

DOROTHY COLLINS



LIONESS OR LAMB?



There was an air of expectancy as the pretty blonde singer stood in the spotlight, waiting for the applause to end.

"You've seen me like this for a long time," she said finally, taking in her blouse and skirt outfit with a single wave of her hand. "But beneath this sissy blouse beats the heart of a lioness, not the heart of a lamb!" And with a few quick movements both blouse and skirt were off, and there stood "America's sweetheart" in a clinging, sophisticated black sheath with a neckline that was for her a real plunger!

Dorothy Collins wowed 'em that night in Las Vegas. Her return to television last month wasn't quite so dramatic, but for both these events, she gratefully "knocks wood." You don't have to have been a week-in-week-out viewer of the old *Hit Parade* to notice there've been some changes made. And you certainly don't need any columnist's brainwashing about a "new" Dorothy Collins, either. That "new" pitch is so much drivel.

"It's all an act," she explained with a gesture that made it obvious she's up to her ears in that kind of talk. "There is no such thing as a NEW Dorothy Collins. You can get a new hairstyle, wear a different type dress, sing a different song, but you're still the same person. After all, I looked the same for seven long years. That might be all right for a man, but a woman needs some changes. And then there were those rumors," she shuddered.

The rumors she scoffs--and with reason--explained away her high necklines by suggesting she had a skin infection or a battleship tattoo she was hiding. "I wore some *low* necklines on the old *Hit Parade*, but no one seems to remember". I thought maybe I'd get some bad mail with the new hairdo and all, but I haven't yet," she sighed--and again knocked wood.

Don't get me wrong--Dorothy's *not* superstitious. It's just that she's a wood knocker, so much so that she seems to punctuate her sentences with a light knuckle to the table--or the door frame -----or any other wooden object within reach.

"I'm still a casual clothes girl," she insisted. "I'm uncomfortable dressed up or down might be a better word. The Las Vegas show wasn't meant to be a shocker, but the newspapers said I did a 'strip' and my mother called from Florida and my father wouldn't talk to *me!* It was just an act. This year my nightclub wardrobe has nice necklines with little straps. From now on I want to wear all kinds of clothes. And I don't care *what* they say, I WON'T do anything in bad taste!" she asserted, banging her fist on the table with what I'd bet to be about as much anger as Dorothy ever musters. Canadian-born Dorothy sort of grew up on the old *Hit Parade*, starting as a young girl in 1950, continuing after her marriage to Raymond Scott in 1952 and the birth of her first child, Debbie, in October, 1954. But her audience still thought of her as the cute girl next door. "Somewhere along the way you have to grow up in your career as well as in real life," she explained. Her nightclub act took care of the career. Off camera she matured through her adored family--Raymond, Debbie, now four, and little Elizabeth, who was born last June.

"Debbie looks like Raymond, and Elizabeth looks like me," she gushed in typical maternal fashion, taking some dog-eared snapshots out of her purse. "We prepared Debbie for the new baby. In fact, she wanted a brother *and* sister. We're so happy with Elizabeth. Raymond *wanted* another girl."

"Debbie started to nursery school this year and I only had to stay with her *two days*, 'she glowed. "They said she's very well adjusted." And there was the now familiar knock knock on the table.

Dorothy loves her family so much that it keeps her busy spending as much time as possible with them and continuing her career, to boot. So she just doesn't have time to worry about the naughty-or-nice stories. Her summer tour in *Oklahoma* whet her appetite for more stage work. "But I was soooo homesick," she sighed. "I missed Raymond and Debbie like anything."

A 30-hour day might've solved some problems these past few months, what with all the rehearsals ~or the new *Hit Parade*, which costars her with Johnny Desmond; rehearsals for guest spots with both Ed Sullivan and Steve Allen ("I'm friends with both of them"); a two-week nightclub engagement in Pittsburgh, Pa., where her earlier appearance had attracted as much attention as that of Bob Hope (knock wood). She got back to New York in time to hop a London plane, back again in time for final TV rehearsals. And somewhere in between she cut an album, *Won't You Spend Christmas With Me*.

And it isn't going to get any better-time wise--since her career seems headed for outer space. At the end of November she'll be hostess and lady huckster for the two-hour *Wonderful Town* spec. Her new video contract allows her to take eight weeks off to make a movie, if the occasion arises, and with acting her newest love, who can tell.

Through it all Dorothy claims she hasn't changed, but that's not quite true. A few years back she was too shy to wear her favorite color, red. Not so today. And when she and Raymond were married she wore a plain gold band. "I didn't think I was the diamond type," she explained. Now there's a band of platinum and tiny diamonds on her third finger, left hand, and a stunning solitaire on her right hand--both gifts from Raymond, who obviously thinks she *is* the diamond type, at least sometimes.

But there's still a lot of the gold-band type about her. Early this year, when she was expecting Elizabeth, Dorothy had to give up three good stage, TV and movie roles.

"But I got Elizabeth instead," she smiled, "and she's nicer. Babies are so wonderful."

Now I ask you, does that sound like a lioness? Not on your life! This girl's all lamb, and the sophisticated gowns, torchy songs and vampish looks are part of her act. Dorothy Collins is still pretty much the same as she was when you dubbed her "America's sweetheart"—*knock wood!*



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HOME. Baby Elizabeth, 4-year-old Debbie and Raymond Scott book Dorothy's heart solid, even when work takes her far from home.