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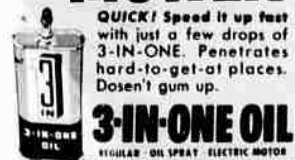
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ORA DENTURE CLEANSER

MOVIES



Shirley and Jack have two sons—baby Pat, here, and four-year-old Shaun.

Shirley Jones and

She credits her husband with transforming her from

By ADELE WHITELY FLETCHER

WHAT CAN A MAN mean to a woman? Everything! says Shirley Jones.

The prim little rosebud of "Oklahoma!" has blossomed into the vibrantly alive woman of "Elmer Gantry" and "The Music Man"—and she credits the transformation to the maturing influence of Jack Cassidy, her husband and the father of her two sons, Shaun, four, and Patrick, six months.

"Before I fell in love with Jack, I was a very different person," Shirley told me recently. "It was as if I held my nature in abeyance until I met the man I loved, then chose which of my dormant qualities would best fit our life together."

Shirley still has the same clear eyes, smooth, fresh skin, and gentle mouth that caught the attention of theatrical agents when she was on vacation in New York in 1953. But now Shirley's eyes meet you directly, her skin has a warmer glow, and her mouth is more expressive. She is quick to agree or disagree, always with confidence and with articulate reasons.

As I talked to her, the sun slanted through the window of her New York hotel suite, turning her hair into a golden mist and accenting the lovely upward tilt of her eyes and mouth. I noticed that every time the press agent who had arranged the interview passed through the room he turned for a second look at her.

Shirley was born with her beauty. Her ability as a singer and dancer has long

been recognized. But critics felt that she "didn't quite come off" as a personality in her early movie roles in "Oklahoma!" and "Carousel." Somehow she seemed to lack fire and depth.

In 1955, soon after her first Hollywood fling, Shirley went on tour with the European road company of "Oklahoma!" Jack Cassidy—the man who was to change her life—was also in the troupe. He played Curly opposite her Laurie.

Oddly enough, the first time Shirley saw Jack she wasn't attracted to him. She was on her way backstage at the first New York rehearsal for the tour when another girl in the cast grabbed her arm and whispered: "Look! That must be Jack Cassidy! Isn't he good-looking?"

"Yes, he is," Shirley agreed with little enthusiasm. The demure young lady, not long out of Smithton, Pa., did not trust handsome men.

A few minutes later, Jack spotted Shirley and greeted her by saying: "Hello! I know you; you're Shirley Jones. My name's Jack Cassidy. It's a pleasure to be working with you."

Shirley was momentarily taken aback; then she broke into a smile. She couldn't help it. He seemed so genuinely pleasant.

When Shirley told me about the incident, a smile again flicked across her lips. And there was a loving warmth in her voice as she continued to reminisce:

"Right then and there, I began to re-evaluate my theory about good-looking men. Soon I discovered the sensitive un-



Robert Preston is a smoothie who romances Shirley in "The Music Man."

How She Grew

a girl-next-door type to a mature, vibrant actress

derstanding that influenced everything Jack said and did. And then I fell in love with his Irish humor—and with him. All this took slightly less than one week!"

The first stop for the "Oklahoma!" tour was Paris, the city of lovers. Jack gave Shirley a gold miniature of the Eiffel Tower to wear on her charm bracelet. He took her to the famous Lido night club, and they danced until closing time. Instead of taking a taxi, they walked silently to their hotel, holding hands.

As the tour came to an end in Rome, Shirley and Jack tried to wipe the stardust from their eyes and take a dispassionate look at their relationship. They decided they would part for a while when they returned home to see whether separation would diminish their affection.

BACK IN THE United States, Jack went to Bucks County, Pa., to fill an engagement, and Shirley to Hollywood to film "Carousel." For three months, they were separated. But it was not the "you go your way, I'll go mine" sort of thing they had planned. Each day, they talked by phone. And when Shirley was in Maine for "Carousel" location shots, Jack ignored the agreement they had made and dashed up to Boothbay Harbor for a visit. They were married the following year.

Shaun was born in 1958. Shirley spells his name phonetically despite Jack's protest that it should be spelled *Sean*, the traditional Irish way. But, with indulgent amusement, he accepts Shirley's protest that "everyone would call him *Seen*."

"Jack hoped our second child, Patrick, would be a girl," Shirley said. "As it now

stands, we really have three sons. David, Jack's 12-year-old son by a previous marriage, spends much of the time with us."

She reached into her bag and took out two pictures, one of David and one of Shaun—both wearing their father's three-cornered smile. "I just happen to have them with me..."

SHIRLEY'S RECENT visit to New York was in connection with her new movie, "The Music Man." In it, she plays the part of Marian, a spinster librarian who comes alive when she falls in love with a fascinating scamp. At first, Shirley wasn't sure she wanted the part.

"I thought it might return me to the sweet-young-thing category," Shirley said. "But reading the script changed my mind. It is the story of a small-town girl who discovers there can be—and indeed should be—more to life than a tight, prim hairdo, businesslike spectacles, and disdain for any man who hasn't read the books she has read. I began to plan how I would show the gradual change when Marian falls head-over-heels in love and forgets to be a librarian and becomes a loving woman. I feel that the part is every bit as dramatic as that of the shady lady in 'Elmer Gantry' that won me an Academy Award last year."

"I don't think I would have brought the same understanding to either of these parts, though, if I had not been married and secure as a wife and mother. When I met Jack, I was very naïve. As a man of the world, he led me gently."

"I don't know how I would have grown as a matured woman without him."



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