

The private lives of Barbara and Martin

By Varo Venturi

It's astonishing when you suddenly realize who may be the most successful actress in Hollywood! As an interviewer constantly listening to the biggest favorites confess the sadness in their heart, I can give you a quick clue. Remember when the initials B. B. stood for Brigitte Bardot? Today, of course, they instantly refer to a far more enchanting new star: Barbara Bain!

She can be tempting, but with class.

Her warm elegance shows intelligence is no sin.

With no urge to strip, she's stunning in high styles. Instead of repeating the same bit because of limited ability, she reveals a fascination acting range.

In *Mission: Impossible*, she stays single, using her wiles to entangle the villains. But she's leaned too much about love to be like that really.

While the obvious sexpot of French movies proved suicide-prone when a succession of lovers and husbands made her despondent away from the cameras, the American gal who's a delight to her own sex as well as all males has quietly managed to create a marvelous, lasting marriage with an always exciting, extremely talented husband. Martin Landau treats her with rare romantic devotion, can't help thinking of her as the treasure he won because she discloses in tender ways that she adores him.

Half the time they drive to work at Desilu-Gower (where they film the series five days a week) separately because they're apt to report for and finish their scenes at different hours. If Martin happens to take their gleaming, big, dark blue sedan, Barbara's blissful in their sleek, beige, sportier car.

When I met her for lunch at Nickodell, a giant-sized block from the studio, she walked in confirming what everybody knows about her in Hollywood. She's a beautiful, tall,

honey blonde with huge smoky green eyes and a generous smile.

At first she's just graceful, gay, bewilderingly gorgeous. A delicate reserve fades as she talks. It becomes intriguingly clear that she won't clutter up a conversation with clichés. Barbara is too bright, too articulate, to be banal.

Attempt to make her an authority on basic problems and she can't be trapped. She resorts to a soothing silence. In another minute she captures you with her truthfulness. She hopes, plans, then does her best. A project turns out well, or it fails. She rejoices, or hides the hurt. Above all, she is intent upon making the most of her chances to live and love fully.

"I've always had an independent streak," she says. "When I was in high school I worked in department stores during holidays to buy the pretty clothes I preferred. I wrapped so many packages I can tie a wicked bow! And I started modeling by mistake. A friend's sister was supposed to be in a fashion show at a store and didn't arrive. I was asked to help out in her place. Other opportunities to model followed."

Although Barbara was voted this year's best actress in a dramatic TV series by her fellow workers, this Emmy winner admits she never once tried out for a high school play.

"I never thought of myself as an actress then. I was in some comedy skits for school assemblies. I thought they were clever, but now I know they were awful. It was much more important to get good grades so I could go to college, to save what I could for what I'd need. And to date a special boy in the class ahead of mine.

"When he went on to the University of Illinois, I hated the thought of waiting a year until I could join him. My parents were firm when I was ready, and announced I had to plan on another college. They were afraid he

was why I insisted on that campus. Actually, he was. I didn't emphasize it to them, but I had to go there because we were in love. When I was told that if I were that stubborn I'd have to earn my way through the university, I answered: ' All right, I will' I climbed on the train for Champaign and did just that.

"It was very difficult. When the student employment people sent me to work in an office, I couldn't stand it. I sat at a desk between two other girls and we filed and handed each other papers. I got so rattled in two hours I got up and quit. I'd go crazy doing anything like that!

"As a result," she says, "I worked in the dorm where I lived. I hovered over a steam table and never want to see some kinds of food again because I served so much of it.

"If you'd ask me then if that boy and I were wise to be so positive about each other, I'd have replied yes with complete confidence. Like all teenagers, at one point I knew everything. Nearly all my high school friends who hadn't gone to college were already married. Naturally, I wanted to be."

She discovered a jolting number of them were already divorced by the time she recognized she'd have been totally unready for the demands of the marriage she wanted impulsively.

"First love lasted for me through my freshman year. Before my sophomore term, I spent the vacation working as a counselor in a summer camp. Whatever I'd had with my boy friend fell apart then. I found I could live without him and her concurred."

