

THE DAVID CASSIDY STORY



EXCLUSIVE:

DAVID'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIVES

By Carol Deck

THE BREAKUP—

David was very young when the kids he played with started asking him, "Are your mother and father divorced?"

"So finally," he recalls, "I asked my father. He had picked me up in New Jersey and we were driving to New York. I remember we were in a tunnel. I sort of said, 'By the way, Daddy, are you and Mom divorced?' And he said, 'Yeah.'

"At that moment, my whole world just went to pieces. Right at that moment, it was as if I had died . . ."

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BY CAROL DECK



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Chapter One

□ "It's a boy, Mr. Cassidy," the nurse said to the tall, nervous-looking young man. "A beautiful, healthy baby boy."

For Jack Cassidy, at that moment, the words "healthy" and "boy" were all that mattered. It was of no importance then what the boy might grow up to be. He had no way of knowing he would one day be a singing-acting star, loved by millions of girls everywhere.

But right then Jack was just thrilled that his wife Evelyn and the baby were both okay. He and Ev, as he called her, were both young and madly in love, and this first-born son was a product of that love.

Both Jack and Ev were actors, and both of their careers were building and growing. There was promise of great success for both of them, and neither regretted the time Ev had had to take off from her career to have this child.

The birth which took place at 10 a.m. on April 12, 1950 in New York City, was a normal, uncomplicated one, and Ev and young David Bruce, as they dubbed him, were both home in West Orange, New Jersey in just a few short days.

The Cassidys were a handsome family. Jack was tall, lanky, with dark blond hair and a smile verging on a grin that could light up an entire theater.

Ev was just the opposite of Jack. Whereas Jack was bright and bubbly, Ev was dark and sultry. She had dark hair and

eyes that seemed filled with great mysteries. She was sexy in a motherly sort of way, and she wore her love for Jack all over her face.

The baby, like most babies, was cute, round, gurgly and funny. He had light blond hair and seemed to resemble his father more than his mother. But to Jack and Ev he was the most beautiful person in the world. He was a good baby and a healthy baby. Ev was able to be back working very quickly after his birth because he was so good, but she cut her career back a lot so she could be at home with him as much as possible.

Whenever she had to be away, she either took young David with her or left him for a few days with his grandparents. Either way he seldom gave anyone any problems. For Jack, just picking up David and holding him and talking to him seemed to make everything in the world right. Whenever Jack was blue or tired or angry at something, he would think about his son, his beautiful son, and things would begin to seem better immediately.

David's first year of life was fairly normal. He did most things when he was supposed to. He talked, walked and grew teeth in at all the usual ages. He was neither a very quick child nor a slow child. But it was his very normalcy that made him such a lovable child. Jack and Ev's lives were already pretty full before he came along, and he fitted in nicely to their hectic schedules.

And he was loved, intently and constantly. David felt secure in the love of his parents from his first conscious moments. There would be tragedy and sadness later in his life but his first few years were filled with love and warmth.

The first of a long list of illnesses and injuries that David was to suffer in his life hit when he was but a year old. Ev picked him up one day when she noticed he was scratching and seemed a bit moody. He was such a happy child that any little bit of sulking always worried her.

This day she decided something was definitely wrong. He felt hot and sweaty and seemed to be itching all over. He looked a bit flushed, too. So she called the doctor who said to bring him right in.

She was filled with dread as she drove into the doctor's office. Young David had been so healthy so far. What could

be wrong? Had she done something wrong? By the time the doctor called her in with the baby, she was downright scared.

The doctor examined David carefully, asked her a few questions, and told her David had a case of the measles. What a relief she felt to know it was just the common measles and not something really serious. She knew that she'd probably go through a lot more childhood diseases with her son before he was grown, but, still, this time had shaken her up.

She did everything the doctor told her to do, and within just a few days he was all well, his temperature was back to normal, the red spots that had come up were gone, and David's usual cheeriness was back.

And life in the Cassidy household settled back down to normal. They were neither rich nor poor, but their financial status depended on which one was working where.

There was never a time when they didn't have enough to eat, or a nice place to stay, but there were times when they could splurge on a few luxuries. Whenever Jack had a part in a Broadway play, times were good and the family would eat out often.

But no matter what else happened, one thing could be depended on—they went to church every Sunday. The church was Episcopal, and it was there that David was to first begin singing in public. But even as a very young child, when Ev would have to hold him in her lap during services, he always enjoyed the services, particularly the singing of the choir and the organ music.

Chapter Two

□ David's life up until he was three years old was pretty normal in every way, except that both of his parents were actors and their schedules were often erratic. But he was a normal child, and it wasn't until around three or three-and-a-half years old that he began to display any sign of the talent which would emerge in later years.

Then one night Jack heard a funny little noise coming out of David's bed after David had been put to bed. He tiptoed over and discovered the boy, lying on his side with his eyes closed, singing softly to himself. His voice wasn't as sure then as it was to become later, but it was pretty good for a little kid, and Jack felt kind of proud that his son liked to sing too.

David heard his father singing around the house a lot, and he loved the sound of his father's rich, bass voice. Ev too sang, and David would often hear them in the bathroom—Jack shaving and Ev putting on her makeup—both singing together, show tunes, popular songs and even old classics. The house just always seemed to have music in it, and David just naturally took to it.

He continued the habit of singing to himself for many years. And when he wasn't singing, he was often humming. Humming too was a regular thing around the Cassidy household. Sometimes when Jack would put David to bed, instead

of telling him a story he would sing or hum him a lullaby. To David, humming was as normal as breathing. When he got his first walky-talky, he would use it to hum tunes to his friends. And he heard his father humming in the shower, so he would hum in the bath. His love for his father was so great that anything his father did was great with him. As a young child he often imitated his father in many ways.

It was at this same time though that Ev first began noticing that there might be something wrong with her son's eyes. There were a couple of small incidents when she would find him staring at something as though trying to focus in on it. Fear again crept into her life, and it was back to the doctor again, this time to an eye doctor.

After a series of eye tests, the doctor said he had a common childhood disorder—weak eye muscles. He gave Ev a prescription for a set of corrective eye glasses and some eye exercises for David to do.

She was afraid David might object to the glasses. She'd heard all the cruel things children say to each other about "four eyes" and things like that. But she soon discovered she had nothing to worry about. David went with her to pick out the frames, and since he was allowed to pick out the ones he wanted, he felt that the glasses were all his, something special, and he never objected to wearing them.

He would sometimes forget to wear them, but after a while he got into the habit of wearing them. He wore them regularly for many months and then just on occasion for a few more months. Then, after two years, his eye muscles had corrected themselves, and he didn't have to wear them any more.

Fortunately he didn't have the glasses on the day his best friend hit him in the eye with a golf club. David's life was to be filled with silly little incidents like this, but this first one surely shook everyone up.

He had a friend named Hal whom he played with all the time. And one day he and Hal were playing with a set of kid-size golf clubs. Hal knew a bit more about golf than David, who'd never even been on a golf course. The two of them were standing in the yard, each with a club. Hal yelled "Fore," but David didn't know that meant he was going to hit

the ball, so he turned around to ask Hal what that meant, and Hal hit him smack in the eye with his club!

The next thing he knew he was back at the doctor's office again, with his again-worried mother, and he was seeing out of only one eye. This time the doctor said he'd been really lucky. He could easily have been blinded for life or have sustained a brain injury. But all he had was one enormous black eye and quite a headache. It took several stitches to cover the gash over his eye, but the cut still became infected. It was several months before it was completely healed, and it left a very slight scar that he was to have for the rest of his life.

The entire incident was one long period of terror for his mother. From the first moment when she saw him in the yard with blood running down over his face, until the last stitches were finally removed, she worried and fretted. David gave her a good many scares during his youth, but it only seemed to increase the love between the two of them.

Along with music and doctors, there was one other major thing in young David's life—girls. Even as early as three and four years old, he was already attracting them like flies. Any time there were little girls around, you could be sure that David would be playing with them. Even though he liked the rough-and-tumble games boys played, he also liked flirting and goofing around with girls.

One of the first girls in his life was a young lady named Judy. She was just a kid in the neighborhood, but to David she was cute and fun and exciting. And he soon had her completely devoted to him. It was obvious at a very young age that this kid had a way with the girls.

The one girl who has played a major influence on his whole life is a cousin named Barbara. They played together when they were very young, shared secrets, played tricks on their parents and generally had a good time in everything they did.

Barbara's father was David's uncle Stanley (who was actually Ev's uncle but he was always more like a brother to Ev and an uncle to young David). There are numerous pictures of David and Barbara in early scrapbooks that Jack and Ev kept. David's mother was quite a camera nut and she loved taking pictures of David, although he wasn't always too

pleased with it. Barbara was different, though. She loved having her picture taken, and was always willing to pose with David for pictures whenever Ev wanted.

This was a happy time in David's life. When Jack was away appearing somewhere, he and his mother would do things together—exciting things like visiting the Santa Claus in the local department store at Christmastime or just little nice things like going to the store together or singing to each other.

And when Jack was home the three of them would have all kinds of good times. Sometimes they would pack up a picnic basket and drive out to the country somewhere for a picnic. David and Ev would sit under a tree holding hands and talking about things they'd both done. Jack would tell her about things that had happened to him while he was acting, and Ev would tell him about things David had done, his latest injuries, and his latest loves. And David would romp and play, chase grasshoppers, climb trees and run until he was exhausted.

Other times they would all go to the zoo together and Jack would tell his son all about the different animals of the world.

Sometimes when they were out like this, Ev would look at her husband and her son and realize how alike they were in many ways, and how much she loved them both. These were indeed good times in David's life.

There were long, lazy weekends, too, when they would all go to the beach. West Orange wasn't far from the beach, so they'd go often and sit in the warm sun and talk or sing or hum. David loved to play in the water, although he hadn't learned to swim. He'd play by the edge of the water, letting the waves knock him around, and he'd gurgle with delight at the feel of the cool water and the rough sand. By the end of the day he was usually quite a dirty little boy, but Ev knew that little boys are supposed to be dirty sometimes, so she wouldn't scold him. She'd just wait until they were home and put a tired little David into the bathtub before letting him turn in for the night.

Christmases were always fun with the Cassidys when David was young. The whole family—all the cousins, aunts and uncles—would get together at someone's house for a merry time. There were always loads of goodies to eat, carols

to sing, and gifts to open. And his cousin Barbara was always there, too.

There were many gifts for David from all of the family, but the ones that meant the most were from his parents. When he was three-and-a-half years old his father gave him a music box with a clown's face on it, which he cherished and played with all the time.

That same year he also got a tricycle and fell in love with wheels. When the next Christmas rolled around he decided he wanted a bike, but he told his father he wanted a real bike, not one of the sissy kind with training wheels, but a real one.

His folks were a bit dubious of the whole thing, but come Christmas morning there was David's first bike! He was so excited he could hardly finish opening his other presents before rushing outside to ride his bike. The bike was almost as big as he was, but he determinedly walked it down to the end of the big driveway by their house and got on it. His first couple of attempts at riding it ended in disaster and bruised knees and hands and once again Ev was worrying. But she knew better than to try and stop him. She knew it was something he had to do by himself, and she knew it was important to him. So she stayed quiet while he fell all over the driveway before he finally worked it out.

When he proudly called to her to come out and watch, she nearly cried as he got on the bike and rode very straightly down the driveway, turned expertly around and rode back. It was hard to tell who was proudest—David for having been able to do what he'd set out to do, or his mother knowing her son could do just about anything he set his mind to.

David was growing up fast and became more and more like his father all the time. There were periods when his father would be gone for long stretches of time, but David accepted it, and as far as he could see, his mother did too. He missed his father whenever he was gone, but he thought he had to be a big boy and never show it. And he knew that there would be good times when Jack came home. But then the periods when Jack was gone became longer and longer. Only Ev and Jack though knew the tragedy that was about to strike in the Cassidy family. David was still believing with the innocence of a child that everything was okay.

Chapter Three

□ Deep down inside, David, even at the age of five, realized that his father was home less and less all the time. But Jack was an actor, and he'd always been away some of the time, so young David didn't really have to face the fact that his absences might mean something more than just work.

The fact was Jack and Evelyn's marriage was falling apart. Ev was the first to really see it coming, and the hurt she felt was multiplied by the fear of what a divorce would do to her son. Looking back over the years of their marriage, Ev could only conclude that it was the old story of a guy and a girl being swept off their feet by love before they were old enough or mature enough to handle the responsibility of marriage. She knew she had loved Jack intensely, when they were first married and she believed he had loved her just as much. But something had changed, something was wrong, and there didn't seem to be any way out except to split.

She looked at her son, cute, active and charming, and wondered what effect a divorce would have on him. He was pretty well-adjusted for the son of two actors, but she knew a divorce could leave permanent scars on everyone it touched. She had tried, as every mother in her position would, to save the marriage for the sake of the child, but now she knew that she was miserable and Jack wasn't much happier. On the rare occasions when she and Jack could talk about their lives, it

seemed all they did was hurt each other more. And the strain of keeping up a happy front in front of David only added to their pain. They finally had to accept that their marriage was over, and it would be better to split and start separate lives than to continue living a lie. And so they were divorced.

The biggest problem for Ev, already hurt and miserable and just a little scared, was what to tell David. She turned it over in her mind for hours, but everything she came up with only seemed to be more painful. She knew he had to be told, but she didn't know how. She didn't know how she was going to do a lot of things from now on—like raising a son without a father. She knew she could depend on her parents for help and support. David's grandparents had always loved him, and she knew they'd come through now. But what effect would it have on him not having a father during his adolescent and teenage years? So much fear and pain did Ev feel at this time, that when young David finally came right out and asked her if the rumors the kids had told him were true, she couldn't handle it.

Years later, looking back over the incident, David recalled it this way: "Some friends had told me my parents were divorced but I kept saying, 'No, no, it's just a play they're doing. It's not real.' Even then, at that young age I knew what divorce meant, and I couldn't face it. I immediately said, 'No, it can't be. It just can't be.'

"I just didn't think it was real. But I finally just had to ask. I asked my mother first. I said, 'Are you and Daddy divorced?' And she said, 'Well, why don't you ask your daddy?' That should have told me right then. But I still didn't want to believe it. I just wouldn't allow it to dawn on me that it was real.

"So finally I asked my father. He picked me up in New Jersey, and we were in the car driving to New York when he told me. I remember we were in a tunnel. I sort of said, 'By the way, Daddy, are you and Mom divorced?' And he said 'Yeah.'

"At that moment my whole world just went to pieces. Right at that moment it was like I died. I can remember crying for quite a number of hours."

So reality had crept into David's life. And the impact of it was immense. Within his head he went through all the fears

and changes that young children experience when their parents divorce. He wondered if he were somehow to blame. He wondered if his marvelous mom, whom he loved so much were somehow to blame. And he wondered if his dad, whom he worshiped and imitated, was to blame. To a child of five, it is somehow important to have someone to blame for everything horrible that happens.

And he experienced anger. He loved both of his parents, and he couldn't understand why they had to go and change everything around so he could only be with one of them at a time. He wanted things back to normal. He didn't want his parents to be divorced. He wanted to be able to tell the other kids that it wasn't true. He wanted his mom and dad to be happy again.

David could only feel the immediate hurt at the time of his parents' divorce. He had no way of knowing what a profound effect it would have on the rest of his life. At the age of five, he had no way of knowing that the breakup of his parents' marriage would greatly influence his own attitude toward marriage later in his life.

Years later, in his late teens, when many young people would be in a great hurry to get away from home and take on a marriage, David would find himself telling friends he didn't think he'd get married until he was thirty, all the while deep down inside wondering if he'd ever marry, if he could ever take that chance.

He would look back over his life and remember all the pain he'd experienced as a result of the divorce, and he'd realize that he was only an innocent bystander in the whole thing, and if it had hurt him that much, how much it must have hurt the people really involved—Jack and Ev. He'd find himself thinking about how they had loved and married and had a child and yet their love had died. And he'd find it difficult to believe in the adolescent dreams of love forever and ever. He knew better. And he wondered if any two people could really honestly commit themselves to each other for the rest of their lives.

He would remember little things, like the day he asked his mom, "Is Daddy still my father?" And the strange look on her face as she answered "Of course." But he knew that every-

thing was different after the divorce and he knew that it was permanent, that things would never be the same again. But he didn't know exactly why. He couldn't understand fully what had happened to his parents that they no longer loved each other. And in his darkest moments, he wondered, if they no longer loved each other, did they still love him as much?

There are many doubts and fears a child goes through when his parents divorce, and young David experienced them all. Was he to blame? Did they both still love him? Why didn't they love each other so much. Was he supposed to do anything about it? Why hadn't they told him sooner? When had it all begun to fall apart? What would happen now?

And so many changes were made. David lived with his mother alone some of the time and with his grandparents some of the time. And his father would come and take him for short visits sometimes. He always enjoyed the visits with Daddy, but it still wasn't the same as it had been before. There were no picnics with all three of them, no more funny visits to the zoo.

But life went on, perhaps not the same as before, but as normally as could be expected. David's love of music continued to grow and grow. His grandmother was very much involved in church affairs at the Holy Trinity Church in West Orange and he soon found himself singing in the church choir with her. She was the star soloist of the choir, and he sang high soprano—until his voice changed to the delightful tone that would become world-famous in years to come. He carried the cross during the procession, too, and felt very proud and grown-up.

Religion was a big thing with his grandmother. She went to church every day and often took her grandson with her. He was too young to understand a lot of the doctrine of the Episcopal church, but he enjoyed the pageantry of the processions and all the robes and gowns in different colors that the ministers and choir members would wear. And he loved the chance to sing. He soon knew many of the hymns by heart and would sing out loud and clear. People in the congregation would often comment to his mother or grandmother, after the services, what a fine-looking young boy he was and such a good singer too.

It was at this time that real "long-haired" music entered his life—he began taking violin lessons and that meant learning classical music. His violin was a difficult instrument, but it made music, so David loved it. He studied hard and often, and during the two years he took lessons, he got the violin down pretty well. His love of music was already so deep that any form of music was beautiful to him.

And the music helped fill a lot of the lonely hours he spent during this time. There was many a time when he'd go to his room alone and turn on some music on the radio or put on some records or practice his violin or just sing softly to himself. He was still a very sad little boy, and music helped ease the sadness.

Then one day his mother noticed he wasn't feeling too well, and it was back to the doctor again. This time it was mumps, and David was sent to bed to recuperate. He was usually a pretty healthy kid, but he did seem to have his share of childhood illnesses and accidents.

Eventually, his life began to fill up again with activities and things he loved doing. He spent fewer and fewer hours filled with sadness alone in his room. Instead, he began joining youth groups.

He loved baseball and soon was in the Little League, playing baseball every chance he got, coming home dirty and tired and happy. At one point he even thought baseball might be his life, but music was to win over in the end.

He joined Cub Scouts, too, and really got into wearing the uniforms—he loved uniforms of all kinds—and going to the weekly meetings. He was a Cub Scout for three years and loved every minute of it. Later, when the family moved to California, he became a full-fledged Boy Scout.

And he discovered miniature plastic cars. He'd get the little kits and very carefully fit and glue them together, then paint them all very brightly. Soon his room was covered with his entire display of plastic cars. He'd look at them and play with them and dream about the day he'd be old enough to have a real car and the places he'd go and the things he'd see.

He'd dream of speeding along some open highway in a brand-new car of some kind—it was a different car every week—and watching the scenery whiz by. He'd imagine he

was in Europe or South America or Africa, all the places he'd read about.

Reading was a new thing to him. During some of the time he'd spent alone after the divorce, he'd discovered reading and his room was soon filled with books on the things he loved—baseball, music, cars and things. This was just about the only time in his life that he really read very much other than what was required by various teachers during his school years.

So his life was filled up with many different things, and the sadness of the divorce began to recede into the past, slowly but surely.

During the first couple of years after the divorce, he made a rather startling discovery. His mom had been concentrating more and more on her career, something she hadn't paid as much attention to since David was born. They were living with her parents, so she had someone who could look after David while she was working or looking for work. Sometimes she would come home from getting a job and tell David all about it—whom she'd seen and what had been said and what the job involved and all. And David found himself more and more curious about acting. He wanted to know all about it. Finally he realized that it wasn't just that he wanted to know all about what his mother was doing—he wanted to do it himself! He wanted to act.

There were a lot of things he wanted to do—play baseball, build cars, travel, become an Eagle Scout—but his desire to act was much stronger than anything else in his life, except possibly his love of music. If he'd had to choose between acting and singing, he probably wouldn't have been able to. Fortunately he never had to make that choice as he would later experience both of those loves at the same time.

Chapter Four

□ Although David's original family had been broken up by his parents' divorce, he soon found himself in the warm fold of another family. He had not only his mother and grandmother, but two father-types—his grandfather, Fred Ward, whom he called "Pop Pop," and his uncle Stan. In addition, Uncle Stan's daughter Barbara was his very best friend. So in a way his family grew instead of shrank.

"Pop Pop" and Uncle Stan both loved the growing boy fiercely and devoted much time to teaching him the things fathers usually teach their sons. They taught him many of the skills he needed for the Cub Scouts—how to build a fire, put up a tent, roll a sleeping bag and things like that. And they encouraged his love of sports by teaching him archery and how to ride a motorcycle. And, of course, they took him fishing. Once again, his life was relatively normal. He went to school, played with his friends, took part in various youth activities, attended church regularly and goofed around a lot.

But his desire to act would not go away, and Ev was faced with a decision. She really didn't want her son in show business in any capacity. She couldn't help but think about what might have happened if either she or Jack or both had not been in show business. And she particularly didn't think it was a good place for a child. She'd seen too many child actors shoved around by pushy stage mothers, totally missing

out on any kind of childhood. She wanted better than that for her son. But at the same time she wondered if she had the right to keep him from at least trying something he so obviously wanted. After all, he'd already shown her more than once that he could do just about anything he really set his mind to. Plus there was one other matter she had to consider—she loved David very much and dearly hated being separated from him. She'd take him with her sometimes, but other times he'd have to stay with his grandparents while she worked. She really preferred to take him along with her.

So one day she finally decided to give him a chance. She got him a bit part in a summer stock play she was doing. That way he had a legitimate reason for tagging along with her. Also, she figured she might as well give him the chance to find out for himself just how much he'd like acting. There was always the possibility that once he found out how much work went into it and all the frustrations that went along with it, that he'd give it up and concentrate on baseball or something else.

But it took only one performance for David to know for sure that acting was what he wanted, deep down inside. While they were rehearsing the show, David would mill around backstage, asking questions, getting in the way, and just soaking everything in. People in the company were good to him, though. They let him help with simple things, moving props, cleaning up, and fetching things. He really felt like he was a full-fledged member of the company. His mother kept a close eye on him to see just how well he did fit in. She couldn't help but be a little proud of the way he was so eager to jump right in and do anything that anybody asked of him. But she wondered just how he would react the first time he had to stand out there on that stage in front of an audience. The part she'd gotten for him was just a small thing as a member of the chorus, but she still didn't want to push him into anything.

For David the excitement leading up to that first night was almost too much to bear. The day seemed to last forever and he was beginning to wonder if the show would ever start. When it finally did, he stood in the wings as he'd done many times before and watched his mother work. He swelled with

the pride that that was his mom out there on that stage, singing and acting, and that soon he'd be out there too.

The moment finally arrived when he walked out on the stage. It was such a small part that probably no one in the audience even noticed the young, slightly nervous boy walking bravely on stage. But for David, it was one of those unforgettable moments in life. As he looked out at the audience who was looking right back at him, he realized what acting was all about—and he realized he loved it, loved it to death! The growing feeling he'd had in him for so long was now a reality. He knew he wanted to be an actor more than anything else in the world.

From that moment on it was hard to keep David away from the stage. He traveled with Ev everywhere she went. If he'd managed to get a bit part in whatever she was doing, he'd work on that until he was totally confident of it. But no matter what, he was always hanging around back stage, helping out where he could, watching and asking questions and learning everything he could about his chosen field. He even went along with his mother sometimes when she'd be interviewed by the press, and he'd watch and try and figure out what this publicity game was all about.

When he was eight he got his first television role in a dramatic show written by a friend of Ev's. The show was called "House On High Street" and a part was written especially for David. David worked very hard at making sure everything was just right for his TV debut. And he spent many hours hanging around behind the scenes because this was a whole different thing from live stage productions and he wanted to understand it too. It seemed like there was always so much for him to learn, but he was an eager student when it came to acting or anything connected to it.

His appearance on the show was a success. He played the part very believably and all his friends who saw it complimented him on it. But David knew it wasn't quite right. He wasn't quite sure why, but he felt he could have done better. A short while later he and his mom had a long, heart-to-heart talk about acting. Ev had realized that David really wanted to act and wasn't going to grow out of it. She knew she couldn't stop him from doing it, but she wanted to make sure

that whatever he did, he did to the best of his ability. She knew he'd learned an awful lot just by traveling with her and all that waiting and watching from the wings. But she knew there was a lot more to be learned, and she felt maybe he'd learned about all he could from her, and it was time for other teachers.

