



ANN SOTHERN: A Gal Troubles Can't Beat

Illnesses, unhappy marriages, career problems—she has faced them all and learned a lesson: the worst enemy one can have is self-pity

By PEER J. OPPENHEIMER

Ann's lovely teen-age daughter, Patricia Ann (Tish) made her acting debut in an appearance with Mom on TV episode of "The Ann Sothern Show."

ANN SOTHERN is a paradox in courage. Women admire her—and hate her. Men like her—but don't love her. She's a lazy woman who does the work of three executives.

She's a person who loves people and parties but lives a lonely life in a mansion valued at \$250,000—while figuring out how to pay the U.S. nearly \$1 million it claims she owes in back taxes.

She's a woman who wants nothing more than to be married, but at 49, with two divorces, she has given up hope of ever finding another husband.

She's a woman who has had more heartbreaks, more ups and downs, more misfortunes than almost any other actress in Hollywood—yet has found the courage to fight back. Each time she has been hit by trouble, she has bounced back smiling.

Take a spring day in Minneapolis, when she was Harriet Lake and eight years old. She saw a little boy dash across the street and into the path of an oncoming car. Impulsively, she rushed after him

and shoved him away from the screeching wheels—in time to save him but not herself. The car ran over her, and she lost consciousness.

"When I woke up in the hospital," Ann recalls, "I heard my father call me 'Dear' and 'Darling.' It was wonderful. It was the first time he had ever shown such affection to me."

In spite of her injuries, Ann appreciated this warmth from a man who had never been able to show much affection, who had hoped for a son but fathered nothing but daughters, whom he raised like sons until he divorced their mother and remarried—only to have more daughters!

Ann isn't bitter. "He taught me to be a good businesswoman," she says proudly. Today, they are partners raising black angus cattle in Idaho.

With Ann there has always been a new vitality, a new aim, a will to bounce back when things went wrong. And they never went more wrong than the day she collapsed in Sun Valley, Idaho.

It was January, 1950, and Ann was skiing when suddenly she was overcome by a deep feeling of fatigue. Minutes later, two members of the ski patrol were carrying her downhill on a stretcher. Ann was too tired to care. She was convinced it was only exhaustion.

But it wasn't exhaustion. Ann had been stricken by infectious hepatitis. The illness eventually led to the necessity for a thyroidectomy.

FOUR YEARS PASSED before Ann could return to work. For three of these years, she was in and out of the hospital undergoing treatment, including two serious operations. Most of the time, she was flat on her back, unable to move, caring little whether she lived or died.

Next came cancellation of her movie contract with MGM. Ann insists they parted by mutual agreement. A close friend disagrees. "She was fired after making a big fortune for them with her won-