

“What Is It About Adam Lambert?”

In the early eighties, I moved to London and discovered that housewives were throwing their panties at Freddie Mercury. I found it baffling. Tom Jones I could understand, though I didn't buy into it; but Freddie Mercury was so obviously gay. These fortysomething women in polyester dresses and perma-set hair were making idiots of themselves on the BBC, as if they didn't understand what gay was.

Could they really not know? I was only sixteen, but I knew perfectly well – maybe it was because I came from LA. I'd gone to Frederick's of Hollywood with my stepmother to buy pink ostrich-feather mules in a size 13 for her friend Philip, to assist in his transformation into Marcia Hardridge.

And now I'm in my forties, and, if I was a panty-throwing type, I'd want to throw mine at Adam Lambert. What has happened to me?

I've never liked the front-combed hair-in-the-face look. I don't know that I'd actually vote for the black nail polish. And I'm a bit worried that he's got some ghastly secret piercings. To be honest, I'm not really sure I want to find out. But there's something about him that keeps me, and half the women I know, replaying old *Idol* episodes on DVR and gazing at photographs of his blue-

penciled eyes. (Let's not forget that Brando did eyeliner too.) Bravery, maybe—he hooked me with “Ring of Fire”. The damn-the-torpedoes flamboyance, the oh-my-god-what-did-I-just-do look when he finished. The intense self-discipline obvious behind the recklessness. And the sweetness. And the smile.

Frankly, I don't mind whether he's kissing a guy or a girl in that photo with the overcoat and scarf and purple hair held back by sunglasses; it's a very sexy photograph. I wouldn't want to print it out if he was kissing a girl. I'd be jealous of her. A guy, I can't compete with.

I'm thinking it may be better to have a crush on a gay man. I haven't had a crush on a famous person since my yearning, aged fourteen, for John Travolta to rescue me from the mountaintop house that, behind my grandmother's back, we called Gloom Castle. I felt like an idiot then, and I'd feel like one now if I was mooning around over photos of Johnny Depp or Denzel Washington and wondering whether, if we were stuck in an elevator together, they just might be up for it. Of course, they're more my age. I was at university, listening to the original “Mad World,” when Adam Lambert was born.

He's utterly unattainable. So what am I thinking? This way, I can really laugh at myself. I'm not like those Freddie Mercury housewives; I know the score. This is not a sad obsession. I'm hoping it might be chic.

