

FROM ANTIQUITY TO ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

Fashion is not just a way to cover and protect our bodies. The clothes and accessories we choose to wear can tell other people who we are and what we value. The history of fashion is fascinating because it reveals the political, technological and cultural influences that mattered to people at any particular time.

The favoured looks of the Ancient World changed relatively little over time. Thousands of years later, they inspired the 'classical' looks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As the middle classes became more fashionable, rich people found new ways to show off their wealth. Fresh white linen underclothes peeking out at the neck or cuffs or through slashed fabric was a sign that a person could afford to change or wash their underwear often.

Fashion truly began when people stopped wearing outfits that simply matched their job or rank, and began copying what was worn by the people they admired.

There were no photographs or fashion magazines thousands of years ago, but we know what the Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans were wearing from the paintings and sculptures they left behind. Simple clothes were accessorized with elaborate hairstyles, make-up and jewellery, from the gigantic jewelled collars worn by the Ancient Egyptians to the coronae (crowns) worn by Roman officials.

The Ancient Romans used clothes to signal status. Certain styles, such as the toga, were strictly for top officials. The rarest dyes – such as Tyrian purple – were a sign of wealth. This association between fashion, wealth and power continued for hundreds of years. In the Middle Ages, most ordinary people continued to wear simple tunics. Royalty, and the wealthy aristocrats who hung around their courts, were the only groups of people who could afford to own multiple outfits for different occasions.

In the Middle Ages the looms used to weave fabric improved and clothes became quicker and cheaper to make. More choice meant that fashions changed more quickly. In the later Middle Ages, certain courts in Europe became style centres, with new ideas spreading by word of mouth, paintings and sketches.

The Renaissance brought a tidal wave of new discoveries and inventions, including the printing press. Printed pictures called 'fashion plates', showing the latest clothes and accessories, could be shared widely. These acted as the first fashion magazines, helping new trends to spread more quickly. As exploration and trade took European travellers around the world, eye-catching new fabrics and patterns flooded onto the market.

In Elizabethan England, trends originated at the royal court – and the biggest fashion icon was Queen Elizabeth I herself. While most ordinary people at the time had just one set of clothes, Queen Elizabeth left behind 3,000 dresses and accessories when she died! She loved dramatic fashion, and her stiff, triangular bodices began a trend that was copied by men and women alike.



ANCIENT EGYPT ca. 3150-330 BCE



ANCIENT GREECE ca. 500-320 BCE



ANCIENT ROME ca. 500 BCE-400 CE



EARLY MIDDLE AGES ca. 900-1200 CE



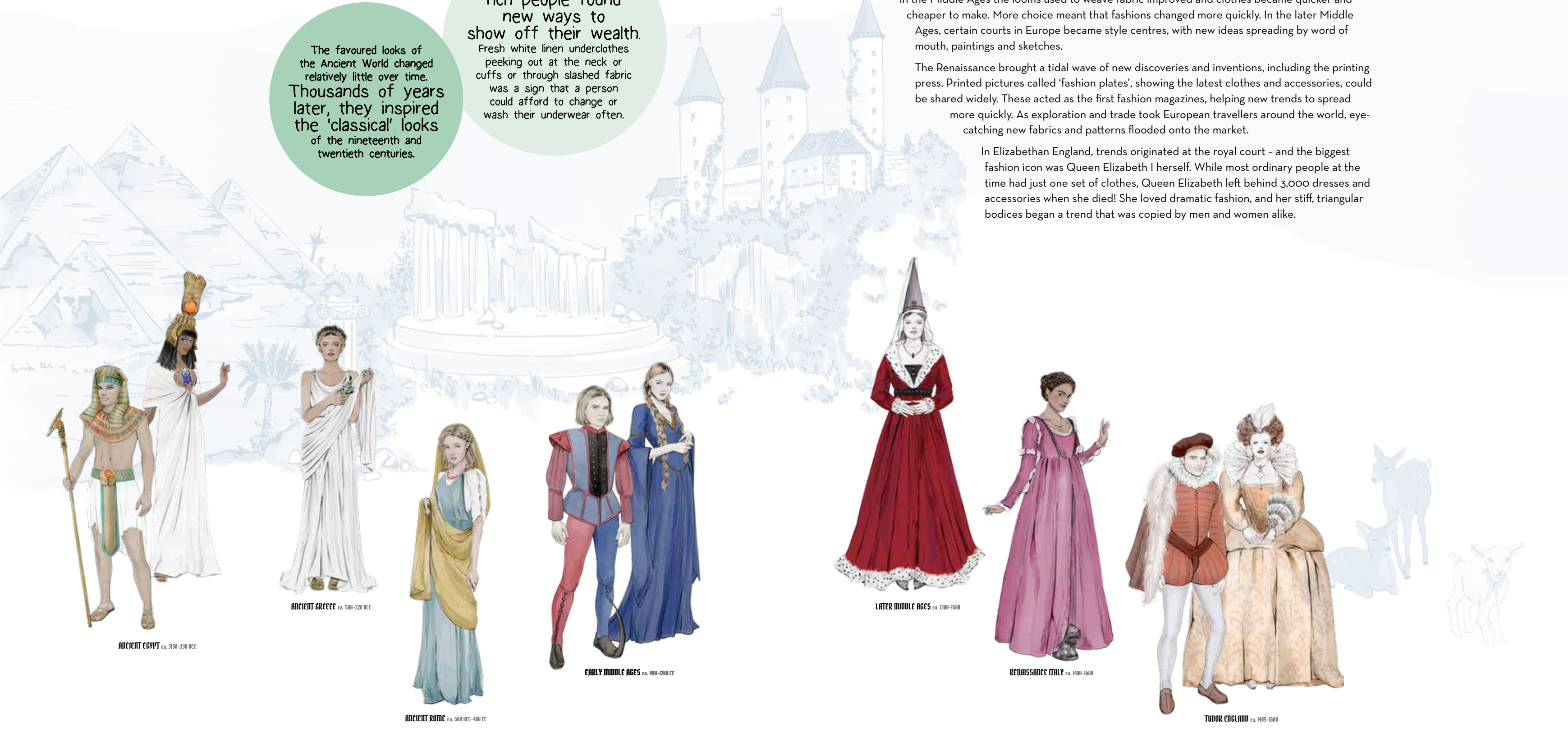
LATER MIDDLE AGES ca. 1300-1500



RENAISSANCE ITALY ca. 1400-1600



TUDOR ENGLAND ca. 1485-1600



ANCIENT EGYPT

ca. 3150-330 BCE

The Ancient Egyptians kept their cool in simple linen clothes, adding colour with dazzling accessories. This iconic look still has a huge influence on fashion.

