those boys outside . . ."

At last I could get in a word. "But I've come here on my own behalf. You see, I've been called up!"

He gave a start. "Called up? By whom? What for? What are you talking about?"

I lowered my eyes modestly. "I've been called up by the army to do my military service."

He burst out laughing. "Really, *Mademoiselle,* the French army has not yet reached the stage of enrolling young ladies as fighters!"

"Very well, *Monsieur,* here are my papers."

He took them from me, studied them carefully, then looked at me again. "Your name is Dufresnoy, I assume. Well, it must mean your brother, *Mademoiselle.* Your brother's name is Jacques."

"No. It means me—because *my* name is Jacques and I have *no* brother at all."

He flushed furiously. He seized his telephone, called headquarters and ordered a doctor to come down to his office at once. Then he turned back to me. "If you are trying to make a fool of me, I'll have you arrested for insulting a military officer who is doing his duty—*Madam*—er, *Monsieur.*"

In a matter of moments, an army doctor burst in. He saluted his superior, bowed to me, then took my hand to kiss it. This was humorous. He thought I was the officer's wife or his daughter. The officer cleared his throat and the hand-kissing ceremony was abruptly cut short.

"Doctor, you are to examine this . . . person."

"Sir?"

The officer's face was purple with rage. "You heard me!"

"But I can't do that!" replied the perplexed doctor. "You know very well that I'm not allowed to examine civilians and this lady . . ."

"She is a man!" snapped the officer.

The doctor now turned purple. It is astonishing how such military men, hardened warriors with years of service, accustomed to danger and the terrible sight of the dead on the battlefield, should always act like virgin schoolboys when they dealt with a man who had female hormones.

The embarrassed doctor did not know how to ask me to undress. I let him stammer for a bit; all the while, the superior officer did not take his eyes off me. Perhaps he

felt humiliated at having been deceived by my appearance. After a while, I started to strip. First I removed my earrings, then my gloves and my skirt. My legs, sheathed in pure silk, were now exposed. The two military men were mesmerized by my striptease act. They caught sight of my swelling breasts, delightfully concealed by a lace bra. In the best striptease manner as taught by the Bernardin school, I unfastened my bra and my curvaceous breasts with their conical tips were exposed in their glorious nakedness.

The officer sighed with relief. "All right, doctor. That will do." He turned to me. "*Mademoiselle,* you could have spared us such a performance. This is a joke in very bad taste. It is obvious that you are not a male. Let me warn you . . ."

"No! You have begun the physical examination. Now you must finish it!" My tone convinced them that I meant what I said. Again, in the best striptease technique, I slipped off first one stocking, then the other. My audience was convinced I was a woman and they were genuinely embarrassed. At last—the crucial moment was at hand. I slipped my fingers around the elastic band of my silken panties. I enjoyed those last few moments; their eyes were firmly fixed on every sensuous move I made. They were waiting . . . waiting for me to disclose my secret. In a shivering movement, my panties slithered down my smooth hips, then lay in a heap on the floor.

The officer staggered backwards. He collapsed on a chair. I thought he was going to have a fit. The doctor swore softly. Both of them stared at me, from the top of my blonde head down to my feminine toes, then at my pelvis and the awesome truth! The doctor gained his senses first and gasped, "This is fantastic! Incredible! I have never seen this before, during my entire career as a physician!" He had to convince himself that what he saw

was real. His medical fingers made an embarrassed examination, after which he stood back and said in a hushed voice, "*Mademoiselle,* I implore you—see a doctor for your . . . uh . . . condition!"

In the costume of Eve, I was transformed into Adam. The balance was in favor of Eve as far as the military was concerned. But legally, I was still regarded as an Adam.

With no hesitation whatever, the doctor signed my papers, after which the officer entered the words: "*Found totally unfit for the French Army.*"

This was my first major victory. Why? Because I was slowly being recognized for what I was soon to become—a woman!