So David began taking acting and singing lessons for the first time in his life. Up until then he'd just picked everything up as he went along. He'd imitated his father and mother since he was just a baby. He'd watched them both work and asked a lot of questions. But this was his first real, disciplined schooling in the craft of acting.

The singing lessons were no problem. He loved singing just about anything, and his voice was quite good for a boy his age. He went regularly to the lessons and always came home singing. He seemed to be singing all the time—in the shower, while reading or riding his bike or playing with his dog, Tips. Tips was an old dog, but David loved him and Tips didn't object to David singing at him all the time.

But the acting lessons didn't turn out quite as well. Acting lessons involved going deep within yourself and using everything that has happened in your life to help you express the part you're working on. And there was still a lot of pain deep inside David that he just couldn't bear to admit, much less work with. For all of this outward self-confidence, he was still a little insecure inside and the work in the acting classes was very difficult and very painful for him. He tried very hard, but somehow it all just didn't fit in with his feelings toward acting.

Another boy might have been discouraged by the lessons, but not David. He never doubted that acting was his thing. He just doubted that these particular classes were right for him. However, he continued trying to make it with the lessons, up until the time that he and his mom made the move to California.

By this time another devastating blow had struck into David's life, although it was later to work out much better than he would ever have hoped for. His father had fallen in love again and remarried.

While doing the movie production of "Oklahoma," Jack had met actress Shirley Jones, who was also in the play. She was

young and pretty and fun to be with—but he was still married at the time. Shirley tried very hard not to admit how attracted she was to Jack, because she knew he was married, although separated and in the process of getting divorced. But it was meant to be—they fell deeply in love and just after his divorce became final and legal they were married.

To David this was a difficult thing to accept. He hadn't seen as much of his father lately, because Jack had been working more and more on the West Coast—and he and Shirley settled on the West Coast after their marriage—but he still considered him his father. The idea of someone else taking his mother's place in Jack's life was very hard to take. He'd heard a lot of terrible stories about stepmothers and none of them were encouraging. He had a mental image of a stepmother as an ugly, old lady who yells a lot and beats on her step-kids. So, before ever meeting her, he'd already decided that he hated her. He just knew he would always hate her, no matter what she did. He knew he would always love his real mom more than anyone else in the world, and he didn't want to know about any other mom of any kind.

Shirley was a small-town girl who was making it big in show business. She was born in Charleyroy, Pennsylvania and grew up in Smithton, near Pittsburgh, where her father worked for a brewery owned by her grandmother.

From the very first, Shirley knew she wanted to sing, and sing she did. She was drum majorette at Old South Huntington Township High School and often entered just about every local talent show held—and usually won. After graduating from high school, she planned to go to college, but being voted Miss Pittsburgh and then runner-up for Miss Pennsylvania in the Miss America competition happened first, and she spent most of the next couple of years traveling and taking voice lessons.

Her first really big professional break came when she auditioned for Rodgers and Hammerstein. She got a small role in "South Pacific," which led eventually to the lead in "Oklahoma!" And that turned out to be the real turning point in her life. From there, she went on to appear in "Elmer Gantry," for which she received an Oscar.

But more important to Shirley was the handsome actor she

met and fell in love with during "Oklahomal" That actor was Jack Cassidy. He was still married at the time, and she tried very hard not to admit how much she was attracted to him. He was separated by then and in the process of being divorced. It was a fast and furious courtship, but they both finally had to admit they were in love—and shortly after Jack's divorce from Ev became legal and final, he and Shirley were married.

Jack was now faced with the problem of introducing his new wife to his son. Both he and Shirley were well aware of the stories that are told about stepmothers. And both were aware of how hostile David might feel toward her. But Jack loved his son as much as he loved Shirley, and he dearly wanted them to be at least friends.

He started off very slowly, letting David get a little used to the idea. His first move was just to show David what Shirley looked like. That he accomplished by taking David to see the movie "Oklahomal" This was David's first view of his stepmother and he was certainly surprised. Sitting in the theater, looking up at the screen, he had to admit that she wasn't ugly or old or anything like that—in fact she was really very beautiful. He watched the film enthralled. It was a great movie, and he was so proud of his father's part in the film. But he was more than a little confused now about his feelings toward his new stepmother. He'd really been prepared to hate her and had thoroughly expected her to be ugly. Now he knew she wasn't ugly and she wasn't without talent—and he could see that too. But he still wasn't ready to like her. He still thought deep down inside that she was probably a grouchy lady who beat up on little kids.

When the time finally came for David and Shirley to meet, David was in for an even bigger surprise. Shirley knew she would have to take it slow with the boy. She knew she couldn't force herself on him. She would just have to be herself and hope that in time David would get over some of his hurt and confusion, and maybe they could be friends. She knew she could never take his real mother's place and she didn't want to—she just hoped that she could be close friends with the son of the man she loved.

So when the day came when Jack brought David home to meet Shirley, everyone was kind of holding back and waiting

to see what would happen. David was still convinced he wouldn't like her. But when she said hello with that big, warm, friendly smile on her face, and she didn't threaten him or yell at him or anything like that, he was surprised. He found himself looking at a very lovely lady. She told him she wasn't trying to take his real mother's place, but she'd really like to be his friend. She told him how Jack had told her he was a big baseball nut, and so was she, and whom did he think would play in the world series this year?

The more she talked, the more amazed he was. She was really nice, and she liked baseball, and she seemed to even like him. No matter how much he tried to hate her, he found he just couldn't. And besides, his dad loved her, so she couldn't be all bad.

It wasn't exactly instant love between Shirley and David, but it was a good start. It got them off on the right foot toward a long and ever-growing friendship. As time went by and he got to know her more and more, he grew closer and closer to her. Years later he would come to realize that he was really kind of lucky. He not only had his own real mom, whom he loved dearly, but he had a second mom too, and he was slowly starting to love her too.

By the time Jack and Shirley's first son, Shaun Paul, was born in 1959, David had become fairly well adjusted to the idea of his dad's second marriage, and he even found himself a little excited at having a young half-brother.

He'd often wondered what it would be like to have a brother or sister and now, even though he didn't see that much of Jack and Shirley, he did see them occasionally. And now he had a brother, or at least a half-brother. He even liked the name Shaun Paul Cassidy.

Chapter Five

□ Once again David's life was settling into a fairly normal life. He and his mom were living happily with his grandparents, who were more than thrilled to have them. Mr. and Mrs. Ward—Evelyn's parents—had had a very difficult time with their children. Five of their kids had died very young, and Evelyn, too, had been very ill when she was just a baby. But she'd survived somehow, and they had felt themselves truly blessed. If they were a little over-protective of her or her son, it was easy enough to understand.

They had worried some when she'd married Jack. They felt she was too young. But once she made her decision to marry him, they stuck by her. And when David was born, they were delighted with their first grandchild. (He was also to be their only grandchild.) They visited Jack and Ev often and greatly enjoyed their roles as grandparents.

Then when Jack and Ev's marriage fell apart, they stepped in and offered their home to Ev and her son. They were greatly upset by the divorce and hoped that Ev would come home to them. Ev, severely shaken up by the divorce also, accepted their generous offer, and she and David went to live with them for more than four years, after the divorce.

Life with the Wards was pleasant enough. Mrs. Ward taught piano, and she soon had David practicing away for hours at a time. Plus, through her work with the church, she

encouraged his singing. In addition, her husband quickly stepped in as a substitute father-figure for David.

Thus, life went on for David and Ev until David was ten years old. At that time Ev was faced with another difficult decision.

She could stay in New Jersey with her parents, but her career wasn't going too well, and she knew she would probably get more work if she were on the West Coast. And Jack and Shirley had moved to the West Coast by this time too, so she knew that by staying in West Orange, she was in effect keeping David away from his father. She felt David was reaching an age when he should be closer to his father. But she dreaded a cross-country move. It would mean taking David out of school, separating him from all his friends and relocating in a new area with a new school and new kids to make friends with. And the thought of leaving her parents depressed her—but she knew she had to live her own life and couldn't stay with them forever. And there were a thousand other considerations—including the fact that David's dog Tips was far too old to make the trip, and she didn't know how he'd take to leaving the dog behind.

It was a big decision, and she thought about it for some time, rolling around all of the facts in her head, wondering what effect it would have on her, her son, her parents and even her ex-husband.

After many hours of serious thought, Ev finally reached her decision—she and David would move to California. So began the hard work and little heartbreaks of leaving one place for another. Even though David had traveled a lot with his parents and had spent quite a lot of time in New York, West Orange, New Jersey was still his home. It was where he'd grown up, where most of his friends were and where he went to school. When his mother first told him about the move he was against it. He didn't want to leave. He liked it where they were. And the more he thought about it—leaving his friends and all—the more he was against it.

But Ev was firm. They were moving to Los Angeles and that was that. So David had to go around to all of his friends and say goodbye. Then, when his mother told him that Tips was too old a dog to survive the long move across the country, he was really upset. They'd had lots of pets, but Tips was

his favorite, and he wanted to take him with them. Finally, though, his mother and grandparents convinced him that Tips would be happier staying behind than he would be moving to California, so David gave in.

The really hard part turned out to be saying goodbye to his relatives. His grandparents, Uncle Stan, and Barbara, had been like a very close-knit family to David, and once again his family was being broken up. But he'd learned something with his parents' divorce. He'd learned that no matter how bad things look at the time, life goes on. After his father had left, he'd felt that nothing would ever be fun or exciting again, but after a while, as his new family surrounded him with love and affection, his life settled back down into something fairly normal.

David was older now and a lot more mature, and he finally got into the excitement of moving. He spent many hours in his room, sorting out everything he owned, throwing out things he hadn't played with in a long time and putting together in boxes all of his favorite toys and belongings. And in the end the move turned out to be like a big adventure.

Ev and David arrived in Los Angeles and quickly found a small house of the Spanish style that is so popular in that area. They put down the first month's rent on the place and moved their belongings in. There were a lot of changes to get used to. In West Orange they had been surrounded by family and friends—but here the only family they had was Jack and his new wife and their children, and Ev knew only a few people in show business out here.

But there were nice changes too. The weather was so much warmer, and David could play outside much more than he'd been able to back East. And it was kind of nice sometimes to have his mom all to himself. Plus, he got to see more of his dad.

David was enrolled in Fairburn Grammar School in Westwood, and the first few months were kind of tough. It's always hard to be the new kid at school, and David really felt like an outcast. He was used to having a lot of friends around, and now he had to start all over again and get to know everyone in his class and try to make new friends. He was a little shy with the other boys for a while, but it didn't take him too long to get to know the girls in his class. He was already de-

veloping into a real charmer with the girls, and several soon had crushes on the new kid in school. And after a while he began making friends with the boys, too, and he finally found himself with a couple of very close friends and a number of other casual friends. Then he began to enjoy school, and his grades went back up to their normal range.

David and his mom had arrived in Los Angeles early in the year, and when spring rolled around Ev announced that they were going back home to West Orange, just for a visit. David got really excited about that. He was anxious to see all his old friends and tell them about his new friends—just as he'd told his new friends about his old friends. And he looked forward to seeing his grandmother and grandfather and Uncle Stan, and particularly his cousin Barbara.

When they arrived back at their old home, it was quite a happy time for everyone. David could hardly stop talking, telling everyone about his new home and new friends and even his new school. He discovered everyone wanted to know all about California. They'd heard all kinds of great stories about streets being paved with gold and oranges growing everywhere and movie stars in the supermarket. David found he was the center of attraction everywhere he went in West Orange. His old friends were full of questions and David had all the answers. It was a fun and exciting visit and David went back to his new home in California feeling special. He was the only kid he knew in West Orange who'd been to the West Coast. And he was now more than ready to settle in permanently in his new homeland.

He promptly got involved in some of the things he'd enjoyed so much back in New Jersey. He found a local Boy Scout troop and became a tenderfoot. He was a little awkward at first, with all the other boys already having a head start on him, but he really liked wearing the uniform and going on the outings and activities. He even managed to get his dad in on some of the trips, but his dad wasn't as interested in the whole thing as he was.

One of the things that was very big with the Boy Scouts was collecting merit badges—some of the other Scouts had dozens of them, but not David. He enjoyed the outings and going camping and things, but he just couldn't get too interested in the whole badge thing. As much as his Scout leader

tried to interest him in working on badges, David just wasn't interested. He wanted to go camping and learn all kinds of camping skills—and show off all the things his uncle and grandfather had taught him—but those merit badges were just useless as far as he was concerned.

Another thing he got back into was playing baseball. There was a Little League team nearby and David soon joined it and found himself playing baseball nearly every weekend. He really loved the Little League and would always come home from the game covered with dirt, and dead-tired but completely happy too.

This entire period of his life was very happy. He liked the school he was going to. He had plenty of friends around—and always a couple of girlfriends. He was playing baseball and going camping. He and his mom were very close, and he got to see his dad quite often. He was getting to know his stepmother more and more, and getting to like her more and more, too.

On January 4, 1962, Jack and Shirley added a second son to their family and named him Patrick William. By this time, David and Shaun were very good friends, and whenever David would visit his dad, he and Shaun would play happily together.

Ever since they had arrived in Los Angeles, David and his mom had been looking for a home. They liked the small house they had rented, but what they really wanted was a larger house, a real home. After looking at many different houses, they finally found the one they both wanted in an area called Cheviot Hills. It was somewhat like the house they were in—it was built like a Spanish hacienda, complete with red tile roof and arched doorways. David and Ev both loved it at first sight, and moving into it was a labor of love for both of them. This became their real home for the rest of the time they lived in California.

David then graduated from grammar school and began junior high school at Emerson Junior High. This time he didn't have any problems adjusting to a new school. Most of his friends enrolled at the same school and David found he really liked the new school. At Emerson he discovered a new love—basketball. As much as he'd liked baseball, he really loved basketball. Even though he wasn't particularly tall, he

was very energetic and enthusiastic and he soon became one of the best basketball players in his school. He was quite proud of his basketball achievements, and they gave him a greater sense of self-confidence than he'd ever experienced before. He was a somebody at school—and of course he loved the attention he got from the girls.

And his ever strong love for music was now concentrating on rock and roll. His mom was a good friend of actor Sal Mineo, and Sal had given David a set of drums, and David spent hours and hours practicing the drums and practically driving everyone out of the neighborhood. He'd learned all different kinds of music in his life—classical, show tunes and old standards. But now he discovered rock and roll and when he wasn't playing it on his drums he was singing it or listening to it on the radio or on his record player. He started collecting rock records and soon had one of the biggest collections among his friends.

He really loved rock and roll. He dreamed of singing it in front of a huge audience and screaming fans—never really believing that someday this dream would become a reality! Practically every minute of the day, David was surrounded by rock music in some way. It was like the background music for his life.

In addition to music, baseball, Boy Scouts, and basketball, David found time for several other activities. He'd wanted a go-cart for some time, and, finally, one Christmas his father gave him one—not without a few misgivings from his mom. It took him only a short time to practice enough on the go-cart to be really good on it. He kept it at his dad's house where there was room to ride it, and often he'd go over there after school or on weekends and ride it around and around and around, getting faster all the time. His mom worried that he might hurt himself, but he never did any more damage than a few scrapes and bruises. He just loved that cart—just as he loved baseball, basketball and music. His life was full of his many loves.

He soon discovered another love—one that is common to many teenagers. He discovered horses. It's very common and normal for teens to fall in love with horses and horseback-riding, and in that respect David was just like everyone else. But he was lucky too, that his mom loved horses and horse-

back-riding too. So he and his mom would go out to a nearby riding stable regularly and ride for hours and hours. They'd get there very early in the morning, select the horses they wanted to ride, and start out over all the trails that crisscross the area. Ev watched with great pride as her son quickly learned how to mount and ride expertly. And he wasn't content with just riding around the trails all day. He wanted to try all kinds of different things, and before she knew it, he'd figured out bareback-riding, which he loved because it made him feel so much closer to the horse. And one day he tried jumping too. His first attempt wasn't too smooth, but at least he remained on the horse and didn't get thrown. Then his mom explained that some horses are jumpers and some aren't, and if he wanted to jump he should ask the man who ran the stable for a jumper. Next time they went he asked the man, who was a little surprised that such a young boy wanted to learn to jump, but he gave him one of their gentlest jumpers, and before long David was an expert jumper too. He looked forward to the riding days, even though he'd always come home exhausted after a full day of riding.

His secret dream at this time was to have a horse of his own, but his mom kept telling him, no, it wasn't practical. But he kept bugging her about what good care he'd take of his horse, how he'd walk it and brush it and feed it and make sure it was healthy and happy and all. Then one day he got some really exciting news—a girl he knew had a palomino horse she was having to sell. She loved the horse but just couldn't keep it anymore, and she asked David if maybe his mom would let him buy it from her.

He dashed home and started bugging his mom again, but this time he didn't give up. He kept at it until she finally gave in and told him she would buy it for him. He was so excited, he could hardly wait until the deal had been finalized and the horse, named Danny Boy, was really his. Then he was in heaven. He kept the horse at a nearby stable, and now he could ride him whenever he wanted. And there was something really special about riding your very own horse. He didn't even mind all the hard and dirty work it took to take care of Danny Boy.

He would get up early on Saturday morning and rush out to the stable to say good morning to Danny Boy. He finished up

all his morning chores as fast as he could, then take his horse out, and ride all day long. He taught "Danny Boy" a couple of things, and soon he and the horse were like best friends.

David's life was so full of exciting things now that he was like the happiest boy in the world. He liked going to school and had many friends—both boys and girls—there. And after school there were so many things to do he could sometimes hardly decide. He could play basketball with the school team. He could take part in the Scout activities. He could go over to his dad's and play with his step-brothers and ride his go-cart. He could go ride Danny Boy. And he could play his drums, or listen to records. And for a short while he had a mini-motorbike too. But after he had an accident on it and ended up with a cast on his ankle for quite a while, he decided he wasn't that interested in the bike and sold it to a friend of his. He had so many other things to do besides. And his mom was getting her career together really well, and it just seemed that everything in his life was fantastic!

Girls, too, played a big part in this particularly happy period of David's life. He'd always been able to get all sorts of girl friends, but he didn't have his first real date until he was fourteen. Up until then, it had just been hanging around school with a girl, sitting next to her in class or at lunch, and things like that. But just before he graduated from junior high he had his first real date. There was a girl named Reba that David liked a lot in his class. She was pretty, with long dark hair and a smile that seemed to light up the whole room. And she was so nice and such fun to be with. At the end of the senior semester there was always an all-night party that was chaperoned by the school's teachers and staff and was something that they all looked forward to. So David built up his courage and finally asked Reba if she'd go to the all-night party with him. And was he ever glad when she said yes.

It was a dressy affair, so when the night of the party finally came David had to get all dressed up in a suit, but when he saw how lovely Reba looked in her brand-new prom dress, he didn't mind so much having to put a suit on. They went to the party and danced and talked and laughed all night long. He couldn't believe how nice and how pretty she was, and she couldn't get over how cute and how much fun he was. When the party was finally over, they were both really tired

but very happy. They went out for breakfast and then home. It was David's first date and a truly memorable occasion. From that time on, David was hardly ever to have any problems with girls and dating.

He took up surfing one summer when he and his mom stayed in California for the summer instead of making their usual visit back to New Jersey. And soon he was a regular surf bum, spending all kinds of time at the beach riding the waves and flirting with the girls. He didn't believe much in going steady. He preferred going out with a lot of different girls. When he was at the beach surfing, he'd often take a girl over to the hot dog stand for a coke or something, but he didn't want to get heavily involved with one girl and not be able to go out with others. He was very popular with everyone at the beach and enjoyed the hours he spent there.

This whole period of his life, throughout junior high school, was marvelous. He was so happy and had so many friends and so many things that he loved to do. He went out with a lot of girls and was generally a very happy and very normal teenager. But with the advent of high school, David was to begin going through some changes.

Chapter Six

□ After David graduated from Emerson Junior High School, he started high school at University High School in Westwood, but not without a bit of a struggle. Since he had moved to Cheviot Hills, he was now out of the district for Uni, as everyone called University High, but all of his friends from Emerson were going to Uni and he wanted to go with them. So his mom appealed to the school board to let him go to Uni with his friends instead of to Hamilton High School, which was the closest school to their new home. The school board considered it and finally gave David special permission to attend Uni.

David was really pleased with that. He had made a lot of close friends at Emerson. He had even been invited to join a social club called The Chaparrals, which made him very proud. The club didn't really do much of anything except have a good time, but it meant that David had been completely accepted in his new home and that was very important. And he was glad that he wouldn't have to start all over again at a different school and make new friends again. So he and most of his friends went off to Uni and high school.

Uni turned out to be a really fun place and David soon found himself in a whirlwind of activity. He started dating seriously here—taking out many different girls. He was out practically every night, going to a movie or just goofing

around. He and his friends hung around together and did everything together. They managed to get most of their classes together and it seemed like every day was a lark. David, with his cute face and fun ways, was very popular with both the girls and boys at school and seldom had any problem getting somebody to go somewhere with him. Then one day he woke up and just didn't feel like going to school. He really just wanted to goof around. So he called up a friend and they talked it over and somehow it came up that they could just skip school for this one day. How much difference could one day make, they wondered. So they skipped and went off for a good time. The next day they were both back at school and nothing terrible happened, so they figured what the heck. And soon it seemed to become a habit to go to school only when they felt like it.

David was having a good time, but his mom soon noticed that his grades were dropping. He'd never been a brilliant student, but his grades had always been at least passing. But now she was notified by the school that he wasn't doing well at all. She'd noticed that he'd changed some lately. He seemed kind of remote. He didn't confide in her as much as he used to. He used to tell her about a lot of the funny things his friends did, but now she wasn't even sure who his closest friends were.

Her first step was to call the school and ask to talk to someone about David's school record. A school psychologist told her that David was a very bright boy, but he just wasn't putting any effort in school. He just didn't seem to be interested in his grades anymore. All he wanted to do was have a good time.

Ev thought about it for a long time and came to several conclusions. The major thing she realized was that David was basically a small-town boy. West Orange is not a large city, and the schools he'd gone to there had always been fairly small. Whereas here in Los Angeles, which is a huge metropolitan city, the schools are much bigger. She figured maybe he'd just been overwhelmed by it all. He was a fun-loving, charming boy anyway, and with any encouragement at all, he'd much rather play than work. She began to wonder if she'd been wise in letting him go to Uni and stay with all his old friends from Emerson.

Finally she sat down and talked it over with David. They had a difficult heart-to-heart talk about it. David realized that his mom was pretty upset over his grades and his lack of interest in school, and he tried to explain to her how he wasn't really avoiding school—it was just so much easier and fun to goof around with his friends than to put any effort into school. He knew she'd gone to a lot of effort to get him into Uni, but he finally had to admit that if he was going to get anywhere in school, he'd probably be better off somewhere else.

And the fact of the matter was he was on the verge of being suspended or even expelled from school. So something had to be done and done quickly. David's education was very important to Ev and she wasn't going to let him drop out at such a young age.

So it was finally decided and at midsemester in the tenth grade, after only ten weeks at Uni, David transferred over to Hamilton High School near his home. It was another difficult transition for David. He was separated from all his friends, and once again he was the new kid at school. He didn't know hardly anyone there and he was behind everyone since he'd been goofing around so badly at Uni. But he pitched in and made an effort, at least. He didn't come through with straight A's, but at least his grades began to rise a little, and he wasn't flunking out. He still wasn't too thrilled about school, and he certainly didn't have any intention of going to college, but it looked like he might make it through high school.

This was a period in his life when all the things that had happened to him so far in his life seemed to have ganged up on him. He really felt the impact of being from a divorced family. Most boys are somewhat rebellious at this age, but David was even more so. Ev's career was getting started again, and she was spending more time on it, and David just sort of skated along instead of really putting much effort into anything. This period was really a turning point in David's life, for if he had received no understanding from his mom at all—if she hadn't recognized the problem enough to get him into another school—he could easily have turned into a high school drop-out right then, or even worse, some sort of juvenile delinquent! Fortunately, that was not to be the path of

David's life. He was saved by an understanding mother and his love for show business, especially acting and singing.

His grades at the end of the first semester—his tenth grade—were passing, so he decided they could afford to go back home to West Orange for the summer. Ev had considered making him go to summer school if his grades weren't high enough, but she figured passing was better than failing, and maybe the summer trip would get him interested in something again, and maybe he'd apply himself a little more at school. That summer trip showed both Ev and David that David really was destined to make it as a singer.

Ev had a friend in New York who was also her voice coach, and she decided to take David to see him and find out once and for all if David did have any potential as a professional singer. She figured he did, but she also knew she was prejudiced, being his mother, and that her coach would be honest with her. David was seventeen years old now, and it was time to begin thinking about what he would do with his life, especially since he hadn't shown himself to be any great student, and he had no desire to go to college.

