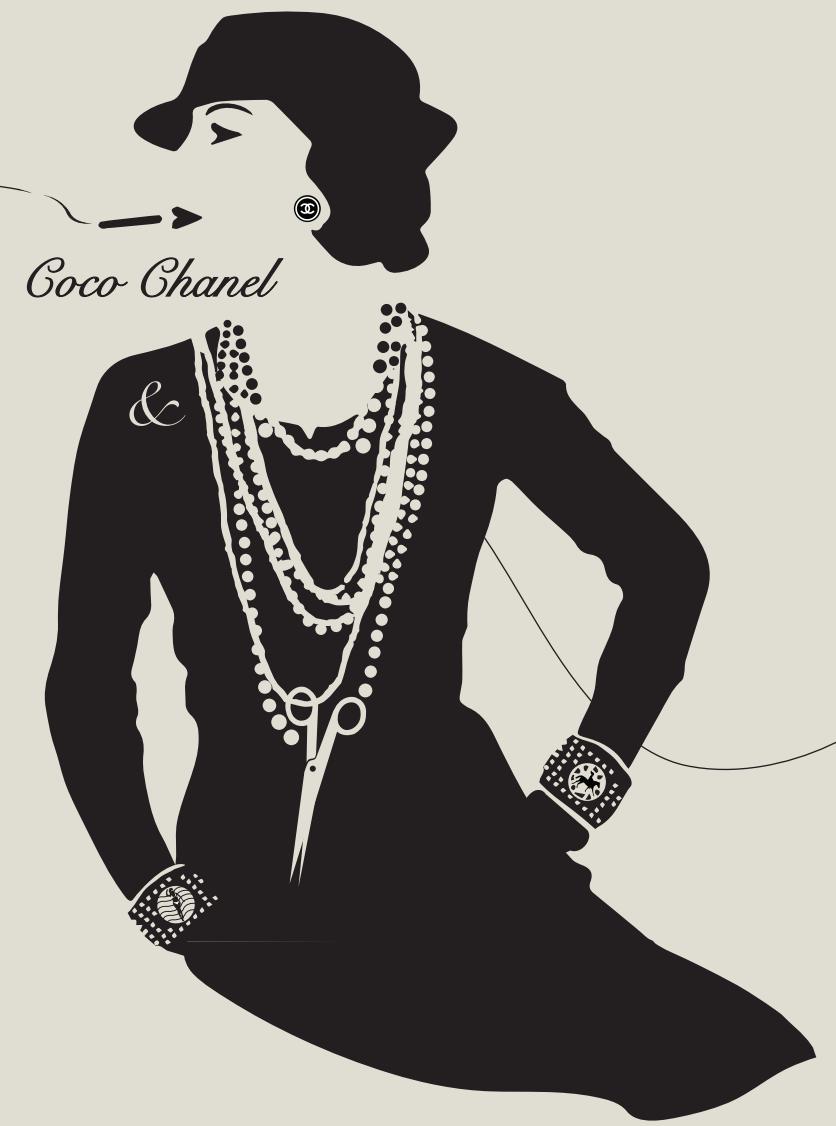


Coco

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Coco Chanel

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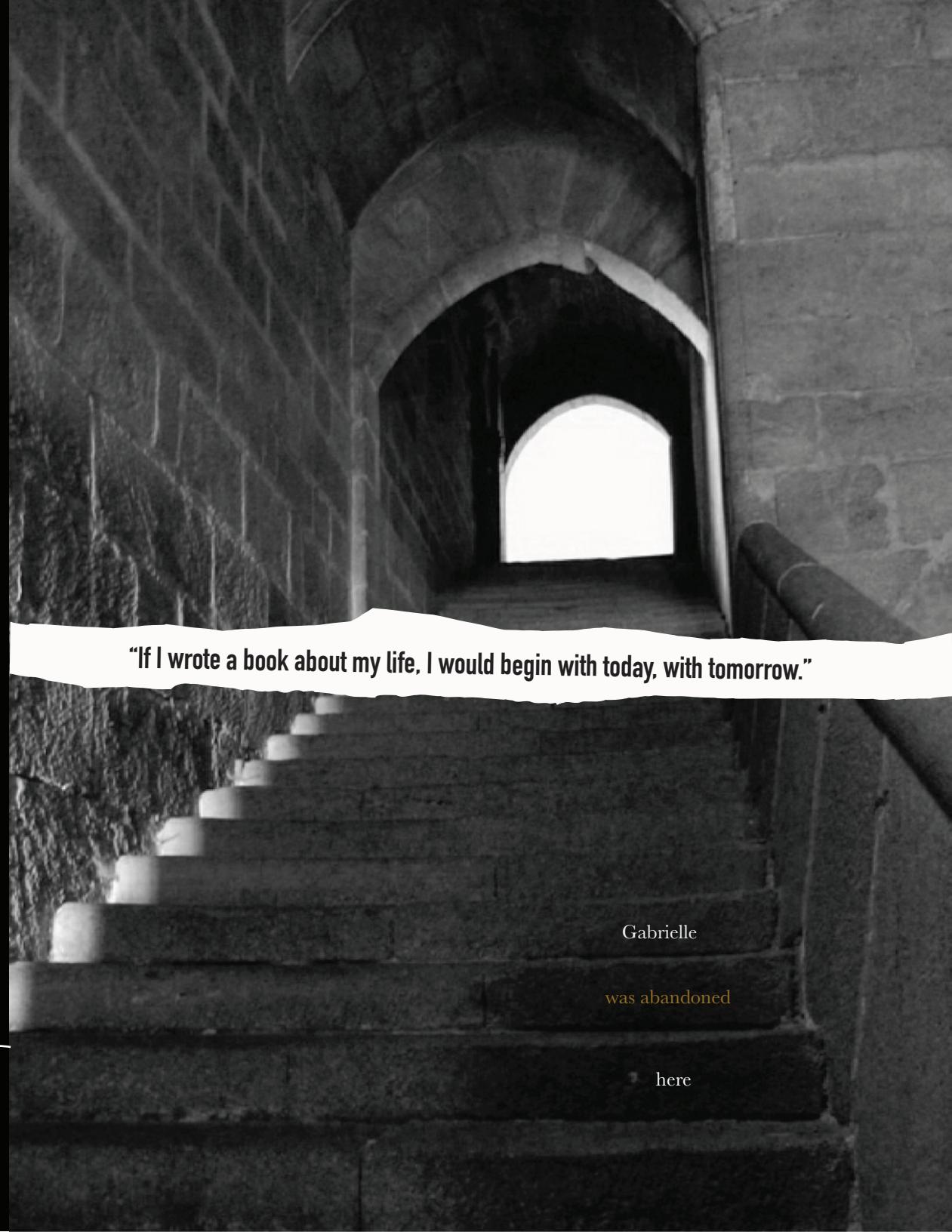
Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel
Coco
was born on

8.19.1883



Gabrielle
was abandoned
here

"If I wrote a book about my life, I would begin with today, with tomorrow."





"I was born on journey."

Chanel rarely talked about her birth, but she told an American reporter in answer to his question about the exact location of her birthplace. She also told her friend Andre-Louis Dubois that she was born on a train when her mother went into labour while travelling on the railway.



"My father used to call me 'Little Coco'."

Chanel revealed the story of her nickname to her friend and it came from her father, "My father did not like 'Gabrielle'" at all; it hadn't been his choice. And he was right. Soon the 'Little' drifted away and I was simply CoCo.' She told Delay, "I loved my father, because he preferred me to my sister."

HER CHILDHOOD

Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel was born on August 19, 1883 in the **charity hospital run by a poorhouse** in Saumur, France. Chanel's name was entered into the official registry as "Chasnel". Jeanne, her mom was too unwell to attend the registration, while her father was registered as travelling. Her parents had five children and they all lived crowded into a single room lodging.

