

THE SURPRISE



Jeff Hunter has been married three times now. This time they both feel sure they have something special. Between them they have five boys. Jeff was married to Barbara Rush and Dusty Barlett.

• Love can be a look away, an hour away—or through an open door. "You hear this, and you don't believe it! Especially when you have no idea of ever remarrying. Then, look what happened to me! I still can't believe it," Emily McLaughlin—oops—Emily McLaughlin Hunter said.

Clarifying a bit, the bride added, "I had no certain man in my lite, just friends. And I had never bothered to pick up the papers to finalize my divorce. Besides, Bob (Robert Lansing, to whom she had been wed for 12 years) and I continued as good friends, which we always will be. With our mutual interest, of course, in our son Bobby, age eleven.

"I was probably lonely in a way that I didn't actually realize," she admitted. "My role of Jessie in General Hospital for ABC consumes five busy days a week, and laps over the weekend at times. My son Bobby's activities, our home which we love—everything that keeps a woman busy, busy, busy, filled my life, I thought.

"I really had no time to worry about whether I would find love or give it a thought. Except at certain times, when a woman suddenly is aware emotionally deep within her. And she will only admit to herself that it is not a real life to go it alone, without someone—an adult man—there to lean on, to love, to make her feel the whole woman she really is.

"And suddenly there was Jeff—just through the door—waiting—although he had no more idea than I had that love was to find us within seconds!"

Emily paused to acknowledge another toast to the bride and a flash smile of endearment that spoke poetry, tenderness, excitement and togetherness from the groom. For this night a special party celebrating their nuptials was in progress. A few of us single girls had cornered Emily, radiant with happiness, her eyes aglow with the sheer delight of her new life, to ask, "How did it all happen?" And hoping perhaps the secret of it all would rub off on us!

"No," she replied, "I'd never met Jeff" (Continued on page 62)

They discovered they had a great deal in common . . . Emily does lyrics for songs and Jeff likes to write music. They are having a lot of fun with Bob, Jr. and his friends playing their songs.



Friend Jose Jasd gave them a big party to celebrate their happiness and arranged for these pictures to be taken early one morning in Emily's dressing room.



MARRIAGE

of Emily McLaughlin

& Jeff Hunter!

Little did Emily think when her marriage to Bob Lansing broke up after many years that she would find new love so soon. She was concentrating on playing Jessie on "General Hospital" and her son . . . when Jeff walked into her life.

Here are the first pictures and the first interview given by the happy couple to anyone!

As told to MAY MANN



EMILY & JEFF HUNTER

(Continued from page 7)

Hunter, although I had seen him on the screen, naturally, and was aware of who he was. Marilyn, a girl friend, had persuaded me to meet her at a party at the Beverly Hills Hotel. It was right after New Year's. And there I was, walking in alone—and not knowing a soul—and realizing I had arrived before Marilyn. I stood poised in the doorway, not by design to make an impression, but for instant flight. Suddenly, Jeff appeared and said, 'May I take your coat? Aren't you coming in?'

"I should wait until my girl friend arrives," I murmured, undecided. Jeff gave me such a safe feeling, and before I knew it, we were talking about our mutual children. We were thoroughly enjoying the subject, too. He brought me champagne. I thought how charming and delightful he was, how interesting!

"When he suggested, 'Would you like to have dinner with me?' I surprised myself with the instant reply of yes!

"Our mutual friend Marilyn arrived, as we were leaving together. 'Thanks,' we said, 'we're going on to dinner.' Her expression was startled, to say the least.

"I've got all that ham left over from New Year's at my house," I found myself saying. "Would you like to go to my house and take pot luck?" Jeff thought this would be a great idea.

"Bobby, my son, had a friend staying overnight, and they were playing guitar and drums when we arrived. Bobby is quite talented and has a neighborhood combo. The kids were in the living room. They were practicing a song I had written for Bobby for Christmas.

"Song writing is a very private hobby," Emily paused to explain. "I've been writing poetry all my life, and never showing it to anyone. Since I have always said to Bobby, 'Don't buy me something for Christmas or birthday, make me something,' I in turn had written this song for him for Christmas. It is called, 'I'm Standing With The Earth Around My Feet.'

"Jeff was fascinated with all of this, for he plays the organ. We all found ourselves so engrossed working with my song and music, that it was three a.m. before we realized the time.

"Jeff took my lyrics home, and the next day he telephoned. Over the wire came my song, accompanied by Jeff on the organ at his apartment in Westwood.

"We got involved with lyrics and songs, and he has fantastic talent. Next, he surprised me with, 'I have two pros who are writing the arrangements, and we're going to get a publisher, and then recording dates!'"

In the interim, all of this excitement and involvement found Emily and Jeff on the telephone or seeing each other "all but about three hours of the twenty-four. I was also going to work with just that much sleep. I felt, and still feel, like fourteen—living in a marvelous new world, and loving every second!

"We never had time to become just friends or close friends, for everything happened so fast. We were completely fascinated with each other. We are both Sagittarius, which by astrology makes us want, think, feel, experience, and react

alike. I still expect the roof to cave in, and I will wake up!

"Jeff laughs that there isn't much chance of that. For already, we are breaking into walls; we chose my house, since we both like it, and by adding a few rooms, and, of all things, a fireplace, we'll have a perfect dream house. Jeff gets things done now! I love that!