Although cotton was known at the time, the Ancient Egyptians chose linen to make most of their clothes. For almost 3,000 years, the Ancient Egyptians used the fabric to make everything from sails to bandages for wrapping mummies.

Linen is naturally brownish or greenish, but richer Egyptians bleached the fabric to make it white. From farm workers to pharaohs, Egyptians all wore different versions of the same thing. Men tied a long strip of linen around their waists to make a loincloth or kilt called a *schenti*.

Women made dresses by wrapping a long linen sheet around their body in different ways. The most famous style is the *kalasiris*. This pleated dress was made of the lightest, most delicate linen. Pleating was difficult, and used up more fabric, so the *kalasiris* was reserved for wealthy women like Ankhesenamun, the wife of Tutankhamun. Colourful jewellery was important for showing off wealth and status.



FASHION FORWARD

In *The Jazz Age* (page 23) the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb led to a trend for Egyptian-inspired fashion.

IN FASHION

Fabrics: Linen
Dyes: Indigo and red alizarin, from plants
Hair: Shaved off and replaced by a wig
Make-up: Black kohl eyeliner, green eye paint
Jewellery: Huge jewelled collars and necklaces
Shoes: Barefoot or papyrus sandals
Fashion icons: Pharaohs and their families, such as Queen Nefertiti
Must-have: Scarab beetle amulet

ANCIENT GREECE

ca. 500-320 BCE

The Ancient Greeks were experts at draping and pinning fabric to make different outfits. Their classical style still inspires designers around the world.

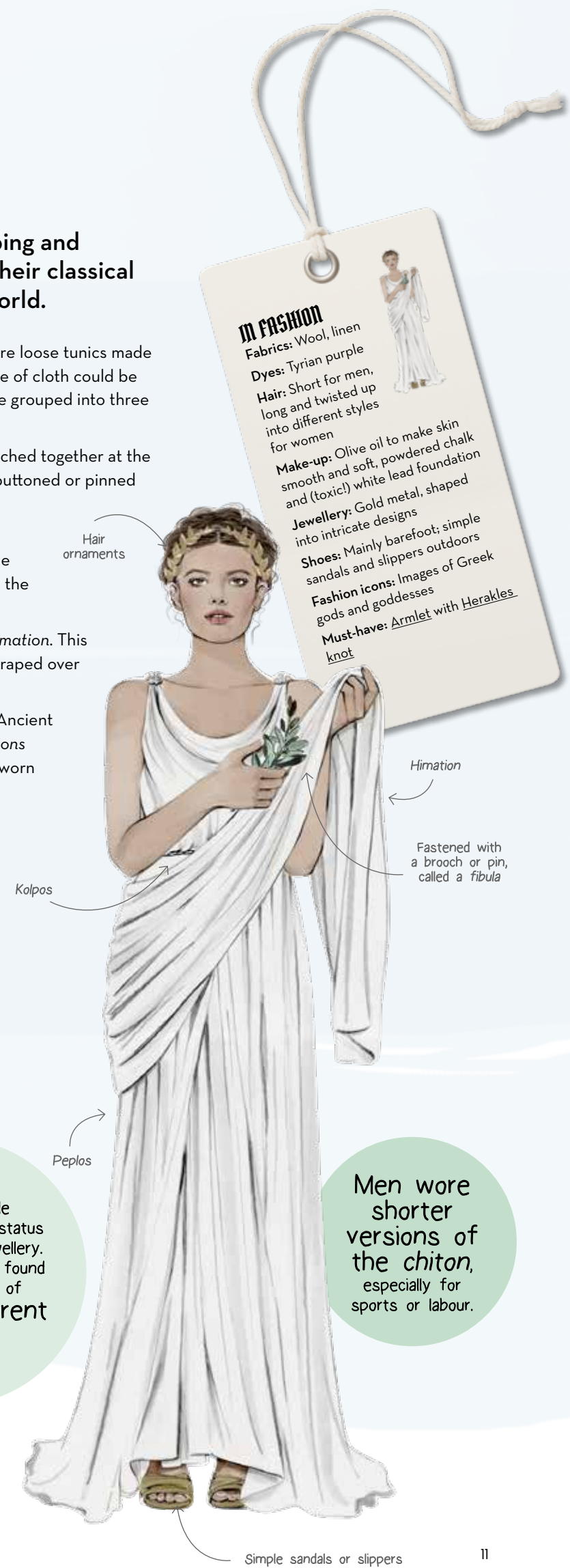
The Mediterranean climate is hot, so the Ancient Greeks wore loose tunics made by draping a large piece of fabric around the body. One piece of cloth could be transformed into dozens of different outfits, but these can be grouped into three main styles.

The *chiton* was made from two wide rectangles of fabric, stitched together at the sides to make a tube around the body. The top edges were buttoned or pinned together over the shoulders and arms.

The *peplos* also began as a big rectangle of fabric, but it was folded over at the top before being wrapped and pinned. The fold - called an *apoptygma* - created a little cape that ran all the way around the body.

Both men and women wore a large shawl or cloak called a *himation*. This rectangle of heavy fabric could be worn in different ways - draped over one or both shoulders, or used to cover the head.

For a long time, people looked at statues and assumed that Ancient Greek clothes were white. In fact, *chitons*, *peplos* and *himations* were brightly coloured - the paint on statues has faded and worn away over time.



