

Maitland Ward of 'Boy Meets World' Believes That "Friendship, Trust and Laughter" Make for a Strong Relationship



By Petra Halbur

Maitland Ward first won our hearts in the 90's as Rachel

McGuire on the hit show, *Boy Meets World*. Though Rachel caused a few love triangles, we adored the towering red head for her quirkiness, lovability and strength. Thirteen years after the series finale, Ward still speaks highly of her character. "I loved that she was smart and tough yet had a heart of gold. She was someone young girls could look up to."

Since the show's conclusion in 2000, Ward has met the love of her life, continued to establish herself as an actress and, most recently, reunited with her former castmates at the ATX Television Festival. "It was like no time had passed at all," the California native reflects. "We hadn't all been in the same room together since the show ended, so it was so great to see all these people who I worked with for so long. My cheeks hurt by the end of the weekend from all the laughing and smiling." The experience stirred up fond memories of the *Boy Meets World* set too. "Working with them was a blast, and I think it showed on screen."

She affectionately adds, "These people will always be like family to me."

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Of course, viewers are already gearing up for an on-camera reunion of *Boy Meets World*'s cast in the highly-anticipated spin-off, *Girl Meets World*, which is scheduled to air on the Disney Channel next year. The new show will follow Riley Matthews, the daughter of *Boy Meets World* characters, Cory and Topanga Matthews, and her best friend Maya. Ward is full of praise for the young actresses, Rowan Blanchard and Sabrina Carpenter, who play Riley and Maya respectively. "The little girls are so unbelievably adorable. I know they are going to be breakout stars for Disney."

While the actress was reluctant to disclose plot details, she assures us that the pilot is "amazing" and that we can expect

to see more of our favorite characters from the original hit show. "Creator Michael Jacobs made a point of saying he wants to integrate the old cast as much as possible, so I'm excited to see what happened to Rachel, Jack Hunter and Eric Matthews. Jack and Rachel left for the Peace Corps in the last episode, and it'll be interesting to see if they are still together. Matthew Lawrence and I were joking at the festival that Eric would've never left Jack and Rachel alone. He probably came after us in Guatemala or wherever we ended up."

Before being Rachel McGuire, though, Ward spent three years playing Jessica Forrester on *The Bold and the Beautiful*, an experience she now sites as inspiration for a script she has written. "It's a crazy, *Bridesmaids*-style comedy about a washed-up former soap star who will stop at nothing to get her career back," she shares. "She finds out her old fan club president (who she treated like garbage and nearly ruined) has made good and become a big time producer with a hot new TV show. So she hunts him down and wants him to give her the starring role. There's a dark twist, but I won't give it away just yet. It's a lot of fun!"

Luckily, life doesn't imitate art when it comes to Ward's personal life. She's been married to hedge fund manager, Terry Baxter, since 2006, which is quite a feat in Hollywood. Though the happy couple tend to stay out of the spotlight, she confesses that her romantic relationships haven't always been drama-free. "I had a few love triangles when I was younger. Nothing like Rachel, Jack and Eric, but nevertheless, they always got messy." When asked if playing Rachel taught her anything about love, she reveals, "It's probably not the best idea to be involved with two best friends who you live with, but, hey, it was fun! Being open and honest about things is probably the best advice I could give about that situation."

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The auburn-haired beauty says that the key to a successful relationship is a strong foundation. She and Baxter met on a set when he was visiting someone else, and the two began a friendship that eventually developed into something more. "If you can't be best friends, then it'll never work in the long run. You have to enjoy spending time with that person. A sense of humor is important too. I love to laugh, and having someone who makes me laugh is the best," she says. "I think that's why it's lasted. We started with friendship, trust and laughter and built from that."

You can keep up with Ward on Twitter @MaitlandWard and www.facebook.com/MaitlandWardOfficial/.