Didn't she rally by trying out for college plays?

"No," Barbara acknowledges, "My best friend majored in theatre arts, but I majored in sociology – orientation toward social needs and problems. I liked dancing, so I went out for the Orchesis group. It's a national organization for students of the dance in colleges. Every spring there was a mammoth variety show on the campus and I sort of danced in it my freshman year. The second year I was hanging around because my two closest friends were involved. They'd written the show and one had the lead. Out of the blue I was handed the job of choreographer. I had to design all the dances – and I had not one

idea! That night I had a terrible nightmare. I saw myself as a lifeguard at a pool and a child was going to drown. I couldn't budge and I was frantic with my inability to function. Then I must have relaxed, for that scene faded and I saw myself sitting away at the top of the stage I had to fill with complicated dances. I awoke knowing just what to do on all the numbers. I was a crazy way to win a prize that year!"

Her sympathy for those who've lost at love is sincere. She was in the same position with a second beau there.

"I then supposed he was the only one. WE also planned to marry. I still had absolutely no thought of ever having a career, expected to be content as his wife. When that fell through, I was very disheartened. If such a calamity could happen, what was the world all about?

"College prepared me to become a teacher. But, after graduating, I decided to go to New York. I had no intention of acting," she points out. "I didn't know what I was going for, yet I'd always known that someday I would go! It was a fact that I'd accepted and the only question was when I'd roomed in college with a girl from New York. She'd returned home and we hadn't written for a year. When I phoned her, neither of us was a bit surprised. We met at the Museum of Modern Art as if we'd simply seen each other the day before."

Then a new friend suggested that she could earn as much in a day from modeling fashions as she could in a week from teaching. Barbara dared to see what her teenage modeling might lead to. Her classic features, stunning figure, and flair made her a high fashion model for Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, and Mademoiselle.

"Yet I truly didn't like it enough. I studied dancing with Martha Graham. And for me, serious dancers were too isolated from real life. I was saving from my work as a model for my first trip to Europe --I wanted to travel over there – when I visited an acting class one night. To my amazement, I felt in the right place instinctively."

Curiosity made her enroll in Curt Conway's group. Several months afterwards, Martin – who was acting in an off-Broadway play – commenced returning frequently to assist the director with whom he'd studied. When an exercise or scene was prescribed, the

six-foot-three Martin could be counted on to demonstrate how it should be done. The evening Barbara met him and saw that, she assumed he was egoistical. As foolishly, he imagined she was dumb.

"Fortunately, we met a second time a week later at a party. We found ourselves standing side by side and began to talk. By the time he walked me home at 4 a.m. we'd had such a good discussion of our ideas and how we were trying to make something of our lives that we recognized how wrong a snap judgment can be."

Brooklyn born, Martin had a father who was a businessman, too. Nobody in his family had ever wanted to be in show business, either. In his college years at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, playing the title role in Hamlet convinced him he had to become an actor somehow. Already adept at drawing, he first earned his living as a cartoonist and staff artist for a leading New York newspaper. Like Barbara with her study of dancing and modeling, he wasn't satisfied. After office hours, he concentrated on acting classes until he won parts on the stage.

Barbara says: "We soon knew there was a very deep feeling between us. It's so critically important to reach real live. To me, it was a miracle!

"For a year and three months we courted on the streets of Manhattan. Both of us were forever hurrying to appointments. WE kept picking up two of everything – two records, two books – to share what we enjoyed. One day we saw there was no reason to collect two.

"Modeling fashions grew less interesting as marriage and studying acting became my goals. Getting married depended upon when we could find an apartment. Any sort of pleasant one was difficult to discover. We looked every day for five months!

"When we finally found ours, we could move in immediately. So we called two friends, to be witnesses and rushed to City Hall on a rainy morning to be married. My knees shook then for the first time – like castanets. Martin had to go right on to a rehearsal for a scene he was doing at the Actor's Studio, while I went to my first class where Lee Strasberg was in charge."