IN FASHION

Fabrics: Wool, linen
Dyes: Tyrian purple
Hair: Short for men, long and twisted up into different styles for women
Make-up: Olive oil to make skin smooth and soft, powdered chalk and (toxic!) white lead foundation
Jewellery: Gold metal, shaped into intricate designs
Shoes: Mainly barefoot; simple sandals and slippers outdoors
Fashion icons: Images of Greek gods and goddesses
Must-have: Armlet with Herakles knot

Tyrian purple was the most expensive dye at the time. It was extracted from sea snails!

Wealthy people showed off their status with elaborate jewellery. One necklace was found to be made up of 16,000 different pieces!

FASHION FORWARD

Glamorous dresses and peplums inspired by classical draping were fashionable during *The Golden Age of Hollywood* (page 24).

ANCIENT ROME

ca. 500 BCE–480 CE

The Ancient Romans built a vast empire that stretched from Egypt to England. They copied ideas from Ancient Greece – including classical fashion – and spread them far and wide.

Taxes and profits from across the empire all flowed towards Ancient Rome, making the city a centre of power and wealth. Roman citizens had plenty of money and leisure time, and fashion was important. Clothes were used to display wealth and power – with laws about who could wear what.

Like the Ancient Greeks, the Romans wore simple linen tunics that fell to the knee (for men) or to the floor (for women). For important events, men added a *toga* – a semi-circle of wool draped around the body and over one arm.

The *toga* was up to 3 metres long, which made it hot, heavy and difficult to put on without help. This was a bonus for followers of fashion, because it helped to make the *toga* exclusive. Only Roman citizens were allowed to wear the *toga*, and only the emperor and other top officials were allowed to wear the most expensive colour – the Tyrian purple that had become fashionable in Ancient Greece.

Women wore a longer garment called a *stola*, which fastened at the shoulders like a Greek *chiton*. Belts were wrapped around the waist or chest to create interesting shapes, and a cloak called a *palla* was draped over the head and body.

Pearls were so precious, it's said that Emperor Claudius decided to conquer Britain to ensure that the empire didn't run out of them!



Ancient Roman artworks show the world's first bikinis, worn by female athletes.

Women rubbed crocodile dung on their faces as rouge.

FASHION FORWARD
Gladiator sandals made a comeback in the Hello, Twenty-First Century (page 29).

M FASHION
Fabrics: Wool, linen, silk imported from China
Dyes: Tyrian purple is more covetable than ever and yellow from saffron
Hair: Always changing; women styled their hair with metal curling tongs and ivory combs
Make-up: Blusher made from crushed petals, red ochre or red lead, kohl eyeliner, white lead foundation, plucked eyebrows, gladiator sweat, crocodile dung
Jewellery: Decorated with amber, pearls, gold coins and gemstones
Shoes: Boots or simple leather sandals
Fashion icons: Wealthy women in the emperor's court
Must-have: Pearl earrings

EARLY MIDDLE AGES

ca. 900–1200 CE

As the Roman Empire ended, Europe was no longer one huge society. Different styles of clothing developed in different places. Travelling merchants spread new fabrics and fashions.

For hundred of years, most clothes were still based on the tunic, made from rectangles of fabric sewn together. Ordinary people layered linen and wool tunics, adding leather and fur in colder climates.

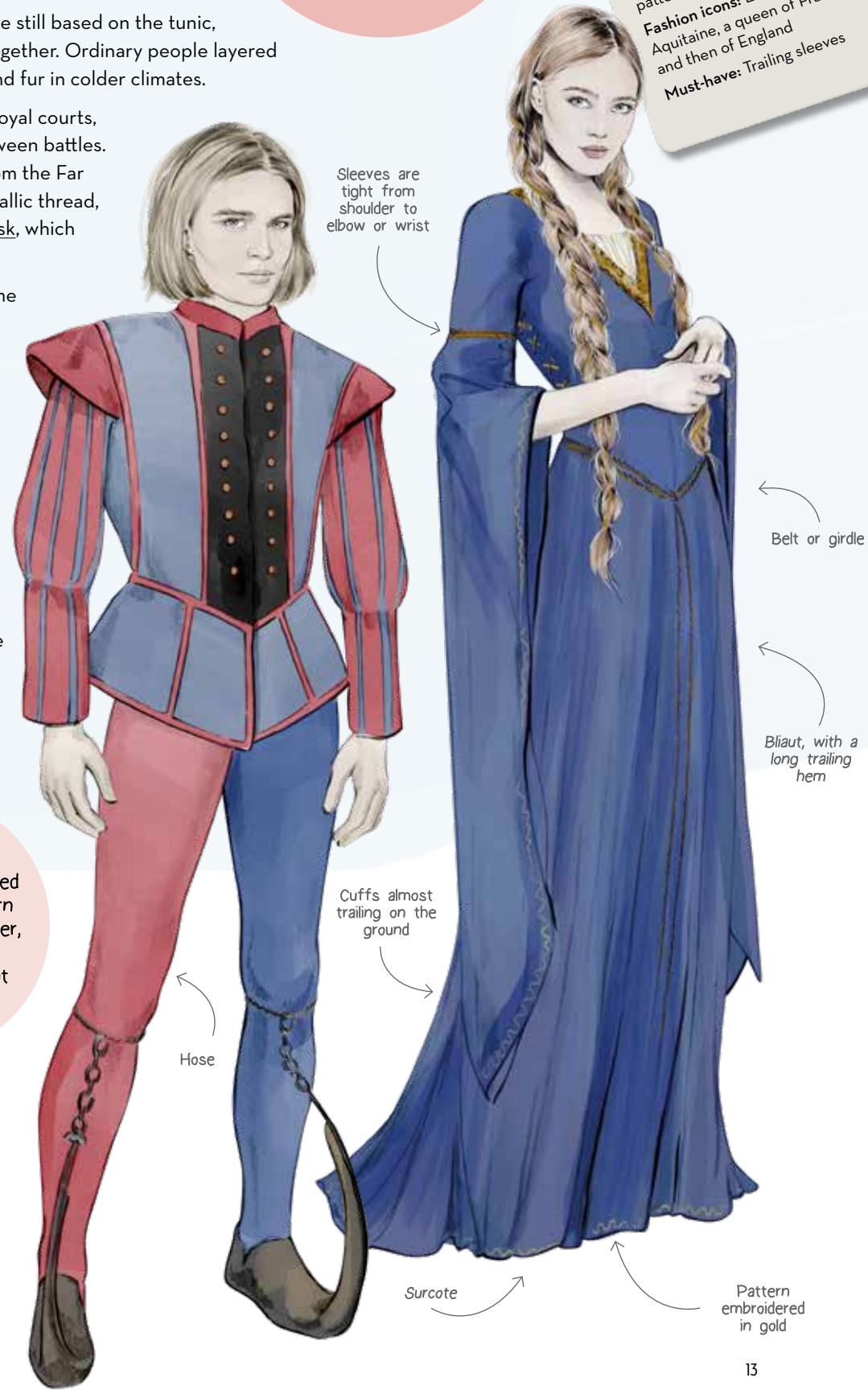
Fashion was a luxury reserved for the royal courts, where knights and ladies gathered between battles. Wealthy aristocrats could afford silk from the Far East, with pictures embroidered in metallic thread, or exciting new materials such as *damask*, which had patterns woven into it.

