

Marta Kristen

BIOGRAPHY

Judy Robinson in LOST IN SPACE

Marta Kristen, 21-year-old blue-eyed blonde who comes to Hollywood via Oslo, Norway and Detroit, Mich., is a willowy, young-Ingrid Bergman-type.

She is pretty, intelligent, long-legged, pug-nosed, effervescent and perfectly cast as Judy in the LOST IN SPACE series, a 20th Century-Fox Television production in association with Irwin Allen Productions and Van Bernard Productions.

The bizarre set of circumstances that landed her in Hollywood constitute a fantastic, modern-day Cinderella story. Born in Oslo, Norway on February 26, 1945, Marta was left in an orphanage by her parents when she was two weeks old.

For four-and-a-half years she was an unwanted Norwegian war waif. In 1948, Marta's picture was sent to Professor and Mrs. Harld Soderquist of Detroit, Michigan by an Oslo woman who found homes for orphans, Marta Bentzen. Soderquist, a teacher of Philosophy at Wayne University in Detroit, had been unable to adopt the girl of his choice and was offered Marta as a replacement.

Delighted with Marta's apparent vivacity, the Soderquists scaled a mountain of international red tape to adopt the little girl. In 1949, Marta flew from Oslo to New York by herself. She was met by the Soderquists, but couldn't speak a word of English. This unfortunate circumstance soon became a dilemma when she lost her "Smeller," a fragrant handkerchief that "smelled of home." Luckily, a passerby who spoke Norwegian perceived the situation and interpreted. Mrs. Soderquist gave her newly adopted daughter her own perfumed handkerchief to soothe her.

Marta quickly adjusted to the language and customs of the United States. She entered Farmington Elementary School, and as a 10-year-old fourth grader starred in an original comedy which she and two other 10-year-olds had written.

A piano-playing colleague of her father's, Professor Henry Herman, recommended Marta to the famous Will-O-Way Theatre in Birmingham, Mich., on the strength of her singing and dancing to ballads he played on frequent visits to the Soderquist home. Marta was accepted and cast in "Peter Pan" and "Little Women" at Will-O-Way in summer stock when she was just over 12. She later took a course in drama at the Detroit Civic Theatre.

In 1959, Professor Soderquist took his family to California on sabbatical leave. Marta studied at Santa Monica High School for a year, then remaining in California with a guardian while her parents went back to Detroit, finished her night school education at Hollywood Professional School at 16 by taking a full summer school session. She considers her most embarrassing moment the fall she took at the formal graduation ceremony at the Rivera Country Club.

Her future plans for higher education are to graduate from "a good college," and she is attending high school toward the end. Marta has consumed a good deal of the world's greatest literature. Her favorite author is Erich Maria Remarque, but she reads and enjoys any book that is recommended by her erudite father.

The lovely young actress was "discovered" while eating a hamburger with her boyfriend at a drive-in restaurant in Santa Monica. Producer Jimmy Harris approached her and asked if she would like to tryout for "Lolita."

At first she thought he was kidding, but after checking Harris' background, she read for the part. She didn't get the role, but producer Harris can be credited for starting Marta on a Hollywood career. He placed her in the hands of an actor's agent who immediately got her a featured role in "The Loretta