Chapter 11

I PREPARE FOR MY OPERATION

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Throughout my many talks with Coccinelle, there were two points on which she was extremely secretive. The first involved her love affairs with completely masculine and virile males. The second concerned the details of her operation. It took considerable effort to obtain complete information about her operation; but she refused to talk about her love affairs. She already did tell about the romance with Robert but this was her first love and it was of a temporary nature. There was another man, one who meant a great deal to her. Coccinelle had little to say about him. The most I could find out was that it occurred between her ages of 18 and 25. What was this man's name? She refused point-blank to tell me. She had sworn it to secrecy. Some time after this interview was finished, I took a trip to Monte Carlo where I wrote some feature articles on cabaret life in the world's greatest gambling home. I stayed at a pleasant little inn within walking distance of the famed casino.*

One morning, shortly after breakfast, I struck up a conversation with a permanent resident of the inn. When he heard that I had finished the interview with Coccinelle, he remarked, "Ah yes, I remember her. For quite some time, she would be seen in the company of _____. She tried to disguise herself by wearing a black-haired wig and simple clothes, but I recognized her immediately. She and her male companion were quite amorous, if I recall."

Who was the mystery man? I immediately recognized his name as one of the leading financial wizards of Europe, not to mention his phenomenal wealth in the shipping industry. Coccinelle had excellent reasons for not wishing the name to be divulged. Even after I learned the man's identity, I, too, vowed that it would never be disclosed.)

Before I explain about my operation, let me tell you about the one man whom I really loved. This happened *before* my surgical transformation. Was he very much in love with me? My answer is that he presented me with this beautiful suite looking out over Sacré-Coeur. He also helped me with such gifts as the farm, a delightful pink and bright red sports car, imported minks, jewelry.

What did I give him in return? You may not believe it, but our love affair did not reach the point where we shared our bodies. Was I selfish? I don't think so. At the very start I explained that this would be a rather platonic love—or a close friendship. But his feelings toward me went much deeper. And I confess that my reaction was no less passionate. Yes, he was *very* rich. I had only to express a slight wish and it was granted. He never refused me anything. He would attempt the impossible to please me.

There was the problem of our being seen together. We

were both public figures. Because of his international position and reputation, the scandal would have involved much more than an outrage to decency. There would have been a political uproar with nation-wide consequences. So, I would affect a disguise and pretend to be just a friend. We met in very discreet places. He would telephone me, give a cryptic message, and an appointment was made. We foiled the journalists and press photographers. There were many times when we went to Monte Carlo, but never entered the casino or other public places. Our movements were very discreet. A few photographs *may* have been taken but no one ever recognized me since my disguise was so perfect.

The problem of concealment turned it into a back street affair. We both knew that this arrangement could not continue on indefinitely. There was always the risk of discovery. So we decided it would be best to end it all. We no longer see each other but I know he would return to me if I would just say the word. He was wonderful—both as a lover and a spender.

When this affair was over, I began to make plans for my long awaited operation. The success of my female breasts made me optimistic; it *had* to be a successful operation. I knew what this sexual mutilation involved. It would be permanent. There could be no turning back. I also knew the risks involved. If you cut a man's leg off by error, you can never give it back to him. I was fully aware that I was going to lose something that could never be restored; nothing would ever take its place. Once and for all, I would cease to be a male. The decision to undergo the operation was, beyond any shadow of doubt, the greatest decision of my whole life. It is the most crucial decision that any human being can make. And I decided to go through with it.

Since France did not allow any surgeon to perform

this operation, I made inquiries. Both Denmark and Switzerland did (at that time) allow the operation but I preferred a French surgeon. I continued making more inquiries among leading medical specialists and learned that there was *one* reputable surgeon who resided and practiced in Casablanca, North Africa. He could perform the operation since the local laws in Casablanca were more accommodating than those of France. If the doctor were ever to return to France, after such an operation, he would immediately be subject to arrest and punitive action. For this reason, his name cannot be divulged.

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Shortly after the operation was performed, an informer told the newspapers the name of the surgeon in Casablanca—a Dr. Laloy who later freely admitted having operated upon Coccinelle. A maze of legal involvements have left him completely free and he has not yet made any attempts to return to France. Extradition is another completely complicated matter and such proceedings have been delayed indefinitely. Before my return to the States, I placed a long distance telephone call to Dr. Laloy. He told me in cordial terms that medical ethics do not permit him to divulge the nature of a patient's treatment but he did admit without hesitation that he performed the operation upon Coccinelle. Was he going to do the same for any other applicants? He politely declined making an answer and refused to state whether others came to his clinic or if he had made similar operations or intended to make any more.*)

I flew to North Africa where I made an appointment with this surgeon in his Casablanca clinic. After a thorough examination, he told me that he would perform the operation. "*Mademoiselle,* there is every reason to believe that it shall be a satisfactory success—but it is very expensive."