As *looms* became better, fashion became bolder. Instead of draping loosely to the floor, a *cote* (light undergarment) and *surcote* (a long overgown) fitted closely around the waist, arms and hips. Lacing was used to pull the fabric closer to the body.

One of the biggest trends of the 1100s was the *bliaut*, a silk tunic with loose, draping sleeves to show that the people who wore them were wealthy enough to use up metres of extra fabric. Fashionable men also wore tight, ankle-length tunics, which split to reveal long, tight stockings called *hose*.

Each of the hose was a separate tube of wool, cut 'on the bias' (diagonally) for a tight fit. The hose were tied to the man's shirt or a belt to hold them up.

M FASHION
Fabrics: Silk, damask, fur
Dyes: Blue woad, made by soaking woad leaves in urine and red from madder plants
Hair: Long and curly for men, very long for women
Make-up: Outlawed by the Christian Church for a while
Jewellery: Gold and silver for royalty, copper and pewter for ordinary people
Shoes: Leather shoes with patterns cut out
Fashion icons: Eleanor of Aquitaine, a queen of France and then of England
Must-have: Trailing sleeves



The lightweight cote would be washed often, and was worn to protect the heavier, more expensive surcote from sweat and dirt.

Clothes and jewellery often reflected a person's religion. Married Christian women often covered their hair and neck with a linen or silk veil called a wimple.

LATER MIDDLE AGES

ca. 1300-1500

In the later Middle Ages, the aristocracy experimented with bold styles to make an impact in court. The wealthy middle classes began copying the looks that they saw, and true fashion was born.

In the 1300s, Europeans began making clothes in a different way. Instead of pulling tunics into shape with belts or lacing, they cut curved pieces of fabric and sewed them together to fit the shape of the body. Wealthy people were even sewn into their clothes, for a perfect fit!

This tailoring led to a much bigger choice of styles. At the same time, trade with China, Central Asia and North Africa was giving tailors an amazing choice of new fabrics, colours and patterns - from samite to brocade. The Italians began to weave their own silk, too, making this covetable fabric more affordable.

The royal courts were still the best places to show off the latest fashions. *Surcotes* were cut away at the sides to reveal a tightly fitting cote underneath. Shorter, tighter tunics called doublets became fashionable for men, worn with tight hose and a *houppelande*, a long draping robe with wide sleeves, thrown over the top. Women also wore the *houppelande*, belted around the middle to create a high waist.

Most extravagant of all were the towering headdresses. They included silk bonnets, fur-trimmed caps and *hennins* (cone-shaped headdresses which had become popular in Burgundy, now part of France), draped with floating veils.

For the first time, sleeves were made as separate pieces and sewn into the armholes on a tunic. This showed off the shape of the shoulders.

Pointed *poulaine* shoes were all the rage. The points got so long, they had to be tied to the knees to prevent the wearer from tripping and becoming a real fashion victim.

Some *surcotes* were completely cut away at the sides!



Hennin

Light veil

High waistline

Houppelande with fur edging

Pointed poulaines, stuffed with wool or moss

M FASHION

- Fabrics:** Velvet, taffeta
- Dyes:** Peach black, made by charring and crushing peach stones
- Hair:** Ear-length for men, plucked at forehead and neck for women, so it didn't peek out from under headdresses
- Make-up:** Flour, arsenic or lead to create a smooth, pale complexion
- Jewellery:** Cut gems and enamels
- Shoes:** Pointed poulaines, worn with wooden overshoes
- Fashion icons:** Knights and noblewomen
- Must-have:** Buttons, tiny bells that tinkled as you walked

RENAISSANCE ITALY

ca. 1400-1600

The Renaissance was an exciting time of cultural change that began in Italy and spread around the rest of Europe, making Italy a centre of fashion once again.

Clothes continued to become more 'tailored', or fitted. The different parts of a dress - the skirt, *bodice* and sleeves - were made from different pieces of fabric, and could be mixed and matched to create new looks.

Instead of flowing across the body, clothes were carefully constructed to create new shapes. Skirts were layered over petticoats, and the fabric was gathered or pleated at the waist to make them bigger and rounder.

In contrast, men used clothes to bulk out their top half. Doublets were padded or rolled to create huge shoulders and wide chests. A jerkin (sleeveless jacket) and outer coat were layered over the top to create a broad, square silhouette. The outer layer of fabric could be slashed so that it puffed out even more.

Tight hose showed off men's leg muscles, and the gap between hose and breeches was covered with a padded piece of fabric known as a *codpiece* - which doubled as a handy place to keep money, snacks or clothes pins!

