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IV. THE DARK QUEEN: MITZAH BRICARD

For a fashion muse to exist, she requires avid enthusiasm from a designer. And Dior more than proved this with Mitzah Bricard, by championing her cause and heralding her taste. "Her high standards are inflexible," he enthused in *Dior by Dior*. "In fashion she remains immediately for the most marked expression of that indefinable, and perhaps slightly neglected, thing called chic." He relished how she was "completely cosmopolitan in her elegance," and due to "gazing at life from the windows of the Ritz" was "superbly indifferent to such mundane considerations as politics, finance, and social change."

Madame Bricard, who was officially in charge of the hats that fitted in with Dior's dictum that "a woman without a hat is not completely dressed," mustered up an aura of glamour in his studio. Whereas Madame Raymond and others were sensibly dressed to the point of being spinster-like, she vamped it up and played the role of *femme fatale*. Always in her *blouse blanche*, Madame Bricard made her look significantly daring by showing lots of skin, sporting only her corset, and her stockings. "Her behavior was fairly outrageous," remembered the model Lia Lucas, then her junior by about 30 years. Yet such choice of attire drew attention to her jewelry. "Her collection was quite wonderful," recalled Countess Cristiana Brundolini, a Dior client from Venice. Madame Bricard's favorite pieces included a coral rose from Cartier that blinked with diamonds, a necklace that boasted fourteen rows of pearls, and a sapphire the size of a baby's fist that hung around her swan-like neck, and was part of a large baroque pearl arrangement. There were also her brooches. "She used to pin her turbans with Indian miniatures composed of emeralds," said Jean-Louis Scherrer.

OPPOSITE Photographed by the legendary Cecil Beaton, Dior's ever-inspiring muse, the bejewelled and turbaned Mitzah Bricard flouted the leopard print that she introduced to Dior's fashion world.

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Monsieur Dior

Once Upon A Time

By Natasha Fraser-Cavassoni

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Monsieur Dior: Once Upon A Time is an exclusive behind-the-scenes look into the ten years Christian Dior ran his esteemed house. As women were starved for glamour following World War II, Dior's New Look was revolutionary in bringing femininity back to fashion with a bold use of fabric and silhouetted lines. In the short time he ran the house, Dior rose to superstardom and managed to expand his empire to perfumes, jewelry, and hosiery while opening boutiques all over the world. Author Natasha Fraser-Cavassoni interviewed dozens of people who had a direct relationship with the fashion designer such as Jacqueline de Ribes, Olivia de Havilland, John Fairchild, Pierre Cardin, Victoire Doutreleau, and many others, including his vendeuses or saleswomen, society clients, models, and muses, giving readers unique intimate insight into how this captivating house operated. With dazzling images by photographers such as Cecil Beaton, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Lord Snowdon, and Willy Maywald, as well as never-before-seen materials from the Dior Archives, this account is a fresh and surprising view into the House of Dior and life of its brilliant founder.

Monsieur Dior: Once Upon A Time is elegantly presented in a Dior grey box with silver tissue paper and a grosgrain bookmark.

Natasha Fraser-Cavassoni is a Paris-based British writer and journalist who specializes in fashion, interiors, and lifestyle. She is the author of *Sam Spiegel, The Biography of A Hollywood Legend*; *A Portfolio: Tino Zervudachi*, published by Pointed Leaf Press in 2012, and *Dior Glamour* by Mark Shaw in 2013.