

Barbara Bain and Martin Landau

We fight violently ... then make violent love

By Michael St. John

Show business marriages! We know all about them. They don't work. They feed on jealousy. Careers conflict. Long separations on different coasts, different continents, are the rule.

Show business marriages! They don't last. We know why. Too much ego. Too much self-love. Too much self-absorption to share the spotlight with anyone else – particularly with one's own mate. You know the old joke about the actor's marriage. "It's perfect," it goes. "She loves him and he loves him." Show business marriages. We know all about them.

Knowing all about them, we are faced with the Space: 1999 film and TV stars Barbara Bain and Martin Landau. And they both candidly admit that they fight violently when they disagree about something. "We try to let the whole world know it when we are throwing pots and pans at each other. With all our might we yell as loud as we can at each other. But when things are going right, we also make violent love too," Barbara says.

Martin adds: "This is the only way our marriage has lasted as long as it has. We don't mind giving it to each other. As a matter of fact that's how we met. The minute I took sight of her, I wanted to raise hell with her."

Barbara quickly interrupted to say: "The truth is we couldn't stand each other. He hated me and I hated him. When I first saw him at the Curt Conway Acting School in New York, I wanted to throw up.

"I was doing a lot of modeling at the time. And I had just come from a job. I was sporting that terrible white makeup we girls had to wear. And, of course, the black

eyes. I was very thin and overly dressed. Martin came down on me because of it like a ton of bricks.

"I was furious. After the way he looked, I thought he had a helluva lot of a nerve to talk about me. He had long hair and a disgusting beard and he dressed in black. He was a man I believed I could clearly do without."

Ten days later when they attended a party, they found that all these feelings had disappeared. As a matter of fact, all those terrible things they felt about each other at first were totally untrue.

"Suddenly, I was in love," Barbara says. "Martin wasn't that ugly and crude. He was a very quiet gentle man. I wanted to marry fast before some other girl found out the truth about him," the actress confesses.

It didn't take long for Martin to disclose his feelings to the tall, ash-blond, gray-eyed beauty. A year later they were married. "But not before a good fight," Barbara confides. "When that guy asked me to marry him, we were having the biggest rompest ever. And just as I raised my hand to give him a real hard punch, he shouted ' Oh, hell! Why are we doing all this now when we can have more fun we got married?' "

Barbara said she was so flabbergasted she hit him anyhow. "And I didn't mean to do it. It turned out that I hit Martin so hard he had a black eye for nearly two weeks. All because he wanted to marry me."

Now that the couple is having such a resurgence of high-powered success after their dual exit from Mission Impossible people occasionally suggest that their relationship is comparable to the legendary

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. There are those who even say that they are the new Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton twosome.

"That idea is nuts. Other than Mission, we had only worked together once before. It was a play with Edward G. Robinson on Broadway."

Still all three couples have had this in common: they have struggled hard to keep their marriages alive under most difficult circumstances.

"I admire Liz Taylor," Barbara says. "She is an extraordinary woman. I've been lucky enough to be one of her friends. And I know how much she has always loved Richard. Even when she divorced him – somehow they were not separated. Martin and I have come close to breaking up many times. But deep down we both knew that we needed each other.

"Martin tries not to interfere with my decisions concerning my career. I'm always asking him what he thinks about this or that."

Martin laughed at this statement and stopped her with: "Sure, you ask me. And I've found that when I suggest one thing – she does the opposite."

Barbara pretends to pout a little, and knowing her so well, Martin cups her cheek and kisses her on the nose.

"You see that proves it – when you marry them – become their slave, all you get is a kiss on the NOSE!" Barbara yells.

"You see what I mean," Martin whispers, underplaying her strategically. "How can you not love a woman like her?"

It is obvious that no matter what his wife would do or say that his love is so immense, it really wouldn't make that much difference to him.

If there is any jealousy or outsized ego operating in their marriage, it is also well hidden. Even the fact that Barbara has gotten her share of Emmys delights Martin. Yes, he's the better actor in the family but his only concern is for his wife.

"Her getting awards has nothing to do with me. I am thankful and feel very lucky

that we are working when so many other actors are in the unemployment line. Barbara and I just want to do our own respective thing. And there's no competition in our relationship," says Martin.

Martin was a New York boy – the son of a manufacturer who made money during the Depression and lost every dime when World War II began. He grew up wanting to be an artist. After studying at Pratt Institute and the Art Students League, he went to work as a cartoonist for the New York Daily News.

One summer, there was a job in a stock company; then came a successful audition. That did it. "I lived like a beggar for a while. But somehow I knew it would all come together. I don't know what it is – when you're down on your ass about to go under, many times there is a force that keeps you going. This is something I marvel about. Mankind's sustaining power."

The Landaus still get stacks of fan letters. Since their new series, the children of the children who used to watch Mission are now sending them letters.

"We get love letters too. And they're from teenagers – can you imagine that? Of course, Martin loves it but to me it doesn't seem right."

Martin bristles a bit at this remark and interjects: "That's not the whole truth, honey. How about that EIGHT-YEAR-OLD boy who wrote to you saying how much he loved you?"

"But he added, ' or at least I think I love you.' " she confirmed.

The Landaus also have two daughters, Susan Meredith and Juliet Rose. And I was told not to divulge their ages to anyone. They've gotten to be at that age it appears.

Barbara admits to being stricter with their kids than Martin. "He's so much easier with them than I. He'd let them get away with anything. Nevertheless, there doesn't seem to be one of these communication gaps other parents talk about.

"They enjoy and respect what we are doing, and we work very hard at understanding their ideas and beliefs. There are some I don't believe I'll ever fully understand but what can you do but try."

Martin said the best thing they've ever done was to go to England to work. "It brought us closer together more than ever before. It was a new adventure. And we're two people who do not like the idea of standing around doing nothing."

When Martin and Barbara exited from Mission Impossible, their fans believed they had walked out on the show when, in fact, they were fired by Paramount.

"There were so many lies coming out in the press that we were holding out for more money. And that was not the situation. Martin had never had a contract and made it known to the producers that he would remain with the show as long as the quality of the show was maintained.

"When the studio brought in other producers that's when the trouble began. Martin said he wouldn't return. And I was

caught in the crossfire. We didn't know that we weren't in the cast lineup until we got a call from a friend from the press. It was also impossible to talk about the situation because it was in litigation."

They are overjoyed with the success of their new show. They are at the top of the list of the ratings, and there is a great possibility they'll have another trip in space next season.

"It's fantastic," Barbara says. "Because we've shot all the shows for this season which gives us a chance to work in motion pictures. It seems that we're stuck together for a time."

"She knows I love working with her – she's what life and love is all about."

"Why thank you, dear." Barbara smiles softly and says. "But when we met," she adds, "if I'd closed my eyes and dreamed how I wanted it to be, it never would have been this good."

Show business marriages! We know all about them. Well, almost all. A few of them work quite well.