Italian women began **bleaching** their hair to make it **blonde like gold**.

Very high shoes called *pianelle* became popular in Venice, Italy. They helped a woman keep her dress off the streets, but also **showed off her wealth** - a servant on either arm was needed to help her balance as she walked!

Richer people owned more sets of underwear, so a flash of clean linen peeking out became a style statement.



Smooth, tight bodice

Puffed and stuffed sleeves

Bell-shaped skirt

M FASHION

- Fabrics:** Satin and taffeta
- Dyes:** Crimson dye, made from crushed up lice
- Hair:** Long and wavy for men, bleached and parted at the centre before being styled over the temples for women
- Make-up:** Rouge from white sandalwood
- Jewellery:** 'Vintage' Greek or Roman stones, scorpion motifs
- Shoes:** Towering *pianelle*
- Fashion icons:** Isabella and Beatrice d'Este, Italian sisters whose style was copied in Italy and France
- Must-have:** Silk ribbons, codpiece

Pianelle

THE GOLDEN AGE OF HOLLYWOOD

THE 1930s AND 1940s

As the cinema became a popular form of entertainment and escapism, Hollywood actors became fashion icons.

In the 1930s and early 1940s, the world was in crisis as World War II followed the Great Depression of the 1930s. People had far less money to spend on clothes, and everyday fashion became more utilitarian. Decorations such as beads, feathers, pleats, pockets and waistcoats - which used extra fabric - were out. Simple, streamlined clothes were in. Men's jackets were usually single-breasted, with narrow lapels.

'Off the peg' clothes became more fashionable, beginning in New York. Instead of being altered to fit each individual customer, outfits were mass-produced in standard sizes and sold 'ready to wear' in department stores. They were made from fabrics that were easy to wash and care for, including new synthetic fabrics. Wool suits and dresses were replaced by rayon or cotton blended with rayon.

At the same time, the Hollywood film industry was booming. Between 1930 and 1945, more than 7,500 films were released! Film stars became the new fashion icons, famous for their glamorous looks on and off the screen.

For women, this included pretty, romantic dresses with ruffles and puff sleeves. Long evening gowns were made from silk or other light materials, which draped from the shoulder and hips. Instead of adding decorations, designers aimed to create beautiful shapes. The peplum also became an everyday feature of dresses and women's jackets.

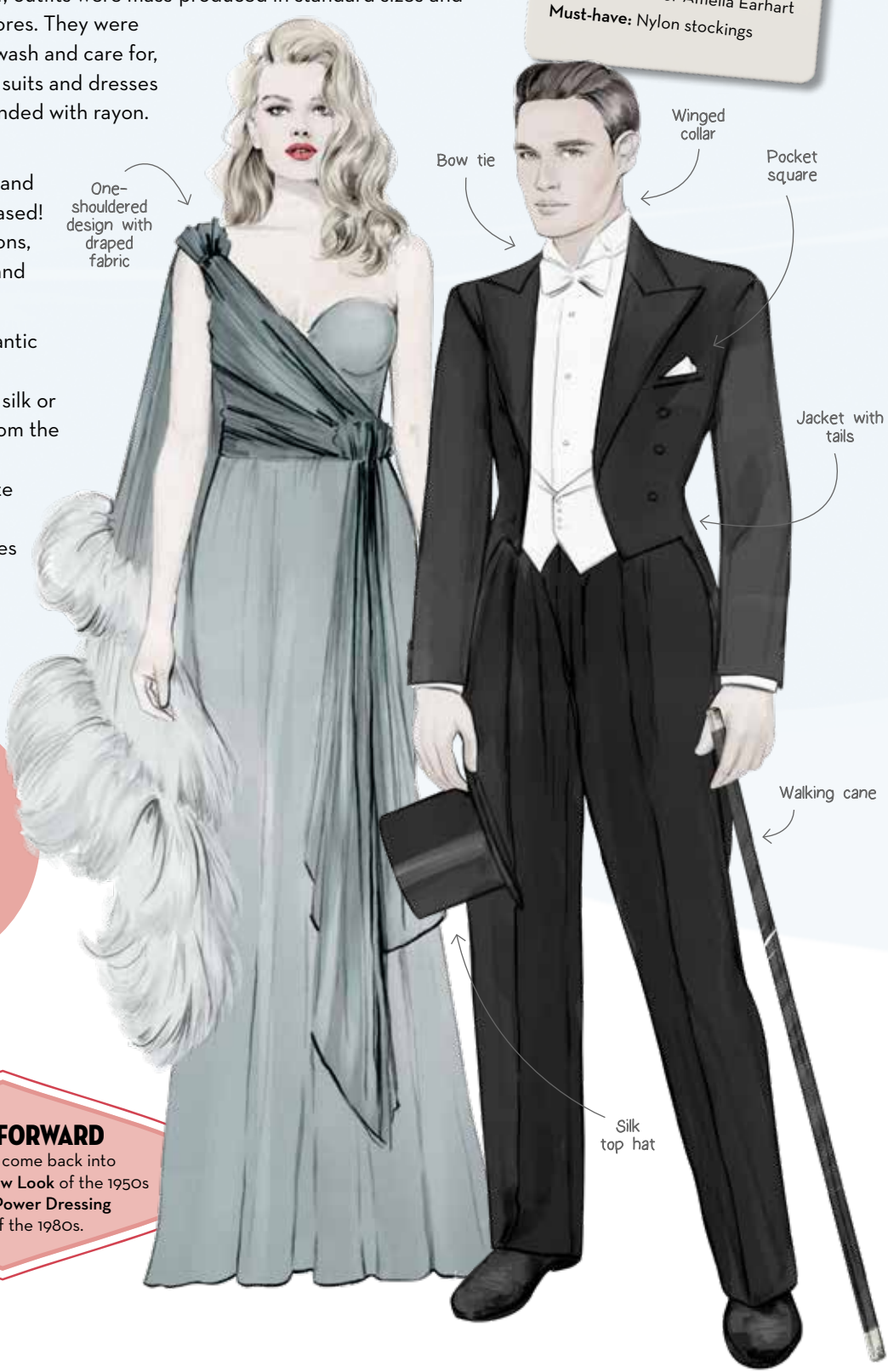
Trench coats became fashionable for men again due to their appearance in Hollywood films.

