

JEFFREY HUNTER

Just Lucky



20th Century-Fox

Jeff's handicaps have been small, his good fortune great

JEFFREY HUNTER has been heard to wonder whether he deserves all the good fortune that's his, because he's never had to suffer for it. He is a guy with no problems at all—none now and none in the past.

"The major handicap I ever had to overcome," he told me, "was a minor and temporary inferiority complex because I couldn't play college football and didn't see any action during the war."

He had a good excuse for even those lapses from success—a broken arch-bone in his foot, which he got in a high-school football accident. Jeff claims he also used to worry because he was shy with girls and because his voice wasn't low enough. Neither of these things turned out to be serious drawbacks either, when you consider his thriving acting career.

He worked hard to become a movie star, but there was no sacrifice involved. He never came close to starving, as some actors do, because his prosperous parents helped him out when the going got rough.

Jeff believes that he has been lucky, but he says that luck comes when preparedness meets opportunity. He certainly did his best to be prepared, though for a while it was a question

of whether he would be prepared for an acting career or for one in sports. The betting was on the latter when, at the age of 11, he won a football contest as the best passer and punter in the state of Wisconsin.

Then a couple of years later he played his first part—that of a 60-year-old man—and the acting bug got him. The accident to his foot settled the dilemma, and Jeff began to prepare for acting in earnest. Besides amateur theatricals, he worked on radio, and won a scholarship to Northwestern. After graduating from there, he went to Los Angeles for graduate study at the University of California. While playing a part in a college drama, "opportunity met preparedness" and Jeff was tested by Paramount.

The contract did not materialize, but the test was nevertheless the most important single event in Jeff's life. Not only did it lead to his present contract with 20th Century-Fox, but it also introduced him to Barbara Rush, with whom he made the test. They were later married, though they have since been divorced.

Jeff enjoys his career so much that he calls acting "well-paid recreation." There's no other job, he claims, in which you have so much fun and for which you get paid so well.

Being an athlete, he says that the more action

there is in a movie, the better he likes it. He loves going on location and always spends whatever free time he has exploring the vicinity.

The best piece of advice he ever got and the one he tries hardest to follow is "Be natural and honest, off the screen and on."

But he admits that acting is hard work too and requires intense concentration. Sometimes he'll stay up half the night, rehearsing himself in being natural.

He's a happy man, doing just what he wants to do, but if his career should suddenly flop it wouldn't be the end of the world for him. He'd be a ski instructor, since skiing is his favorite unpaid recreation.

As you learn more about Jeff, you find out that his talents are almost boundless. He can play the piano and sing. He's good at sketching, and can capture likenesses of his friends. There's hardly a sport he hasn't tried, from golf to tumbling, and he's good at them all. His greatest enthusiasm at the moment is diving for abalone off the Palo Verdes coast.

He even claims to be a handyman—but so far, since he lives in an apartment and has no home of his own to tinker with, we have only his own word on how handy he could be, given the opportunity.