So she took him to see Jim Gregory, her voice coach. After just the first visit, she knew for sure that David could sing. She was amazed to watch him and realize how closely he had watched her and Jack and how much he had soaked up over the years with very few professional lessons. She was also amazed to realize how much David had grown up.

She sat in Jim's studio and watched with fascination as her son ran through a couple of numbers. He already had timing and poise and even stage presence. She was so proud, even of how much of Jack there was in him. Sitting there, watching him, she realized how much he was like his father in so many ways—his laugh, his sense of humor, some of his hand movements. It was quite a moment for David's mother.

And it was quite a moment for David, too. He'd known for a long time that singing was what he wanted to do, but he'd never really had anyone else confirm it. He remembered how when he was young he'd thought he was the world's greatest singer. He'd sing to anyone who would listen. Then one day someone told him he wasn't the world's greatest singer, or even close and that was pretty hard to take at the age of seven. But he'd still always kind of thought he could sing

pretty well, and now here was his mom beaming away and her voice coach encouraging him. It was great. Someone finally agreed with him.

After that first monumental meeting, David went to Jim's studio regularly for lessons and encouragement. He worked at it all summer and by the end of the summer was a very professional singer. The last time Ev went down to watch, before the summer ended and they had to go back home, she was even more overwhelmed than the first visit. Her son was truly a good singer and a professional one at that. This wasn't a lark with him. He was serious about it and ready to put whatever work into it that was necessary. He cared so much more about singing than he did school. Ev worried a little that maybe being raised in a show business family had hurt him somehow, but she knew that his love of music and acting more than made up for his lack of interest in education. So many kids who weren't interested in school weren't interested in anything else either—except possibly making trouble. But David was interested, very interested in acting and singing. And not only that, but he was good at it, too. He had talent, and that was what counted.

They flew back to Cheviot Hills feeling very good. David started the school year out again at Hamilton High, and once again he wasn't getting good grades, but at least he was passing. He still cut a few classes every now and then, and still preferred to goof around rather than study, but he was getting by.

Then a friend told him about Rexford School, a private high school in Beverly Hills, where a lot of movie stars' kids went. It was set up with very small classes, sometimes only five kids to a class, and the emphasis was on learning something and not just keeping a kid busy so many hours a day. That sounded pretty good to David. He really didn't like school, but he knew it was necessary and he figured maybe at Rexford it would be better, and besides, wasn't he a show-business-kid too, just like a lot of the other kids at Rexford? And then, too, he had to admit to himself if not to his mom that if he didn't shape up pretty soon, he was going to be right back where he'd been at Uni. He was going to flunk out or get kicked out and he knew it. But it just didn't seem to matter much to him, even though he knew it should.

So he checked up on Rexford and found out you had to take a test to get in. That kind of shook him up a bit. He'd been flunking or barely passing school for two years now, how could he hope to pass whatever test they threw at him? But he kind of figured he didn't have anything to lose so he talked to his mom about it and sent in the application. When the day of the test arrived, David was pretty nervous, but he kept telling himself that it wasn't really important. He didn't really care if he passed or not. But deep down inside he knew that it was important and that he did care. He went into the test kind of scared, but it didn't turn out to be so bad. He could answer most of the questions and guess on a lot of the others. And when it was over he felt maybe he had a chance.

Sure enough, when he got the notice back in the mail, he had passed the test, but there was another problem. Because of the classes he'd flunked and all the goofing off he'd done at both Uni and Hamilton, he didn't have enough credits to get into the classes he wanted to take. In order to go he would either have to wait another year, until he had enough credits—and hope he didn't blow any more classes—or else go to summer school. Neither plan really appealed to him because it meant that much longer before he could get into Rexford. But then he realized that he could go to summer school at Rexford and pick up the extra credits there, then start regular classes in the fall.

He didn't really love the idea of summer school. He'd always enjoyed fooling around all summer and going back East to visit with his grandparents and old friends. But he figured if he was going to make it through high school this was the thing to do. So the summer between his first semester of the eleventh grade and the second, he attended Rexford's summer school. It proved to be quite an experience. The classes were so small that he just couldn't goof around. Sometimes there were only five or six kids in a class, and in a group that small the teacher gets to know each student pretty quickly. But David discovered that with all the extra attention he was getting, he was really getting into school for the first time in a long time. It was hard, but it was also stimulating.

By the end of the summer he had enough credits to qualify for Rexford, so he enrolled there full-time for the fall semester. And suddenly school became important. This was a pri-

vate school, intent on teaching individuals, and David found himself being treated as an individual instead of just one of a horde of students. He found that the teachers were really interested in him and his problems. And he found that he couldn't cut classes and expect no one to notice. They did notice, and they wanted to know why he had cut. So he stopped cutting classes.

There were times when he wished he'd never even found out about Rexford. Once again, he was the new kid at school and didn't know anyone. But he was getting a little used to that, so it wasn't quite as bad this time. And sometimes he'd hear about acting or singing jobs and dream about quitting school and going to work. But his mom was always adamant about one thing. He was going to finish high school before he took on any full-time work. She didn't discourage his interest in being an actor or singer but she told him it could wait until he'd graduated from high school. It was frustrating for David but years later, looking back, he would appreciate her making him wait. Later he would look at many of the child actors that he worked with and realized that they were growing up in an adult world without having other kids their own age to play with, and he would be grateful that his mom had been firm about his growing up some before getting involved full-time in show business.

Somehow he made it through his first year—the eleventh grade—at Rexford, and with better grades than he'd gotten in some time. At the end of the term he realized that he'd made a wise decision in going to Rexford. In many ways it wasn't exactly what he'd pictured it would be, but it was working for him. He was getting the special attention he needed, he was learning things and he wasn't goofing off nearly as much. But he was still having a good time. He still dated a lot. He still played baseball and basketball and listened to records and played his records and surfed. He'd discovered surfing and absolutely loved it. He would willingly get up at dawn on weekends and dash down to the beach with his surf board to wait for that one incredible wave. He might easily have become a surf bum and spend much of his life doing nothing but surfing, but he had so many other things he liked doing, too. Most of all he loved music—rock and roll music—and he wanted to have a rock group of his

own. He and some friends formed a rock group and practiced for hours in one garage or another until the neighbors would complain. Then the boys moved to another garage. The group was always changing. One person would drop out and another would join. And they'd get into arguments about what kind of group they wanted to have and what kind of music they wanted to play, and someone would get angry and leave. So it was a constantly changing thing. But it was still fun and still important to David.

Along about this time, when he was eighteen, he decided that he was being unfair to his horse. The horse he'd wanted so badly a few years ago was now sitting idle a good deal of the time. David seldom rode him anymore, and it seemed like he could hardly even find time to visit him. It seemed kind of cruel to Danny Boy, so David thought it over and sadly decided that maybe Danny Boy would be better off with someone else. So he finally had to sell Danny Boy. It was a sad moment for David, but he realized it was the best thing to do. It was cruel to leave the horse sitting around without someone to ride him and talk to him and take care of him. So he sold him to someone else who would care as much about him as David had when he'd first gotten him.

That same summer David and his friends had a fairly stable rock group going and were really getting anxious to try and get started in the rock world. They'd practiced and practiced and played for all their friends and they thought they were kind of good. But they wanted a chance to show others what they could do. Then someone came up with a plan—why not go somewhere else for the summer and try and get some work performing in a club or something? And for some reason or another they chose Florida as a good place to go. Actually they were just a group of boys looking for some adventure.

David's mother realized that he was growing up and that he was going out in the world more and more. She knew he probably wouldn't stay at home for much longer. It was getting close to the time when he would want to move out and try something on his own. She dreaded that move but knew it was inevitable. But when this Florida trip came up she didn't like the idea at all. She wasn't really sure why, but she didn't like the idea of the boys going off down there and

trying to get work. But she also knew she couldn't just tell David no. She'd always been able to explain things to him before, give him reasons, and he would want reasons now. And she figured no matter what she told him, he would just say she was being over-protective and that he was growing up—which was true. So she worried.

At the time she had just been notified by her agent that she had a part in a local stage production of a musical play called "And So To Bed," at the Los Angeles Theater Company. She was excited about the part. Her career had been going very nicely, and she knew this was a good part for her. But one day when she was talking with the director, he mentioned something about a role for a young boy who could sing and dance that was still uncast. It was a small role, but he was having trouble finding just the right boy for it. And Ev got the brilliant idea that maybe David could play the role. It seemed like the ideal solution. The play would probably only run through the summer, so it wouldn't conflict with his schooling. It involved both acting and singing, which David would love. And, perhaps most important, it would keep him from making the Florida trip, without her having to just try and stop him.

So she asked David if he'd like to audition for the part. And David said yes—the chance to sing and act was much more exciting than the obscure chance to play in a rock band. So the audition was arranged and David went, alone. Ev knew better than to escort him to an audition at his age. He was almost a grown boy, and she didn't want to embarrass him by playing stage mother. It was expected that she'd be with him when he was younger, but now it was unnecessary.

David went into the audition a little confident and a little scared. He didn't really know if being Evelyn Ward's son would help or hurt in this situation, and he kind of wished he was just a nobody auditioning for the part like everyone else. But he was a professional, and he went up on the stage when he was called and did everything they asked him to do to the best of his ability. He tried to remember everything he'd ever been taught, especially by Ev's voice coach, and he concentrated very hard on what he was doing.

Later that afternoon Ev got a very excited phone call from the director telling her that David had been fantastic, and he

had the part. She could hardly believe it. The whole thing had been a long shot. She didn't know if she'd ever really expected him to get the part, but now he had it. Her son had gotten a part in a play she was in. And he'd gotten it on his own. This wasn't like the younger days when she'd ask a director if David could have a small role or something. This was to be the first time she and David would perform together in the same show as adults. It was still hard for her to accept him as an adult, but it was becoming clearer all the time.

They went into rehearsals for the show just a few weeks later, and both Ev and David knew their parts well. Although David's part was small, it was still an important part. He had one big speaking scene with Ev, plus a solo singing number during which he also had to dance. David worked very hard on everything he had to do in the play. It seemed like the most important thing in the world to him at the time and he put his whole self into it. The more he worked on the role, the better it got, and by the time the show was ready to open, he had it down pat.

Opening night he was scared. Even though he knew he'd had plenty of rehearsal and knew all of his lines and movements backwards and forwards, he was still scared. Many thoughts went through his head. What if he failed? It would not only hurt him, but it would also hurt his mother. She was so proud of him and he didn't want to disappoint her. And he really wanted this role to work out. He'd known for so long that he wanted to be a singer and an actor, and this was his chance to prove that he could do it.

But when the curtain went up at the beginning of the play, David became the professional he'd been taught to be. He did his role and did it well. And the most amazing thing happened—he got a standing ovation during his singing number! He couldn't believe that! He just wanted to burst with joy at the mere thought of a standing ovation for him alone. When the final curtain came down, David was nearly exhausted from the sheer tension of the evening, but he was also terribly excited. He'd shown them all that he could do it, and the audience had loved it. But he also knew that he could do a lot better. That was the amazing thing. He'd been good, but he knew there was more he could do. Maybe he could even be

great! That was a very big night for David. When he got home he was still floating with happiness, and he just knew he'd never get to sleep. But he slept like a log, and suddenly it was the next day.

Each night that the play was put on, David got better and better. Sometimes it was only a minor thing, like how he turned his head or how he walked, and other times he would discover something wonderful—how to really project a number to the entire audience. It was a fantastic experience, and for David it was like everything he'd always known to be true suddenly really was. Sometimes he could hardly stand it. It was all so exciting. And then another marvelous thing happened. The director told him that he was handling the role so well that they were going to enlarge it. And so he got a few more lines and another whole singing number. It was like heaven come true for David. He was really doing it—he was an actor and a singer in a play and he was getting paid for it. He'd never had a real job up until now, except for the small parts his mom had gotten for him when he was younger. He'd never been a paper boy or anything like that. So the idea of having his own money, money that he'd been paid for doing something he loved doing, was phenomenal! Like wow!

Night after night for all the weeks that the play ran, it just got better and better, and if David had ever had the slightest doubts about his ability to fulfill his dream, they were gone now. And if his mom had ever had any doubts about his sincerity and willingness to work hard, she now too knew that David was destined to be a performer. And she privately admitted that he was pretty good. Whenever she told anyone else how good he was, they figured it was just because she was his mother, but she knew deep inside that he did have talent and determination. And she had a feeling that he just might make it big, very big.

Her own career had always been important to her, but she'd put it aside for David and now she knew that it was all to the good. For even if she never became a major star, her son might. And she'd be just as proud for him as she would be for herself.

When the play finally closed, David was sad to see it end. But he knew it was just the beginning. This had been his big break, and he was grateful for it. And besides it was getting

late in the summer, and he knew he'd have to be going back to school pretty soon. He only had one more year of high school, and then he could forget about any more formal education and get down to the important things—acting and singing. He knew that a college education was important to many people, but not to him. He'd had it with school and wanted to get to work. He didn't need college to prepare him for his profession. The only way to get into show business is to get into it. And that's what he planned to do just as soon as he had his high school diploma.

So it was back to school. The last year of school seemed to last for decades. He wanted so badly to be out there working, but he was stuck here in L.A. at school. By this time he'd gotten pretty tired of Los Angeles and California and all and had decided that the first chance he got he was going to New York. That was where the action was and that was where he could really get his career started. It was strange to finally be able to think of his dream as his career—a real thing—but "And So To Bed," had cinched it for him. There was no doubt in his mind about what he wanted to do with his life. He was following both his mom and dad—and stepmother—all the way.

He settled down to studies and continued with all of his other activities after school, especially girls. He really liked girls, and they seemed to like him too. He rarely went steady though. He liked dating a lot of different girls, and he didn't dig the possession thing a lot of girls would go through if he dated them for very long. He didn't want any girl thinking she owned him. And if he stayed with one girl for very long, soon she was making all kinds of demands on his time. And he just wanted to be with girls when he wanted to be with girls and be alone or with boy friends the rest of the time. So his dating was usually with several different girls.

Somehow he made it through that last year with fairly good grades. Looking back over all of his school days, he had to admit that going to Rexford had been a smart move. He doubted if he would have graduated anywhere else. He was kind of proud of making it through high school, and he knew his mom was.

The graduation ceremonies were like most high school

graduations, except that there were a couple of celebrities in the graduating class. David Bruce Cassidy wasn't yet a known name, but Jon Provost and Dino Martin Jr., the names of two of his fellow graduates were.

Chapter Seven

□ After graduation, David found himself in one of those times in life when things just have to change. He was through with school—at least formal, regular school—and ready to start his career. He'd fulfilled his mother's desire by getting his high school diploma, but now he was ready to go out into the world and put into use everything he knew about acting and singing. This was also a time that made him realize that he had a pretty special set of parents.

Many teenagers have a rough time getting away from home. Their parents either kick them out, or they don't want them to leave until they get married or go off to college or something like that. But David had no intention of getting married yet, and he also had no intention of going to college. But there was one thing he wanted to do more than anything else in the world then—go to New York and try to make it in show business for real.

Having grown up on the East Coast, he saw Broadway and the legitimate stage as the center of the show business universe and that was where he wanted to be. He didn't realize that New York was full of actors and singers who felt the same way about Hollywood. But he was convinced that if he could get to New York, all his dreams would finally begin to come true.

So once again it was time for a heart-to-heart talk with his

mother. He told her how he felt and what he wanted to do. And to his surprise she didn't put up any arguments. He told her he would get a job during the day and then would take classes at night—singing and acting lessons and things that would help him with his career. And during his lunch period he would make the rounds, trying to get work. And she agreed that that was a good plan. She had only one suggestion. In order to save money, why didn't he stay with his father? Jack was working on a play in New York, so he and Shirley were staying there.

David thought that was a great idea but he wasn't too sure that Jack and Shirley would want him. They had their own family—their third son, Ryan, had joined the family by now—and he wasn't sure they would want any more boys around. But Ev gave Jack a call and Jack said of course they wanted him—they'd be hurt if he went anywhere else. So it was settled. David would go to New York and stay with his dad and stepmother, but he would basically be on his own. He would get a job and take whatever classes he felt were helpful, and he would make a real effort to get his career together. From now on, it wouldn't be just a fun thing to do. He would make a serious attempt to become a full-fledged actor and singer.

David flew off to New York with a head full of dreams. He recalled what Broadway looked like and imagined a marquee on one of the large theaters with his name on it in big neon lights. He imagined himself on stage, singing and dancing in a major musical. He imagined many glorious things during that plane trip. But it was to be some time before any of them came true.

He had no way of knowing that he was heading for the wrong coast, that his true fate was to be found in Hollywood. But he was in for a lot of adventures and some very maturing situations.

He arrived in New York with his few belongings and settled quickly in with his dad and step-mother. They had a place in a town called Irvington, which was a small suburb not unlike West Orange, New Jersey. They had a big place, with plenty of room for their growing family, and David felt pretty much at ease immediately. But he hadn't come to New York for a family reunion. He'd come to work and the first

order of business was to find a daytime job that would leave his evenings free for classes.

He hit the streets of New York almost immediately, concentrating on the area near Broadway. Broadway is a street that runs through almost all of New York City, but the area between 42nd and 50th Streets is what is usually referred to as Broadway. There is where the major legitimate theaters of New York are concentrated. All of the theaters aren't actually on Broadway. Some are on cross-streets. But it is still the stage center of the country. And that was where David wanted to be. So he scrounged around that area looking for a job. The first job he applied for he didn't get for some reason and he was pretty disappointed, but he kept at it. Each night he'd go home after job-hunting all day, and he'd be tired and disappointed but not discouraged. He had faith that his plan would work out. He found living with Jack and Shirley to be all right. They both encouraged his efforts and didn't bug him too much. His only small complaint was Irvington. After living in Los Angeles, he'd realized what a small town West Orange had really been. He liked big cities, and he'd hope to come to New York and live and work in New York. But instead he was stuck at night back out in this small town. At least he had his days in New York.

Looking back at West Orange he saw how a small town can make you think small. When he'd been in West Orange, that had been the whole world to him. He was hardly even aware of any world outside of that except what he saw on TV and the places he'd been with his folks. But he knew now that he was really a big-city boy. And the first chance he got he was going to be living in a big city and not stuck out in some tiny suburb.

Finally, after a couple of days of job-hunting, he heard about something in the garment district. The garment district is a huge, very crowded, busy area of New York that is only a few short blocks from the theater district of Broadway. So the location was ideal for David. He was within walking distance of his dream-world. The job was in the mail room of a large textile firm. He was to do all sorts of odd jobs, including sorting and delivering mail within the huge firm and running errands for executives, including the president of the company himself. It wasn't a particularly important job, but it

was pretty much what David wanted. It would give him a little money and it was close enough to Broadway so he could walk around there on his lunch breaks. And it was also close to the places where he hoped to take some classes. So he went to work.

It was difficult at first to get used to actually working eight hours a day. He'd never done that before. The only jobs he'd had before were small acting jobs. But he knew that he'd been lucky to get any job since he didn't know anything but acting and singing. So he worked hard at it. He was scared sometimes that he didn't know what he was doing or that he would make a mistake. But he never let anyone know about his fears. On the surface he appeared confident, even cocky. One thing his acting had taught him was how to pretend to be something you're not. He wasn't really unhappy with his job. It was just very new to him. And it was frustrating to have to do something else other than acting.

But he knew that every struggling actor had to go through this kind of a period before his big break came. And he knew he had more going for him than a lot of other young kids trying to be actors had. He had his parents, for one thing. Even though he didn't know how much weight the name Cassidy would have anywhere, at least he had grown up with actors all around him and had a pretty good idea what the profession was all about. He knew about the big times and the hard times and he felt he was ready for both. He thought he should be able to handle the hard times better than some just because he'd been through them before whenever his father's career hadn't been going too well. But there was also the chance that his name would hold him back. He knew some people would think he was just Jack Cassidy's kid and that he would have to work extra hard to convince those kind of people that he did have talent. He'd already decided though that if need be he would use some other name rather than Cassidy if the Cassidy name would hold him back.

The first couple of days while he was working on his new job, he would take each lunch break and dash up to Broadway. There he'd walk from one end to the other just looking and smelling and feeling the life of the place. He loved it there. The hustle and bustle and the crowded sidewalks and all different theaters and their marquees announcing what

play was being done there now and who was starring in it. He'd look up at the names of the stars and dream about the day he would walk down this street and see "Starring David Cassidy" in huge letters on one of those marquees.

And it seemed like he always stayed just a little too long and really had to rush to get back to work on time. But those lunch breaks on Broadway were what kept him going, what kept his dream alive.

When he had begun to feel a little more at home in New York he made some inquiries about different classes being offered. There were so many things he felt he should take. It was funny that he'd never really liked school that much, but now he was actually looking forward to taking some classes. But these were classes in things he knew he would need and would use. These were important to him. He wanted to take more acting and singing lessons, of course, but he also wanted to take things like dancing and movement and fencing and karate and anything that would teach him more about his chosen craft. He felt that movement was his weakest point. He still walked and moved like an awkward teen-age boy, and he wanted to be able to move gracefully in whatever roles he might get. He was slender and loved to dance, and he felt it shouldn't take long to become more efficient at moving about and not just clopping about like he usually did. He'd watched other actors, including his father, and had been enthralled at the way they moved, so fluid and smooth, and he wanted to be able to move like that.

But the first classes he found that he really wanted to take were acting and singing lessons, so he applied for those and left the others for a later date. He would eventually get around to all sorts of classes, but for the meantime he was satisfied with acting and singing.

So his first few months back in New York soon fell into a regular pattern. He'd go to work at the textile firm early every morning. His lunch breaks he would spend walking up and down Broadway dreaming and reading the billboards and marquees. Evenings he would spend at his various classes. It was a busy schedule and it didn't involve any real acting, but it was a start and he was fairly happy with it.

Occasionally he would feel a little lonely, especially during the day. He was really on his own for the first time in his life

and it was a bit strange. He wasn't going to a regular school, which is where he'd usually made most of his friends. There wasn't anybody of any great interest at his job. And he hardly ever had any free time. So he soon discovered that he had very few real friends. His whole day consisted just of working, dreaming of future days, and going to classes. He rarely dated at all and didn't even have one close friend to share things with. As much as he loved the big city, he realized that for all its millions of people, it could still be a very lonely place. It was a maturing experience for David. He'd looked forward so long to being on his own and getting to New York and now here he was, and he was very busy but he was still lonely. It was all very strange.

Finally, after several months of this, David began to feel like he was ready to try for some work, some acting work. He had dashed up to Broadway on his lunch break and was standing in Shubert Alley, a long narrow alley between two of the theaters where posters from all the current plays were stuck up. He looked over all the different posters about all the various actors who were working and decided it was time to make his big try.

So he became one of the thousands of young actors in New York doing what is called making the rounds. David had a slight advantage at this game, having grown up in an acting family. He knew some of the things he had to do.

The first step was to make the rounds of the agents. Until you are an established actor, you don't have to work with just one agent. In fact it's to your advantage to have a lot of agents. So David began making the rounds of agents. At each agent's office he would present his pictures and tell them a little about himself and how he was willing to take any part, no matter how small. He'd tell them what teachers he'd studied with and the work he'd done when he was younger. And he would play down or even not mention at all that he was the son of Jack Cassidy and Evelyn Ward. He didn't want to make it because he was somebody's kid. He wanted to make it on his own.

Very soon he had a whole mess of agents that he would have to visit regularly. It was a discouraging business. He'd go in and see each one and they'd always say "Nope, nothing yet," or "Nothing today, try me again in a few days." They

were always polite, but it still hurt to keep getting rejected so often.

The next step was to start going to what are called open calls. He would go up to the Equity office and read the bulletin board. There would be notices of open calls for various things being cast. David's first experience at an open call was pretty discouraging too. He saw a notice for an open call that wanted young male actors. That was all it said and since he figured he was a young male actor, he wrote down the time and place and planned to make it there really early.

He got there as early as he could and discovered to his dismay that there were already over three hundred people ahead of him. He couldn't believe there were so many kids just like him pounding the streets in New York looking for acting jobs. He suddenly felt very small and very doubtful of the whole thing. But he'd made up his mind to go through with this thing, so he stuck it out. He went up to the guy in charge and added his name to the enormous list. Then he stood off in a corner alone for a while just watching what was going on. He really felt like an outsider. Many of the people here seemed to know each other and he felt very left out. It was crowded and noisy in the cold theater and he kind of wished he were somewhere else. He kept looking around, hoping to see just one familiar face, maybe someone from one of his classes. But they were all strangers. He noticed that many of the others would go out for a while and come in every now and then and check the list to see how far along they were in.