Women began to wear shorts for the first time while playing sports.

FASHION FORWARD

Peplums would come back into fashion with **The New Look** of the 1950s (page 25) and **Power Dressing** (page 28) of the 1980s.

IN FASHION
 Fabrics: Nylon, lamé
 Prints: Playful prints, small prints
 Hair: Shoulder length for women, and carefully styled to create curls, waves and rolls; sleek, short and slicked back for men
 Make-up: Winged eyeliner, red lips, nail varnish
 Jewellery: Art Deco jewellery, with designs created from gemstones
 Shoes: Strapless pumps, strappy sandals or wedge heels for women, highly polished, patent leather dress shoes for men
 Fashion icons: Hollywood stars, American aviator Amelia Earhart
 Must-have: Nylon stockings



THE NEW LOOK

THE 1940s AND 1950s

During World War II (1939-1945), fabric was rationed and new clothes were in limited supply. But after the war ended, designers were able to start creating exciting new looks again.

World War II had a big impact on fashion, fabric was in short supply and clothes makers had to learn to make huge numbers of uniforms at once, with less waste. At home, people learnt to 'make do and mend', patching or re-working old clothes to make them last longer.

After the war, designers began to show new collections again. One of the most distinctive was French designer Christian Dior's 'New Look'. Fabric was cheaper now, so Dior created skirts that flared out from the waist and swung around the calves in pleats and folds.

Unlike the straight and lean shapes of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, the New Look had a pinched-in 'wasp waist' and bulky petticoats. The shape was adapted for every occasion, from day dresses with a floral print through to wedding dresses and cocktail dresses.

Meanwhile, teenagers began to create exciting new styles of their own. In London, Teddy boys and girls mixed the tailored look of La Belle Époque with clothes worn by rock-and-roll stars. Long, casual jackets were worn with drainpipe trousers or straight skirts, a skinny string tie and shoes with chunky soles.

Jeans became a must-have for teenagers. They were often worn with white T-shirts and leather jackets, and seen as clothes for rebels.

In the 1950s, Coco Chanel introduced the Chanel suit, with much straighter lines than the New Look. Chanel suits are still fashionable in the twenty-first century.

IN FASHION
 Fabrics: Denim, 'wash-and-wear' fabrics that didn't need ironing, gingham, taffeta
 Prints: Floral, polka dot
 Hair: Bobbed and bouffant, or piled on top of the head to create a beehive, for women, slicked back into a high quiff for men
 Make-up: Long lashes, orangey-red lipstick and pink blusher
 Jewellery: Pearl necklaces or costume jewellery
 Shoes: Slender, high-heeled stilettos or court shoes for women and peep-toes, loafers or creepers for men
 Fashion icons: Singers like Elvis Presley, film stars such as James Dean, Grace Kelly and Audrey Hepburn
 Must-have: Hat, belt, boxy handbag, aviator sunglasses



Bikinis became fashionable beachwear in the 1950s.

SWINGING LONDON

THE 1960s

The 1960s was an exciting time in fashion. London became the style capital of the world, and designers created outfits and silhouettes that completely changed the way we dress.

In the 1960s, the world let its hair down. Instead of following the fashion 'rules', people used fashion to have fun. Young designers experimented with new ideas, and nothing seemed too wild to catch on. Most striking and shocking was the mini - very short A-line skirts or dresses in bright colours and bold patterns.

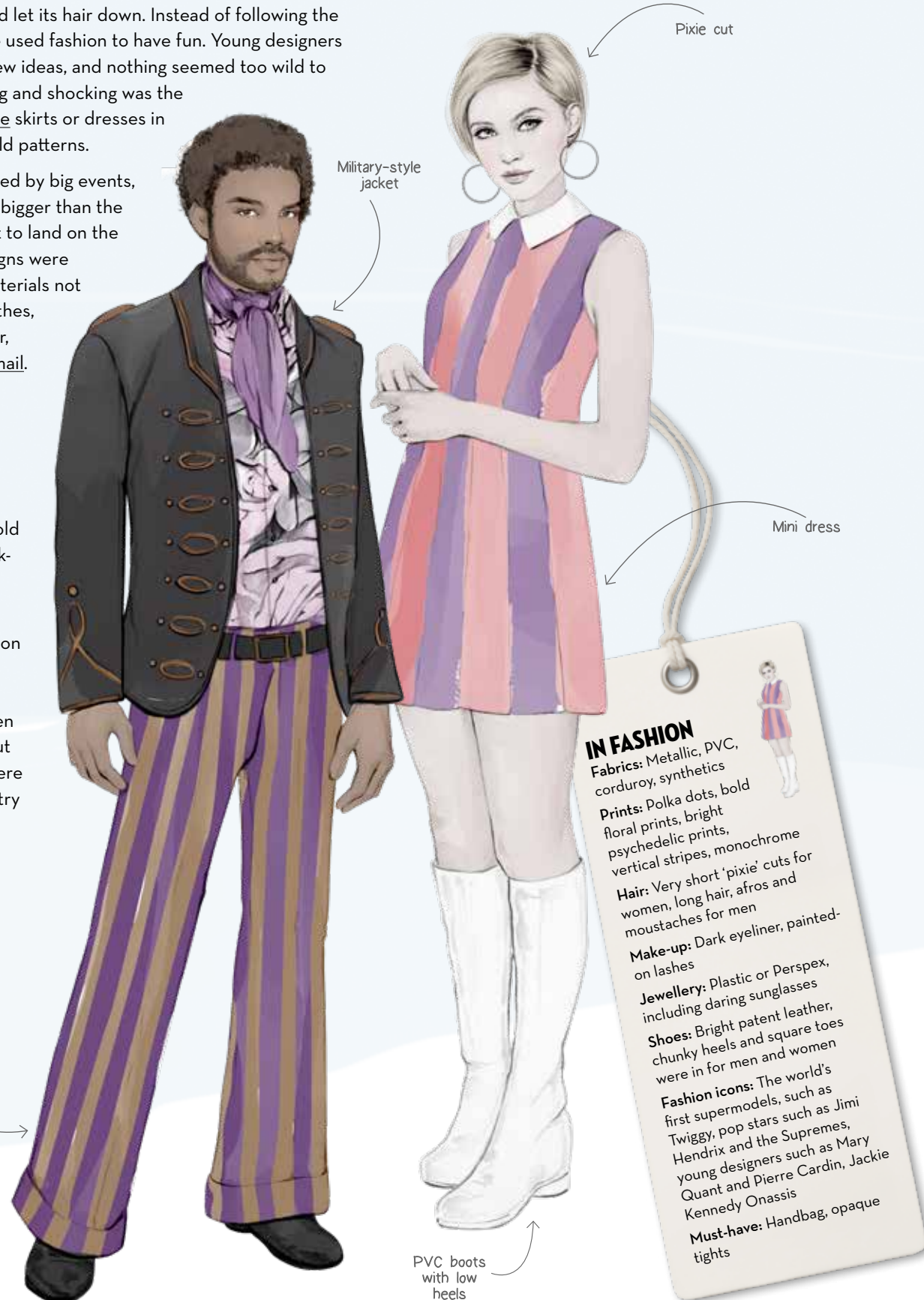
Designers were inspired by big events, and they didn't come bigger than the 'space race' to be first to land on the Moon! Futuristic designs were everywhere, using materials not normally used for clothes, such as plastic, rubber, PVC, vinyl and chainmail.

