

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

A Rosy Future

Vanna refused to talk about losing John. When friends tried to console her, she replied softly: "This isn't the first tragedy in my life. All I can do is keep moving. Keep working. It doesn't take any of the hurt or pain away. There are just some things that only time can help."

So many friends and fans called her to express their sympathy that she was forced to change her phone number to stem the outpouring of condolences. All the well-wishers only brought her anguish back anew.

She missed only one day's work on *Wheel of Fortune*, and went on about her duties promoting the show with a smile on her face; but, try as she would, she couldn't mask the pain in her eyes.

"After John died Vanna seemed terribly sad," says a movie art director who had met her at Hugh Hefner's mansion. "She didn't come up to Hef's for about two weeks after the accident, and when she finally did show up, her brother Chip escorted her so she wouldn't have to go there alone.

"The first time she came back, she was being very quiet and introspective. People came up and offered their condolences, and she would smile a little, but she was never weepy.

"Later, Patrick and David Cassidy came in, and I overheard her say, 'My God, David Cassidy! I had a crush on him when I was a child.' A little later I noticed him telling her about the shock he had suffered when his father burned

to death. They sat down and put their heads together, and he was obviously consoling her and giving her advice on how to deal with the pain she was going through."

Vanna had made a commitment to be the grand marshal of Myrtle Beach's Sun Fun Festival. Though she had expected to perform the role together with John, she pushed down her heartbreak and bravely went alone. She fulfilled all her official duties wearing a smile, but kept to herself the rest of the time.

In sad irony, just as Vanna gathered together the shreds of her life, her fame was growing by leaps and bounds. How she longed for someone to share all her happiness and good fortune with! She's been spotted out on the town with several eligible bachelors—including actor Corbin Bernsen of *L.A. Law*, *Hollywood Reporter* writer Richard Hack, and *Fame* star Billy Hutsey—but none of them could fill the hole in her heart left gaping open by John's death.

Since her fans had been clamoring hungrily for a poster, she decided that the modeling sessions would help take her mind off her loss.

She did some shots in a swimsuit first, showing her incredibly sexy body off to its full advantage, but then, upon seeing the proof sheets, nixed the idea. A poster of her wearing a bathing suit was just too ordinary, Vanna decided. Anyway, it didn't express the real her. Her desire for something more representative soon found her lying in a bed of hay, her workshirt cunningly tied up just under her breasts and her midriff peeping out above her tight jeans. The Jane Russell-like pose sold more than a hundred thousand copies at \$3.50 each.

Following the success of the first poster, she opted for a radically different style for her second one, going from down-home country to a big-city "Cosmos-girl" look. Her pose has her hair swept up in a tumble on her head, and she is dressed in a sultry clinging black dress with a revealing cutout neckline.

Vanna likes to look sexy and slightly come-hither, but she is opposed to modeling in the nude.