

18 promote their toiletries. Although she felt overawed by the *Time* journalists and uncomfortable with the profile itself, she remembers a sense of compensation for some of the torments of her teenage years. At school she did not shine as a student, and was picked on by her classmates because of her athletic ability. 'I was always coming home in tears then,' she remembers, 'but when I saw myself on the cover of *Time* I thought of all those people and the way they'd treated me, and I thought "That's it – I've done it to you." It was a great feeling.'

★ 'When you're on stage and forty or fifty thousand people are screaming that they love you, it's an incredible high.' David Cassidy, singer.

In the early days of fame there is often an intoxicating rush of elation which can overwhelm the most stable personalities. The initial high can last a year or two, and however much doubt and disorientation the newly born star feels, or however mixed the public response to them is, it feels like a powerful boost of pure happiness. Sometimes the boost is too powerful. Here, from his autobiography *Snakes and Ladders*, is Dirk Bogarde's memory of his first taste of fame.

'My adventure had begun and I really rather liked it all. There was one gently worrying doubt, however. Just one. Who the hell was I? More important still, what was I? I had known, to be sure, who I *had* been – the brave little Captain, the hopeful novice actor – but now there was a vast vacuum and in spite of a house, a car, all my family and possessions, I belonged nowhere. Unproven as an actor and, worse still, in the brand new life which I had entered, quite unproven as a man.

'Old friends, such as I had, began to fall away. Uncomfortable in my new found riches, embarrassed by my sudden new classification – so far completely undeserved – as a Film Star, they left me to get on with my new inheritance. The trouble was I had no friends there either. I knew I bored the people I now had to mix with, and in desperation and in fear, I started to drink too much, hoping this would give me courage.

'Insecurity, that overworked word, swamped me. I made friends among the rag-tag-and-bobtail of the profession. I happily played the role of host to my Court of small-part actors, extras, hairdressers' assistants and noisy girls from the Publicity Pool at the Studio. I enjoyed their flattery, inaccurate gossip, false deference, and above all delighted in the respectful silence with which they patiently listened to my wild improbable theories about a profession of which I knew absolutely nothing. It's just that they made me feel Big.

48 demonstrates is that a man's sexual attraction is largely a matter of visibility and conditioning. Although hailed as a sex symbol from Norway to New Zealand, Shaw was several times turned down for roles in US productions because the producers didn't consider him handsome or sexy *enough* – *The Professionals* was not widely screened in America. His response was to try harder to fulfil the sex-symbol stereotype.

★ Barry Manilow tells the story of his grandmother saying to him, 'Barry, you were always a clever boy and I knew you would be a success. You were always talented, and I knew you'd be famous. But how you got to be sexy and good-looking, I'll never understand.'

'I don't think that outer perception of me as a sex symbol damages my inner perception of my own sexuality because I don't know where it all comes from. It's just literally a blessing. I don't really believe in it, and because I can see how unreal it is, I don't attach importance to it at all.

'In a way perhaps the negative thing is that the inner doesn't recognise the outer *enough*. Because the last time I was put up for a big film role, I was told that I hadn't got it because I wasn't conventionally handsome. I started to feel sorry for myself. I thought, if that's the game that has to be played, instead of protesting "Oh, I'm a real person," I will play the game. That's when I went to the gym more, and started working out, and got my clothes in order, because I thought I wanted to be part of that market. So I've started to play the game more, but it *is* a game, I don't believe in it. About two years ago, I was in Australia and someone phoned me up to tell me I had been voted the man with the most attractive backside in England. I don't know how to respond to that. I'm genuinely bewildered by it, I mean, what a load of nonsense.'

The singer David Cassidy also found the experience of being a sex symbol disturbing.

'It was quite incredible, unreal almost. Apparently I had the kind of looks which sent young girls into ecstasies and in no time at all, as soon as I became a pop singer, I was mobbed wherever I went.

'In Los Angeles where I lived, I had to change apartments three times in one year because there were always crowds of girls waiting for me. I enjoyed it to a degree, yes. I enjoyed the fact that I could have any woman I wanted and that wherever I went people made a fuss of me. But despite the crowds, or probably because of them, I went through periods of loneliness and depression. It was all too much,