David was getting more and more discouraged and he realized it would be a long time before they called his name, so he decided maybe he'd go out somewhere close by for a cup of coffee or something. He knew his way around this area pretty well by now and so went directly to a nearby coffee shop. There he spotted several of the other guys who were waiting to be called and he realized that was what they'd been doing. They were all out drinking coffee and chatting. And everyone now and then would go check the list to see how far along it was. He felt better in just knowing that he'd done something that everyone else was doing. But he still felt very much alone. And what chance did he have among all those people. He didn't even know anything about the role being

cast.' He'd asked someone what the role was and no one seemed to know. It seemed strange for all those people to be trying to get a role they knew nothing about. But he didn't know anything about it either, and yet it had somehow become the most important thing in his life just then to get that part. He sat alone drinking his coffee and thinking. Did he really stand a chance among all these people? Would he have enough chance to show what he could do? What if he got the part and then didn't like it? That was absurd, he told himself. If he got any part he'd work with it to the best of his ability. And any job is better than no job. He didn't want to go on working as a mail room boy all his life.

After a while he went back inside the theater. They were still a way from his name, so he just sat off by himself for a while and watched what was going on. The guy with the list would call a guy's name and then the two of them would disappear into the actual theater. Pretty soon the guy with the list would come back, followed shortly by the guy whose name had been called. David watched the faces of the other actors as they came back out. Some of them were kind of confident, some appeared to be bored, but most looked like he felt, scared and discouraged.

At one point David actually considered leaving. *This is hopeless*, he thought. *They may already have picked the guy they want. But if they'd already picked someone, they wouldn't still be calling names, would they?* But he knew he was hooked. This was like some kind of test. If he could stick out this, things would get better. Even if he didn't get this part, the next time would be better. So he stayed and sat and waited and watched and wondered. He could hardly imagine what the actual audition was going to be like, but he knew it would probably be very short, from the rate at which they were working their way through the list. The thing that amazed him most was that the last time he'd checked the list there were over 500 names on it. He really had not known there were so many kids like him out there. He'd felt so alone and so isolated, and yet here were 500 other guys in the same position he was. It was hard to believe.

As they got closer and closer to his name, he became more and more scared, but also more and more determined not to let anyone know. Everyone else looked so calm and so cool

and he was going to be cool too, even though he certainly didn't feel anywhere near cool. The feeling he had now was worse than anything he'd ever felt all those times he had to start at a new school without knowing anyone there.

Finally the guy called "David Cassidy." David jumped when he called his name, but then tried to walk very calmly over to the door, even though his knees were shaking and he could hardly breathe. He followed the guy into the theater and up onto the stage. The guy just walked out onto the middle of the empty stage with him, introduced him as David Cassidy and told David who all was out in the audience, but David didn't even hear what names he said or anything. He just stood there on that empty stage as the guy walked off and left him alone there. He'd never felt that alone in his life. The theater was dark except for the stage area where he was standing. He knew there were people out in the audience, important people—probably the director and producer and others connected with the show—but he couldn't see any of them. All he could see was darkness. And all he could feel was stark terror. He'd thought he was so ready for this audition and here it was and he felt like he might pass out.

Then a voice from somewhere in the theater asked him to tell them a little about himself. He found his mouth was completely dry and when he tried to speak it first came out kind of like a gasp. When he finally did get his voice to speak, it didn't sound like his voice at all. He heard this strange voice telling them about the work he'd done earlier and the people he'd studied with—but it still didn't sound like him. It was all so unreal.

Right in the middle of a sentence, the voice in the theater said "Thank you very much. Leave your picture and resume, if you have one." And that was it. It was over. He hadn't gotten the role. He'd failed. After all those hours of waiting, he'd blown it in just those few minutes up there on that stage. He walked out of the theater telling himself that it was only his first open call and there would be others and besides over 500 other guys hadn't gotten the role either. But no matter what he told himself, it didn't help. He was crushed. He'd failed. He hadn't gotten the part. They didn't want him. It was a staggering blow.

He walked slowly down Broadway full of doubts. Could he really make it in this business? Did he really want to go through all that again? He knew that he'd have to go to many open calls and he wondered if he could really do it. It was the first major blow and he wasn't sure if he could recover.

That night he talked it over with his dad, and the next time he went to class he discussed it with some of his friends in class, and he soon figured out that what he'd experienced was pretty common. The first open call was devastating for most actors, but it was also a kind of testing ground. If you came back for more after that first one, then other people began to take you a little more seriously. There were always a few guys in town who would go to one or two auditions, get fed up and split. So you had to stick it out for a while before anyone would believe you were sincere about acting.

David thought about it and decided he was sincere and he wasn't going to let them scare him away. He was going to stick it out and he was going to get a part somewhere somehow. He wasn't going to give up, not him.

So he went back on the streets, back to making the rounds. He spent many hours walking down lonely streets, knocking on doors, telling people what he had done and what he could do and what he wanted to do. He passed out thousands of pictures of himself and talked until he was hoarse. Sometimes he got a little discouraged, but never as bad as he'd been after that first open call.

Even the open calls got easier after a while. He'd check out Equity frequently and make a list of all the calls he thought he'd make a try for. And he'd get up earlier and earlier in order to get a lower number on the list. Before long he had the game pretty well figured out.

He'd get up early in the morning and make it down to the audition as early as possible. He'd get his name on the list and then go out to a local restaurant and get some breakfast. By this time he'd gotten to know some of the other people making the rounds and they'd gather together and rap. They'd talk about what a rough life they had. And they'd boast about things they hoped to do. And they shared with awe the news that someone had really gotten a good part through an open call—so it was still possible, it wasn't hope-

less. They'd argue over which acting teacher was the best, and they'd complain about the straight jobs they had to put up with in order to eat.

Occasionally one of the group would go back over to the theater and come back to report what number they were up to. It was like some sort of huge fraternity, and David felt much less lonely and more a member of something. He began to feel like a part of the theater world. But he never could get used to just how important each possible role would become. He would always tell himself that he was going to the call, but if he didn't get the role, it wouldn't really matter. But deep inside he had to admit that it did matter. Each time he went to an audition, he found himself wanting that role more than anything else in the world. He knew the odds were pretty bad with over five hundred people showing up for each open call, but he still kept plugging away at each.

And each time he would stand up there alone on that stage and his knees would shake and his voice would sound strange to him. And each time the voice in the theater would interrupt him to dismiss him, his world would crash down around him. It still hurt to be rejected, but it didn't hurt quite as much.

Occasionally he'd have a bit of luck, and the voice would ask him to read a few lines. Then the guy who'd lead him on stage would hand him a couple of typed pages. And he would start to read and then it would happen again—"Thank you very much. Leave us your picture and resume." But still they had asked him to read something and that was a sign of some interest on their part.

And every now and then one of the agents would come through with something. One would call and tell him to be at a certain office at a certain time to audition for some role in a play. These auditions were never as bad as the open calls because there weren't as many people competing for the role. He'd go into one of these much more confident than any of the open calls. But still each time nothing happened. More frustration and rejection.

It was a rough life, trying to keep his job and trying to get in as many auditions as possible during lunch breaks and after work. Sometimes he'd be able to get someone at work to cover for him so he could sneak out during the day for an

audition, but most of the time he could only fit them in around his work schedule.

One thing he soon discovered was that you could actually lie about your credits and no one would pay any attention. He noticed that other guys would make up all sorts of things they'd say they had done that David knew they hadn't and no one ever jumped on them because of it. So he tried it once, and it worked. It gave him more to say when they questioned him about what work he'd done. And no one ever questioned whether or not it was true. They all seemed to assume that the young actors would make up a few fake credits. And anyway they were usually more interested in how an actor stood and talked and moved than in what he was really saying. So David added a couple of fake items to his short list of credits just like everyone else.

It was a pretty depressing period for David. Even though he had a couple of friends and would sometimes find room in his crowded schedule to date a little, usually a girl in one of his classes, there was still the constant rejection. He'd had this dream of coming to New York, struggling for a while and then making it big. And he was getting tired of the struggle. He'd never imagined it would last this long. It was really a rat race.

But he kept up a confident face. He smiled a lot when he didn't feel like smiling, and he faked a lot more confidence than he really had. And he knew that a thousand other guys were going through the same thing. But all along he really believed that he had talent and that someday he would make it.

Chapter Eight

□ Then one day his luck appeared to change. He went to an open call that had asked for young actors who can sing. There was the usual crowd of people, but by now he knew a lot of them, and it was all pretty common to him by now. He fooled around, drank some coffee, and rapped with his friends until they called his name. He walked out on the stage with the stage manager, answered the usual questions and experienced the same anxiety. But there was one difference this time. Instead of the usual dismissal, the voice in the theater said, "Come back tomorrow at the same time."

That one short sentence was like the greatest words he'd ever heard. He knew he still didn't have the part, but he had a chance. He'd been called back. He didn't allow himself to get too excited about it. There was still a lot of other guys in the running. But he couldn't help but hope that maybe this was it. Maybe this was his break.

The next day he went back and ended up back on the same lighted stage with the same darkened audience and the same voice. He figured by now that voice must be the director. This time they handed him a couple of pages of a script and indicated which lines they wanted him to read. He read them pretty well, he thought. And again the voice asked him to come back in a couple of days. There had been about fifty guys at this audition and that was certainly better odds than

five hundred! And he'd been called back again! This time he couldn't help getting excited. He still didn't know very much about the part except that he wanted it awfully badly. He tried everywhere to get a hold of a copy of the script, figuring if he knew what the play was about he'd have a better chance at the next audition. And he knew there would be fewer guys at the next one. He could hardly believe that he really might get a role finally, after all those weeks of making the rounds and going to open calls.

The next audition was even better than the last. There were less than a dozen guys still in the running for the show. David stood on the stage willing them to give him the part. He thought he'd be forever grateful to everyone connected if only they'd let him have this one role. This time they gave him the same typed sheet of script but asked him to read a little more of it. This time too he put more into it. He really tried to project everything he could in those few lines. And again he was asked to come back. He'd never before had more than one call-back and here he was still in the running after several call-backs. It was too good to be true.

Finally it came down to just a handful of guys, and David knew this was the last audition. This was it. He had to make it this time. It took place in the same theater, on the same stage. He still didn't know who those people were in the audience except that they were probably the producer, director and writer and possibly a few others connected with the show. And he still didn't know very much about the play or the role he was trying out for. But he knew he had to have that role more than anything else in the world. It had become like a matter of life and death to him. The tension he felt was unbelievable. On one hand he felt sure that he was going to get the role. On the other he was scared he'd lose it, after all this. But he knew all of the guys still in the running wouldn't get the part. There had to be losers. He just didn't want it to be him this time. He'd been a loser in this town long enough. He was ready for some success.

When it came time for the final audition, he felt torn in many directions. He felt a little put off by the same old stage and that invisible audience and that voice that gave directions. But he had faith in his own talent and felt once he got up there on that stage in the spotlight, he could do it and he

could do it better than anyone else. For this audition he had to do a short scene that involved both acting and singing. This was his chance to really show them what he could do. He knew he could show them so much more now than he'd been able to by just reading a few lines on a piece of paper.

He really put himself totally into that audition. Everything he'd ever learned or picked up about acting and singing came to force in that one short scene. It was like he put his very soul into one short bit.

And then the most fantastic thing in the world happened. The stage manager walked over to him as he finished the scene, handed him a script, and told him he had the part! And that he had one hour to get to the rehearsal hall to begin rehearsals! David was stunned and just about the happiest guy in the world.

He had a part, a real part in a real Broadway play. The play was to be called "The Fig Leaves Are Falling!" and David had a small part, but to him it was the most wonderful part in the world—and it was his! But, wow, only an hour until rehearsals started. He couldn't even get over his initial excitement in one hour. He was absolutely floating with joy. After all the hard work and the frustration and the rejection and the depressions, he finally had a role. It was finally beginning for him.

And one of the nicest things about it was that he'd gotten it completely on his own. He hadn't even used his full name. He had told them his name was just David Bruce, so they had no way of knowing who his father or mother or step-mother was. They had selected him for the role strictly on what they'd seen him do at the auditions.

He went to the rehearsal that first night feeling like a king. There were a lot of new things for him to learn, and he had to meet so many people and remember their names. He met all of the rest of the cast and part of the crew and finally got to meet the producer and director, those mysterious people who'd been sitting in the audience at his auditions all this time. That voice finally became a person to him. And he got a chance to read the script and find out what the play and his role were all about. He was still floating with excitement, and now he had so much to learn and remember. But he didn't

mind. He was working and that was the important thing, the most important thing in the world.

The first rehearsal was pretty much of a blur to David. But late that night, after the first rehearsal, he did one of his favorite things. He walked down Broadway looking at the billboards. But this time he wasn't dragging along feeling scared or rejected. This time he was floating. He stopped at each corner and leapt into the air, clicking his heels together in utter joy. It was the happiest moment of his life, and he could hardly wait to tell everyone he knew. He rushed out to tell Jack and Shirley and placed a long-distance call to his mom to tell her too. They were all just as excited as he was. Ev was particularly proud. Her son was fulfilling his dreams, and she couldn't have been happier for him.

Early the next day he quit his job with the textile firm and looked up all his friends to tell them the good news. The funny thing was that all his other actor friends were really happy for him. None of them were jealous of his success, just happy for him. And each one felt a little surer that maybe his turn was coming.

It was a bright beginning for David. All the hard work, the various classes, the things he'd done when he was a kid appearing in plays with his mother, everything was falling into place and David was actually making his living as an actor. The money wasn't a lot but to David it was pure gold. To be able to do what he loved most—acting and singing—and to get paid for it was unreal.

The rehearsals were held every day in a mid-town rehearsal hall up on the second floor. David would get up early, dress in something comfortable and get there right on time. The entire day would be given to rehearsing. Sometimes he would sit for hours and watch the director work with other members of the cast. Sometimes the whole cast would be involved as each person had to figure out where he was supposed to be on stage at each moment. The room was almost bare with just a few chairs and a piano but to David it was a beautiful room that he spent many happy hours in.

The times he liked best were when the director would work with him alone, explaining and expanding his role and trying to get each movement and line down just right. David

worked hard on his small role. He studied the lines until he not only knew them but also knew what they meant. He talked them over with the play's author, Allan Sherman, until he thought he understood everything about it. And he worked out each scene with all the others who were in each scene so he could be sure he knew what all was going on.

The hours were long with only short breaks for lunch and coffee, but there were many times when he could do nothing but sit and watch as someone else rehearsed. He practiced his singing numbers constantly, singing merrily away at anyone within hearing distance. It was difficult at times because things kept changing all the time. The director would decide, after having seen something rehearsed one way that he didn't like it that way and wanted to try it another way. Then everyone would have to work it all out again the new way. And sometimes the director would then decide that he liked it better the original way and they'd all have to try and forget the revised version. It got frustrating sometimes, but it was a different kind of frustration that David had experienced before. It was a happy kind of frustration of just working hard at something you loved.

He'd sit in the back of the room sometimes watching the others work and imagining how he would do it if he were in charge. And he wondered if this was really the start of something big. Would this small part lead to bigger and bigger parts until he was finally starring in his own play on Broadway? How long would it take before he would see his name up there in lights? And mostly he wondered if he would ever be able to really combine his two great loves or have to choose between acting and singing one day. He hoped he'd be able to do both, but he knew there was a definite possibility that he might have to emphasize one and let the other ride.

The rehearsals went on and on, week after week until a whole month had gone by. David had spent so many hours night and day thinking and living the play that he felt he had it down pat. But at the same time he knew it wasn't anywhere near ready for an audience. He'd already been told that they would try the play out in Philadelphia for a few weeks before opening on Broadway. This is a common practice that assures that the play is really ready before it opens

on Broadway. In fact many plays are performed in several different cities before making it to Broadway. It's kind of like a dress rehearsal in front of an audience, he was told. You take it to a place like Philadelphia, and you put it on in front of an audience there and you watch the audience and see what they like and what they don't like. Then you take out the weak parts and beef up the strong parts and constantly rework the thing until you get it to a point where the audience really reacts to it in a favorable way. It's a rough way to do it, but it seems to work so most Broadway plays are tried out for several weeks somewhere else first.

So after about six weeks of steady rehearsals in a New York rehearsal hall, the whole company moved to Philadelphia to begin the final rehearsals. David packed up his few important belongings and eagerly headed for Philadelphia. In some ways he was kind of glad to be out of New York for a while. And besides, he figured by the time they got back they'd have this great play ready for Broadway. In Philadelphia he checked into his hotel room, hardly looking at it. The whole cast was booked into the same hotel which was close to the theater where they would work.

David had a little free time before the first rehearsal so he wandered around checking out Philadelphia, but he wasn't that interested in the town. He just wanted to get to work on the play. He strolled through the theater district and checked out what other plays were being done and who was in them and got a little of the place. He wasn't overly impressed with the city, but it was home for the coming weeks and he'd make the most of it. He figured he'd be too busy to do much else besides the play anyway.

The rehearsals here were a little more intense than the ones in New York had been. It was getting close to time to do it for an audience, and everyone was panicked that it wouldn't be ready. The cast by this time had fallen together like a big family. Everyone knew everyone else pretty well and everyone tried to help each other in any way possible. It was a sort of us-against-the-world kind of thing. They knew they had to hang together in order to make this play a success. And there was still a lot of work to be done before that would happen.

David had conflicting feelings about the whole thing.

There were times when he felt like if he went over those lines any more he was just going to choke. But other times he felt like he'd never have enough time to get it just right. He was anxious to get it over with and get back to New York with it. And at the same time he was hoping that the date when they'd have to do it in Philly for real would be held off for a while. It was a very intense period and David often found that he didn't feel like eating very much. He had always been slender anyway and never had a weight problem, but now he was getting downright skinny. But beneath all the other emotions, he was happy. He was working at his craft.

The rehearsals went on frantically for several more weeks as the date for the Philly opening crept closer and closer. The days were long. They'd start about nine in the morning and work until around one, when they'd have an hour for lunch. David usually went into some local restaurant for lunch but sometimes when things were really hectic, he and other members of the cast would send out for food instead and work through the afternoon. They sometimes stopped shortly after dark but other times they worked late into the night. The play became the center of their lives. They worked on the play physically or in their heads every waking hour. And David sometimes found he even dreamt about it. It was the center of his very existence for that period of time.

When the day of the Philly opening finally arrived, David still had mixed feelings. He was glad that they were finally going to do it for an audience because he knew that all of them were too close to it to be able to see it objectively. But at the same time he was a little frightened that he wasn't really ready. This would be his first time on a stage in front of an audience in a long time, and he wanted everything to be perfect.

The day started at the usual early hour and seemed to go on forever. The tension was pretty strung out. Tempers got short, and friends found themselves harping at each other over minor things. Everyone was excited, nervous, scared, elated and very tired. Opening night was upon them.

They finished the final rehearsal shortly after sundown and David split for the hotel to have something to eat and maybe get a little rest before the 8:30 p.m. curtain time. He could hardly believe that it was finally going to happen. It seemed

like a year since he'd been pounding the streets of New York looking so desperately for work, instead of just a few weeks.

The curtain went up on "The Fig Leaves Are Falling!" for the first time, and David went through his role trying hard to remember everything about where he was supposed to be and all the little tips the director had passed on to him. He couldn't see more than the first few rows of the audience, but he sensed that the theater was full and he was glad. By the end of the play, he was nearly exhausted just from the release of the tension he'd been under lately.

As the cast gathered afterwards to discuss it, David felt like he'd done a fairly good job, but he knew he could do better and he promised himself that he'd work extra hard on it tomorrow night. The director pointed out some of the flaws he had noticed and things that the audience had reacted to and then sent them all home with orders to be back early the next morning.

And they were all back early the next morning. David was a little down. The more he thought about it, the more he saw how much the play could be improved. Everyone else gathered together and many seemed to agree. When the first morning reviews came in from the night before, it wasn't good. It wasn't good at all. In fact it was a disaster! The reviews were all bad. Some had a few good words for individual performances, but the overall opinion was it was a bomb. So it was a saddened cast that went back to work that morning. The writer and director had been up all night and new script corrections were already ready. David found his role had been changed some and he had a mess of new things to learn. So rather than dwell on the first night failure, he concentrated on the changes that had been made to try and jazz up the play a bit. It was a hard day, getting over the disappointment of the night before, getting ready for the next night and trying to believe that it would get better.

The next night was a little better but still not a smashing success. And the next morning found them all up early and learning new script corrections again. And so it went for almost a month. Each night they'd perform it before an audience, and each day they'd have to learn all sorts of new lines and scene changes. Sometimes the changes were only a few lines here and there, but other times whole scenes were

added or dropped or moved or changed drastically. In effect, they put on a whole new play every night. An audience seeing it one night would see a different play than the audience that would see it the next night.

But as the weeks went by the reviews got gradually better and better and everyone began to feel a little better about the whole thing. David's part had been changed so many times he was often afraid he'd get confused and come out with lines that had been killed already, but he always managed to come through with the proper lines, and the director was generally pleased with his work.

David had little time for any kind of social life during this period, but he sometimes managed to have lunch or dinner or just a snack with one of the girls in the cast. But basically his acting came first, and he just didn't have time for fooling around.

Finally, after what seemed like years, the reviews got to a point where they were quite favorable and the producers of the show began to feel it was almost ready for New York. This cheered everyone up and made them work that much harder. David was surprised to find out how anxious he was to get back to New York. It was like that was to be the crowning achievement and everything would work out then. Once again he saw New York as the place where his dreams would come true.

The closing night in Philadelphia was a night of mixed emotions. David was eager to get to New York but also a little sad to be leaving Philadelphia. He'd gotten kind of used to the place, and he felt as if he'd grown up a lot during the past few weeks there. But he was more confident of the play now. The producers felt it was ready for Broadway, and that meant it was good. He felt he knew his part well and was personally ready for Broadway too. So they closed the play in Philadelphia, packed up and returned to New York.

David had thought the opening night in Philadelphia had been tense, but as opening night on Broadway approached, he experienced a tension he'd never known existed. He found he was highly irritable and likely to snap at anyone. He could hardly eat, and his laugh sounded a little strained. And the funny thing was that he noticed at rehearsals that everyone

was like that. It was as though they were turning into different people than they'd been these past few months. It was as if they'd been playing a game up until now, but this was for real, this was Broadway. This was it.

The opening night crowd was typical. All of the vitally important critics were there looking bored. And the beautiful people were there too—those socialites who come to openings more to be seen than to see. They aren't really interested in theater, but they like to be seen at all the proper functions. It was a dressy crowd with the usual amount of limousines and furs and diamonds.

And backstage was the typical last-minute panic. David felt like he could hardly stand it. He couldn't wait for the curtain to go up so they could get this thing started. Everyone was yelling at each other and complaining about the silliest little things.

Finally the curtain went up, just a little after eight-thirty p.m. and "The Fig Leaves Are Falling!" made its Broadway debut. The play ran smoothly without any major problems. It was just as they'd rehearsed it before leaving Philadelphia. It was the best they could do.

But it wasn't enough. The first indication of disaster was the network reviews on TV late that night. They panned it, badly. It was a bomb. They found fault with just about everything in it. This time there weren't mixed reviews, but all bad. When the morning papers came out, all of their reviews, including the vastly influential *New York Times*, were bad. "The Fig Leaves Are Falling!" was one of Broadway's biggest flops of the season.

All of the hard work and enthusiasm the cast had put into it was for nothing. It was a bomb. They did it a few more nights, but after those wretched reviews, few people came to see it, and by the end of one week it was over. As David would put it later when telling people about it, the fig leaves fell. His first Broadway play was a disaster.

The effect on young David was immediate and intense depression. After the final performance, he cleaned out his dressing room and wandered off down Broadway. This time he didn't float or click his heels. This time he walked very slowly, looking down at the ground rather than up at all the

colorful billboards and marquees. He couldn't believe it was over. He'd worked so hard for four whole months on that play, and now he was back on the street again.

He wondered seriously if he could ever face anything like that again. Could he really take the hassle of going back to all those auditions and maybe getting another role and taking the chance of bombing out again? Could he really do it? Was it still important to him? For the first time in his life he seriously doubted his desire to be in show business. He knew if he went on with it, he might have to face other failures like this one, perhaps some even worse, and he wasn't sure he could take it. He wasn't sure of much of anything right then except he was a very miserable guy and that something he'd wanted awfully badly had failed. That night was one of the loneliest nights of David's life. He lay awake for hours pondering what had gone wrong. Was he somehow to blame? Hadn't he done his best? Was there something more he could have done? Was he really talented at all? Did he still want to try? If he gave up, would he be able to live with himself? If he gave up, what would he do?

David Bruce Cassidy had experienced one of the greatest disappointments of his life and had no way of knowing at that point that "The Fig Leaves Are Falling!" for all its fault, would turn out to be a good thing for him.

Chapter Nine

□ David's depression over the failure of the play continued for some time. He had really set his hopes on it and he wasn't sure he could take going back to that grind of agents and open calls and a day time job. It was one of the most depressing periods of his life. And one of his greatest periods of doubt. His head was full of unanswered questions and fears. For the first time he actually questioned his desire to be in show business.

