

JANE SEYMOUR MAINTAINS HER SUNNY SPIRIT-AND QUIET BEAUTY-DESPITE LIFE'S MANY UPS & DOWNS

BY LISA ARCELLA



IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE that Jane Seymour has been acting for more than 30 years. The actress looks like she's barely changed at all since making her screen debut as a Bond girl in 1973's *Live and Let Die*.

And it's not because she's got a permanent seat in a Beverly Hills plastic surgeon's office or because she lives a stress-free life. In fact, her personal trials have included a gutwrenching divorce, premature twins and serious medical problems.

So how come she looks so good? Jane believes it all radiates from her perennially optimistic outlook and hard-won ability to roll with life's punches-the very subject of her fourth book, ***Remarkable Changes: Turning Life's Challenges into Opportunities***.

A BRUSH WITH DEATH

And challenges she's had-one of them nearly deadly. In 1988, while filming *Onassis: The Richest Man in the World* in Madrid, Jane developed a bronchial infection. While giving her an injection of antibiotics for the infection, a nurse "missed the muscle and hit an artery or vein. My mouth and throat closed up, and I could feel myself losing consciousness," recalls Jane. "The next thing I knew, I had a view from the top of my room. I could see a man crying and screaming on the phone and then trying to

resuscitate me. I knew that I had left my body. I actually saw a white light. I was very calm, but I remember thinking, 'I have children that need me.'"

The actress had gone into anaphylactic shock and had to be given shots of adrenaline and cortisone. "The doctors told me later that I nearly died," she says, "but I think I made it clear to whoever was listening that I was not ready to give up."

A MARRIAGE COLLAPSES

Three years after Jane's close call came the very painful breakup of her marriage to third husband David Flynn-a union she had detailed in the flowery 1986 book *Jane Seymour's Guide to Romantic Living*.

Five years after the publication of the book, which featured pictures of the English castle the couple lived in with their two children, Jane began noticing that her husband seemed distant. She confronted a friend and found out that Flynn was cheating on her. He would later admit to some 14 affairs.



Ask Jane Seymour who she respects, and her late father, John Benjamin Frankenberg, an obstetrician who made science exciting to her as a youngster, is high on the list. So is her mother, Mieke, who lived in an Indonesian prison camp before World War II. "I'd always known my mother was a strong person who had been through tremendous inspiration to me. Many people never would have been able to overcome the brutality she experienced in the camps, yet she meets the challenges of her life with grace and resilience. She has taught me that you can't expect a remarkable change in your life unless you are able to face whatever pain you may have and process it in some way."

Jane also admires her friend and *Somewhere in Time* costar Christopher Reeve. "I have certainly learned from him that when one door closes, another one opens. Every day he is challenging himself mentally and physically and is using his drive

and wisdom to change the course of medicine. That is huge!"

"Before that moment, I was totally in denial," she says. "I think I didn't want to admit to myself that something was going on."

Another shock: Flynn had been handling their finances and she was near the brink of financial ruin. "I had lost more money than you can imagine, and I had two young children to support. It was devastating," she recalls.

A SILVER LINING

Despite her deep sadness, Jane held herself together for her children, Katie and Sean, then nine and six. "Even when I was the most upset, I knew that their well-being came first," she says. "I didn't have time for a breakdown. I had to take care of them, get them to school and not look like I was panicking as much as I was."

Her solution? "I started finger-painting with them. I guess it was a stress reliever and sort of therapy for all of us. It's funny, but I ended up having a painting career I wouldn't have had otherwise." (Jane now exhibits her artwork all around the world.)

She also needed a job, and in a hurry. A phone call to her agent led Jane to her role in the beloved, long-running series *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*.

In 1992, her world brightened further, when she fell in love with producer James Keach, now her husband of 10 years. "Going through all that I had allowed me to meet and fall in love with James," she says. "Before, I had led my life with blinders on. I had allowed myself to be dependent on someone else for my happiness. I wasn't going to do that again, but I could allow myself to open up to something new and wonderful. That's what life is all about." Even better, she and Flynn have mended fences, for the good of their children.