

FREDA PAYNE

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has, in fact, the very same qualities and background that helped push another lean, lanky, big-eyed little girl—Diana Ross—to stardom. Indeed, she shares so many things in common with Diana, it's positively frightening—especially when Freda may very well be verging on the same mistakes Diana has been making lately. And they are mistakes which could become professionally fatal.

Both Freda and Diana were born in Detroit, Michigan. Diana's first hit with the Supremes, was "Where Did Our Love Go?" It was a tune by Eddie and Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier—the same team who put together Freda's "Band of Gold." Both girls have been successful as nightclub entertainers; both have aspirations to do Broadway musicals. (Surprisingly enough, Freda has come closer to that realization than the more famous Diana. She was Leslie Uggums' understudy in *Hallelujah Baby* several years ago, and got to play the lead many times.)

In each of the girls, talent was apparent at a very early age, and both did their stint in the school-and-church musical events. And there is a very definite resemblance between the tiny, slender ladies with the huge, melting eyes.

But these are only surface similarities, really—although there seem to be enough to almost believe, whether by accident or design, that Freda is following in Diana's footsteps. But it is *one* of Diana's experiences—later to be followed in almost exact detail by Freda—which has us worried. It has us screaming, in fact, "Please, Freda—don't do a Diana!"

It was only recently that Freda took a little job which landed her right smack in the middle of the city of love—Paris—a trip Diana had taken just little while back. And Freda's day-and-night escort, in and around the capital of romance, was the very same chap who performed the same service for Diana when she went there on her own for the very first time.

His name is Andre Oliver, and if you haven't heard of him—they sure have in Paris! He is right-hand-man to fabulous designer Pierre Cardin. Remember him? He's the one who first put us all in boots and miniskirts. Well, whatever comes out with a Cardin label that Pierre himself didn't put together, Andre did. And that makes Andre the favorite man-about-town—the rage, in fact with loads of fashiony Parisiennes, and one of the foremost social butterflies flitting around all those marble walls and halls and stuff.

Well, to make a long story short,

when Diana popped into Paris as a solo, Andre was right on hand to show her the ropes and the right folks and all of that stuff that is so important to people over there. Diana met and was wined and dined by not just the usual show biz types. You'd expect that anyway. But the hosts and hostesses this time were top-level society, the people with the titles and the palaces and the pedigrees. It was very heady stuff, to say the least, for a girl not that long out of a housing project in Detroit, Michigan.

Did it all go to Diana's head in such a way that she began making boo-boos for the first time in her dazzling career? There are folks, who used to be very close to Diana, who swear that that's exactly what happened. They haven't been able to pinpoint just what the changes have been in her to make her do some of the things she does. And probably only the lady herself can do that—if ever she decides she will. But that fact is that many of Diana's bubbles began to burst after Paris—and Andre's super hosting service there. There is the fued and huge law suit with ex-Supreme, Florence Ballard, still hanging over her head as we go to press. And Florence's references to Diana are none too flattering personally and professionally. And there is—though Diana never mentions it—her disappointment with the speed at which her career is rising without the Supremes. They, in fact, are reportedly doing better than she is. And like we said—all after Andre and Paris.

Now here's where the plot thickens. Andre not only repeated a triumphal entry into Paris—Freda as he had for Diana, he went even further. Diana went to parties at the Rothschilds' fabled estate; those social lions are invited to a party *for* Freda. And most incredible of all, not only the social cream of Paris at this do—but the President of France and his wife. Now, are you ready for that kind of thing? More important, was Freda? Here's another American girl, this one just getting used to being acclaimed a star, and Oliver puts the whole country at her feet. It really could be enough to turn a person's head.

But Freda, when asked about all these fancy goings-on in her behalf, giggled how she felt "It's better than hunting for bullfrogs in upstate Michigan," she said, "which is what I used to be doing around this time of the year."

Well, if she keeps her sense of humor, that should help. It usually gives a person some perspective and a sense of balance if they don't take themselves too seriously, when the world seems to be going absolutely wild over them. And to have the President of France show up for your little party must seem a little out-of-the-ordinary, especially to a for-

mer bullfrog hunter who's spent most of her life overcoming and paying dues.

And he was only one of the more important celebrities among the lesser luminaries were folk like, Alain Delon, Brigitte Bardot, Jean Paul Belmondo, Ursula Andress, Yves Montand, Simone Signoret, Yul Brynner, and all the rest of the movie heavies. Some of these people haven't spoken to each other for years, and to really add to the spice, Andre had invited people who are dating each other's exes. Oh, that French wit and curiosity all the political and social biggies and beauties rounded things out. Well, if Freda can hold her own in company like that, maybe she will be all right.

She seems to have a mind of her own, you have to say that. Even though that party included the aforementioned Pierre Cardin and Marc Bohan, who designs for Christian Dior, Freda's opening night gown was the work of an American designing team.

Since returning from her undeniable Paris triumph, Freda has released a new single that's already a hit, "Bring the Boys Back Home." That shows that her heart is still in the right place. There are no ominous whisperings, and so far nothing to indicate that the experience has turned her around. Perhaps she's already taken heed of what's happened to that gal who went down the pike just before she did. Let's hope so. •

SHIRLEY & DAVID

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proud to have him for my son."

"Does David come to visit often?" I asked.

Shirley re-filled our glasses with iced tea as she continued to talk about her very popular step-son. "Yes David is a guest in our home quite often."

"How did you and his father feel when he first moved out?"

"As parents," she admitted, "we were a little apprehensive, but we both knew that it would hurt David if we babied him and held him back. He is a young man who is very able to take care of himself. He grew up and matured very fast. It could be because his own mother, his father and I never babied him. We let him do things his way and become his own man."

"It worked, too," said Shirley. "David leaned on us more than if we had pushed him to do things our way. When he decided to take his own apartment, he came to Jack and me to discuss it. We weighted the pros and cons and decided it was an okay idea. Now it seems that David is even closer to us than be-