

Daytime Scoop!

**EMILY
McLAUGHLIN'S
SHOCKING
STORY!**

**"I
Spent My
Honeymoon
With Our Best Man!"**

**Emily and Jeff have known sorrow.
Now they can learn to be happy again**

Emily McLaughlin married Jeffrey Hunter after having known him for only three weeks. Here in her own words, is her story! She tells us of the shocking and terribly romantic truth of how she eloped with a man she hardly knew and how it came to be that she spent her honeymoon with the Best Man. The following are Emily's own words:

□ When I arrived at the Beverly Hills Hotel, the party was already going full blast. I looked around for the hostess, but I couldn't find her and I didn't see anyone else I knew.

At that moment, a very attractive man came up to me. "You look a little lost," he said. And he smiled right into my eyes — just the way they do in the movies, or in *General Hospital!*

I found myself smiling back. "I am," I admitted. "The lady who invited me doesn't seem to be here . . . and I'm afraid I don't know anybody . . ."

Well, you do, now," he said. "I'm Jeffrey Hunter."

"I'm Emily McLaughlin . . ."

"What a beautiful name," he said softly. "Would you like to go to dinner?"

I'd like that very much," I said. It never occurred to me that I'd only known him ten minutes.

And what can I tell you! The collaboration grew by the proverbial leaps and bounds: three weeks later we eloped to Juarez, Mexico!

I felt Jeff was a very special person, but I had no plans to marry him or anybody else. I only knew that I loved being with Jeff; I truthfully didn't think past that.

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When her marriage to Bob Lansing ended, Emily felt she would be lonely all the rest of her life.



EMILY McLAUGHLIN

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Something like two weekends after we'd met, we flew up to San Francisco to tape a new syndicated TV panel show. Later, we had cocktails and dinner at the famous Top of The Mark restaurant. No soap opera writer could have concocted anything better than what really happened. As if someone had *cued* it, there was a magnificent sunset over Golden Gate bridge. We just stared, enraptured, for like a whole minute. Finally, Jeff turned to me and he said, very quietly, "Let's get married."

The only answer seemed to be, "Of course."

The next question was, *When?*

And both of us sort of said, "How about Monday?"

I've never been a particularly impulsive person . . . and marriage is an awfully big step—especially in my circumstances. I guess that's why my friends are still gasping a little bit!

All I can say is that it seemed like the most natural thing in the world. My only anxiety was how my son Bobby would react to my marrying Jeff. I knew Bobby adored him. Jeff has a marvelous way—I think you could rightfully call it a talent—with children. From the very first, he's been like the Pied Piper around our neighborhood. But there is a big difference between a man being your friend and your step-father. Bobby is my only child and frankly, I was more than a little frightened about this. Which was really silly, because Bobby is tremendously perceptive and sensitive. He probably realized Jeff and I would get married before we knew it!

When I told him, I was kind of holding my breath and really searching his face for any hidden emotion. But his smile was real and he said simply, "Mom, I'm very happy for you." There was a little pause and then he wanted to know, "What can I call him?"

"Well," I said carefully, "You can call him, 'Jeff' or 'Hank,' which is his real name. Hank McKinnies." Our Scottish heritage is one of the many, many things we have in common.

Bobby pondered that for only a second . . . then he asked, almost shyly, "Can I call him, 'Dad'?"

And I turned to warm glue! But I just said very casually, "Yes . . . I guess that'll be all right." So now, Bob is Dad Number One and Jeff is Dad Number Two.

We asked Bobby if he'd like to go to Juarez for the wedding and he said he'd love to. Then we invited him to be Best Man. He was thrilled! Of course, he spent the whole honeymoon with us. We're a family.

I came on the set Monday morning and I announced that I was getting married—*tomorrow!!* I'm afraid everyone is still in a state of shock!

The next morning I put on a grey knit suit, Bobby got into his Sunday best and Jeff, a neat, dark suit; we hired a car and driver for the day and our first stop was the legal offices in Juarez, where Jeff's lawyer was waiting, with the first batch of papers for us to sign.

At approximately 5 P.M. Tuesday, Feb. 4, Jeff and I exchanged our vows in the Juarez Courthouse. It was a regular civil ceremony performed by a Judge. (We're both Episcopalian and we may have another ceremony in a Church.) Bobby was a magnificent Best Man . . . and although we could barely understand the Judge's English, everything went smoothly. The only minor goof came when Jeff said, "Yes" instead of "I do." Later, he felt bad about it but I assured him it did not matter a bit, because the *intent* was right!

We spent our honeymoon evening in El Paso . . . with our best man, my son Bobby. It was marvelous, though, because the musicians at the Hilton where we had dinner, invited Bobby to play the drums and Jeff to sit at the organ. I was dry-eyed during the wedding ceremony, but I must admit that I got kind of choked up, watching my two guys up on the stage, playing together. We had to come

back to Los Angeles the next day because I was due at *General Hospital* . . . but the honeymoon is still going on!

For a wedding present he gave me a magnificent set of gold earrings and a pin, in maple leaf design. "Darling! How did you know I adore maple trees?" I gasped when I opened the jewelry box.

"The same way you knew about me," he retorted. "Jeff had two cut-crystal mugs that he loved and I did some sleuthing, found out where they came from and got him the rest of the set for a wedding gift.

We bought ourselves a joint present—a piano for the music room. Jeff moved his organ in . . . and to add to all these creative sounds, we have four dogs and a turtle!

I can honestly say that I was never concerned about the things that might worry most women. For example, it didn't disturb me at all that Jeff had been married twice before (first to Barbara Rush, the actress, with whom he had a son who lives with her; later, to model Dusty Bartlett who is the mother and has custody of his other three sons). I know Jeff loves his sons very much and sees them often . . . but as I write this, I have never met either of these ladies.

I will confess, though, that I had a few uneasy moments on the eve of his parents' first visit to us. Jeff's folks live in Milwaukee, Wis. I hadn't met them before the wedding . . . and they did not know anything about me. *General Hospital* goes to Milwaukee, but they had never seen it. (Neither had Jeff for that matter!) His mother laughs that when they received our telegram announcing our imminent wedding, she tuned in the very next *General Hospital* show.

To be utterly honest, I was terrified of meeting his folks. All I could think was, What if they don't like me? Will this spoil our happiness? My fears were ridiculous. They couldn't have been nicer; they were absolutely marvelous. The first thing his mother did was to put her arms around me and say, "Welcome to the family."

You've heard the line, Love is lovelier the second time around. The way I feel these days I'd set it to music myself, if someone hadn't already beat me to it!

BY EMILY MCLAUGHLIN

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