A way out of the depression came in the form of a phone call. His manager, Ruth Aarons, called and said that a man from CBS Films had seen David in the play and was impressed—by David, not by the play. He wanted him to test for a part in a movie in California. This was a bit hard to believe, but David thought about it and finally decided it was better than hitting the streets again in New York. At least it would give him a chance to go back to California for a while and see his mom, whom he had missed a lot while he was in New York. And maybe, just maybe something would come out of it. It was better than nothing, he reasoned.

So he packed up his things and said goodbye to all his relatives in New York. Saying goodbye to his acting friends was hardest. They all understood how he felt about the play bombing, and they could comprehend how he could take the chance on going to California to test for a movie, but they

also felt kind of like he was giving up after just one failure. Many of them had already had several failures and were still in there trying. But David had to be honest with himself. He had given Broadway a try, and it just hadn't worked for him. So now he was going to give movies a try and see if his luck was any better there.

On the plane on the way back to L.A., his mind was full of many things. Looking back over the months he'd spent in New York, he could see both good and bad times. He had never really liked his job at the textile firm, but at least it had gotten him a little money and kept him near the theater district. He'd liked the acting and singing classes he'd taken. Those were exciting and stimulating and he'd made a lot of good friends in them. He liked anything that would help him in acting. He had to admit that even with all his doubts, he still loved acting and still hoped he could make it.

Back in Los Angeles he looked up an old friend of his, Sam Hyman, whom he'd known in school. Sam was trying to break into film editing, and he and David hit it off together immediately. They decided that neither of them really wanted to live with their folks any more, having had a taste of freedom. So they agreed to get a place together, something they could both afford on what little money they had between them. They spent a few days scrounging around the Hollywood area looking for something inexpensive yet homey and comfortable too. They found a lot of places that were all wrong. Either they were too expensive or too small or something else was wrong with them. They wanted a two-bedroom place so they could each have some room to themselves, a little privacy. They both liked girls a lot and wanted to have a place where they could sit and talk with a girl in private. Some of the places were so far away from the general Hollywood area that they were out of the question.

Finally, after what seemed like weeks of looking, they found a place up in the Laurel Canyon area. The Laurel area is a lovely, wooded canyon with all sorts of little houses scattered around throughout it. It is not as expensive or fancy an area as Benedict Canyon or Coldwater Canyon, other canyons running through the Hollywood Hills, but it's a more natural canyon, less spoiled by housing developments. At one time,

the canyon was a kind of artists' colony, filled with little groups of writers, painters and craftsmen of various sorts. But those kind of people have since moved over to the Topanga Canyon area. Laurel is in many ways a kind of hippie colony. The houses close down to Laurel Canyon Blvd. are often filled with groups of kids who pool all their money for the rent and have little or no actual furniture. Higher up in the canyon are some nicer homes where a good many actors and singers live.

David and Sam's place on Ridgmont Drive was about midway between these two factions. One had to drive up several winding streets to get there, but they loved it at first sight. There was a small parking area in front of the house, which would just hold their two cars. The house was a natural wood, two-story house, kind of country-looking. The front door opened onto a tiny hall area that led to the two bedrooms and bath on the ground floor. Sam claimed the bedroom right in front of the hallway and David took the one off to the right, which was also close to the small bathroom. To the left of the door as one came in was a stairway that led up to the second story where the living room and kitchen were. Outside the kitchen, looking over the parking area, was a small sun porch. The house was bare when they moved in, and neither of them owned much in the way of furniture, but they soon turned it into their home.

They moved their few belongings and their dogs in and set about fixing the place up. Between them they had two dogs, which had also added to the problem in finding a place since many landlords won't let a tenant keep animals in their places. But their landlord here had no objections to pets at all. David's dog, Sam, was a black and white mutt he'd had since he was fifteen. Sam had stayed with his mom while he was in New York but was now happily reunited with his master. David's love for the dog was gigantic. He was super-thrilled to be back together with him. Sam, his roommate, had a dog named Shish, a light-colored female who made immediate and fast friends with Sam, the dog. The confusion over the two Sams, one human and one dog, was hysterical from the beginning. David would yell at Sam, the dog, for something he'd done and Sam, his roommate, would look up

wondering why David was mad at him. Or Sam would call to his roommate, and his dog would come. It got pretty funny at times keeping the two straight.

As they began fixing the place up they realized they had little money, but they had a lot of enthusiasm. Sam painted his own bedroom and David painted his, although Sam, who's quite an artist too, turned out to be a much better painter than David would ever be. David wasn't too thrilled with his walls when he got finished with them, but he figured he could always do them over again sometime when he got back in the mood to paint.

They scrounged up a little furniture, a very little. In his bedroom, David had a box spring and mattress sitting directly on the floor because he didn't have a headboard or frame for it. He just threw a couple of sheets and blankets over it and called it his bed. He also had a record player and tape system and many different albums and tapes of his favorite musical artists, mostly rock and roll groups. And he had a chest of drawers that he hadn't liked much at first until he painted it all brown—then he was rather proud of his achievement in painting. His room was a bit messy, but it was home and it was his, all his.

Upstairs, they turned the living room into a comfortable place where they could entertain friends or just loaf about. Dominating the living room, they placed a low table made out of a giant spool like the ones telephone wires are strung on. Around it were four orange crates for chairs. On the walls of the living room and down the stairway they hung several different pictures, including some that Sam had done himself. The rug in the living room turned out to be the perfect thing for a couple of rambunctious young guys. It was light in color but practically spotproof. It seemed like no matter what they spilt on it—and they spilt just about everything on it—it would wipe up clean like magic. David was fascinated by the rug and how it could stay so clean.

The kitchen was typical for a couple of bachelors. There was hardly anything in it. There was little evidence that anyone ever did any cooking. The refrigerator was full of things to drink and ready-to-eat foods that just had to be heated up a little. And the freezer had little in it but TV dinners. It wasn't that they didn't eat well. It was just that neither of

them knew anything about cooking. They tended to eat out a lot, especially at hamburger and hot dog stands. Such was the life of David and Sam in their new house.

The first work David did after returning to California was the test he'd been asked to do while he was in New York. It was for the lead in a movie called "Hail Hero." He did the test at Universal studios, and he wasn't too sure of it at all. The way he saw the role was as someone older-looking than he was. He'd already accepted the fact that he looked several years younger than he was, which was sometimes a drag, but it might also mean some work for him.

The labor laws in the movie and television industry set all sorts of conditions for actors under eighteen—how many hours a day they can work, how many hours a day they have to go to school, and things like chaperones, tutors and social workers. So any time a studio can get someone who is over eighteen but looks under eighteen, they'll often prefer him to the younger actor. So David knew he might be able to get some work out of his young looks, even though it would be playing parts younger than he really was.

Just as he had expected, he didn't get the part. It went to Michael Douglas, son of Kirk Douglas, and turned out to be a fairly successful movie. But the test wasn't a total loss for David. While he was there, he met several people, including people in the casting department who decide who will play what parts in various television shows and movies.

He must have impressed someone there, for soon he was up for a role on "Ironside," the Raymond Burr detective series. This time David got excited. Sure, it wasn't as big a thing as a Broadway play, but it was work and that was important. He was ready now to give television a try. Before he'd thought he would only be happy on Broadway, but lately he'd realized that he just wanted to act and he would be equally happy on TV, in movies or on the stage.

So he showed up for work on the "Ironside" episode and soon found himself back in the midst of one of the things he loved most, acting. All of his doubts were gone now. He was thrilled to be working with a great actor like Raymond Burr and he found he had no trouble getting along with the entire cast. He watched everything Burr did and learned quite a bit

from the experience. It was terribly exciting to finally be back at work. The part he had wasn't a huge part, but it was big enough for him to really work with it. There seemed to be so many new things to learn. He'd never done any television work before, and there were so many things that were different than on the stage. Working with a camera instead of a live audience was strange. A camera doesn't react the way a live audience does, so the actor has only the director's word as to whether or not he is getting his point across. And he has to be much more subtle. On stage he has to make every little gesture bigger than natural so that even the back rows can see. But on TV the camera sees everything, so everything has to be as natural as possible.

David found that working on a TV series was, in some ways, very slow. He would sit around for hours sometimes watching Burr do a scene and waiting for them to get to his scene. And sometimes a scene would have to be done over and over again from all sorts of different camera angles. It was all very new and very fascinating to David. When the episode was finished, David found he was a little sad to see it end. There were so many more things he wanted to know about. He just hoped that maybe he would be able to get some more TV roles. But this time he was smart and didn't set his hopes too high. He'd done that on Broadway and was still feeling the hurt. He wasn't going to set himself up for another blow like that one. Once was enough.

For the next week, David threw himself into working on his house. He and Sam painted and played more with the house. It still wasn't any shining display house, but it was their home, and they liked it a lot. David was especially glad that the "Ironside" role had come along because he really needed the money. When he'd left New York he was flat broke, and the only way he'd gotten to California was that the talent scout from CBS who sent him out for the "Hail Hero" test had bought a round-trip plane ticket for him. Once David got to L.A., he knew he wanted to stay, so he cashed in the return trip portion of the ticket, and that had paid for the first month's rent. But he was going to have to get some work of some kind if he was going to keep up his end. If the acting jobs didn't come through, he would have to go back to the drag of having a regular day job. Sam had a

regular job, so his part of the rent was assured, but David had to make sure he could get his half too.

Life was fun during this time. It was exciting being on his own, living with a roommate in this funky Hollywood Hills house and having time to goof around again. David had always loved goofing around.

There were some moments of sadness, however. He received word that his grandmother had died back in West Orange, and that made him very sad. Even though he realized that he had probably disappointed her by not continuing to go to church after he and Ev had left their place, he'd always loved her, and it was very sad losing her. He was particularly sad for his grandfather, whom he knew would miss her immensely. His grandfather was going on eighty years of age, and it was sad to think of him alone.

By this time, too, his mother had remarried. She had met Elliot Silverstein, a very talented director, and they had fallen in love and were soon married. After their wedding, Ev retired from acting and devoted her time to being just a wife. She really liked acting, but she felt that she should concentrate her energies on her family. Unfortunately, this marriage didn't work out either. And once again Ev had to face a divorce. This time she didn't have a five-year-old boy to worry about—David was old enough to understand this sort of thing now—but that didn't make it any easier for her to accept. After the divorce, she moved back East.

The failure of Ev's second marriage made David stop and take a hard look at his own views on marriage. He'd seen Ev and Jack's marriage fail, even though he had thought they were very happy together. And he'd seen Jack and Shirley's marriage make it, despite the fact that they sometimes had horrible fights and would split up for a while. They always went back to each other. And now he'd seen his mom make a second try, only to have that fall apart too. The effect of all of this was to make David a little leery of the whole state of marriage.

He liked girls and dating and all that, but he hadn't really had any deep, emotionally involved romances and he wasn't that eager to. He liked to keep things light, and the minute a

girl would get too possessive of him, he would end it. He became convinced that he probably wouldn't get married early, if at all. He figured he would probably wait until he was thirty or older and had his career settled down before he would even consider anything like a marriage. It was just such a risky thing, and he could understand now how much a divorce hurt people. When his folks had been divorced, he had only felt his own pain, but now, looking back, he realized he wasn't the only one hurt. Everyone gets hurt by a divorce. And that was one thing he didn't want to have to go through. He hoped if he ever got married it would be forever and not just for a few years.

Chapter Ten

□ The next few months of David's life were devoted to trying to get work. The next role he got was a small bit on "The Survivors," a television series with a number of big name stars in it that turned out to be a big bomb and was cancelled after the first season. It was a very small role that David got, but he did the best he could with it and was glad to get it. Every little bit helped.

But after that he began to get discouraged again. Neither the "Ironside" nor the "Survivors" episodes he'd done had been aired yet, which was another strange thing about television. It would often be several weeks or even months between the time a show was filmed and the time it was aired. It was kind of frustrating not to be able to see it immediately. He would watch the shows on television and wonder what he would look and sound like. He was really looking forward to seeing himself on TV. That was something you couldn't do with plays. You were in them, so you couldn't be in the audience too, but with TV you could be both in them and in the audience. The whole television thing was fascinating to David, and he found himself drawn more and more into it. It seemed strange now that before he had wanted so badly to get to New York and try out Broadway.

After two whole months of doing nothing but thinking and

fiddling around the house, David was just beginning to get discouraged again when his manager called and said he was up for a role on "Marcus Welby, M.D." Then she called back and said he definitely had the role and told him where to report and what time and had a copy of the script delivered to David. David was pretty excited about this role because "Marcus Welby, M.D." was a highly successful show and he had the guest star role. It was a good part too, playing a diabetic who didn't take care of himself. David read the script over and over and put much thought into the role. He was really going to show everyone what he could do with this part. The whole idea of working with Robert Young excited him. It kind of amazed him, too, that he'd only been doing television work for a few months, and he was already working with some pretty important actors, like Raymond Burr and Robert Young.

After he finished the "Marcus Welby, M.D." role it was like a dam had burst. Suddenly he was getting offers of roles right and left, and it looked like the rent wouldn't be any problem for a while. He did an episode of "Adam-12" with Martin Milner and Kent McCord next and then a good, strong show on "The F.B.I." in which he played a boy who gets kidnapped along with his mother, who was played by June Lockhart, Jon Provost's mother on "Lassie." That one was a good show, and he was pretty pleased with his work on it. He followed that with a part on "Bonanza," his first Western role. He had a great time working with all the fine actors on "Bonanza's" large cast. All in all, he felt he was really lucky in the people he'd been able to work with.

He'd done all this work, but he still hadn't seen himself on television, and it was getting pretty weird. The first one to come up that he'd been in was his episode of "Marcus Welby, M.D." It had been the third role he'd done, but it turned out to be the first to air.

David sat in front of the TV set in their house and watched himself work for the first time. It was a shocking experience. He couldn't believe that was actually him. He didn't look anything like what he saw when he looked in the mirror. He didn't realize how skinny he looked. But his voice, that was the biggest surprise of all. It sounded so young, like a little boy. *That couldn't be me*, he thought, but it was. It was

definitely weird to sit in your own living room and look at yourself on television. What upset David the most was he noticed that he licked his lips in almost every scene. He knew that was a nervous habit he had whenever he was under strain, but he hadn't been aware he was doing it when he filmed the show. He wished the director or someone would have told him he was doing it so he could have stopped. But he guessed maybe the director thought it was deliberate and left it alone.

All in all, watching himself on television for the first time wasn't an overly pleasant experience for David, but he did learn something. He learned he'd have to be more aware of everything he was doing when he was filming, and he'd have to concentrate on relaxing more. He hoped that as he got more work and more experience that the nervousness would go away.

Then an even more amazing thing happened. He got a package from a studio one day and opened it to find a small stack of fan mail, addressed to him. He'd never received a fan letter before and he found it a little hard to believe that after seeing just that one show, that someone would sit down and write to him. He sat down immediately and read each and every one of the letters. They were from all over the country. Some were from towns he'd never even heard of. He tried to picture all of these people sitting in their own living rooms around the country watching him on television at the same time he was watching it in his own place. It was an amazing thought. He showed the letters to Sam and they sat and talked about what an amazing thing television is.

David kept saying, "Just think, the President of the United States can go on television and talk to the whole country all at one time!" It was just too much to believe. And he had wanted to be on Broadway where he could only reach a few hundred people a night. He knew now he was hooked on TV and hoped he'd be able to work in it for a long time.

For the next couple of weeks it seemed like one of his shows would be on just about every week. He wondered if anybody but him noticed how different he looked in each one. He didn't have any set way of combing his hair then. He'd just get up in the morning and comb it some way or another quickly and then wouldn't worry about it much for the rest of

the day. Sometimes it would be parted on one side, and sometimes on the other. Sometimes the part was in the middle and sometimes there wasn't any part. He just wasn't too concerned with his hair and what it looked like. And so on each show he did his hair different, and he would look different. On some shows his hair was fairly long, and on others it would be short. It must have seemed weird to anyone who paid any attention to him. But David didn't really think many people would pay much attention to this new kid actor on the scene, so he didn't worry about it.

The shows all aired during the fall, and most of them were pretty good, but there was one show that David wasn't particularly proud of. He knew he'd done a bad job on it, and he knew that the show itself just wasn't very good. By some strange quirk of fate that one show that he didn't like aired on Christmas Eve. It kind of irked David that of all the shows to be shown on a night like that, they had to show his bad one.

The next show he did, which turned out to be his last guest starring role for some time, was an episode of "Mod Squad." It was to be the last show of the season, and David was looking forward to doing it. He'd seen the show several times and was impressed with it. The show was filmed at Paramount studios in the heart of Hollywood, right next door to a Jewish cemetery. On the first day of filming, David met the show's stars, Michael Cole, Clarence Williams and Peggy Lipton and was even more impressed by them personally. He thought Peggy was really lovely and very feminine, though kind of quiet and reserved. And Clarence was pretty much like he'd thought he would be, quiet, professional, and very warm. Michael Cole turned out to be a very complex guy and it took David a little while to kind of get to know him, but he found Michael to be a very likable guy.

He worked on the show for a week and loved it. It was hard work, in some ways harder than the other shows he'd done, but he felt he was doing good work, and that made him feel good. And, besides, the money was good. It had been some time since he'd had to worry about the rent money.

Looking back over that season, David was surprised and very pleased with the amount of work he'd done. It was funny that he'd gone to New York with such big dreams and

struggled so hard to get just one little role in a play that bombed. Then he'd come back out to Los Angeles, kind of as a last-ditch effort, and had soon found himself working all over the place. But he couldn't really feel that the months in New York had been wasted. He felt they were probably a necessary part of his development. If he had gotten the work without any kind of struggle he might not have appreciated it as much as he was now appreciating it. He knew he had matured quite a bit in New York, so he had no regrets over the whole thing. He had learned a lot there. He had learned that it isn't wise to put all of your hopes on one role. He had learned that he could doubt his profession but the doubt wouldn't take over and destroy him, it would only make him more careful. And he had learned a lot about acting.

In the past few months he'd done some good, strong dramatic roles and felt he had a very good start on a steady career as a television actor. He might even get his own series one day—that would be great. It would mean steady work, steady money and regular exposure on TV. But every TV actor dreams of his own series, and David knew this. He wasn't going to build up his hopes again. But still a series would be nice.

The only thing he worried about now was that his singing career seemed to have been shoved aside. His love for music was still as strong as his love of acting, and he didn't want to see one destroyed by the other. But then he hadn't been cast in any roles that required singing, and he knew that some people within the television industry probably didn't even know that he could sing. Once again he worried about having to choose between acting and singing. He loved both. He wanted to do both. He didn't want to have to make that choice.

Chapter Eleven

□ The phone rang one day and it was David's manager. David didn't know it then, but this one phone call was the beginning of something that would change his entire life.

Ruth Aarons wanted to know if he wanted to try for a role in a television series. The role was of the oldest son in a family that makes rock and roll records. David wasn't too impressed with the entire idea at first. It sounded kind of hokey to him—a family that makes rock and roll records. He wanted to have a series, but not a hokey one. But then his manager told him that it would be a musical role as well as an acting role, that he would be required to both sing and play guitar in addition to act. Now that was a whole other ballgame. This would be his first chance in TV to combine his two favorite things, and on a series too. That sold him on the idea, and he said he'd read for the part. He still thought it sounded a little icky, but he was willing to at least look at the script.

The script was what changed his mind completely. As he read and reread the script, he became more and more enthusiastic about the project. He saw the script for the first time while he was sitting out in a hall waiting for them to call his name to read for the role. This was nothing like the open calls he'd suffered through in New York. This time there were only a small crowd of actors trying for the role, and each one had an appointment. So you knew that you at least had a

small chance. He wasn't nervous at first, because the thing just wasn't that important to him. But then he read quickly through the script for the pilot and was impressed, very impressed. He could see himself in that role. He knew he could handle it well. In fact he thought he just might be able to do it better than anyone else in the world. It was a funny and quick script, and he could see all sorts of possibilities for it. He realized that within just a few minutes he had changed from indifference to great desire. He wanted that role. He wanted it badly. He wanted to be Keith Partridge. That was the name of the character he was to read for. The show was to be a half-hour situation comedy called "Family Business."

Just as he realized he wanted the role, that it was really important to him, he became nervous. Then he got really nervous. He'd walked in here very calm and sort of unconcerned, but now that he wanted the role badly, he was petrified. He couldn't believe how quickly he'd changed from very calm to very scared. By the time they called his name his knees were shaking and his mouth was dry and he wasn't even sure he could remember his name.

He followed the man who'd called his name into the office and there met the producers of the show, Bob Claver and Paul Witt. He knew a little about them. Bob Claver was a very successful television producer, whose credits included "Here Come The Brides" and "The Interns." But all that didn't make David any less nervous. They asked him to read a few lines on a specific page and he did, but he figured he'd probably blown it. He just knew they could tell how nervous he was. He'd done all the little things that he knew he did when he was nervous, including his old habit of licking his lips. It was hard for him to believe just how nervous he was over this part. It was totally out of proportion to the situation. He left that reading figuring he'd blown the part, a part he wanted very badly.

That night he lay in bed reading the script he'd been given. He read it and reread it until he practically had all the lines memorized—everyone's lines memorized! He sure hoped that he was wrong and that he hadn't blown it because it was such a perfect role for him. He knew he could do a good job of it. It would be like a dream come true to get this part. He

would be acting steadily. He'd get to sing and play guitar and record. And he'd actually have a series. It was all too much to hope for. And, he had to keep telling himself, this was only for the pilot. There was always the chance that even if he did, by some major miracle, get the part, the pilot might never sell and it would be just like "The Fig Leaves Are Falling!" another big build-up for an even bigger letdown. He didn't want to go through that again.

The pilot is an idea used on almost all TV shows. In order for a network to be able to tell if it likes a series enough to put it on the air, a studio makes up what is called a pilot. They get the entire idea for the show together and work out one very strong script to use to sell the show. Then they hire the actors and crew who will work on it, and they put together one entire show, complete with credits. This is then shown to the networks, and if one or more of the networks likes it and thinks it will be a successful show, then it is sold to the highest offer from the networks. Dozens of pilots are made by studios every year, but only a small percentage of them ever make it to the air. Some are never seen again, and some are shown on TV as one-shot shows. Generally, if a show is sold, then everyone who was in the major cast will then go on to be in the series, but occasionally the series will have different people in it than the pilot. Sometimes an actor will do several different pilots, and by the time a network decides to buy one, he may be so involved in something else that he can't take the role. Or sometimes the network will say they'll buy a show if such-and-such an actor is replaced, if they feel it's a good show but would be better off with someone else in a role.

So pilots are a tricky deal. Working on a pilot may mean just that one show, or it may mean being bought, going on the air for one season and then being cancelled—or it can mean getting a series that will last for years and years, like "Gunsmoke." There's no way of knowing in advance just what will come of a pilot. And David knew all of this.

He went to sleep that night with his head full of thoughts about Keith Partridge and "Family Business." He tried hard not to get his hopes up too high, but he didn't succeed very well. The next morning he fooled around the house pretending not to be waiting for the phone to ring. He just knew he'd

blown it and they'd never call him back. When the phone finally did ring, he couldn't believe it. They did want him to come back and read again. He hadn't blown it, at least not yet. He still had a chance. He still might get to do the part.

This time as he went down to the reading, he took a little more pains with his appearance. He made sure he was dressed like what he thought Keith Partridge might look like and he combed his hair, which was a little on the short side, neatly into place. He didn't have to look at the script again since he knew most of it by heart.

They called him in, and he read the lines they asked him to, thanked him, and said they'd let him know. It was so quick and efficient, he could hardly stand it. He wanted to shout to them—"I am Keith Partridge, can't you see that? I want that role!" But he politely thanked them and left. At least this time he was a little less nervous.

He felt he'd done a little better this time and began to feel just a little hopeful that he might yet get it. When they called back again the next day and asked him to read again, he was floating. He had a real chance. They'd called him back three times—he must be doing something right. But they had a surprise in store for him this time.

Claver and Witt sat him down in their office and told him that the part of Keith's mother had already been cast, and they wanted to find out how he felt about the actress they'd cast in the role. He thought it was pretty weird that they'd ask him about someone they already had cast—until they told him it was Shirley Jones, his stepmother! Claver and Witt didn't know what kind of relationship David and Shirley had, but they knew that a lot of stepsons and stepmothers don't get along and they didn't want any of that kind of hassle in their show. They had already asked Shirley how she would feel about working with her stepson, and she had told them there would be no problems. She'd told them how David was more of a friend than a stepson, and that he was very close with her three sons, and she thought he was a good actor and could handle the role.

