





WHAT MARRIAGE HAS TAUGHT ME

BY JEFF HUNTER

Loving each other came easily for Jeff and Barbara, but living together, well, that's another story. And it's the best part of all!

When I married I knew I would be giving up a certain amount of freedom, I could no longer do exactly as I pleased, so I wasn't surprised that I had to change my way of living. I valued some of the things I was losing, but I stepped into a relationship that more than compensated for all I gave up.

Two weeks after Barbara Rush and I were married, I was shipped off to the Virgin Islands. This is always good for a laugh, but at the time it seemed less funny to Barbara and me than it did to other people. We had planned to marry seven months later, but when we learned I was to go to the islands for *The Frogmen*, Barbara was on location in Sedona, Arizona, for *Devil's Canyon*, and the long separation ahead seemed more than we could take. We eloped and were married in Boulder City, Nevada, December 1st, 1950.

Barbara had to settle into our first home all by herself. She sent out our wedding announcements and Christmas cards and attended to business I had to leave behind. I learned right then that I had a very capable girl for a wife.

You don't know anyone until you have lived with her for years. You keep learning as you go along. I discover something new about Barbara every day, almost every hour. Much of it is contradictory. As I said, she is capable, but she's not the "Let me alone, I can do it myself" type. She likes to depend on me, although I can imagine conditions under which she might say: "Thank you, I'll work this out alone."

Some bachelor joys are harder to give up than others. I'm a spur-of-the-moment man, I like to make up my mind suddenly and hop off right away, not plan ahead. A husband can't do that, unless he happens to be married to a spur-of-the-moment type wife. Barbara likes to think things over. She has domestic responsibilities, and now that we have a baby, arrangements must be made for his care. *(Continued on next page)*

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I love to ski ... to rush off at a second's notice, drive a hundred and twenty-five miles to the snow, spend the day on the slopes, and drive back. Barbara is learning to ski because I enjoy it, but she is new at the sport and she hates to dash up to the snow and back. "I need at least two days to prepare myself," she says, "so much driving tires me and takes the fun out of the thing."

So no more impromptu ski trips.

Part of a happy marriage is sharing things. Barbara loves to dance; I like it, though I'm not an enthusiast, so we go dancing and have fun.

She is crazy about the ballet. Early in our marriage, she persuaded me to go with her to see a famous ballet company. "You'll love it," she assured me. I didn't. The girls were all right, some of them were quite lovely, but I didn't care for the men. I thought they looked silly leaping and bounding about. "This is for the birds!" I said, and we nearly came to blows because ballet bored me. You live and learn. Recently, she asked me to take her to see another ballet company, and either the troupe was better, or I had changed, for I really enjoyed it.

Since we married, we've been separated several times. Besides that first location, I spent some months in England making *Sailor Of The King*, leaving Barbara with a brand new infant son to care for. I doubt if either of us learned much about the other while we were apart. There were letters, certainly, but absence tends to turn the beloved into a dream person. All her fine qualities remain with you, you remember only sunny hours, so that once you return it comes as a shock to discover that she isn't that impossible angel of light you've been imagining, but rather a human being, an individual with emotions, a will of her own, and—let's face it—a slight touch of unreasonableness . . . Just like anyone!

Almost any magazine you pick up contains advice to the newly wed. Before I married, I used to read these articles, and afterwards some of it came back to me. Occasionally now I read the stuff, and part of it helps.

They tell you not to try to remodel each other.

Barbara loves to lie in bed in the morning. When we aren't working, she'll say: "You don't have to get up now. It will do you good to lie and rest." But once awake, I must get up, and so far she hasn't changed me.

Barbara is one of those people who simply can't shut a door or a drawer. Sometimes I come into the kitchen and find everything wide open, as if a strong wind had swept through the room. I go around slamming everything shut. But she doesn't reform. I suspect that she'll never change and it will save me wear and tear if I realize it now.

We make efforts to reform each other. I go about it as if it were a joke. Putting Barbara in the hall, I say: "Now I will give you an imitation of Miss Barbara Rush in her bathroom!" I wrinkle up the rug, open all the drawers, leave whatever I touch just as I drop it, splash about wildly, exaggerating naturally to put over the idea.

"Oh ho!" she'll say, entirely unimpressed. "Now let me show you something!" She'll lead me to a corner of the dining room, where my correspondence is piled up in stacks. "See?" I have the habit of neglecting my mail, and her point is made.