When Chanel was 11, her mother died which may due to poverty, pregnancy and pneumonia. After her mother's death, Chanel was abandoned on the stairs of Aubazine that lead up to the orphanage by her father, who worked as a peddler. Chanel was raised by nuns who taught her how to sew, a skill that would lead to her life's work.

During her brief career as a singer, **Chanel performed in clubs where she was called "Coco."** Some say that the nickname comes from one of the songs she used to sing.

HER DESIGN

Chanel, as a pioneering female designer, revolutionized womenswear in the early 20th century. Her signature skirt suit, which used tweed and a fit that featured a straighter silhouette than in the past, demanded the world take its wearer more seriously. This business minded minimalism also emerged in her favored jersey fabric and iconic little black dress. While out in Deauville society, Chanel wore trousers, a then -shocking choice that paved the way for women in the future.

In the roaring twenties, women socialized as never before, ushering in a new era of boyish style. The hat she designed had no feathers and was **much lighter than the previous ones**. At the same time, chanel's straight tube skirt has also become the mainstream, while the hemline is rose. The skirt is **above the ankle** and **does not wrap around the waist**. The most striking change of the decade has been the fashion shift from corsets to short hair, abandoning centuries-old ideals of exaggerated femininity.



"What you have to do is cut."

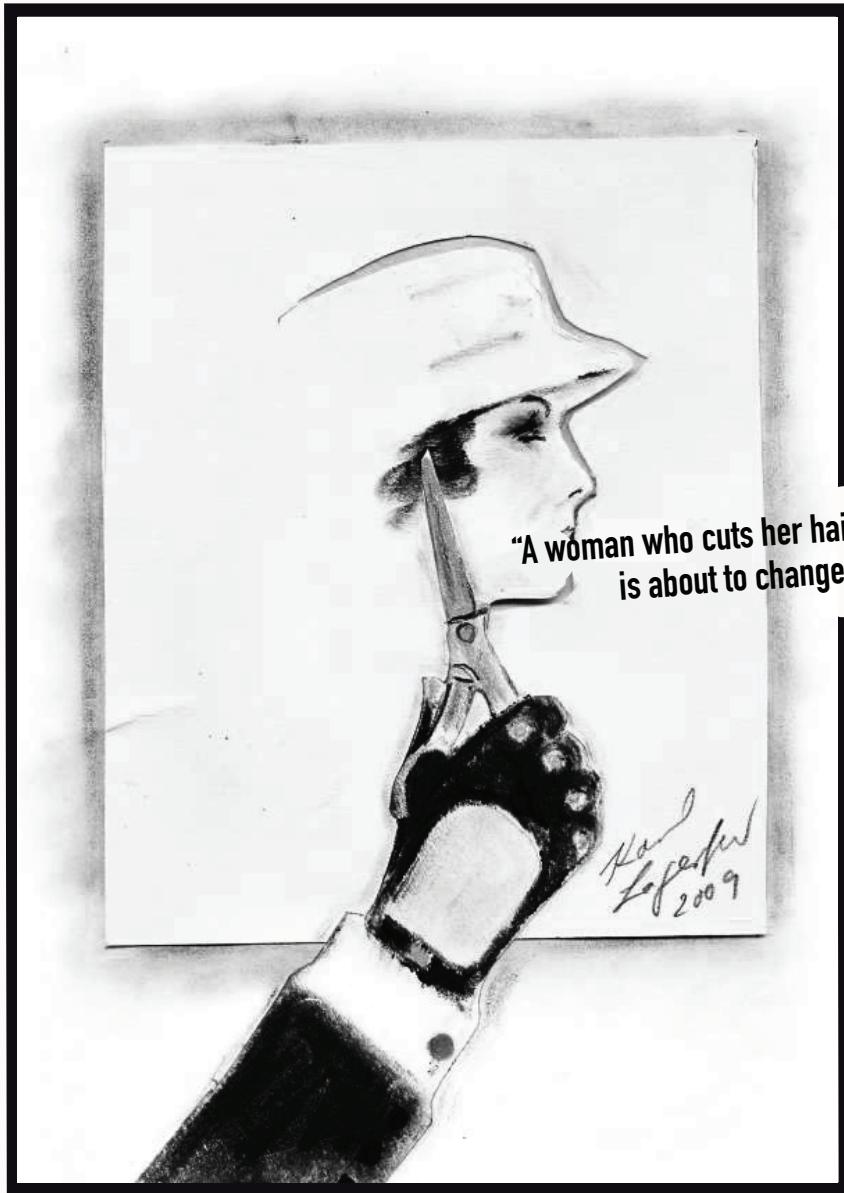


She **cut** the feathers, to lighten women's hats;
She **cut** the corset, to free women's waist;
She **cut** the dress, to reveal women's ankles;



When Gabrielle Chanel stepped into her realm at Rue Cambon, her assistant would hang a long white tape around her neck with Mademoiselle's special **scissors** threaded through it, like a ceremonial necklace. Other pairs of **scissors** were always within her reach — silver and gilt ones arrayed in her apartment and in rows on her dressing table at the Ritz; another on a plain white napkin on the bedside table, lying beneath an icon given to her by Stravinsky.

In old age, when Chanel was showing Claude Delay her gold boxes from the Duke of Westminster, she pointed out the coat of arms engraved on the top. If she were to mark her own emblem next to his, she said, 'I would add my **scissors**.' By this point, Chanel has never seen sewing — she had left that far behind her, back in her modest past as a seamstress, and before then, as a child of the orphanage — but she still wielded her **scissors** on a daily basis to shape and remake her creations.