But they wanted to make sure that David wasn't harboring any secret grudge against his stepmom that would mess them up later. David was surprised when they told him Shirley would be the mother in the show, but once he got over his

initial surprise, he assured them that he would enjoy working with her. He had never worked with her but he couldn't see any problem. He told them that it wasn't as though Shirley had tried to replace his own mother. He had lived with his real mom through all the years after the divorce, so he didn't have to live with his dad and stepmom. But since then he'd gotten to know her and he had to admit that he really liked her as a person, he thought she was good for his dad and he had mountains of respect for her as an actress. When it came right down to it, as he thought about it, he told them he thought Shirley was perfect for the role and he would really like working with her.

The producers were encouraged to hear everything David had to say, but they still wanted to be absolutely sure that there wasn't some hidden conflict between the two. So that afternoon they got the two of them together to talk about the show. It only took a few minutes for Claver and Witt to see for themselves that this was no ordinary stepmother-stepson relationship. These two accepted each other as individuals and got along splendidly. Their doubts were gone, and they told David he had the part.

The contracts were drawn up and signed and David actually, for real, had the part. He still had to keep telling himself that it was only a pilot, and it might not ever sell. But he still couldn't contain his happiness. That night he and Sam called up some girls they knew, and went out to celebrate his good fortune, and David had to tell them all about the show.

He explained to them that the show was about a widowed mother and her five kids who are basically small-town people. The mother works in the bank and tries to keep things together financially while raising her kids alone. One of her younger sons is a financial genius who's only ten but plays the stock market—and comes out ahead! The kids all like to sing and play musical instruments, so the genius kid decides to get them a record contract and make them all rich and famous.

David went on to explain that the pilot would be shot in Las Vegas and would be about how the kid actually does get them a recording contract—plus a manager and a job working at a major Las Vegas hotel. He was really looking forward to doing the show, and getting to see Vegas. The rest of the cast hadn't been signed yet. The producers were still

looking for four other kids to play the rest of the family. They were particularly worried about finding just the right kid to play the ten-year-old genius.

The family was to be made up of Shirley as the mother, David as the oldest son, a daughter a year or two younger than David, the ten-year-old genius and a younger boy and girl. David's character, Keith was to be sixteen, but David was used to playing roles younger than him by now, and he liked the role so much that the age thing didn't bother him at all. He was just too happy with the entire thing.

Chapter Twelve

□ Work on the pilot began in Screen Gems' Hollywood studio on Beachwood Drive. There David met the rest of the cast for the first time. Susan Dey, a New York model, was cast as the oldest daughter, Laurie, and David's first impression of her was what a beautiful girl she was. She was kind of tall and thin with long flowing hair. David knew they had almost considered not hiring her because she was half an inch taller than he was, and he was glad they'd changed their minds and hired her. And, besides, it would be nice to have someone around to talk with about New York—and she had been very successful as a young New York model. He realized too that she was pretty scared, and he decided to do everything he could to make her relax more. He knew he was going to like working with Susan.

The part of the ten-year-old genius was finally filled by a real ten-year-old named Danny Bonaduce. David liked Danny right off. He was a wild kid who always seemed to be into something. He had bright red hair and fidgeted a lot when he was sitting down, but he seemed like a pretty good kid, and David figured he would be fine to have around. David got to talking with Danny's mother, Betty Bonaduce and discovered that Danny came from a show-business family too, just like David did. Only Danny's family were mostly behind the scenes people. His father was a writer who'd written

many scripts and had just been signed as story editor on a new TV series called "Arnie" that would go on the air in the Fall. That would be the same time that this show would go on if it were sold quickly. Danny's mother was a script writer, too, and his older brother John had sold a script, too. So it was quite a family.

Mrs. Bonaduce told David how Danny had started acting when he was six, doing commercials, and had since appeared on several different TV series, including "Bewitched," "The Ghost And Mrs. Muir" and "Mayberry, RFD." David was glad to hear that he had some experience. He remembered the things he'd done as a child actor, and he found himself liking Danny more and more. They had a lot in common, and he figured they were going to have some good times together.

Cast as the youngest boy on the show was Jeremy Gelbwaks, a wide-eyed nine-year-old from the San Fernando Valley who had only done two commercials and a skit on a comedy program. But he had an interesting look about him, and he seemed pretty sharp. Seven-year-old Suzanne Crough was set to play the youngest girl, Tracy Partridge. This was her first acting experience. David thought what a pretty little girl she was with her blondish-red hair and those gorgeous eyes. She was very quiet and David could hardly get her to talk to him, but he knew that once she got used to everyone she would open up a bit.

The last member of the cast was Dave Madden who would play the group's manager, Reuben Kincaid. Dave had had quite a successful career as a stand-up comic and had then broken into television with a part on a series called "Camp Runamuck." David remembered seeing him on "Laugh-In," throwing confetti. He'd thought he was a very funny man then, and he was glad now that he would be playing the part of their manager, which was a funny role.

All in all David found that he genuinely liked everyone in the cast. He couldn't see any personality problems popping up here. In fact he might even try and get something special going with Susan. She was really cute, and nice too. By this time the name of the show had been changed and was now officially "The Partridge Family," which David thought was a better title than "Family Business." He'd thought when they first told him the original title that people would get it con-

fused with "Family Affair" and so he was glad they had changed it.

After shooting the indoor scenes in Screen Gems' studios, the entire cast moved to Las Vegas to shoot the scenes there. The one big scene that David was looking forward to was the scene in the Vegas hotel where the Partridge family actually performs in front of a big audience. David had always wanted to be in a rock group and perform for a big crowd, and this was the next best thing. In the script he was supposed to play guitar with the group and, along with Shirley, sing lead. This suited him fine. He loved singing and he could play a little guitar, even though he thought he was a little better on drums. But he knew this would be a fun scene to work on.

The shooting of the pilot took three weeks altogether, and in that time the cast got to know each other. David found that working with Shirley was a dream. And he enjoyed having time just to sit around and talk with her. There were a lot of things they found to talk about, including the fact that if this show was sold and went on the air that many people would probably make a big deal out of their relationship as stepmother-stepson. David couldn't see that it was anything to worry about. They knew each other pretty well, and they trusted each other. He knew she would never say anything about him that he wouldn't want known, and he certainly wasn't going to go divulging any family secrets. Working with Shirley turned out to be a real joy. David found that she was a true professional and that no matter how much the younger kids fooled around, she never got impatient or lost her temper. She seemed to be just about the calmest person around.

They were all under a lot of pressure while doing the pilot. There's always the feeling that this might all be for nothing, and that was discouraging. But there was also the thought that this might be the beginning of something very big, like a series that would run for several years. In the world of television, a show isn't considered a real success unless it runs at least three seasons. Anything under three seasons is liable to never be heard of again. But a show that's done at least three seasons, will probably be shown in re-runs several times. And that means a lot more money for everyone, since the actors all

get residuals each time a show is shown again. So it's very possible to still be collecting money from a show many years after you've actually done the show.

The pressure was still intense. The entire idea behind the show had to somehow be shown in this one show. For this show would be shown to executives of the networks, in hopes they would put it on the air, and to executives of sponsoring companies, in order to get the all important sponsors who pay for television.

Plus, everyone knew they had to establish their characters in the pilot. They had to make everyone seem believable enough so that anyone seeing the show would want to see it again. David wanted Keith Partridge to be a regular kind of guy who cares a lot about his family and music and cars and things like that. He wanted people watching the show to like Keith and to believe him. It was quite a challenging role for David but he was putting everything into it.

It wasn't all tension and hard work during the pilot, however. There were some good times. David slowly got to know Susan better and was a little surprised to find out how shy and uncertain she was. He'd always thought that girls who wanted to be actresses were pretty sure of themselves, but Susan wasn't at all. She'd been sure of herself as a model in New York, but acting and Hollywood and Las Vegas were all very new to her and she was very shy and very uncertain. So David took it slow and got to know a little more about her.

She told him about her parents, Robert and Gail Dey and her sisters, Lesley, who was also a model, and Elizabeth, who was still in school, and her brother, Tom, whom she was obviously very close to. And she babbled on to him about the fun things the family did like sailing and water skiing and other water sports. They had a house in Mount Kisco, New York, which she described to David. She bragged about her mother's cooking and what a great guy her brother was.

David began to see after a while that it was much easier for her to talk about her family than it was to talk about herself. But gradually she began to relax and trust him, and she told him more about herself, how she had dropped out of high school to start her modeling career but was taking a correspondence course so she could get her high school diploma, how she'd appeared on the covers of *Seventeen*, *American*

Girl, and *Simplicity* magazines and had done several television commercials, and how her agent had gotten her the audition in New York for the part of Laurie Partridge. She'd done so well at the audition that they sent her out to Hollywood. There she was signed for the role and had just a few days to get organized and ready to do the pilot in Las Vegas. She wasn't sure what would happen if the show sold, because she would have to move out to California and get a place there and her mom didn't want her living alone. But that was something she would worry about if and when the pilot was finished and sold.

David finally began to feel that Susan maybe trusted and liked him a little, so he asked her out to dinner and a movie. After all they were in Vegas, one of the big entertainment places of the world, and, even if neither of them was yet twenty-one years old, they could take in some of it.

They actually went out together a couple of times, but it was usually just to dinner at the end of a day's shooting or maybe to a movie. And they'd have lunch together and talk together all day between scenes. He told her about his experiences in New York, which were now beginning to seem a little humorous, and she told him about the parts of New York that she liked and the parts she hated. They discovered they'd eaten in a couple of the same restaurants and been to several of the same places. It was all very fun and very light.

It wasn't any kind of actual romance. They just happened to be two young people of opposite sexes who were thrown together in a working situation, and as long as they were going to be together so much they figured they might as well make the most of it. And both of them were a little grateful to have at least one good friend around. But there was never any talk of love or anything like that. They just spent some time together and became very close friends. What they didn't know at the time was that they would spend the next couple of years denying that they were in love, going steady, engaged, married or divorced—all of which was totally false.

After a couple of weeks, the visual part of the pilot was finished, and the credits were done. David was kind of sad that he hadn't been able to play or sing on the sound track for the show, but the studio executives had felt there wasn't enough time, so they had hired a group of studio singers and

musicians to do it. They really didn't know if any of the kids could sing or play, but that could all be faked for the show. Also, they figured if no one in the cast except Shirley (who they knew was an excellent singer—she had been in several Broadway musicals) worked out musically, they would just use other people.

So the pilot was finished, and everyone had to say goodbye and go home to wait for the news. It had been a fun time in Vegas, and if doing the show was anything like doing the pilot, David was sure hoping they'd get to do the show. He knew there was a lot more he had to learn, but he was certainly willing to learn it. He found himself returning home to his and Sam's funky Laurel Canyon pad full of hope that the pilot would be sold.

Chapter Thirteen

□ Back at home in L.A., David found himself wondering what to do next. He had no idea how soon he would know anything at all about the pilot. He figured he could probably try and get some work but he didn't want to get into the middle of something else, then have the show sold and have to decide which one to choose. But at the same time he didn't want to sit around passing up jobs and then have the pilot not get sold and end up with nothing. It was quite a quandary.

Fortunately the wait turned out to be very short. One day soon he received a call from Bob Claver informing him the show was sold and they'd be going into production in June. The cast would be the same as the pilot and the show would be just as they had described it to him all along. The pilot was to serve as the first show that would air in September on ABC-TV from eight-thirty to nine p.m. on Friday nights. The time slot they'd been given wasn't the greatest in the world. A lot of young people go out on dates on Friday night and wouldn't be home to watch it, and it was being aimed quite a bit at young people. But other youth-oriented shows had survived in that time slot, and David hoped that if they just put out a very good show that people would stay home and watch it.

This time David allowed himself to be genuinely excited.

He had his own TV series. He was guaranteed work for at least thirteen weeks. Then, if the show was getting good ratings, it would be picked up for another thirteen weeks and would run until June of the following year. He could hardly believe it was true. He wouldn't have to worry about the rent for a while longer. He wouldn't be rich by any means, but there would be steady money coming in, and there was talk of other things that would bring in even more money, including records and books. So at least he wouldn't have to scrounge for money, and he would be doing both of his favorite things—and being paid for it. David's dreams were finally coming true. After all the struggle and ups and downs, it looked like David was finally into a good thing, a very good thing.

The plan was to have at least one song included in each show with some shows having two. Some of them would be performed by the group in real situations, like whenever the Partridge Family got a gig. Others would be played over the action going on in the show. David was excited about this and anxiously looked forward to recording, something he'd never done.

Then he got a rude shock. The people at Screen Gems had just about made up their minds not to use any of the real cast of the show to do the music. They were going to have other people sing and play the music which would be used on the show and released under the name "The Partridge Family." This he couldn't accept. He was capable of both playing and singing, and Shirley was certainly a good singer. There was no reason to fake it when it could be done for real. Even if the younger kids couldn't really work on the record, he and Shirley could, and for all he knew, Susan might even be able to sing. He felt they should at least give him a chance. He just couldn't believe they wanted to fake it.

He recalled all the stories about how the Monkees were fake because they didn't play on their own record in the beginning. That had hurt the Monkees a lot, and he didn't want that to happen with the Partridge Family. There should be at least some of them on the records.

So meetings were held, and the matter was discussed at great length, and, finally, when David had just about given up in disgust, they decided to let him do it. He and Shirley

would both sing on the records, but the musicians would be studio musicians unless David progressed to the point of being a very good musician, which even he admitted that he wasn't at that point. They discussed having Susan sing on the records too, but they didn't think she had a good enough voice and so left her out. She was a little hurt by the decision, but went along with it rather than make waves. And she knew she had never done much singing, and they were probably right.

David felt much better after it had all been settled. He had never done any professional recording, but he was sure looking forward to it. He might even try his hand at writing. And he'd practice his guitar so that eventually he would be able to play on that too. Things were finally beginning to fall into place and David felt very good about the entire matter.

Chapter Fourteen

□ At this point in David's life a very strange thing began to happen, something that would be with him for a long time and something he had not really anticipated. The press began noticing him and requests for interviews and pictures began coming in, slowly at first and then in great floods. It was a big surprise for David who'd never thought too much about the publicity side of acting.

It began in March of 1970, six months before the first episode of "The Partridge Family" would go on the air. And it began in an extraordinary way. The teenage fan magazines at the time were dominated by Bobby Sherman, the star of another Screen Gems TV series, "Here Come The Brides." The usual way in which a young actor would end up as the number one teen idol was that he or she and they would do something, have a string of hit records or get a TV series on the air, that would stimulate interest and the fans would begin writing into the magazines asking for more information of the person or group. But it was different with David.

David's series was not yet on the air. All the fans had seen of him was the handful of guest shots he'd done on various other TV shows. But they noticed him, and what really amazed the editors of fan magazines across the country was the fans actually went to the trouble of reading the credits after those shows and picking out his name. Mail began com-

ing in from all over asking for something on David Cassidy, often before many editors even knew who he was. Who is this David Cassidy?, was the question of the day around fan magazine offices. And as each one traced him down they came across the information that he had just done a pilot for a TV series that would be on the air in September. It was too good to be true. A new teen idol was falling right into their laps. They hadn't even had to work to get the fans to accept him. The fans already loved him, and this was just the beginning. Once that show went on the air it would be like Bobby Sherman all over again. That would sell magazines and make everyone happy.

David was unaware of the interest he had generated through the shows except for the fan mail he had received. So the first time he got a call saying the editor of a fan magazine wanted to interview him and take some pictures, he was greatly surprised. But he agreed and began what was to turn into several years of being asked the same questions over and over again and having his picture taken in just about every pose imaginable.

As editor of *Flip Teen Magazine*, this writer had the privilege of doing the very first interview with David at his home in the hills.

David didn't really know what to expect of an interview. The only interviews he'd done before were job interviews, trying to convince someone to hire him. But this was a matter of someone just coming up to ask him some questions. He didn't know what kind of questions they would be and he had no idea if there was anything he was supposed to do besides answer the questions and let the photographer take pictures. But it didn't worry him much. In fact, he was still in bed asleep when my photographer and I arrived for the interview.

Sam answered the door, struggling to keep one of the dogs from getting outside, and got a bit embarrassed as he realized that this was David's interview and David was still in bed. He dragged a still asleep David out of bed and gave him a few minutes to get dressed before letting the guests in. David finally wandered out of the bathroom with his eyes only half-open and said hello. He looked confused, like he didn't know what he was supposed to do next, which he didn't.

The interview finally got underway with David and interviewer sitting on his mattress on the floor with the tape recorder between them. The tape recorder was a strange thing to him, but he took the mike and listened carefully to how he could turn it on and off with the mike in case he wanted to say anything that he didn't want printed. And so began the questions. Most of it was pretty easy for David. He talked about his life in New Jersey, California, New York and back in California. He ran through a pretty thorough biography and found it was kind of interesting to have someone really want to know all about your life. No one had ever asked him to explain his whole life before. He skipped over the bad parts, like his folks' divorce, and talked more about the good things, like working on the pilot for "The Partridge Family."

He found it was easy to talk to a stranger about his step-mother and was amused that Shirley had been right when she said people would make a big deal out of it.

"Well, I've never worked with her before," he said. "But I get along with her great. She's really a groovy chick, and she's like my friend. We really have a good relationship. We kid around a lot, I really like her, and I think she's a fantastic performer. I really respect her."

But there were other questions that were harder to answer. What kind of girls did he like? He didn't really know. He just liked a chick or he didn't like a chick. He'd never really stopped to figure out why. But he thought about it a little and finally came up with an answer that seemed to satisfy.

"That's a hard question. I don't know, just as long as they're bright. I like girls who are vibrant, alive girls, who care one way or another. Girls who aren't just tripping from day to day, just existing, waiting for that day when they get married. And of course I like girls who are interested in the things I'm interested in. I don't like girls who are hung up materially.

"I see girls who attract me for various reasons. There's no set form to go along with. I just like girls, girls who've got something to say, one way or another, girls who feel things and who don't feel one way just because I feel that way or because that's the way she thinks everyone should feel."

The only negative thing he could think of that he didn't like about girls applied to everyone as far as he was con-

cerned. "I don't like super liberals or super conservatives. That really bugs me. I get really frustrated around them," he explained.

In answer to a question about his immediate goals, he replied, "I feel like I'm doing what I want to do and I think I'm doing it well. I just want to grow with it. I don't want to get stagnant in whatever I do. I just want to grow with whatever happens."

He felt very awkward trying to tell this person about himself, and he wondered if anything he'd said made sense. Then the photographer asked him to pose in various parts of the house, which he did. He looked around and was a little upset to realize that maybe he should have cleaned the place up a little bit, but he figured this was the real David Cassidy, and wasn't that what they wanted?

He had some questions too. He wondered why anyone would want to interview him and what was going to be said about him. But it was hard to understand the explanation about all these kids across the country writing in to magazines asking about him. He'd read their letters to him, but he'd never imagined they would also write to some magazine.

When the first interview was over, and he and Sam were alone, he pondered the meaning of it all. What would be printed about him? It was almost like waiting to see himself on TV for the first time.

He and Sam laughed about how the only thing they'd been able to offer to drink was water, since the refrigerator was almost bare. And they wondered what impression it had made when David had been asleep instead of eagerly awaiting them. But David still couldn't believe that this was going to be any kind of steady thing. People like Richard Burton and Sophia Loren were interviewed by the press, and he didn't see himself in that category quite yet.

But soon another magazine wanted an interview, and then another, and they were all somewhat alike. Sometimes they came up to the house, and other times he went down to their offices, but the questions were often the same. They wanted to know his life story, where and when he was born, where he grew up, where he went to school, how he felt about his parents' divorce and his stepmother, how he liked working with his stepmother, what kind of girls he liked, what were his fa-

favorite food, color, television show, actor, actresses and musical group, what his hobbies were, what fashions he liked and what his future goals were. They all seemed to expect him to have all the answers, to have his entire life figured out and to know everything about himself. It was all very strange.

He just couldn't figure out what it was everyone in the press wanted from him. He always asked them questions but they didn't always answer. They wanted to ask the questions and have him give the answers.

And they kept telling him how he was going to be a huge teenybopper idol and he wasn't sure what that was or if he wanted to be it, whatever it was. And they often compared him to Bobby Sherman. He had never met Bobby Sherman but he didn't like being constantly compared to him or anyone else. He was David Cassidy, himself, and no one else. At times he wondered what he'd gotten himself into with this whole thing. He just wanted to act and sing and play music. Was all this other nonsense really necessary?

It finally reached a point where he had to hire Jim Flood, whose entire job was to handle his publicity. He hoped the guy would somehow make sure everyone said good things about him, which was a very human thing to hope. Nobody wants anyone else to say anything bad about him.

The first time he picked up a magazine and found a picture of himself in it, he couldn't believe it. He didn't think he looked anything like that picture. And he read the copy and thought it was strange to see these words written about him in this magazine. It just told a little about where he was from the TV shows he'd done, but he wondered what someone reading this would think. Would they really think they knew anything about him after they had read this? He was highly curious about this entire matter of press and publicity.

It would be sometime before David figured out the publicity game enough to get a little control over it and be able to project any kind of real image of himself through it.

Chapter Fifteen

□ By the time it came time to get down to recording, David was ready. This was something he was looking forward to even more than the filming of the show. He'd won his victory in being allowed to help with the records and now he had to prove to them that he was capable. But he wasn't too worried. He was confident of his singing ability and felt that with some good material and good musicians, he could turn out some good music for them. And with the added help of Shirley, who was a fantastic singer, he couldn't see how they could fail.

A guy named Wes Farrell was hired to produce the records, which would be released on Bell Records (owned by Screen Gems) under the name "The Partridge Family." From the first time Wes and David met, they hit it off. There was just some sort of magical rapport between these two, and both felt better because the other was there. David had been a little afraid of getting a producer who was old and not into this kind of thing. And Wes had been afraid that David was just some bratty young actor who thought he could sing. Both were pleasantly surprised. Wes turned out to be young and energetic and into the same sort of music that David was. And Wes was surprised to find David a very professional young actor who could indeed sing. And so a very strong

partnership was formed that would eventually turn out a string of massive hits.

The first recording session was like a visit to Disneyland for David. He looked around the studio crowded with mikes and instruments and speakers everywhere and felt like a kid at Christmastime. All of this was for him. He would sing into these mikes, and Wes would fiddle with those buttons on that complex board that looks like part of a space ship and somehow music would come out of it! The whole atmosphere of the place excited him. It was as though he'd been waiting for this all his life and here it was. Wes gave him a quick guided tour around the place, explaining what everything was and how it worked. David couldn't wait to get started on it all.

He soon discovered, however, that just like acting, there was a lot of hard work involved in recording. He and Wes would sit down with a song, and Wes would explain the arrangement to him and have him sing parts of it over and over and over again until he began to get the feel of it. Then Wes would cut the musical track with the studio musicians, which were some of the finest available in the city. David would listen to the music and mentally sing the words over it to himself, trying to imagine what it was all going to sound like.

Then it was his turn to do the vocal tracks. He would go into the big studio which was usually darkened to give it a more intimate feeling. Sometimes he was alone in there, and other times either Shirley or a group of background singers would be with him. He would stand before the big mike with earphones on, through which he could hear the musical track. Then he'd come in right where Wes instructed him to and sing. The first couple of times weren't too good. He was either a little nervous and it would show in his voice, or he was over-enthusiastic and would push his voice a little too much. Each time Wes would stop him and quietly explain what he was doing wrong. David didn't object to being corrected. He had faith in Wes' judgment, and if Wes said it wasn't right, then it wasn't right. Sometimes it would seem like he spent days in the studio singing one song over and over again until he was sick of it. There were some songs that Wes would get really excited about and he'd tell David that

if the show made it this one was sure to be a hit. Other songs Wes would worry about and work with more and more until he had it as good as he thought they could get it.

It took many long hours, particularly in the beginning since David had so much to learn. They'd take breaks every now and then and go out for coffee or a coke and sit and talk. As time went along they became very good friends, and David felt very fortunate that Wes was his producer. He felt there was no one better in the world for this project.

In the beginning David and Wes and the producers of the show had sat down and discussed the music and what it would be like. The producers didn't want any acid rock or heavy drug music. This was a clean family show and they wanted the music to reflect that. But they also didn't want just straight bubblegum music. If the records were going to see to the general public, they had to be good clean pop music that would appeal to a great variety of people. David and Wes both agreed with all of this.

The first work done was just a series of various songs. They wanted a single, a good, strong single, but they also wanted to have enough for an album to back up the single. In addition, the music they did would be used on the show so it had to fit in with the scripts for the show. It was all very complicated, but the brunt of the work fell on Wes' shoulders and he managed it marvelously. David had only to concentrate on his singing. Out of the first batch, everyone thought a thing called "I Think I Love You" was the strongest and that was decided as the first single release by the group.

Then on June 9, 1971, "The Partridge Family" officially went into production, and David began the most hectic period of his life. From this point on, he was seldom to know a really good night's sleep or a relaxing weekend. It was work, work and more work for him now. Fortunately, the work he was doing was fun for him, and he was young, so it didn't seem so terribly rough to him.