At this point, Jeff claimed his bride, and walked her to the windows to listen to the roar of the surf. With the downpour of rain, however, they soon returned, and we girls cornered Emily again. For no one is more fascinating than a member of your own sex, who has just done it; married a handsome, famous, marvelous man—and for love, which is a little rare these days!

"I would have given up the house—anything Jeff wanted," Emily disclosed, while putting on a fresh lipstick as though none of us had noticed the nice smudge of fresh, new kisses. "We have such a rapport—it's unbelievable that two people can be so lucky. We both want the same things—a home, children, our work, and over our careers, our life together is the most important.

"I know," she added, "you wonder how we know our happiness will last. I had a year and a half to think about and determine why my first marriage didn't work. We, Bob and I, both tried very hard, but we could not make it work. This one will! I know how and why, and it will simply be because Jeff and I will put everything secondary to our being together. We are first—we, and our children. Third comes our careers and work. Fortunately, we are both in a position to be able to do this.

"Jeff proposed the weekend neither of us expected him to. Although I think right from the very first, we knew there was only one way for us to go. Would I go to San Francisco with him to do a TV show? Yes. We watched the sunset on the Golden Gate from the Top of the Mark. Saying how we'd never marry again—uh, uh—we began laughing.

"That was Saturday, and we kept on laughing through Sunday. Monday morning I had to report to ABC for work. And Jeff went to see lawyers and my former husband. Bob, to get everything arranged. Bob was marvelous. He said, 'Bless you,' and picked up Bobby from school, signed the necessary papers, drove us to the airport and put us on the plane for Juarez, Mexico.

"Bobby had reacted when we broke the news first, with 'Wow!' Then, 'I'm so happy for you. Mama!' Later, he asked, 'What can I call him?' There was a big pause. I suggested, 'Hank, perhaps.' Then he said, 'Could I call him Dad?' I checked with Bob. Wisely, he suggested that Bobby call him Dad No. 1, and Jeff Dad No. 2."

"But the wedding itself?" we pressed.

"Oh," Emily smiled. "Bobby held the ring and he kept asking, 'Are you married now so I can hand you the ring?' We all kissed and hugged, and on the way home, we planned our honeymoon for Easter time, when I have two weeks off from the series. At home was a new three-year contract from ABC, and congratulations from Bob—and now everyone."

Pointing to her new in-laws, Jeff's parents, who'd come from their home in the midwest to meet the bride, she said, "They are so marvelous. What do you think they gave us—a new station wagon as a wedding present!"

Emily and Jeff indeed were, exclamation point, Happy! Two people who only a few short weeks before were actually lonely people, unfulfilled, believing that true, lasting love and the chance for happiness had bypassed them. There was their work, of course, the need to keep busy successful careers, thereby to insure security and the good things of life for their children. But to each in his and her own heart, the incentive to reach out for the magic of love, which is as necessary for the growth and development of human happiness as sunshine and rain for all earthly things, was dormant in undeclared rejection and despair.

Then, presto! When neither one the least suspected, there it was: love—beckoning them to the end of the rainbow in all its rosey hues! Jeff was free. Emily was divorced. With the final papers not quite due. Robert Lansing ("Twelve O'Clock High") seeing his former wife's happiness, accelerated matters. His congratulations to Jeff: "You have just won the most wonderful woman and the most perfect wife in the world!"

Jose Jasd, a South American, who gives generously with parties for his friends on any special occasion, was giving the bridal pair this party at his beach pad over-looking the Del Rey Marina. Jose greeted twenty guests in his bare feet, wearing a colorful shirt with strands of beads on his neck and legs. Jeff doffed his shoes, and he, too, was wearing strands of beads. So was Emily. It looked for all like a high class hippie-do. Even Jeff's conservative parents from Milwaukee borrowed beads and entered into the carefree fun.

Linda Cristal arrived with her two children, "since I could not get a baby sitter," said she. Olga Velez and Florence Marly doffed their shoes, strung beads around their ankles, and helped with the serving of the bountiful buffet of West Indies food, for which the host is famous.

"It was one of those logistically impossible things, our meeting and falling in love," Jeff smiled, when I cornered him alone for a moment, although his eyes were riveted on his bride, I noticed. "I was ready to leave the party. I had stayed my stay. And suddenly, through the doorway came this lovely creature! It was sudden!" he admitted. "I love and respect her. And I adore her," he added, with simple honesty.

"Bobby is sweet and talented. We are presently turning the former living room into a music room. On our block there are so many children. I love children, and love to go outside and play with them. I tell them, 'Call me Father Flannigan of Boys Town!' "

"We have five boys between us," Jeff added proudly. "There is Christopher, sixteen," (his son by Barbara Rush). "She and I have maintained a happy relationship, at all times. She is very kind and considerate. I have three by my second wife", (Dusty Bartlett, non-pro). "Steele is my adopted son from her first

marriage, and there's Todd ten, and Scott, six. Someday," he grinned, "I hope to be the father of a little girl!" His eyes traveled searchingly into Emily's across the room and brightened with the assurance he found there.

How does Jeff know that his marriage to Emily will be forever, and this happiness is lasting?

"For anybody who cares," he said, "Turn to page 15 of 'The Prophet,' and you'll read why. That's why I think it will work!"

Page 15 of "The Prophet" reads: "When love beckons you, follow him, though his ways are hard and steep. And when his wings enfold you, yield to him, though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you. And when he speaks to you, believe in him." THE END