"How much will it cost, doctor?"

"Three million francs!"

It was a shock! It was, without doubt, the most expensive operation in the world. It would take nearly all of my savings, not to mention heavy loans. But I had no choice. My mind was made up.

"You will have to pay a million francs in advance." He held up his hands. "No, no, put away your check book. We mustn't be in a hurry. There are some formalities to observe." He glanced at his desk calendar. "Suppose you come back to see me in just 10 days. By then, we shall be ready to talk further."

The doctor was wise. He thought that this delay would give me a final chance to back out of it. But I had absolutely no desire to retreat. I was prepared to sacrifice the one thing which—for 10 more days—connected me with the male sex. During these 10 days, I would enjoy, for the last time, the pleasure of being a virile man. If I so desired, I could even plant the seed in a woman and eventually become a father. But when that event would occur, I would have died as a male and been resurrected as a female. What would I then be considered? Father . . . mother . . . or—what?

How could there be any doubt? All the anguish of my lonely childhood and adolescence welled up in my throat. It banished any slight hesitation. I was a woman—a woman in behavior, temperament and appearance. I was a woman as far as most of my body was concerned. I was a woman from my waist to the top of my head. I was a woman from my feet up to my groin. After all, there was so little of me that was masculine!

When I returned to the doctor, 10 days later, I told him of my affirmative decision. He had prepared a set of documents for my signature but before handing them to me, he started to dissuade me! He did not point out any

advantages of the operation—rather, he emphasized the drawbacks. He told me that I had nothing to gain by remaining a man, that was true. But he added, "You have everything to lose by becoming a woman!"

Far from discouraging me, he made me all the more convinced that I would have to go through with it. Seeing my obstinacy, he continued to explain, "As I told you before, I shall guarantee that the operation will be successful—but I speak to you as a surgeon on that point. Let me speak to you as a man; or, as one human being to another. Do not go through with it. You see yourself as no longer a member of the male sex, after the operation; you will belong to the female sex. You will become a woman in the real sense of the word. But medical science cannot look into the future. No one knows what your reactions—physical and mental—will be in many years to come."

"You are wasting your words, doctor. My mind is made up."

He persisted, "You have, undoubtedly, thought over the fact that when it is all over, there is not the slightest possibility of ever restoring that which you wish to have removed. Furthermore, you may experience regrets in the future. Then there is the matter of the cost. Is such a financial sacrifice really worthwhile?"

My patience was beginning to wane. "Doctor, let's come to the point. I wish to undergo the transformation and we should begin as soon as possible."

"Very well," he sighed, "if that is what you wish."

He opened a large folder and spread out various papers on his desk. The administrative machine was set in motion. He called in his secretary and several witnesses. There were papers concerning legal clauses, national insurance, health certificates, questionnaires, forms, documents of every description. Nothing was left out. Each paper had to be signed—at the top, at the bottom, on the

right, on the left. The name of Jacques Dufresnoy was untiringly affixed for more than two hours to an endless pile of papers and documents.

I assured, in writing, that this decision was being made of my own free will, with no regrets whatsoever. I even confirmed, in writing, that this decision was reached even after the doctor in charge had tried to dissuade me. I stated that I was in full possession of my faculties; I waived all responsibilities attached to the surgeon, his assistants, the anaesthetist, the nurses, the clinic, even the porters! I made it clear, in a signed and witnessed document, that I fully accepted the idea of becoming sterile. I also stated that I was prepared to run the risk of becoming frigid and void of any sexual response. I also made a solemn pledge that neither I nor my family would ever attempt to make any claim or bring any action against those in charge of the clinic. The last document I signed was a promise that if the operation should not be as successful as anticipated, it would be chalked up as "an experience."

When I finally signed a check for a million francs, my wrist ached. It was finished as far as the administrative and legal aspects were involved. Now the medical points of the case were to be taken care of. I underwent all sorts of examinations and tests. X-rays were taken of my entire anatomy, specifically those regions which would be subjected to the operation. The doctors and medical technicians did their utmost to mentally torture me. They annoyed me, they vexed me, they even embarrassed me in numerous tests which required that I prove my male virility in full view of the others. Perhaps they did this with a sound motive—to see if my resistance would break. It did not.