Male fashion was transformed, too. Instead of being stuck with a suit for all occasions, men experimented with bold prints, ruffles and rock-star style.

By the end of the Swinging Sixties, fashion was no longer about copying the rich and famous, royalty or even designers. It was about young people, who were willing and hungry to try new things.

Mini skirts were shorter than traditional stockings, which helped newly invented all-in-one tights catch on.

The shift dress was a looser, longer version of the mini dress.



THE DECADE THAT STYLE FORGOT

THE 1970s

Fashion in the 1970s was even more outrageous than in the 1960s, and the era is jokingly known as the decade that style forgot. In fact, its key trends frequently pop up on today's catwalks.

Fashion doesn't stay still for long. At the end of the 1960s, the mini dress was replaced with floaty, floor-sweeping maxi dresses. The 'flower power' look was pioneered by hippies, and inspired by traditional, rustic clothing from around the world, such as peasant smocks and kaftans.

Trousers became even more popular with fashionable women, from all-in-one jumpsuits to trouser suits with bold patterns and wide, flared legs. The most extreme flares were known as 'bellbottoms', and were worn over chunky platform shoes.

As disco music became hugely popular, stretchy, synthetic fabrics such as Lycra were used to make figure-hugging clothes in bold colours. This included the tiny shorts known as hot pants. Glam rock stars inspired sequined jumpsuits and outrageous make-up for both men and women.

Denim became the ultimate unisex look. Men and women of all ages wore blue jeans, often with a denim shirt or jacket to complete the 'double denim' look. They were easy to customize by sewing on patches, embroidering pictures or fraying the ends.



The rebellious punk look became fashionable in London and New York, including super-tight, ripped jeans, slogan T-shirts and leather jackets.

1970s fashion prioritized comfort. Diane Von Furstenberg created the wrap dress in 1974, as a style that would suit every woman. Five million wrap dresses were sold in the first two years!

FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE

REGENCY BRITAIN

CRINOLINEMANIA

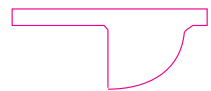
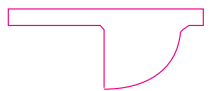
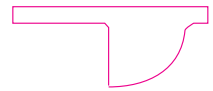
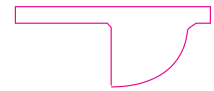
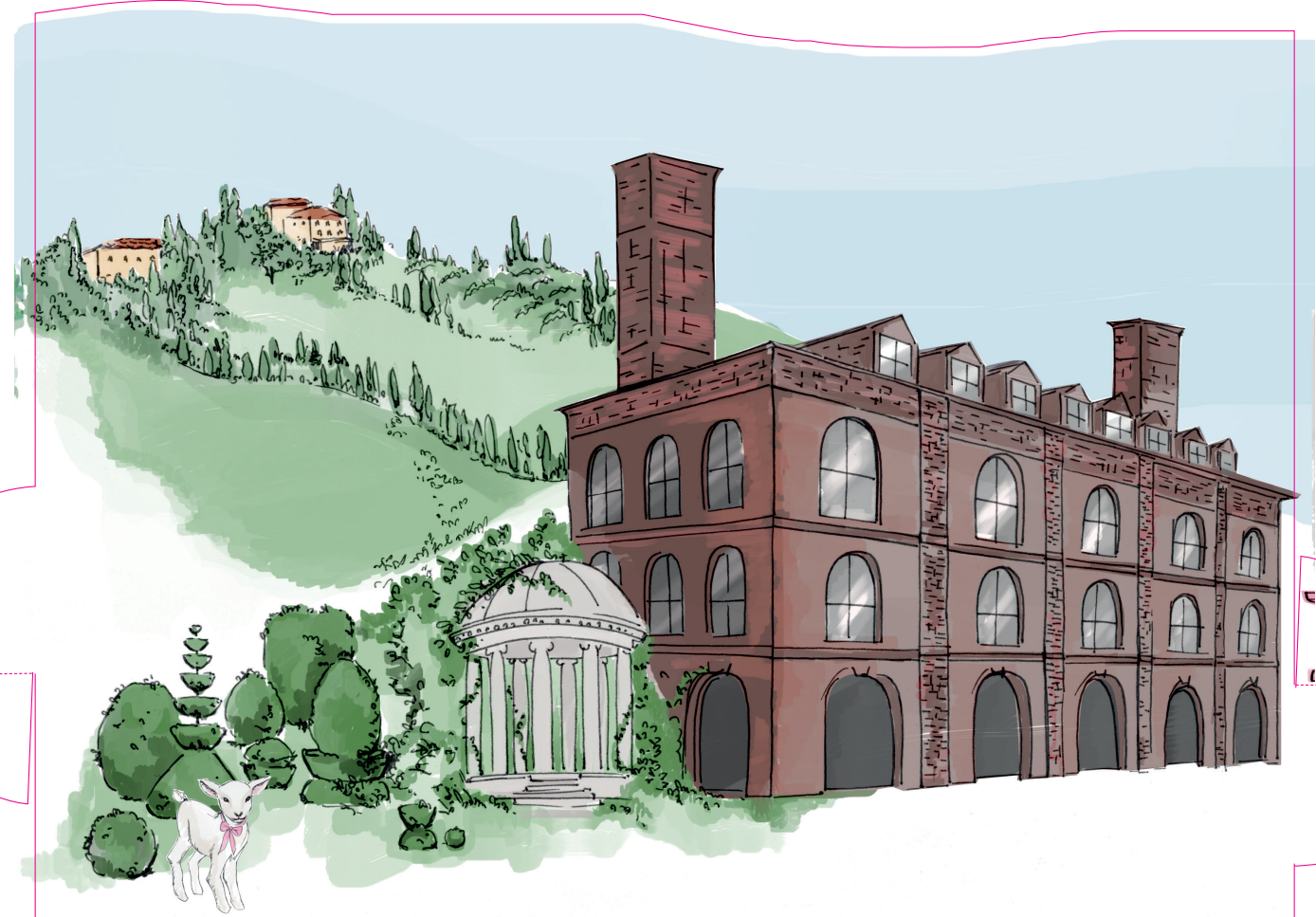
THE COURT OF VERSAILLES