Ten days later, an elevator man looked horrified when he brought them down from their apartment. Barbara was a surprising vision in a white wedding gown and veil. Martin was appropriately arrayed. They were flanked by their fathers and mothers. Their parents had been shocked by word of merely a civil ceremony. So there was a second, religious one at an altar, with dotting relatives assembled for a proper reception besides.

The Landau's first six months of marriage was a severe test of their faith in their future as actors because Martin could get only an occasional small part in a play. Promises for better roles evaporated. Still they never lost hope, kept studying, survived. They had their love to sustain them.

Then their luck turned. His genius for characterization, polished by three years of the best training at the famous Actor's Studio and in off-Broadway plays. Put him in TV and on Broadway. She won acting plums in the stage and in the top television shows produced in Manhattan. When the Broadway hit Martin was in had its six months' tour of key cities, they were on salary for the same show at last.

"He was acting for the audiences, while I was the stand-by for the two leading woman," Barbara recollects. "They were so healthy I never once had a chance to go on for any performance."

When the tour ended in San Francisco, they shipped their trunks back to New York and visited in Hollywood with a suitcase wardrobe. Martin was offered such acting opportunities they stayed. She was in demand for television because her versatility stamped her as an excellent actress. When she scored in a lead on a Hollywood stage, she reported she'd be absent one night so her understudy could shine!

Barbara considers motherhood essential to her fulfillment as a woman, so she was thrilled – as Martin certainly was – when their first daughter, Susan was born six years ago.

Then almost a year in Italy, when he was cast as a Roman general in Cleopatra, gave them a fantastic time together in Europe. She had studied Latin, French, and Spanish in school, so she listened to Italian language records in the ten days before going.

"It took me three months in Italy to talk comfortably. I made lists of new words to learn every day when we moved from a hotel to an apartment in a purely Italian district. At Francesco Collette 32, near the road to Florence, I had no help the first eight days and a baby as well as Martin to take care of. Everybody in the neighborhood went out three times a day to shop for each meal. There was no supermarket, only separate stores for everything. I came close to panic. Each meal I fixed was a triumph, a superb accomplishment. We were high in new building. The swimming pool was directly above our bedroom and we used to wonder if our ceiling could hold it up there.

"We had many wonderful weekend trips. And one Tuesday Martin was told he'd not be needed till the next Monday, so we left the baby with our maid and finally drove to Florence. We stayed overnight in Spoleto, saw Assisi, and when we reached Florence drove by the Duomo and Baptistery, peeked into the Piazza de la Signoria, and decided we didn't like the look of the hotel where we had a reservation waiting. At another one we intended to go to sleep early, wake up and see the city full of energy. I phoned Rome to check on the baby and we were getting to bed at 8 p.m. when our phone rang.

"I answered and laughed when told a change in schedule meant Martin had to be at the studio for work at 6:30 the following morning. I was sure someone was putting me on. Nut it was so. There were no flights to

Rome that night and we couldn't drive back that fast. We found a train that left in twenty minutes. We packed up, turned in our rental car, and ran to return to Rome on that night train. The only seats left were in the dining car, and we sat up there all night. Martin got to the location near Anzio in time to say one ' Hail, Caesar!' a hundred and fifty feet from the camera.

"We never got back to Florence. But we went to Egypt with the picture, stopped over to see Athens on the way back, and loved what we saw of Paris and London, also, en route home.

"For a while, home was in Malibu, on two acres overlooking the ocean. We were totally isolated, but it was an easy drive into the city. We moved because our child would have no playmates near."

They now live in a two-story Georgian country manor with a swimming pool in the garden in the Westwood section of Los Angeles. Its English and French decor is stunning, thanks to their taste. Their second daughter, Juliet, is 2 ½ and – like Susan – darling. Rags, a loyal sheep dog, is the family pet. Everything runs with remarkable smoothness because Barbara is even beautifully organized.

Martin's been acclaimed as brilliant in tragedies, in hilarious roles and mostly as a villain on TV. Now he's happy to be a hero with Barbara as the series' exquisite bait. Send either on a hazardous mission and underline: possible.