Next came the psychological tests. These involved long waits, appointments, wearisome interviews, question-

naires, more signatures. The questions were so intimate that I could hardly make any replies.

When was my first sexual awakening? What was my favorite method of sexual relief? Why did I like to play with dolls? Why did I like my mother more than my father? Why and how had I first started to dress as a woman? What were my sexual feelings during my first love affair? Why did I want to become a woman?

Was I a sadist? Masochist? Exhibitionist? Voyeurist? Narcissist? Fetishist? Megalomaniac? Misanthrope? Philogynist? The entire deluge of questions had to be answered in writing, over my signature repeated in quadruple on each and every page. I recognized these questions as being a cowardly attempt to hide behind the safeguards, to guard the medical people involved against each and every contingency. But, in spite of all that, they were eagerly prepared to take my three million francs without witnesses and without psychoanalysts. I cannot say honestly that I blame them. The unusual aspects of the case required all such necessary precautions. But my nerves were stretched taut and there were times when I even lost my temper, to feel regretful about such a childish outburst when it was all over.

There was even a signed agreement that I would go to a psychiatrist *after the operation* so that he could study my reactions and readjustment to my new sex. When I thought the preliminaries were over, the surgeon asked me to see him, in private, in his office.

"Everything is now ready," he looked me straight in the eye. "There is just one more question I must ask you." He clasped his hands together and spoke to me in gentle tones. "For the last time, *Monsieur* Dufresnoy, do you want to go through with the operation?"

I had to make a superhuman effort to control myself. I wanted to explode, to burst out angrily, to stamp my feet,

to tear my hair out, to scream, to collapse into tears. Of course I wanted the operation. That was why I went through everything up until now. But I kept a hold on myself. My instinct forced me to keep calm. An outburst would have spoiled everything. An attack of nerves would show that I was out of my mind, not responsible for my actions. Hence, I would be a person who was in no state to decide the fate of his own body. My whole body became rigid. I clenched my teeth, balled my fists. My temples throbbed. But I did not give way. I did not explode. I stared at the surgeon and in a trembly voice, told him, "Yes, I want to go through with it."

Had he noticed anything? Did he suspect I was fighting against an attack of nerves? Did he see that I had broken three fingernails of my right hand because I clenched it so tightly?

I don't know. I only heard his reply; it was a whisper coming from another world, as if I had just sunk into a torpor:

"The operation will take place tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock."

Closing the door behind me, I bit my lip until I tasted blood; then I burst into tears—tears of complete exhaustion, frustration, grief—and joy!

Chapter 12

WOMAN THAT IS BORN OF A MAN

Weeks . . . no, months—still no—years and years of anticipation would now be rewarded with fulfillment. Shortly before 11 o'clock, I was at the hospital where the operation would take place. They made me take a bath and don a nightdress. A nurse came in my room to shave all hair from my pubic region. I watched her silently and rather sadly. Occasionally I glanced down at a part of me that would soon be removed. Never again would I see it, feel it. There was still time to change my mind but I had not the slightest desire to do so. My decision had been made.

The next nurse was a cold creature. Her face was impassive. It could have been made of ice or granite. She was devoid of human feelings. I did not like her expression. Considering that I was paying three million francs, I felt that I was entitled to a little more consideration. She held a hypodermic syringe for the preliminary injection. She pulled back the bedclothes, stared at my ex-

posed, hairless manhood with absolutely no expression. She found my thigh muscle. There was a slight sensation. The needle was plunged in. Another needle was plunged in my arm.

Everything grew hazy. I felt myself slipping into a dreamless void. Before it all went blank I had one final fleeting thought. I was going to sleep as a man . . . I would awaken as a woman . . .

I regained consciousness about three days later. Of course, I came round a few times before then but I have no recollection of it. Each period of consciousness was very short since a series of injections were administered. I was treated with a special post-anaesthetic preparation to keep me in a state of prolonged artificial sleep.

"It was necessary," explained the doctor later on, "because the shock of the operation would have been impossible for you to have endured. You have no cognizance of the pain. It is agonizingly unbearable."