When I try to talk Barbara out of doing something I disapprove of, sometimes I win, sometimes not; but she has talked me out of doing things. I remember once coming in with a luxury item that dismayed her. "Now, honey," she said sweetly reasonable, "just why did you think you had to have this? It's expensive and I'm sure we can't afford it, but if you have some reason for needing it, tell me." I felt like a cocker spaniel. Presently, knowing she was right, I took the thing back to the store.

You can't say, women are this, women are that. You can



A gallant hero in 20th's *Sailor Of The King*, Jeff fills the role of father for son Christopher just as expertly.



Jeff and Barbara have blended their careers and family life into a wholesome one. They're not much for night life.

generalize about certain aspects of a woman's behavior, and under similar conditions, you may strike a norm. But you never get to know a person until you live with her, and probably many women are not at all like Barbara, Marriage is no easy road. It's a serious undertaking that requires hard work to get the best out of it, but its compensations are terrific.

Money is supposed to be a trouble spot in matrimony, but it's never bothered us. Barbara isn't extravagant. At first



Sunday morning breakfast isn't complete until the papers are all read. They've wisely held off buying a house.



Barbara has a long term contract with Universal International, is slated for top roles after *It Came From Outer Space*.

we'd talk things over and decide what we could afford, but actors are not always good mathematicians and the budget didn't balance. Now we have a business manager who is also our friend. He understands legal, banking, tax and investment problems and we know we can trust him to take care of our interests.

I haven't been in Hollywood long enough to know what to do about requests for contributions to various charities. I'm not sure whether I should give ten dollars or a hundred

dollars. Now I can say: "Please see my business manager," and know that he will deal with it correctly.

Another danger-point, say experts, is that green-eyed monster Jealousy. Jealousy is pretty basic. I suppose no woman feels truly loved unless her husband is a little jealous of her attention, and it would be disconcerting if your wife didn't care whether or not you looked at someone else.

Fortunately, our careers offer no reason for jealousy. We talk over picture problems but don't compare our roles, or their importance.

We spent our first wedding anniversary on the set of *Lure Of The Wilderness*. Barbara sat on the sidelines while I spent the evening chasing Jean Peters and kissing her. Everyone thought it very funny: luckily, so did we. A wife not in pictures herself might have been most uncomfortable.

Married people are apt to have difficulties, they say, when both have careers and household tasks are to be done. A working wife asks: "Why should I work hard all day and then come home and do the dishes?"

Washing dishes used to be a specialty of mine. I'd go to the sink saying: "Now you will see the best dishwasher and the tidiest kitchen you've ever beheld!" I'd keep my boast. But I'll confess I never loved washing dishes. Today we are lucky enough to own a dish washer ... so our problem is solved.

When children come, they bring new adjustments. A baby must be put before everything else; he's the heart of the home. Our son was very young when I went to England. Months later, when I returned, it was a shock to find our whole mode of living changed. Presently, I learned to change diapers and give him his bottle, but when he cried I was appalled. Sometimes I felt so helpless I wanted to run away, but that passed. We adjusted ourselves.

We are fortunate in having Barbara's mother living near us. Mother Rush is perfectly happy when she can take care of little Christopher. She lost both her husband and son in accidents, and the baby fills the vacancy in her life. Because she was a nurse at one time, she understands baby care; she loves him and we feel safe to have him with her. So Barbara is able to resume her career and, occasionally, we are free to go away together.

I am delighted to have Barbara take up sports I enjoy, but I believe no husband should try to teach his wife to do anything in which he is expert, whether it's golf, tennis, skiing or even driving a car. All men want their wives to excel and wives are afraid they won't be good at whatever it is, so when she repeats a mistake through nervousness, he is likely to snap: "I *told* you not to do that!" or "Don't you know which is your right hand?"

If she should learn quickly and go on to be better than he is, I can imagine that he'd be a little jealous, and maybe it would be good for him, who knows?

Teaching someone you love is difficult. I'm teaching another man's wife to drive because he made her nervous. I want her to learn, but I don't care whether she is slow or not, just as long as she's safe on the road. I can offer her encouragement without criticism because it's not vital to me that she be good.

In marriage, as in life, you learn to meet demands. It's a poor idea to think you know what lies ahead. Take things as they come, but never take them for granted.

As the years go by, you learn more about yourself than you learn about anyone else. If your marriage is to be a success, you must develop certain qualities in yourself—tolerance, unselfishness, consideration. Regardless of your mental picture of yourself, you seldom measure up to your ideal. I don't pretend that I've perfected even one of these qualities, but at least I'm aware of the necessity of acquiring them.