VICTORIAN BRITAIN

BAROQUE STYLE

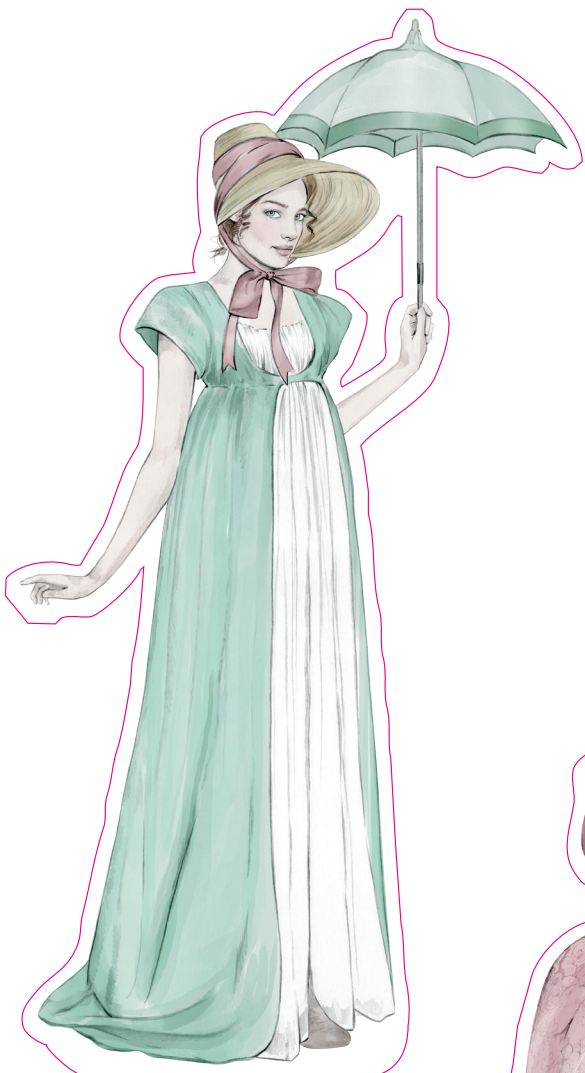
LA BELLE ÉPOQUE

FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE





FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE
CRINOLINEMANIA



FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE
REGENCY BRITAIN



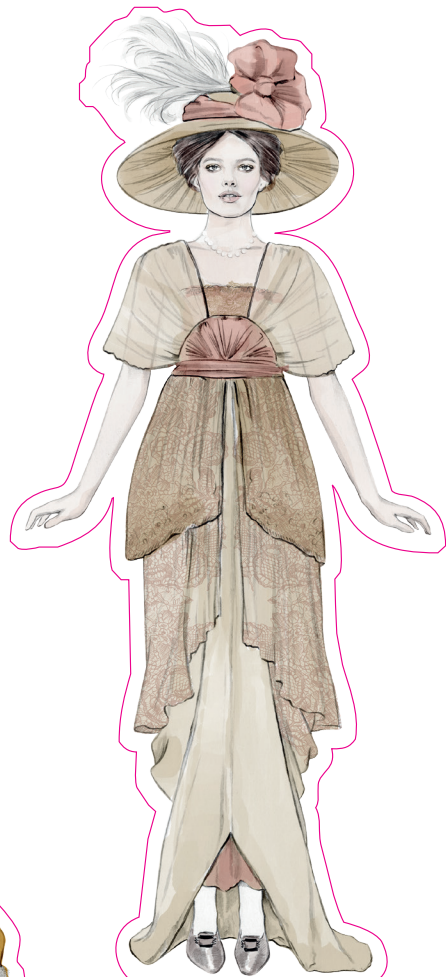
FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE
THE COURT OF VERSAILLES



FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE
VICTORIAN BRITAIN



FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE
BAROQUE STYLE



FROM BAROQUE TO LA BELLE ÉPOQUE
LA BELLE ÉPOQUE