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E. E. TANNER III

alias
PATRICK DENNIS
alias
V. ROWANS



The man behind Auntie Mame

EDWARD EVERETT TANNER III dreamed up jazzy *Auntie Mame* in his bathtub. "I think best in the tub," he says, "and I get clean." After a year of plotting under water, he wrote the book in 90 days. Fifteen publishers spurned Mame, as a real peculiar heroine. Vanguard Press sneaked her into print in 1955. For 112 weeks, *Auntie Mame* topped best-seller lists. About two million people bought the book; 125,000, the new sequel, *Around the World with Auntie Mame*. Even the Japanese think Mame is funny, though her usage of words like "id" and "daiquiri" defies translation.

Retiring Tanner, 37, writes only under the pen names Patrick Dennis and V. (for Virginia) Rowans. And he conceals his face behind a luxuriant beard, which he has worn since World War II, when he served overseas as an ambulance driver. He thinks S. J. Perelman's books are "far funnier, and better written than mine." But in Mame, Tanner has created his own Lady Bountiful, who has rewarded him liberally from the two books, the adapted play and now a smash movie about her.

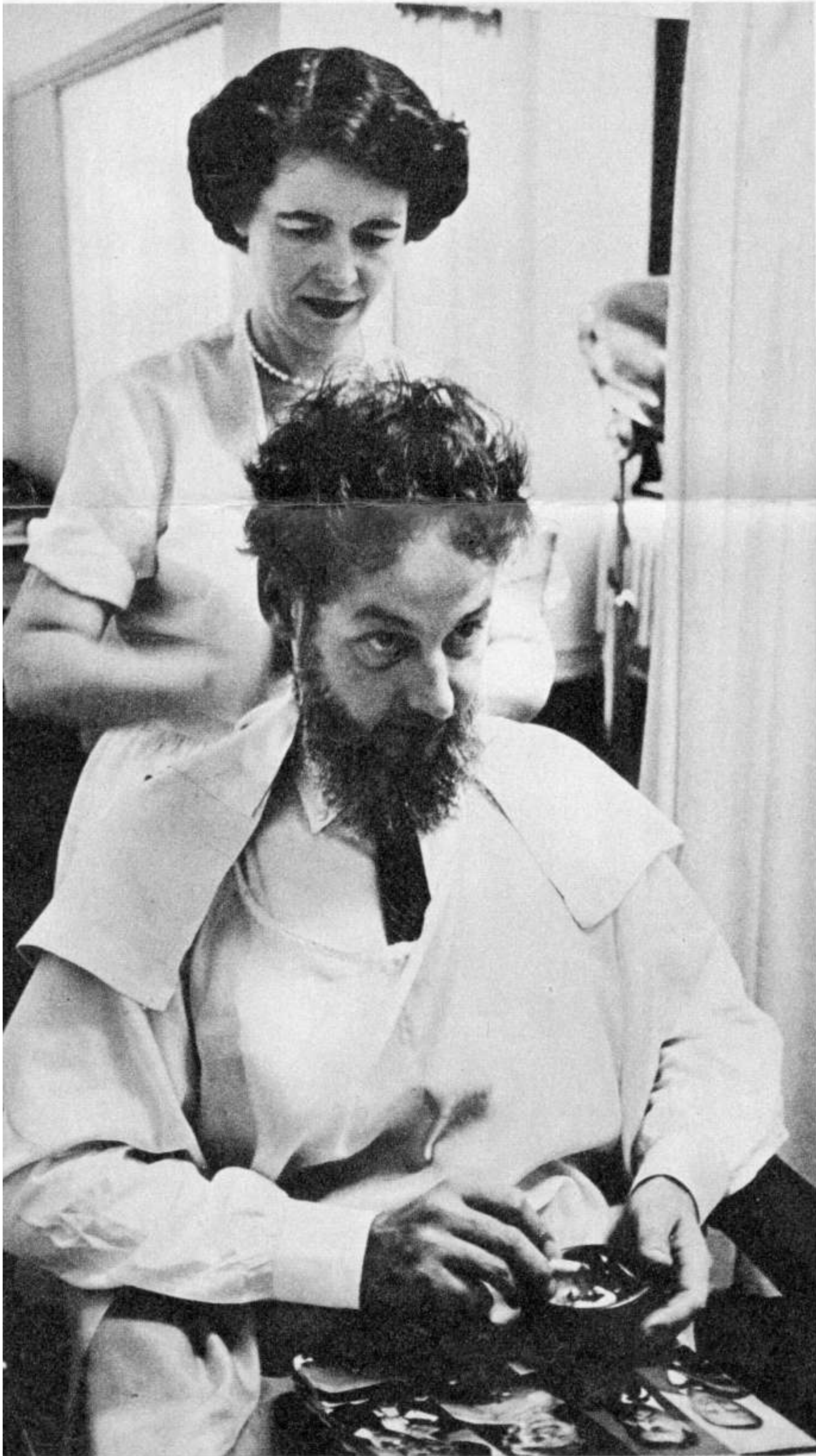
Almost synonymous with Auntie Mame, Rosalind Russell was star of the Broadway play, as well as the movie. Here, she shows off film's Orry-Kelly costumes while author Tanner cavorts in an assortment of his own helmets and hats.

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Was there a real Mame? “No,” quips Tanner. “But I had very fast parents.”

A relative of Tanner once announced on TV that *she* was Mame, the original. Not so, vows Tanner, whose own life abounds in picaresque detail. “I grew up in the ’20’s in Chicago and had a pair of very fast parents,” he quips. “Pat,” to the dismay of his stockbroker father, was booted out of several private schools, and went to work for the Stebbins Hardware Co. Like Mame, he is stylish enough to be listed in the Social Register. Yet he is drama critic for the liberal *New Republic*, and says *his* children will attend public school.



Best-selling author enjoys the luxury of a herbal scalp massage.



Party begins in splendid drawing room. Host chats with director Carmen Capalbo, writer Anita Loos and Roz.

Host and friend spoof Roz Russell at a posh party



1 Loyola flutters about guests in dining room.

With his success, Tanner splurged on a Manhattan town house furnished, in “Bronx Renaissance style,” with French Empire pieces left his wife, Louise, by a Grandaunt Emily. At a formal dinner party there for Roz Russell recently, Tanner and actor-artist Cris Alexander hatched a plot: The latter would disguise himself as Loyola, a bumbling extra maid. Here’s what happened.



2 She pours after-dinner coffee shakily, then sits cozily next to Roz with demitasse.



3 Baffled but unflustered Roz breaks up when she finds the strange maid is Cris.

4 Louise Tanner, left, was also fooled by the help.



5 Roz hugs unmasked maid.



continued

TANNER continued



At home and at work, spoofery's the word

Betsy, 1½, is fondly called "monster" by her parents.

Next book of spoofery on Tanner's agenda: a tale of a Lady Bountiful who latches onto young people in the arts. With Carmen Capalbo, he is adapting his best seller *The Loving Couple* (author, V. Rowans) for Broadway. He has run out of things to write about Mame, but his agent, Annie Laurie Williams, says it's time for a musical, now that she has been in a book, play and movie. *Auntie Mame* may yet have as many lives, theatrically speaking, as Ruth McKenney's *My Sister Eileen*.

Murals on dining-room walls caricature the four Tanners. Here, Cris Alexander paints Pop. Michael thinks it's pretty funny.



END



Two boulevardiers stroll up Park Avenue with umbrellas furred. Author Tanner wears the homburg; son Michael, five, the velvet jacket.