Vêtements, coiffure, maquillage, l’opération a pris trois heures.

Clothes, hairdo, make-up: the whole process/operation/shebang **took[[1]](#footnote-1)** three hours.

On m’a mesurée sous toutes les coutures, on a établi que j’avais une

They[[2]](#footnote-2) measured me from every angle and established/concluded that I **had** an

morphologie sablier (traduction : gros seins, grosses fesses) et qu’il fallait

hourglass figure (read: big boobs, big bum)[[3]](#footnote-3) and that I had to

que je souligne ma taille et que je fasse des abdos. Mon principal atout

emphasise my waist and work on my abs. My main asset is my chest

est ma poitrine et il faut que j’apprenne à la montrer. Cindy m’a jeté des

and I must learn to show it. Cindy flung[[4]](#footnote-4) dozens of pieces of fabric

dizaines de morceaux de tissu au visage, pour déterminer les couleurs qui

at my face, to determine the colours that enhance/bring out

mettaient ma carnation et mes yeux en valeur (inutile de préciser que ce

my skin tone and eyes (needless to say, it wasn’t

n’était ni le bleu marine, ni le gris clair, mes couleurs fétiches).

navy blue, or light grey, my favourite colours/colours of choice).

Elle m’a montré une série de bijoux et m’a demandé de faire une sélection

She showed me a set of jewellery and asked me to pick out

de ce qui me plaisait. J’ai fait une sélection et elle a gardé en tout et pour tout

what I liked. Of the few I selected, she kept only a chain, arguing,

un sautoir, en argumentant, à juste titre, que je n’étais pas un sapin de Noël.

quite rightly,[[5]](#footnote-5) that I wasn’t a Christmas tree.

J’ai essayé des pantalons, des jupes, des tuniques, des leggings...

I **tried** **on** trousers, skirts, blouses, leggings…

— Tu dois porter des robes, oublie les pantalons, des robes droites bien

“Forget trouser**s**![[6]](#footnote-6) Only dresses for you. Straight dresses, taken in at the

cintrées à la taille et des talons hauts, je pense Marilyn, je pense

waist/waisted dresses, and high heels. **I’m thinking[[7]](#footnote-7)** Marilyn, I’m thinking

Catherine Zeta-Jones, je pense Monica Bellucci. Oublie les ballerines et

Catherine Zeta-Jones, I’m thinking Monica Bellucci. Forget ballet pumps,

les jupes trapèze ou plissées, après douze ans, ça devrait être illégal.

Trapeze/A-line or pleated skirts. They should be illegal for anyone **over the age of 12**.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

Le coiffeur s’appelait Jean-Eudes :

The hairdresser was called Jean-Eudes:

— My love, on va donner de la structure à ton cheveu, un peu d’angle,

“Darling/chérie/mon trésor,[[9]](#footnote-9) we’re going to give your hair some structure, a little edge,

parce que là c’est plat plat plat, sans caractère, si tu veux garder ta base

because now it’s flat flat flat, no character/oomph. If you want to keep it long

longue, il faut du mouvement, du volume entre les pommettes et le

we need some bounce, some volume between your cheekbones and

menton pour faire ressortir le doré dans tes yeux, tu vois, là je vais

chin, to **bring out[[10]](#footnote-10)** the gold in your eyes, you see. I’m going to

épouser ton implantation, challenger ta double texture, on va te faire du

embrace your growth pattern,[[11]](#footnote-11) challenge/tackle your double/dual- texture.

foncé en racine, et trouver un blond qui t’appartienne vraiment, parce

We’re going to darken the roots, and find your true blond/ the perfect shade of blond for you/a blond that really suits you, ’cause

que là c’est terne terne terne, ton blond naturel c’est pas le tien, et moi je

now it’s dull dull dull. Your natural blond isn’t your true colour, and I say

dis non non non, je vais te déstructurer[[12]](#footnote-12) tout ça et te donner de la lumière.

No no no, I’m going to get rid of/destructure/take care of/restructure it all/all that and give you some shine/light.”

Marie Vareille, *Je peux très bien me passer de toi*, 2015

*I can manage perfectly well without you*

*I can get by perfectly well without you*

*I can live pretty well without you*

*I’m doing fine without you*

1. Passé composé ALWAYS translated with past simple/préterit. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Here it’s important to avoid the impersonal construction: ‘~~One measured me’~~ [this sounds too formal for the type of text we are translating]; ‘~~I have been measured’~~ is also strange, as it leaves unclear who is doing the measuring. ‘I was measured’ is ok but then the ‘it was established’ sounds weird. Here it is clear that the narrator is having a makeover (*relooking*) and is being appraised by a team of professionals. It is unlikely it is just one person otherwise we would find ‘il’ or ‘elle’ so I think the best solution is to go with ‘They’. The tone we are going for in this translation is that of the narrator as **amused, unlucky victim of a makeover, at the mercy of these overly keen and eccentric professionals.** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ‘Breast**s’** is always plural in English; ‘bust’ is singular. As this text is in an oral register, ‘boobs’ is perhaps the best translation. Bum, bottom or buttocks are appropriate translations for ‘fesses’. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ‘Flung’ and ‘at’ permit us to keep the comic element of the text, as they highlight the almost aggressive nature of the makeover procedure. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This syntax allows us to keep the funny part at the end of the sentence – always a good tactic for joke telling. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Always plural in English. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ‘I think’ implies a habit or something unchanging – for example, ‘I think Cergy is a fantastic place’ (=unlikely to change in the next 5 minutes). Here we’d use ‘I’m thinking’ in this context as it is a sharing of the thought process as it happens (je pense, en ce moment-ci, à…). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Not ‘~~after 12 years~~’: this would imply after wearing them for 12 years. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Nice idea to use, as many of you did, a French *équivalence* for the ‘My love’. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. ‘to pop’ is a bit too violent here: we don’t want anything to explode. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. C’est la manière dont les cheveux sont [plantés](http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/%C3%AAtre_plant%C3%A9/61439). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Faire perdre à quelque chose sa structure, son organization systématique. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)