

The making of a drag queen

Before

After

The Clackamas Print sends a reporter deep undercover to give the scoop on what it takes to be a drag queen

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The Clackamas Print

So I was sitting backstage in a dress, waiting for my cue to go on, and all I could think was "God, these heels are murder."

I was participating in Clackamas' first ever drag show. Yes, as in men in women's clothing (and vice versa). I figured, "How many times in my life am I going to get the opportunity to put on a dress and dance my ass off on stage?"

I signed up with the Rainbow Club Advisor Carol Burnell. My drag name was "Starlet," and I was going to perform to Abba's "Dancing Queen."

Of course, there's more to being a drag queen than slapping on a dress and a wig. Take my word for it. Perhaps the hardest thing for an actor is to play the opposite sex, and to be a good drag queen you have to believe in yourself fully, look in the mirror and say "I'm the most glamorous bitch in the world."

But finding an outfit is no walk in the park either. I am by no means feminine; my shoulders are too broad, and my hips are square. Most dresses I tried on got stuck halfway over my face. By the grace of God alone I found a pair of heels that fit, and I thanked Him for that sasquatch-footed woman.

The night before the show I strapped on my heels and cued up "Dancing Queen," the anthem to my drag odyssey. My girlfriend watched me strut around the living room for a little while, but soon she left. It was just me and Abba.

The next morning I headed to the bathroom to change. Two of the other drag contestants were already there, shaving their legs. As I squeezed into my little black dress a man walked into the bathroom, took a look at the scene and said, "scuze me ... ladies," as he strode by.

Backstage, women applied mustaches and men applied blush. Three professional drag queens were there to perform as well as judge the contest. When I saw them in their full attire - glorious wigs, tiaras, flowing dresses - I realized I was a Kinkadee in the presence of Rembrants, a Danielle Steele among Faulkners.

How was I supposed to compete? I realized I couldn't, but I was still going to be fabulous. A scene from John Water's "Pink Flamingos" flashed through my head as I anxiously waited to go on; in the movie, a reporter asks the ultra-glam drag queen Divine if she believes in God. She replies, "I am God."

With that in mind, I stormed the stage as "Dancing Queen" echoed throughout the Community Center. Men swooned, and women wished they were me. It's safe to say in retrospect that there has never been, or ever will be, such a fine performance of Abba, not even by Abba.

Was I disappointed when the first place award went to another contestant? No, I channeled my inner diva and came to the only possible conclusion: I was too good for that show, and everyone knew it.

I would say "next year," but I've already moved beyond that show. From here, it's all the way to the top, baby.



Jeff Sorensen Clackamas Print

See that girl, watch that scene, diggin' the Dancing Queen.



Nobody said being pretty was easy.



"Are my boobs on straight?"

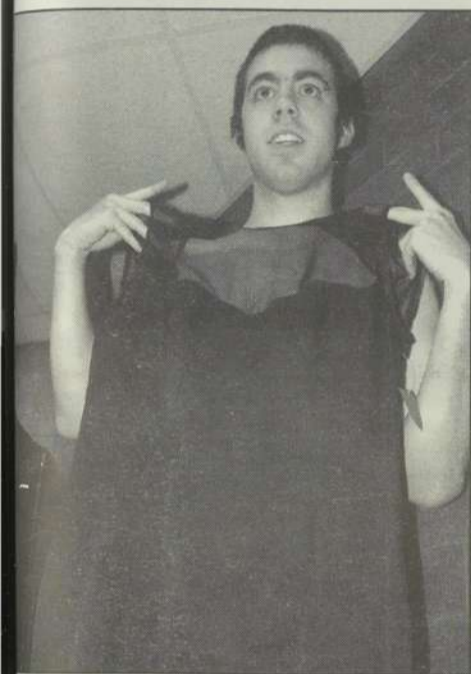


Photos by Adam J. Mantey Clackamas Print

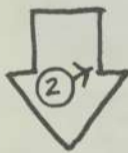
He's bound to catch a sailor with these nets.



Cinderella at the ball, it's all about the shoes.



The little black dress.



of practice finally pay off.