The show went into production at the Columbia Ranch, a large piece of land in Burbank, California, at the intersection of Hollywood Way and Oak Street, that was owned by Columbia Pictures (which owned Screen Gems). One whole stage, a large green monster of a building, was set aside just for "The Partridge Family." There the permanent sets were

constructed. The permanent sets consisted of the different rooms in the Partridge house. There was the living room, kitchen, several bedrooms and the garage made over into a rehearsing room. The rooms were movable so that one could be pulled out and lit up for a scene, then pushed back out of the way when another was used. In addition there was plenty of room for other rooms to be created when a script called for it.

Scattered about the lot were various street settings that could be used for outdoor shooting. There was a New England street, a small town street and even an old Western street left over from "Here Come The Brides" and "The Young Rebels." Plus there was a small park and a gas station that could be used whenever needed too. It was an ideal setting for the show. It was close into town, within fifteen minutes of Screen Gems' main offices, and it contained enough different settings so that they seldom had to go out on city streets for location work. And a good deal of the time, they had the entire lot to themselves so they didn't have to worry about anyone else interfering with their shooting.

David soon got to know the guards at the main gate, and they'd let him drive through in his always-dirty blue Mustang without stopping him. In front of the stage he had his own parking space with his name on it. And just to the right of the stage, outside the stage door, was his home away from home, his dressing room. It was actually a small trailer like the kind you hitch behind a car and drive across country. It was a light beige in color and had his name and the Partridge Family symbol painted on the door. Inside was a little crowded, but it was enough room for him to have a little privacy. There he could change clothes, shave and wash up, eat lunch, stretch out for a nap, read scripts or do interviews. It was always a little messy, but David didn't mind. It was his, and he made the most of it.

Each weekday morning he would get up very early and drive into the studio. He'd park in his parking space, go by his dressing room and then go into makeup and wardrobe. Then he'd work all day usually with an hour break for lunch. Sometimes he'd have lunch by himself, but more often it was with his manager, Ruth Arrons, his publicist, Jim Flood, some friends or members of the cast or crew or with an inter-

viewer. Then it was back to work in the afternoon, often going until after sundown. At the end of the day he would be given the shooting schedule for the next day which would include his call—the time he had to report for work the next day—and the scenes they would be doing the next day, so he could read and memorize them that night.

His nights were filled too. That was the only time he had to record. He would work all week on the show and record nights and weekends. The schedule was hectic, but nowhere near as hectic as it would get later when he would begin doing live concerts.

The first show filmed was an episode called "Love At First Sight." In it, Keith fell in love with a girl named Janet, played by Lane Bradbury, but Janet wouldn't have anything to do with him because he was in show business, and she didn't like show-business people. It was a cute, well-written show and David had a good time filming it. Lane turned out to be a very nice, fun-to-be-with young actress and David enjoyed working with her. The show went a little slowly, but that was to be expected from the first episode. The cast and crew had to get to know each other and figure out what they were doing.

For David it was an exciting moment, being back in front of the lights at work as an actor. He put everything he'd ever learned to work on this show. This show was going to be a success, if he had to work twenty-four hours a day on it. He was willing to put whatever effort necessary into this in order to make it work.

David put a lot of thought into the character of Keith Partridge. He could easily remember being sixteen and he used those memories to make Keith a real kind of guy.

"I think Keith and I are very similar in a lot of ways," he told an interviewer. "When I first read the script, I know I felt like yeah, this is me. I could see myself doing it. Keith is me a long time ago, a little different. He's me when I was sixteen.

"I don't know though. It's ridiculous for me to say he and I are exactly alike. But we are alike in a lot of things. His head is really into music, and so is mine. That's his bag. Everyone on the show has his thing—one is sports, one is the movements and being really socially conscious, and one is the

stock market and making money and being a financial genius, and mine is music.

"I would say though that Keith is really a small-town kind of boy. He's kind of hung up in his little scene. Like I grew up in West Orange, New Jersey, until the time I was ten; and I was kind of aware of the whole scene, that small-town thing, and I didn't get outside that small-town thing for a while. You get hung up into that little groove and you forget about the rest of the world. All the kids in the show were like this—it was like their heads were so together there in that small-town thing, they had no idea what was going on in the rest of the world, and then all of a sudden they turn themselves onto it, and it's all really unbelievable to them.

"I became aware of the rest of the world when I was about ten, but if I had stayed there longer it would have taken longer. I might never have come out of that small-town thing. There are people back there who never did. They really think West Orange is the whole world."

One of the first things David recognized was that a lot of people who see him think of him as Keith Partridge. They would have no idea of what David Cassidy was like. They would only relate to Keith Partridge. This kind of bothered him at first but the more he thought about it the easier it was to accept.

When asked if he objected to people thinking of him as Keith instead of himself, he replied "That's okay. That won't bother me so much because people who meet me are going to judge me anyway, no matter what, they are going to judge me for what I am on the screen rather than what I am personally. So it's like it doesn't really matter because they're not judging me as a person, they're judging me as a television character that they see up there on their screen who jumps around and does funny things. But there's nothing I can do about that. It's inevitable. I have an image to put up there on the screen, and I can do anything I want to with it, but the fact is I'm playing sixteen. But it doesn't really matter. They're just going to see him and say 'You're the kid on television, right?' And I've seen you do this and this and this and this; and they're not going to say, 'Gee, what are you like personally?' But it's all ridiculous. Most of them won't care any-

way. They'll just dig on the fact that there they are next to me, and I'm on TV."

As the show progressed, David discovered that he really was some sort of teen idol, just as he'd been told he would be, but he also discovered that that wasn't always a great thing to be. It was nice getting mail from kids all over the country and knowing that they liked what he was doing and wanted to know more about him, but the people around him, other actors and his friends, thought it was pretty funny and began teasing him about being a teenybopper, Mr. Bubblegum and other silly titles. He found he wasn't respected as an actor as much as he would have liked to have been, because other actors thought he was just some kid with a cute look. It was a little frustrating to be liked by so many people and still have the people closest to him making fun of his success. It all just made him that much more determined. He would show everyone by putting out as good a show as possible and the best possible records.

The aggravation of being compared to Bobby Sherman continued too, which upset him, but as time went on the fans learned more and more about him and began to see him as a separate personality and not a carbon copy of anyone else. He discussed it with various magazine editors and most understood his feelings on the subject and began to play down or avoid comparisons between the two.

After a while he found he was being asked similar questions all the time by the press, and he found it easy to give them all pretty much the same answers. If they were going to ask the same questions, they were going to get the same answers.

In response to questions about his greatest fear, he told them "Becoming used up—that's really a fear I have. I would never want to do anything I couldn't do my best at. I think if I got to a point where I didn't really care, I just wouldn't do it any more. But it's hard because I can't say where my life is going. It could go this far or it could go that far. You never can tell what's going to happen next."

When asked what he would do if the show failed, he replied, "If it doesn't go very far, I guess I'll just go back to doing what I was doing last year. I did it before and I can do it again. I guess just getting what TV parts I can."

Queries about how it felt to play roles younger than he really was brought this reply: "I've gotten used to playing really young roles because I look younger than I am. The oldest I've played so far is eighteen, and the youngest was fifteen, but most of my parts have been sixteen and seventeen. It bothers me, yeah, sometimes it bothers me. All the films and things that are coming out now are about college revolutions and things like that, and all the guys you see in movies are nineteen, twenty, twenty-one and when you're twenty and you're right there mentally, it really hurts if you're not physically there. It's frustrating because you never get to do those kind of roles. But I try not to let it get to me. I just bide my time, I guess."

And the thousands of questions about his relationship with Susan Dey always brought the same response—"We're just very good friends."

"In the beginning when I first met her, when we were doing the pilot, I dated her a couple of times," he would explain over and over again. "I took her to a couple of movies and out to dinner and things like that. But because of the fact that we have to work together, we just became good friends. It never evolved into anything more than that. I think the relationship we have, just liking each other, works out much better for working purposes."

Susan's replies were similar, but people still continued to ask and disbelieve. Everyone assumed they were hiding something. But the truth was that they liked each other, but they simply didn't fall in love, and both were glad. The strain of carrying on a romance while working together was something neither of them needed. And both, especially Susan, didn't want to get stuck in the horrible situation of having a romantic thing going, then breaking up—with possibly both of them getting hurt—and still having to work closely together every day. It was more than either of them wanted to tackle. So they were both very happy with the friendly relationship they had going—just being friends. They could talk and goof around on the set and have a good time, but each maintained his or her own private social life.

Susan actually wasn't dating much at all, and neither was David. Susan had gotten a house in the Hollywood Hills with Jane Joyce, a girl friend from New York who was a few years

older than Susan and who served as her guardian and chaperon. The girls were very close friends, and neither found very many guys in Hollywood that they really wanted to go out with.

And David was just too busy to find much time for girls. Just about the only girls he met were the young actresses who worked on the show, occasionally. He would take them out a couple of times, but in general they just were not his kind of girls. By now he had a better idea of what his kind of girls were than he'd had when people first began asking him. He could give a much more complete explanation about girls now than he had been able to when the show first started.

"Usually girls demand a lot from me," he would begin. "I wouldn't like to have a relationship with a girl where I'm the big man and she's the meek girl. It's just people you know.

"I don't like to feel that I always have to pick her up and open doors for her and always decide what we're going to do. But those are nice courtesies, you know, so I usually do that whole thing. I don't believe chivalry is dead. Most of the girls I meet still feel that it's not cool for them to call me up. I have to always call them and say, 'Hey, why don't we do this?' They won't say, 'Hey, would you like to do this?' or 'I'd really like to do this.'

"Maybe because I'm me, an actor, and they think I'm super busy and don't have time for them (which is sometimes true) so they're afraid their egos will be deflated. And they always expect me to come pick them up and take them places and take them home. They never just drop by to see me, or come over to see me.

"Sure, it's all very nice, and I don't mind being polite. I don't expect them to go Dutch, but I do like them to be a little independent. There's no reason why I should go through that whole game. It's just baloney. I like a girl to be my equal. I don't mean a liberated woman who's going to beat me up when I come home though. I like affectionate girls, someone who's going to surprise me and not just be the same person as every other girl in the world.

"And another thing she must be is, without a doubt, totally devoted to me, which is absurd because I can't think of anyone wanting to be totally devoted to me," he added, without realizing that the country was full of teenage girls who would love to be totally devoted to him.

Chapter Sixteen

□ All in all the first season of "The Partridge Family" brought about some very major changes in David's life. He'd been a pretty casual guy before with lots of time to do all the things he liked to do. But this ended and his time became a very precious thing. There just weren't enough hours in a day for David to even begin to get much done. His entire life took on a very different appearance than ever before.

It was almost as though he no longer had control of his life. It was governed by the studio's schedule for shooting the show, the recording studio's schedule for recording time and the dates set by Bell Records for when Partridge Family records would be released and by the demands of others, including the press, network, sponsors and lawyers, on his time. He no longer ever had any free time when he had to decide what to do. Every minute was scheduled and the only decisions he had to make were how to try and get two things done at the same time whenever someone fowled up a schedule. From the time he woke up in the morning, through shooting all day, interviews and photographer sessions and into recording sessions until he went to sleep at night, he worked. Some of the work was fun, but it was still all connected with his position with the show. There was no more time for sports and hanging around with the guys. In fact the only time he found to even listen to music was during lunch breaks or just before he fell asleep at night. He had a record player installed in his

dressing room, but with so many lunches taken up with interviews and shootings, he had little time to use it.

He seldom had time to even sit down for a full meal, except when interviews would take place over lunch. This would happen sometimes when he and the interviewer would go out to a local restaurant for lunch. But this wasn't like a long, friendly lunch with a friend. This was a matter of answering questions between bites. More often he just grabbed something off of the catering truck that came on the lot every day. He'd get a sandwich and a soft drink or milk or something, and maybe something sweet for dessert and gobble it down in his dressing room while reading over the lines for the afternoon's shooting.

In the evening he'd usually grab a quick meal between filming and recording and then maybe nibble on snacks during the recording session. Breakfast was simply nonexistent. In order to eat breakfast, he would have had to get up earlier, and he wasn't about to give up any of the few precious hours of sleep he could sneak in now and then.

He had no weight problem, however. He maintained a good-looking 130 pounds without any effort at dieting whatsoever. The only person around skinnier than he was Susan Dey, who was still as slender as a model should be.

He was making more money than he ever had before but had no time to spend it. He took a \$50 a week allowance and often had some left over since there wasn't time to buy anything except things to eat.

He also became more and more dependent on his roommate, Sam, for the simple things of life. In this capacity, Sam showed himself to be the truest of friends. Many other guys would have objected to the change in their living arrangements but Sam came through like a trooper. Before David had been signed for the show, he and Sam had split all of the responsibilities of the house half and half. Things like doing the laundry, buying groceries, cleaning the house, feeding the two dogs, paying the utility bills (gas, water, electricity and phone) and taking the garbage out were split between the two of them with each taking an equal portion. They had no formal schedule for such things but they usually worked it out so no one did more than the other.

But once the show went into production, all of this

changed, and Sam sort of inherited the house. David just didn't have time for such things, and if they were going to get done, Sam would have to do them—and he did. David would leave early in the morning, return exhausted in the late evening or early morning and fall straight into bed.

David's fans too added to Sam's responsibilities. David soon discovered that he couldn't even run down to the local market for some cokes without causing a riot. Everywhere he went in public, if there were young girls around they were soon around him giggling and asking for autographs. So it was left to Sam to do anything that involved going out in public.

And somehow, despite great precautions, some of the fans would get hold of David's phone number. But David was seldom there. It was Sam who had to handle the phone calls. He would tell them politely that David wasn't there, but they never believed him. They would accuse him of lying to them and some would get a little nasty. Sam didn't mind some of the calls, the nice, polite ones. He would sometimes talk to them for a little while. But whenever the phone would ring all day long with nothing but fans, Sam would finally get tired of it and tell everyone they had the wrong number, there was no one there named David Cassidy. The ones that upset both David and Sam the most were those who would call at odd hours of the morning. David was only getting a few hours sleep at night and to have that precious little bit disturbed by a phone was more than he could take. It was all he could do to remain polite, but he always tried just to calmly explain to them what time it was and that he'd like to get some sleep.

It was Sam too who helped David keep his ego under control. With thousands of girls writing you love letters every day, it's pretty hard not to begin to think that you must be someone pretty special. But whenever David would begin to get a little big-headed, it was Sam who'd bring him back down to reality.

And it was Sam who would help pick him up when he was down. Depression would set in occasionally and David would feel like he just didn't want to go on any more, but Sam would remind him of the good things about his life and the things that might yet be ahead, and eventually David would pick up and get back in the swing.

Sam eventually even put his own career aside for David. He had been working on becoming a film editor, but as David's life became more and more complex and Sam became more and more involved in David's life, he had very little time for his career. Finally, Sam quit his job and in effect went to work for David. Their relationship did not alter with this, though—another sign of the real friendship between the two.

David, himself, went through some changes too. "I suppose I have changed somewhat," he said in another interview for *Flip Teen Magazine* at the end of the first season. "I've become much more tolerant of the situation. At first I just didn't want to accept people saying to me 'You are a teenage idol.' And like if someone asked me what I did for a living—'Oh, I'm a teenage idol.' And I didn't want to accept that, but I do now.

"Now I can deal with it. It's really fun. At first I guess I was a little defensive. I mean I couldn't figure out what everyone wanted from me. Suddenly people were asking what do you do, what do you eat, where do you sleep, what do you like. And I kept thinking, what do you want to know for? No one ever wanted to know before, so why all of a sudden do you want to know now?

"And it reached a point where I actually told my publicist that I didn't want to be in the teenage magazines anymore. I felt I couldn't take it. I couldn't face myself in the morning. It was all pretty hard for me to swallow, but it became easier and easier and now it's fun. I mean I wasn't into this whole thing at first. I wanted to be an actor, not a teenage idol. But now I've accepted the whole thing and am really enjoying it.

"It would be easy for me to say, Jeez, it's really a bummer and I can't go anywhere and I can't do this and I can't do that—that's all true. It is a bummer in that way, but it's still nice that it is there and I really can't honestly say that I would trade it for anything else.

"So long as it continues to happen, I will deal with it and enjoy it."

David knew too by this time that the teen-idol thing never lasts for very long. Just about the longest anyone has ever remained really huge with the teens is three years, so he figured

he'd maybe last that long, maybe a couple of TV seasons, and then he would get back to his acting career.

The one thing David learned very quickly the first season was how to tell true friends from just people who want to hang around with a TV star. He discovered that the people who'd always been his friends before were the ones that were his closest friends now. The show had only strengthened those relationships.

"My friends, my father and stepmother and my real mother—our relationships are still the same. My friends who were my friends before will always be my friends," he said, "but it is strange that everyone all of a sudden wants to be my friend. That's rather hard to deal with, but I can usually see right through it. People who knew me before but didn't want to get close to me, but who now want to get close to me—I know where that's at. I can see it and deal with it for what it is.

"The show's been pretty successful and it's affected all of us. I'm sure it's hard for Danny Bonaduce to handle it all. It's hard for me to handle it too, in my own way. I had a lot of anxiety about it—whether it would be a hit and if it was, where would it head for me.

"But it's interesting. It's an experience that unfortunately everyone can't have. I'm sure I'll look back on this whole thing as one of the most important times in my life," he commented.

The show also brought about a change in some of his feelings toward girls. He suddenly found himself loved madly by an immense number of teenage girls whom he had never met. It was a mind-blowing experience, but he found it more flattering than anything.

"Absolutely flattering," he exclaimed. "There's no way it wouldn't be. Sure, because of all this I can't go out much. I can't even go to the grocery store. But it's a nice inconvenience to have. I just wish every male would go through what I'm going through. It's an ego trip, but it's something that is really unusual to have to deal with. I mean, I never thought people would be screaming and running after me—I never saw that happening—but now when it does happen, well, it's fun."

One other major change that occurred in David's life the first season was a move into a bigger and fancier house. He and Sam had found an inexpensive, funky kind of house when they had been carefree, struggling bachelors. But now they were both busy working guys, and they were ready for a better house. And besides, a lot of the magazines had taken pictures of David at home, and he began to feel like maybe he should have a little better place as long as he was going to share it with all of his fans.

But finding time to go house hunting was something neither David nor Sam could fit in, so a real estate broker was hired. He showed David several different houses, none of them quite right. David didn't have any particular idea of what kind of a house he wanted but he knew he wanted it to be secluded and comfortable, with lots of room for him and Sam and the two dogs.

Finally the broker found just the right house. He took David to see it and David walked in, took one look around and said "Ah, this is it. Where do I sign?" It was just what he wanted. He already felt at home in it.

And the best feature of it was its seclusion. It was on a short street, only about one hundred yards long all together, and the street name was on a hand lettered sign that was barely visible. David himself drove right by it several times before he got used to looking for it. It was up in the Hollywood Hills, not too far from where he'd lived in Laurel Canyon but on the other side of the hills. You reached it off of Sunset Plaza Drive and it had a magnificent view, on clear days or nights, of all of Hollywood and Los Angeles.

In front of the house was a wide, open yard without a single tree and a small pool. It was no Olympic size pool but it was big enough for David, Sam and a few friends. The front yard ended with a sharp drop off to the street below.

The large wooden front door opened onto a brick walled hall with a small room off to the left that had been made into a pool hall. Since the house was fully furnished David and Sam didn't have to worry about going out and selecting furniture. Next to the pool room was a small guest room. Then the hall opened out onto the living room which was a magnificent open area dominated by two large circular couches, a pair of round rugs, and a huge fireplace. It was arranged kind of like

a figure eight and gave an appearance of intimacy to the big room. A window behind one of the couches offered a good look at the view. Looking back into the house you saw something surprising—a circular stained-glass window with sunlight shining through it in a very church-like fashion, adding a bit of brightness to everything.

Past the living room was the kitchen, an open bright room with a window looking out on the back yard. Neither Sam nor David had yet learned to cook, so the refrigerator was pretty much as bare as their last one except for one change. Because of his rough schedule, David was a little more conscious of his health and so in the kitchen were things like wheat germ, yogurt and fresh fruit—in addition to the usual collection of dog food.

Past the kitchen were the two large bedrooms with the one on the right being David's. His room had a view out the front, over the pool and out over the city. It was a big, warm, masculine kind of room and David felt immediately at home in it. There he hung his pictures and awards on the walls.

For several months David and Sam were able to live peacefully in the house before even a single fan discovered the place. It became a kind of haven for them. The first sign of problems occurred one day when David was standing in the front yard, and two girls called to him from a street above the house. He ignored them and wandered back into the house, hoping they would figure it wasn't him. He didn't like to hide from his fans, but he just had to have a place of his own where he could just be himself without having to worry about pleasing anyone or not letting anyone down.

Chapter Seventeen

□ One show out of the shows in the first season stood out for the fans for it had both of their favorite idols on it—David and Bobby together. It was a phenomenal thing for the teenybop world to have the two together. But it wasn't such a great thing for David.

The idea was that Bobby was to have another series. "Here Come The Brides" had been cancelled the year before, and the pilot, instead of being the first show of the series as "The Partridge Family" pilot had been, was to be an episode of "The Partridge Family." This was a common practice in television—using one show to launch another. The executives of Screen Gems figured "The Partridge Family" would be the ideal show to launch another teen-oriented show from.

So a script was written, incorporating both the Partridge cast and Bobby and his co-star, Wes Stern. All that was really final on Bobby's show was that Wes would co-star with him and they would play a song writer and lyricist who were struggling to get into show business. There wasn't even a final name for the show at this point. It was just thought of as The Bobby Sherman Show. They would decide on a title later, if the pilot did well and was sold.

David had no objections to piloting a show off "The Partridge Family." And he had no objections to working with Bobby Sherman, whom he had not yet met. Even though he

had been bugged a lot about comparisons to Bobby, he knew that wasn't Bobby's fault, and he held no ill feelings toward Bobby. And he could see the value of the idea. A lot of kids would watch a show with both of them on it, and that was the idea of the whole thing—to do a show that a lot of people would watch.

The thing David objected to as they got to work on the pilot was the script. He felt it wasn't exactly a great script and that it was written more for Bobby and Wes than for the Partridge Family, and this was after all the Partridge Family's show. But he kept his complaints to himself and did the show.

It took a week to finish the show and there were more than the usual hassles on it. Every fan magazine in the country wanted to have a photographer there for the historic event, and rather than allow so many on that they would disrupt filming or have to choose a few from the many, the people in charge of publicity decided to have only one photographer, a studio man, shoot it and provide pictures for everyone.

And there was the matter of extra security to keep over-enthusiastic fans from interrupting filming too. But several scenes for the show were actually filmed right on Hollywood Blvd. in the middle of Hollywood in broad daylight without a single incident!

During the filming, David and Bobby finally got a chance to get to know each other a little. They were two of only a handful of people who've experienced the teen idol thing, and they had had a lot of similar things happen to them.

"We had a lot to rap about," David told reporters afterwards. "We have a lot in common. There was always the underlying thing when we were talking to each other that I am one of the only people who can understand the way he feels and he's one of the only people who can understand the way I feel, 'cause he's been through it.' It was nice, talking with him because a lot of things I didn't even have to say. There are a lot of things that go unsaid to someone who knows."

The two teen idols talked about their lives, their music, the touring that David had yet to undertake and other things common to both of them. They did not become best friends but neither did they become enemies. They were merely two

people who experienced a lot of similar things—things that very few people experience. And neither felt threatened by the other. Both realized that there was room for both of them. It wasn't like the fans would choose one or the other of them. They would share a lot of fans. They could both exist in the teen idol thing without either hurting the other's success.

When the show was completed, David was not very pleased with it. He felt it was one of their weakest shows and that it could have been much better. But every show had at least one weak episode, and David figured there wasn't really anything he could do about it.

Chapter Eighteen

□ 1971 brought about several major events in David's life. The first was his twenty-first birthday, a big event in anyone's life.

He turned twenty-one on April 12, the Monday after Easter Sunday and spent the day just the way he wanted to. He knew it was something of a custom in Hollywood to have a huge party on your twenty-first birthday or at least take a group out to a big restaurant. But by this time David had decided that whenever he did have some time to himself he would do only what he wanted and not what others said he should do. His free time was rare and precious and he was lucky to get any of it, even on his birthday.

He had the day off from filming since it was a holiday and decided he just wanted to stay home and invite a few very close friends over. They came up to the house and the group of them just fooled around all day talking about things that had happened in David's twenty-one years and making corny jokes about how he was "legal" now.

They teased him a little about coming into all sorts of money but they knew that didn't mean much to David. All of the money he had earned so far from the show, while he was under twenty-one, had been put in a trust fund for him as required by the Federal Child Labor Laws, but now that he was twenty-one he could get it all. However, David still

didn't have any time to enjoy it, so he just let the accountants go on handling it. He had a nice house, a pretty thorough wardrobe and a car that ran, so he didn't feel any need to go on a wild shopping spree. He felt he might one day soon—when he found some time—go get another car, but that was about the only major purchase he looked forward to.

