

As the ever-in-trouble "Maisie," Ann once starred opposite Lew Ayres.

derfully popular 'Maisie Revere' series."

Ann wasn't passive for long. "One morning I woke up and felt ashamed of my self-pity. I suddenly realized I was lucky to be alive. I realized I must make each day count for something."

That was when Ann became a convert to Catholicism. That was also the time—while immobile and flat on her back—when she considered several business ventures. Out of those considerations came a TV firm, a ranch, and a movie company. In addition, her interests now include a music-publishing firm and a line of clothing for career women.

Since her illness, Ann has gone on to become the most successful TV comedienne since Lucille Ball. Her two series—"Private Secretary" and the "Ann Sothern Show"—still play to an audience estimated at 30 million viewers.

However, Ann hasn't overcome all the effects of her illness. She has developed an intense fear of sickness, no matter how minor. Secondly, as one acquaintance says, "She has become a compulsive eater. She knows she shouldn't and is trying (unsuccessfully) to keep down to 135 pounds."

This poses a serious professional problem because physical attractiveness is vital to an actress. Unable to cope with her weight, Ann took a practical way out: to make her at least look slimmer, she hired the best dress designer, make-up expert, and cameraman she could find. The results are apparent. She comes across as an attractive personality, whose bounce, sympathy, and good humor more than make up for her noticeable chubbiness.

The No. 1 problem in Ann's life is her inability to find the kind of family life she has always dreamed about but never known. "It seems to be a terrible pattern in our family that nobody can stay married," she confesses.

Ann's parents were divorced when Ann was in her teens. One of her sisters, Bonnie, also is divorced. Ann herself has been divorced twice—from band-leader-now-turned-advertising-executive, Roger Pryor, and from actor Bob Sterling, the father of Ann's 16-year-old daughter, Tish.

BECAUSE SHE HAS usually been alone, Ann has had to acquire the self-assurance to accept man-sized responsibility.

But this responsibility is a liability as well as an asset. Early in life, Ann developed a tendency to be bossy. She tries hard not to be dictatorial and claims she can delegate responsibility—but she's a tough boss when her orders aren't carried out.

Her coworkers respect Ann for her judgment and executive qualities. But there's also resentment, particularly from some of the attractive young actresses who work on her show.

There is one person on whose love and admiration Ann can always count: Tish. All business at the office, Ann is first and last a mother at home.

"I promised myself and Tish," Ann says, "that she would always have affection, guidance, and someone to whom she could tell her problems."

Ann has lived up to her promise. For example, she deferred a crucial business meeting to be with



Tish on a very important day—when braces were taken off her teeth. "Some mother I'd be if I wasn't there for that!" says Ann.

Ann's ultimate dream is that some day Tish will marry and raise a family of her own. "I can't wait till I can spoil my grandchildren," Ann says.

But Ann will be able to do something else for them—teach them how to take life's hardships and come back fighting.

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