When the doctor spoke to me, I heard what he said, but I hardly listened. I lay moaning with pain. I did not cry out. I was too weak to do so. The pain was so terrible that I imagined myself tasting the tortures of Dante's *Inferno.* Not only did my pubic region pain me, but my head, arms, legs, back—everything was a mass of punishing agony. My whole body was burning, clammy, completely exhausted. Each breath I took made me feel as if a sharp sword were being thrust right into me up to the hilt. Lying in bed, stretched out, I yearned to try and curl up, to try and ease the part where the pain was worst. But this was impossible. The doctors had forseen this desire. Strong leather straps held me firmly in position. Movement was out of the question. I suffered martyrdom. It was not unexpected. They had told me to expect this.

The operation was in several stages. From start to fin-

ish, it was plain torture. I found myself wondering if any other operation could entail more suffering. The doctor said that unwilling castration in male or female is the most painful. What could I answer to that?

Time passed slowly. After a few weeks, the flaming intensity of the pain began to diminish. Gradually, the hideous nightmare faded into an unpleasant memory. My new sex organs were trained to carry out their new and vital functions, all except one: they had forgotten to teach me how to make love—as a woman, that is!

The details of the operation are very sensitive. They are best described in general terms. I shall use the same figurative language that my doctor had used. Imagine the reverse of a banana that is skinned. The inside, in my case, was discarded—but the outer skin was carefully kept!

The penis was cut open for the whole of its length of the outer covering. This incision was made back and front. The organ was then "skinned." The skin was retained but the rest, that is the spongy tissue and interior, was disposed of. Certain blood vessels were cut and joined up again elsewhere. The ureter was re-positioned. The scrotum containing the testicles was completely removed and discarded.

The second stage of this operation consisted in forming a female vagina. This was comparatively facile when you consider that all female organs are possessed by the male in a very rudimentary, vestigial form. The surgeon made a small orifice in my body; he removed the muscular extension of my sex organ. The walls of this orifice were then lined with the skin which had formerly covered the penis. Now you see why it is so vital that this skin must be retained. When this was done, a cylindrical-shaped plug was inserted inside this new orifice so that the flesh on either side would not adhere as it healed and seal off the

vaginal passage. For two weeks, this temporary plug was left in its position. When it was removed, I had a vagina.

My experience may be compared to that of the ex-soldier from America who underwent sexual transformation in Copenhagen, Denmark. But there is one major difference. Her vagina was made of a plastic material. My vagina is flesh—my own flesh! In fact, the process is like turning the finger of a glove outside in. My vagina is not artificial. It is natural, having been made from my own flesh. It responds to stimulation with as much fervor as the vagina of a natural-born female. Because of this phenomenon, it is regarded as a triumph of surgical skill. It has been the subject of admiring comment among leading medical men throughout the world.

Without being vain, I am proud to state that I am the only person in the world to enjoy the benefits of such a perfectly made vagina.

A later operation shifted the position of the prostrate gland and the seminal vesicle so they would not interfere with the arrival of the new organs and also help in creation of pleasure. To form a clitoris, a whole system of delicate nerve ramifications was grafted at the upper extremity of the opening. This aided in creating pleasurable sensual reactions as a normal woman is entitled to receive. The success of the operation is unbelievable. In fact, although I cannot menstruate, I experience the same "monthly symptoms" and have vague pains, for about five or six days. While I cannot bear children, there are many naturally born females who are also infertile. There is comparatively little difference between myself and another female, other than that of fertility.

The operation was over. The period of long convalescence was at an end. When I flew back to Paris, there was only one uppermost thought. I would see Robert. You may recall (see Chapter 9) that at 19, he was my first love. I still loved him. Now that I was a complete woman,

he could love me as he desired to do so. But it was a shocking tragedy. He looked at me as though I were a strange being. I was a sexless creature, neither male nor female. He could not accept me as a woman. When I had been a man, he still could not completely accept me. There were several terrible quarrels. In the end, we decided it was all over between us.

Looking back at it all, I could not blame him. He was totally unprepared for my sex transformation. He did not understand it. Perhaps he feared me since we all hate what we fear. For a while, I was in such a state of depression that suicide seemed the only remedy. It required extensive psychiatric treatment, more rest at a nursing home and sheer will power to pull myself together. After some time, the emotional shock subsided. The pains were over. The past was gone, I vowed. Now the future lay ahead. Back at the *Carrousel,* my appearance brought in new crowds. Truthfully speaking, my operation made me a female. I was no longer a *travesti* or female impersonator. For professional reasons, I let my audience think of me as a *travesti.* At least, for a while longer.