That night the group took David out for dinner. Since it was his birthday they didn't let him drive or pay the bill. He was the guest of honor. But this wasn't any big, fancy Hollywood restaurant. They went to a small seafood place in Venice, California—a charming little oceanside community about a half hour away from David's house. There David ordered a huge bucket of his favorite food—steamed clams—and thoroughly enjoyed every single bite.

He also ordered a big bottle of wine and his friends wouldn't let the waitress serve it to him until she'd checked his ID to make sure he was of age.

It was all very silly and very comfortable and David loved every minute of it. It reminded him of just how priceless true friends are. It's nice being loved by thousands of people you don't know, but it's even nicer being liked for yourself by a few very good friends that you do know.

There was one other item on the agenda for David's birthday. His fan club—actually the entire Partridge Family's fan club—had called and said they were stacked to the ceiling with birthday presents for him from all over the country and what did he want to do with it all. They had had stuff coming in for weeks before his birthday and figured they would probably still be getting more for weeks to come. And other places that had received gifts for him too, including Screen Gems, ABC-TV and the various fan magazines, had forwarded their collections to the fan club too. It was quite an impressive haul.

David really wanted to open each and every present and see all the goodies the fans had sent him, but he knew it would take hours, maybe even days. So he asked six of his best friends to help him. They all went down to the fan club's office, sat down all around one big room and began opening presents. As each one was opened it would be shown to David, who was also busily opening things. He just couldn't believe it. There was just about every kind of gift in the

world there. There were very expensive things that he felt a little guilty about accepting, and there were hundreds of homemade items, candles, cards, poems, paintings, drawings, and jewelry, and there were more stuffed partridges than he'd ever seen in his life.

The more he looked at the presents the more amazed he was. Most of these kids had never even met him, yet they had gone to all this trouble for him. He found it all very mind blowing.

Finally, after hours and hours of opening and sorting, he gathered all of it up and took it home. His bedroom, where he put it all, then looked like some sort of gift shop but he was happy. It was the most exciting birthday he'd ever had in all of his twenty-one years. He just knew he would never ever have another one like this one.

There was one other event though that overshadowed everything else for excitement—his very first live concert. He had done several personal appearances but they weren't actual live concerts. It had been discussed, when the show began, that if David developed into a good enough singer and performer that he would do a series of live performances. The idea of having the whole Partridge Family do live concerts had been discussed, too, but vetoed as too impossible. It just didn't seem likely that they could get all five of the kids proficient enough on their instruments and with their singing to make it work. So that idea was abandoned.

But David got his singing together and proved to everyone he could make a success of it by having a string of very successful hit records—starting with "I Think I Love You," which sold 5 million copies, and continuing through almost every single and album released thereafter. And finally it became obvious that the next step would be live concerts—but how to work them into his already full schedule was the question. A plan was devised whereby David would film during the day all week long, record at night and do concerts on Saturday and Sunday nights.

Thus began a series of rehearsals to ready David for the concerts. Some recording time was cancelled to make time for him to rehearse his live act. The entire idea of getting up on a stage and singing to a large crowd of people simultaneously thrilled him and scared him to death. He couldn't even pic-

ture in his mind what it would be like. He could hardly wait for the first concert, but at the same time he felt he would never be ready for it.

There were so many things to be worked out. What musicians would he use? Would he carry a steady group with him or pick up local musicians in each city? What cities would he play and in what order? What city would be first? What songs to sing? What outfits to wear? How to keep him from getting mobbed or hurt? What kind of sound system would be used? How would he travel, by car, train, bus or plane? What hotels would he stay in in each city? What would the tickets be priced at? How would the shows be promoted—radio spots, billboards, hand bills? And a thousand other details.

Bit by bit each problem was worked out. He would carry a couple of regular musicians with him and pick up the rest in each city. He would stick to the material on his albums and do very few other songs. His stage outfits would all be designed by one master designer.

But the thing that worried David most was what was he going to do out there on that stage in that spotlight in front of an audience. Singing was a different thing from acting, and singing in concert form was a totally new thing to him.

He worked hard at the rehearsals, trying out different things, different ways of singing each song and different sequences of numbers, but no matter how much he worked, he still felt he was nowhere near ready for that first show. And the date for the first show had already been set. It would be in Seattle, Washington, and it was approaching fast. He was told over and over again to just do whatever felt natural up there on the stage. If he wanted to stand still in one spot and sing, do so, and if he wanted to move about the stage, do so, whatever felt right. But he couldn't tell ahead of time what would feel right up there.

And everyone kept telling him about Bobby Sherman concerts and the old Monkee concerts and how hectic they had been. They told him not to worry about what he sounded like, because with an arena full of screaming girls no one would be able to hear him. But he just couldn't picture a hall full of girls screaming at him. He had this fear that either no one would come, or they would come and sit there, very still

and quiet, waiting for him to prove himself. Either thought terrified him.

Finally, the Friday of the show arrived and David was still scared silly. He filmed all day, but his mind wasn't really into it. He kept thinking about what was going to happen that night in Seattle. After the filming was completed for the day, he went home and changed and was driven to the airport to catch a plane for Seattle.

In Seattle he checked into a hotel and had only to wait until show time. It was worked out that the other acts that had been hired as seconds on the bill would go on first, before David even arrived at the stadium. Then David would be driven by limousine into the arena while the other acts were still on stage. This was to avoid any dangerous mob scenes while getting him in. Everyone would be seated and watching the show when he came in.

There would be an intermission, and then David would go on—with the help of a corridor of security guards to get him safely to the stage. At the end of the last number, he would make a mad dash off stage and immediately out to a waiting car already in gear. The car would speed him out and back to the hotel before the applause had even stopped. There would be no encores, ever. It was just too dangerous. If he went back to do one more song, he probably wouldn't be able to get safely out of the place until hours later, possibly the next morning.

David ran it all over and over again in his head. He knew every step of the way. He knew where he was supposed to be and when. He knew which songs he would sing and in what order. All he had to remember was which side of the stage to dash off after the last number. He knew it all, but he was still scared silly. He'd never been this petrified in his life. All the opening nights and pilots and first shows in the world couldn't compare with what he was feeling right then.

In the car on the way to the arena, he tried to calm himself down, to relax, but it was no use. He was more excited and terrified than he'd ever been in his life. The guys in the band each came over and wished him good luck and Sam, his ever-faithful roommate tried to assure him that it would all work out, but he hardly even heard them. His mind was literally buzzing with emotions.

"I was nervous, very nervous," he told a writer later. "I was just out of my mind. I was just buzzing. I was going 'Oh my God, I can't stand it,' and I was shaking all over."

Somehow he managed to get on stage when he was supposed to. The house lights all went down and David ran on stage and grabbed the mike without anyone seeing him. He yelled "Hey!" into the mike, the spotlight came on, lighting up only him in the middle of the stage and the audience went wild! They let out a scream that could have been heard all over town. And David started singing.

The first song was a little too fast and a little strange-sounding because the excitement had made David's voice tighten up. But by the time he got into the second number he was having the time of his life. It was all so incredible but it was fun and fantastic. He loved it.

He did a number of songs off the first and second "Partridge Family" albums, plus a song by Chicago, "Beginnings," and a Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young number, "Everybody I Love You." But no matter what he sang, the girls screamed. He could hardly cope with the fact that all those girls were out there screaming and crying because of him. He couldn't see all of them but he could sure hear them, even if they couldn't hear him. It was hard to believe that he could create such a scene. It gave him a feeling of immense power, and he understood why some people like to create mob scenes. It was the most incredible thing he'd ever experienced.

Before he knew it, it was time for the last song. He was a little sad to know it would all be over in a few minutes, but he was exhausted from the effort and would be glad to get back to the peace of his hotel room. He ended the last number, turned and dashed off the stage, out the way he'd been told, and into the car which took off before he even got the door closed. He could still hear the audience screaming and clapping as he left. It was over.

Back at the hotel he felt the strength drain out of him. He couldn't seem to stop smiling and laughing. It had been fantastic. He had loved every minute of it. He couldn't wait to do it again. Everyone who'd traveled up with him came by to congratulate him on his first show and he felt like some sort of king receiving homage from his people. It was a

funny, silly time, but the whole thing left him very tired, and he slept like a baby that night.

After a couple of weekends of concerts, they became a little more routine but he still looked forward to each concert and got the same thrill each time he stood on a stage and found a mass of girls screaming at him. It didn't even bother him much that they couldn't hear him most of the time. He knew they heard him on the records and every week on the show and he looked at the concerts as just a time to have a good time.

On stage he would dash back and forth reaching out as though trying to touch every one in the audience. He sometimes wished he could literally touch each and every person there, even the few guys and parents out there. But he could only touch them with his songs, so he sang his best every time.

The schedule did turn out to be inhuman. He would leave right after filming on Friday, fly to his Saturday night performance, fly out again Sunday for his Sunday night show. After the Sunday night show he would immediately catch a plane back to L.A., often arriving at three or four in the morning. So the only sleep he got before going to work early Monday morning was whatever he got on the plane on the way back and a couple of hours at home. He wasn't always at his best on Monday mornings, but he never missed a day of work because of the concerts.

He began to get used to getting only a couple of hours sleep a night, but whenever anyone would ask him what he wanted most in the world right now, he would always answer "more sleep."

His life was full, exciting, tiring and frustrating sometimes, but very fulfilling. He knew he wouldn't be able to do this for many years, so he determined to make the most of it while it was here.

After a while he got to the point where it was hard to tell one city from another when he was out on the road on weekends. It was a constant parade of hotel rooms, limousines and performing halls. Sometimes the rooms were fancy and nice. Other times they were dull and looked like every other hotel room. Sometimes the places were enormous halls with tens of thousands of kids. Other times they were smaller arenas

holding only a few thousand. But the majority of the time they were filled to capacity with screaming, giggling young girls.

After each concert there would be a big box of gifts the fans had brought for him. These would be boxed up and sent back to L.A. to be sorted out later. And after each concert there was the usual dash to get safely back to the hotel. Occasionally a few girls would find out which hotel he was staying in and make their way up to his room through various devious schemes, and David would usually sit and talk with them for a few minutes, sign autographs and let them take his picture. He had to admire the cleverness of those few that got through to actually meet him.

Concerts now became a regular part of his life and added to his worries too. He worried about what he would do if his voice went or he caught a sore throat. He'd heard of people collapsing from exhaustion on schedules like his, and he didn't want to do that. He wondered how long it would last. And he wondered how long he would be able to keep it up.

Chapter Nineteen

□ He was able to keep up the pace until July of '71.

He'd experienced a couple of pains in his stomach area several times, and he finally found time to see a doctor about it. The doctor told him that his gall bladder wasn't functioning but not to worry about it since it probably had never functioned from birth. So David tried to ignore it.

But the pains continued, and at times he had to resort to pain-killing drugs in order to be able to work. He just didn't have any time to take off and rest for a while. Then one week early in July the pain really got to him and he actually took a day off from filming—something he never did—and went to the hospital to have a series of tests made. He was a little concerned, but figured it was something minor and they could give him some pills or shots or something, and it would go away. He felt terrible about taking the day off from work, but felt it was better to take one day off than put it off until it got worse and he ended up taking a lot more time off.

Besides, the show was scheduled to go on a month-long hiatus in August and he thought he would be able to get some rest and take care of it then. He was looking forward to that month. He knew he'd still have recording sessions and weekend concerts, but at least he'd have a little time to get some sleep and maybe see a few friends. Everyone else in the cast was making plans to go somewhere. They all had reservations

made for their vacation, but he was just going to take the time to catch up on a few things at home. At least that was what he thought.

Then the Monday after he'd had the tests, he went to the hospital after work to get the results. What he got was a rather big shock. His gall bladder was not only malfunctioning, it was disturbing the rest of his system and it would have to come out. The doctor told him he was to have it surgically removed—the next day!

David couldn't believe it. He'd really thought it was something minor, and here he was scheduled for surgery the very next afternoon. He was told it was a fairly common operation and there was no great danger, but he would have to stay in the hospital for about a week and then it would probably be another three to five weeks before he could resume work of any kind.

That upset him. Not only was he going to be out of commission, but everyone else whose work depended on him—his second producer and the others in the cast—would also be inconvenienced. They would either have to cancel everything or figure out a way to work around him. And he had concerts scheduled for all the upcoming weekends. Those would have to be cancelled because there was no way you could have a David Cassidy concert without David Cassidy.

It was all so sudden, he hardly had time to adjust to the idea before he was being wheeled into surgery at twelve-thirty p.m. On July thirteenth he had his gall bladder removed. The surgery was routine, with no complications, and David was soon resting comfortably in the recovery room. He stayed there the rest of the day and night and was put into a private room the following day.

By this time word was out in Hollywood that David Cassidy was at Mount Sinai Hospital, and the place was crawling with his fans trying to get a look at him. The hospital had had many celebrities there—in fact comedian Don Rickles was there at the same time as David—but nothing like this had ever happened before. Finally, they had to put on extra security guards, including one outside David's door, to keep people from disturbing him. The only visitors allowed to see him were his family—Jack and Shirley and their kids (Evelyn was in New York at the time)—and his manager.

His manager told reporters later, "I didn't know whether to hire 'round-the-clock nurses or Pinkerton guards." A couple of girls were even found hiding in the food elevator. Officials at the hospital were uptight, but managed to quietly evict most of the over-enthusiastic fans. They knew the kids didn't really want to hurt anyone, but it was highly possible that they might, so each one found was quickly escorted to the nearest exit.

David was in no condition to receive visitors anyway. He was barely conscious and still had intravenous needles in his arms. He could barely open his eyes to see who was there. And the only people he really wanted to see anyway were his family.

Then he received get well cards and gifts that began flowing in and soon the room was almost filled with flowers and gifts. Once again there were candles, handmade cards, and a mass of toy partridges. David was once again amazed at the generosity of his fans. He had sometimes felt they demanded so much of him, but now he realized that they were also willing to give as much to him as they took from him in time and effort.

He gradually gained strength and his manager informed him that everything had been cancelled until further notice. The studio had decided not to try and film around him, so everyone's vacation plans had been disrupted when their vacation came a month early. They would all just take their hiatus immediately instead of waiting until August. The concerts and recording sessions had all been cancelled too. And his publicist was busy, giving all of the press whatever information they needed on his illness.

David felt generally miserable for several days. He was still physically uncomfortable, and, in addition, his operation had caused all kinds of changes in a good many other people's lives in addition to his. He had wanted a chance to get some more sleep, but this was not what he had had in mind.

Finally, after nearly a week in the hospital, he was released and told to go home and stay in bed for at least another two weeks. The guards were taken off duty at the hospital, and things there returned to normal, except for the flow of mail still coming in that had to be forwarded to David.

At home David made a surprising discovery. Just a week or

two ago he would have given anything to have a whole day to do nothing but lie around in bed. Now he had weeks, and he was soon very bored. He had become so accustomed to constant activity that he could hardly stand not being able to do anything.

At first he hardly had the strength to get out of bed, so he'd lie there and read. He read books, newspapers, scripts, and fan mail until his eyes hurt, but he was still bored. All he could think about was getting back to work.

Gradually, he got stronger and began moving around a little bit in the house. Friends dropped by to wish him well, and his record producer came over to discuss the things they were going to record as soon as he was better. But he still found himself bored and anxious to get back into the swing of things.

He discovered he'd lost eighteen pounds while he was in the hospital, and he didn't have eighteen pounds to lose. He was really thin now and very pale. The image he saw of himself in the mirror surprised him. And he was still very weak. The slightest exertion wore him out and he had to lay down for a while. It was all intensely frustrating for him.

By the time August rolled around and the doctor gave him permission to go back to work, he was more than ready. But he still had to take it pretty easy. The first day back on the set everyone was extra nice to him and the director let him rest occasionally when it was obvious he was getting tired. And the wardrobe man had to pin all of his clothes together, because nothing fit since he'd lost all the weight.

The first recording session was a bad one. His voice didn't sound right to him and he just couldn't seem to get anything right. But soon things began to fall into place again.

The concerts that had been cancelled would be re-scheduled, but it would be a while since he was already booked up for months in advance. The first concert he did after his recovery was a bit frightening to him. Once again his clothes were held on by pins. He'd managed to gain back some weight—but only eight of the eighteen pounds—and everything was still too big. And the stage turned out to be very slick and David found himself afraid of falling during the show. He knew a fall might put him back in the hospital and he didn't want that, so he restricted his movements, then

felt guilty that maybe he hadn't put on as good a show as he was capable of.

It took many weeks before he was fully recovered from the whole thing, and even then he still had that ugly scar that would probably be with him for the rest of his life. He took more time to eat so he could gain some weight and he promised himself that he would take more precautions with his health in the future, now that he knew how much his health affected the people around him.

Chapter Twenty

□ One thing that had aggravated David since the beginning of this whole teen idol thing was rumors. He knew they were an occupational hazard, and there was no way he could stop them, but they still bothered him. It seemed like everyone who interviewed him had a couple of rumors for him to confirm or deny. And the dumb thing was that about 95 per cent of them were false.

The biggest rumors always had to do with his marital status. The mysterious "they" who were always quoted as the source of rumors said that he was engaged, going steady, secretly married or divorced—all of which was false. He wasn't even dating anyone steadily. He simply didn't have time. But the question always came up and he didn't know how many thousands of times he had said, "No, I'm not married or anything like that."

It disturbed him because he knew it was important to his fans for him to be single and therefore available and he didn't want them upset by the rumors. But it also bugged him that people didn't believe him when he told them the truth. All of the magazines had printed that he was not going steady, engaged, married or divorced and he couldn't understand why the question still came up.

And a good deal of the time the rumors of marriage had to do with Susan Dey. So he knew Susan was getting bugged

just as much as he was by people constantly asking if they weren't secretly married or about to be married. David felt badly that he was the cause of aggravation to her too.

Occasionally there were public events that he more or less had to go to, or wanted to go to, and usually these were date type events, events like the Grammy Awards Presentation when "The Partridge Family" had been nominated for an award, and the Emmy Awards. To these he usually asked one of the actresses he knew, because he knew they would be able to handle the publicity and the photographers. But he then had to put up with rumors for months afterwards that he was married to this actress. He sometimes wondered if it was all worth the bother.

He still didn't think he would get married until he was thirty or older but one thing he knew for certain—when he got married it would be for life, and it would be no secret from anyone. He told people over and over again that he would never keep a marriage a secret—he felt that was insulting to the wife—but still the rumors spread.

Then there were a series of drug related deaths in the world of rock music—Brian Jones, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison—and soon rumors were flying about David. They said he was on drugs. They said he had died or almost died of an overdose. They said all kinds of ugly things that were all untrue. David hated to even answer these since they were so absurd. He just hoped that his fans knew him well enough to know he would never get involved with any kind of narcotics.

And there were the inevitable rumors about him and his stepmother. Everyone seemed to think that they shouldn't get along as well as they did, and David was constantly asked what it was really like to work with his stepmother. He couldn't seem to make them understand that he and Shirley had a very adult, friendly relationship, and there were no problems with them working together.

There were injury rumors too. It was rumored that he'd broken a leg, been blinded in an accident, been shot by a burglar, run over by a bus and many, many others. Except for his gall bladder surgery, David was as healthy as he could be, but the rumors still flew that he had one or another illness or disorder. And after the surgery, the rumormongers really went wild with all sorts of hysterical rumors about why he

had really been in the hospital. He told the details of the surgery over and over again, but still the rumors continued. It is highly frustrating to have people not believe the things you tell them.

At least one rumor could be traced to one real source. The rumor said that David and Bobby were fighting over the same girl, and every girl in America wanted to know who this supergirl was. David finally saw a copy of the article in a movie magazine that had started the whole thing. He saw a theoretical piece about how Bobby and David were sharing the same fans and this was how they had gotten the bit about them fighting over the same girl. It wasn't really one girl, it was all the teenage girls in America. David couldn't believe how absurd this one was. Most of the kids must have only read the headline on the article and nothing else. He denied this one for months and months. He and Bobby had never even dated any of the same girls as far as he knew.

Then there were the really silly rumors—rumors that he was really bald and wore a wig all the time, that he had a wooden leg, that he wore contact lenses, that he had false teeth and that he had had a nose job, all of which were totally false.

Many people too could not believe that he was twenty-one. He looked like he was only about sixteen, and questions came in asking if he was really twenty-one. He thought this was all pretty funny, because every actor he knew who lied about his age subtracted years, and yet people thought he had added years.

One of the rumors he accidentally started himself. A magazine did an article on pre-marital sex and David told them quite honestly, but without any pre-thought of how people would react, that he would like to live with a girl for at least six months before marrying her. Soon letters came in everywhere asking if this was true, and David began to regret ever having said it.

And after he had told a few people how displeased he was with the Bobby Sherman pilot show (the pilot was sold and went on the air the following fall under the name "Getting Together"), many people turned it around and said that he didn't like Bobby personally, and before long rumors of a full-sized feud between the two were everywhere. Both

Bobby and David had to make several statements to the press denying that they were fighting.

Rumors were an endless aggravation to David but he got used to them. They had him in love with girls he'd never met. They had him dying of every incurable disease in the book. They had him doing all kinds of things he had never done in his life.

After awhile, his publicist got to know him pretty well, and he could handle most of the rumors, so David didn't have to be bothered with as many of them.

But rumors were definitely something he had not had to deal with on such a large scale ever before in his life.

Chapter Twenty-One

□ In the Fall of 1971 tragedy again struck in David's life. His dog Sam was like his very best friend. He and Sam and his roommate Sam and his dog Shish were a very close quartet. David loved coming home at odd hours of the night and knowing that his dog would be there to greet him with a wagging tail and a lick or two. The dog asked very little of him except a little affection and food and in return he gave unquestioning loyalty. Even if everything else in the world went wrong, the dog was always on his side. He had to admit that he really loved that dog.

But one day in late September, a few days after he had been involved in a dog fight and had ended up at the vet's getting stitches in his neck, Sam died.

It was a mighty blow to David. It was as though his closest friend had been taken away from him. He still had Shish around, but Shish missed Sam as much as he did, and she just moped around the house for days.

The horrible thing was that not only was he going to have to accept the fact that the dog was gone, but he also knew that every reporter and writer around would want to ask him about it and do big stories on it, and he really just didn't want to talk about it to anyone, especially the press.

He finally asked his publicist if he couldn't ask the press to just ignore the whole thing. He had never made many re-

quests of the press before, and he could only hope they would comply with this one.

At this time David split for Hawaii. He had two weeks off from filming and took the opportunity to take a short vacation. He wanted to get away from the hassle of recording, filming and doing concerts, if only for two weeks, and he wanted to get out of the house that seemed so empty without Sam. He hoped that by the time he got back maybe the whole thing would be over and he wouldn't have to deal with it.

He knew the logical thing to do was to immediately get another dog but he just couldn't bring himself to. Maybe later, he thought. Until then he at least had Shish around, and he loved her too, even if she wasn't really his own dog.

David didn't want to talk to anyone about Sam, because he knew he could not express his feelings for the dog without sounding very melodramatic. And he knew too that anyone who had pets eventually suffered the loss of at least one, but that didn't make it any easier to take. He'd had Sam for six years, and it wasn't easier adjusting to being without him.

It would be some time before David would be able to easily talk about Sam, just as it had been quite a long time before he could discuss his parents' divorce with anyone. But time does heal most wounds.

Chapter Twetny-Two

□ In just two short years David's life had undergone some very major changes. He had gone from unknown, struggling actor to one of the best known young actor-singers in the country. He had gone from having to work at jobs he didn't like in order to pay the bills to having more money than he had time to spend. He had gone from a fun-loving, fooling-around guy to a superbusy, totally involved entertainer.

He had grown from a little boy who liked to hum to a young man who loved to sing and act and perform. He had known tragedy and . . . severe depression. And he had known intense excitement and almost unbearable joy. He had become a man.

The only thing he had yet to experience was true love. He knew the love of his parents, including his stepmother. And he knew the unique experience of being loved by masses of people he had never met. But he had never yet found one girl that he would have a long, enduring relationship with involving love. He had known a lot of girls and had liked a good many of them. Several times he had even thought maybe he was a little in love. But never once in twenty-one years had he experienced the incredibleness of knowing deep down inside that he truly loved this one woman. That was something he had yet to look forward to.

He believed that one special girl who was just right for

him was out there somewhere and he just had to keep going until he found the right time and the right place and the right woman. That was the one big thing he had left to look forward to.

As for the rest of his future, he could not imagine what it would hold. He had talked with people about movies and Broadway plays, about writing a great song, about doing a score for a movie or play, about all sorts of dreams that were now within the grasp of his imagination. And he had thought about houses and cars he would like to own and places he would like to visit. He had dreamed of being able to go places where he wasn't known, where he could walk down the street and window shop if he felt like it without anyone making a big fuss over him.

He had many dreams and many years to fulfill them. For a young man, David Cassidy had come a long way and still has an even longer way to go.

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