Chanel, by Karl Lagerfeld

HER HAIRCUT

Chanel hated the way hairdressers set her clients' hair in tight waves like cart ruts. Cecil Beaton, who sketched Chanel with her scissors hanging around her neck, had long observed her command over her clients and models. He wrote, 'She would take nail scissors and **crop the hair** of her favorites herself. She then set about concealing their breasts and buttocks. Women began more and more to look like young men, reflecting either their new emancipation or their old perversity.'

Chanel continued to cut her models' hair - and her own, as part of the ritual of every new couture collection. What was it that Chanel abhorred about long hair? The mere sight of it was enough to make her lunge at a woman with her scissors, as Grand Duke Dmitri's sister learned to her cost. In her memoir, Marie describe the savage cut that she had been given, without any warning: ' Before I had time to realize what she was doing, she had pulled out my hairpins, snatched up the scissors and was cutting off my hair by the handful.'

According to Claude Delay, the author of several biographies of Chanel, Chanel's 'horror of hair was one of the things that survived from her childhood'. She told Delay on several occasions that her father hated the smell of hair; that he always asked when she had last washed hers. Chanel's own **hair had been short** since she had cut it off as a young woman, but not hidden;

Sometimes, said Gabrielle Labrunie, Chanel's grand-niece, her aunt would tell her, 'A simple life, with a husband and children — a life with the people you love — that is the real life.' And yet Gabrielle could also see the manner in which Chanel had cut her own familial ties, to set herself free.



"Nothing is more beautiful than freedom of the body."



'She battled for her freedom, to escape from her childhood, from the suffering of Aubazine — and that was why she designed clothes that made women free. It was all a question of freedom — to be free to drive your car, to ride a bicycle, to walk to work, you had to be able to forget about what you were wearing. Forgetting is part of freedom - and so she was free to forget her past. And even if she did not forget it, she put her memories somewhere where they did not weigh too heavily on her - just like the clothes she made, that were so light that they seemed to weigh nothing at all.'



"The best thing in life is free. The second best is very expensive"

Coco

at work

with scissors



Coco Chanel

passed away on

1.10.1971