Then I met Francis Bonnet, a French photographer. From the start, we knew we were in love. He heard the details of my operation and accepted me as a full woman. We have a lot in common. I met his parents. They don't know who I really am. They would never dream that at one time I was a man. We became engaged. Then we started a wrangle of legal complications to have myself declared as a female. This was most difficult. Both Francis and I had to appear before endless judges and government officials. At last, on December 10, 1961, France granted me legal status as a woman. Several days later, Francis and I applied for our marriage license. We already have set the wedding date.

Once again, I am not being vain by stating that I am the only such person in the world to be officially recog-

nized as a female. With regards to that ex-soldier from America who underwent a sex transformation, she cannot get married because her country regards her as a male. Physically, she is a woman. Officially, she is a male—so how can there be a marriage? How can a woman regarded as a male get married to a male? Confusing, isn't it? Speaking realistically, America has a problem. If America officially declares that ex-soldier as a female, it would create a precedent. Others might undergo the same operation. Perhaps they should *not* be permitted a sex transformation. Since each case is so different, American laws are strict. They have to be.

Many have wondered about my sexual experiences. They ask me what it feels like to have a reversal in sex roles. Do I prefer the active role of yesterday or the passive role of today? Is my pleasure really physical and not mental—is my sexual pleasure a fact or the result of autosuggestion?

Let me explain that no physician or psychiatrist could teach me sex. They did explain that at first it would be a painful experience. I expected this; of course, it is unpleasant to experience pain when one should enjoy pleasure. But my new sex organs could be compared to a new car—it cannot be driven "all out" at the start. It has to be "broken in." In my case, it was not a question of mileage but a problem of time—and experience. The operation made me a physical woman—but mentally, I was a virgin!

My past experiences as a male were worthless. In fact, they were a handicap since I had to dissolve all male attitudes of mind. This required deliberate will power. Of course, I already had certain feminine tendencies. I'd had them since the early days when, as a child, I would play with dolls. But these tendencies had been perfectly natural. Also, no matter how you look at it, I had always

been a male who acted as a female. Now I was a female—and had to act as a female. There is quite a difference. Of course, before my operation, I was far from being a passive creature. Sexually, I *gave* pleasure more than receiving it. It is a paradoxical condition; I had all of the outward appearances of a woman but I *gave* pleasure as would a male. It is not too unusual. Many men with marked feminine tendencies (some are hermaphrodites) feel just as I did but act differently. They feel they have to do what is expected of them by virtue of their status and feminine manners.

For example, during love, they may be physically capable of acting as males (although they hate to do so), yet they are ashamed of this ability. To play the active role is contrary to their feminine tendencies. They deliberately avoid the active role and this entails loss of pleasure.

Some have such an overpowering desire to be feminine that they just refuse to make love like a man! It goes against the grain, so to speak. Such people are victims of their own peculiar ideas. Furthermore, many of these are feminine *only* in their imagination. They lack the bodies and sexual components of the female.

Look at it this way: when you have the broad shoulders of a lumberjack, the muscles of a Tarzan, a large size in shoes, the voice of a top sergeant, the physique of a Mr. America, it is ridiculous to say you are a feminine person! You are anything but feminine when you are as masculine as all that.

In my case, I was feminine in my physical make-up, as has already been explained. I behaved like a woman. I thought like a woman. But I remained a "man" when circumstances—and privacy—permitted. Nature endowed me with the necessary attributes to start with.

My transition from male to female makes me an excel-

lent lover; I am superior to someone who was born a woman. Why? Because I have the rare advantage of knowing only too well a man's reactions, the most intimate ones, the most secret desires, the capabilities, preferences, weaknesses, tastes, and so forth. Don't forget that I was once a male. I know how a male enjoys pleasure. I know what he likes and does not like.

I know the male's sensitive areas; I know his most vulnerable ones. I know how to charm him, to hold him, to captivate him, bewitch him. Why? Because I experienced them myself. I shall make this confession to you. Since I had only a few days left as a male, I decided to enjoy myself to the full. I carried out the last wishes of a "condemned" man and experienced physical pleasure with a female. It was my last experience as a male. Today, I know how I, as a male, felt. That is why I can provide pleasure for a male.

The first three months meant little to me. There was *no* physical pleasure whatever, except a curious sensation of penetration and internal friction. My doctor said it was a normal reaction. He consulted a special chart he had prepared, running a slender pencil down a graph line, then looked at me and said,

"*Mademoiselle* Coccinelle, you will begin to experience true feminine pleasure within 30 days."

On the evening of that day, I was ready for this long awaited event. I was impatient. I was curious. When it was over, the doctor had proven himself correct. That first night of love brought me an exciting revelation and transported me to . . . seventh heaven. Was it hypnosis? Auto-suggestion? I cannot say. Perhaps. But what does it matter? The result is all that truly matters.

What are my plans for the future? After my marriage to Francis Bonnet, we are going to do a film together, about my whole life. We will probably make it in Italy. I've already appeared opposite Blasetti in *Europe By*

Night. My role was small, but it helped me adjust to the camera's eye. After this film of my life's story, we want to take a trip around the world. We'll visit India, Japan, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and, perhaps, even the United States.

My ultimate plans call for the opening of a restaurant in Paris. It will be called *Chez Coccinelle.* The food will be superb since I want my restaurant to be known as a favorite spot for *gourmets* and *gourmands.*

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Early in 1962, Coccinelle and Francis Bonnet were legally married. The wedding, to which I was invited, was attended by leading figures in show business from all parts of the world. When the ceremony was over and the beautiful six-tiered wedding cake was cut, Coccinelle handed me a delicious portion, then smiled and asked, "Well,* Monsieur *Wade, did you ever attend a wedding such as this one?" I had to admit that I did not. It was the first such wedding I had ever written about. But it made me wonder: would it be the last?*)

My greatest (and only) disappointment in life is that I can never have a child. Once I might have been a father, but never a mother. Now I am incapable of being either. But my plans call for adoption of a child. I may find it strange to be called Mommy rather than Daddy! In any case, I shan't adopt boys. They're too noisy. I love girls as much as I dislike boys. Francis agrees with me. No matter what happens, I know that my future will be filled with happiness. It cannot be otherwise.

* * *

The interview was over. Jacques Charles Dufresnoy, now Coccinelle, had surrendered the whole life's secret to me. But I was filled with conjectures. Was Coccinelle truly happy? I have seen her pensive, listless, alone with her own thoughts; she was melancholy, the picture of being weighed down with cares and, who knows?, even re-

gretting her former life when she was a male. On the other hand, I have seen her happy, gay, in love with life, tossing off champagne, laughing at men, at life, at the whole world. Perhaps, even laughing at me!

Well then? What are we to think? To what extent must I take into account these extraordinary testimonies? Coccinelle must have gone through a time of crisis when she could not adapt herself, when she was in despair and, perhaps, regretted her transformation as a female. But these reasons may not be those which are generally ascribed to her. It may have very well been the result of her unhappy love affair about which she had spoken to me. No one will ever know for certain.

Had I just discovered the truth about an international hoax or about the most impressive success against Nature's mistake? Nature is blind. But she is also wise. To what extent had Monsieur Jacques Dufresnoy become a woman? To what extent had Coccinelle remained—just a little—a man? Man-woman? Or woman-man? Which of the two? Nature or the power of homo sapiens? Which has the last word?

Are there certain ineradicable indications that cannot be altered, attacked, defiled? Indications that nothing in the world, not even the genius of man which is both destroyer and creator, can destroy forever?

Could Jacques Dufresnoy, the most beautiful travesti in the world, regret his mutilation—or come to regret it some day? Did Coccinelle-Dufresnoy win or lose her pathetic wager, the dramatic conflict that was fought with her imprecise body as the battlefield?

Had she deliberately condemned herself to the anguish of living in a state of perpetual regret or to lifelong happiness? That is the great question; it is a question that the pride and prestige of one of God's creatures—and of the surgeons—condemn to remain unanswered.

CARLSON WADE



CARLSON WADE is one of America's most prolific authors with a writing schedule of nearly a half-million words a year. His articles on show people and theatre life have appeared in many important publications throughout the world. Among his best-selling books dealing with the psycho-sexual field are *Erotic Symbolism*, *Transvestism Today*, *Sexual Sadism*, *Sexual Masochism* and *Your Sex Problems in Marriage*. Much of his work in this field has been in collaboration with Dr. Edward Podolsky, world-famed psychologist. At present, his efforts are devoted to being a literary agent in New York City.