

David Cassidy's

Own Story:

"My Heart Stopped

During Surgery"

On July 12th, of this year, David Cassidy, the superhero of millions of television viewers who've taken the 21-year-old Cassidy into their hearts as well as their homes every week via the top rated ABC-TV series, *The Partridge Family*, entered the medical complex at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. David was understandably jittery and, admittedly, "a little scared."

He was scheduled for a series of tests that Monday to confirm that he was ready to face his first starring "role" on an operating table the next morning. The pre-operative "stage fright," as David described the imaginary butterflies buzzing about his stomach during the last hours immediately preceding major surgery, were worse than anything he'd ever experienced during his short, but enormously successful, career in show business. The doctors had assured him in typical medical generalities that he had little to worry about. His father, Jack Cassidy, attempted to bolster his confidence with the old cliché about David being "as good as new in no time at all." David's real-life stepmother, Shirley Jones, who portrays young Cassidy's TV mother on *The Partridge Family*, clasped his hand tightly in her own and stated simply: "I know everything will be just fine. Don't worry, I'll be praying for you, just in case the doctors need a helping hand along the way."

Shirley's compassion-filled face was transformed by an angelic smile as she promised that she'd be praying for David, the stepson she has grown to love so much. David, as all those who know Shirley, is well aware of how genuinely devout is her belief in God—and in the power of prayer.

The attempts of medical specialists to reassure their patient with established scientific facts, and his father's reference to the overwhelming statistical success of skilled physicians in their conquests over the invisible enemies that afflict mankind with disease and physical disorders, did little, if anything, to calm Cassidy's troubled mind on the eve of the first major operation of his life. Ironically, it was the simple intuitive belief of his

stepmother that everything was going to be ok, and her vow that she would translate that faith into prayer on David's behalf that David found the most comforting, and the most convincing, assurance of all.

Neither Jack Cassidy nor son David formally practice any religion, and only recently has David discovered that his belief in God and his need to "talk things over" with

God is an unswerving, compelling convocation that throbs mightily within his soul.

The day of David's operation, Tuesday, July 13th, Cassidy, love for his son brimming within him, went about business as usual and arrived bright and untroubled for rehearsals on the soundstage of a Hollywood television studio. Just as he'd told his son, there was no question in Jack's mind that David was in the hands of the best medical men available. It would be a chance in a million—no a billion—that anything might go wrong. Jack was sure of it! . . . In spite of her own confidence in the surgeons, Shirley spent most of the morning praying to God that everything involving the medical procedure would actually be as simple as it was supposed to be.

Meanwhile in the operating room at Mt. Sinai Hospital a surgical team of seven members, including internationally prominent surgeon and heart specialist, Dr. Milton Uhley, prepared for the operation. The aim of the surgical team was far from complex. It was the type of operation performed hundreds of times each day in hospitals all over the United States. An abnormality in David Cassidy's acutely inflamed, dangerously distressed gallbladder dictated that the ailing organ be removed. Young Cassidy had endured excruciating pain as a result of this gallbladder condition, and to delay the operation any longer might seriously endanger his health—possibly his life.

Luckily, the need for the crucial operation had arisen at probably the most convenient time possible from the point of view of David's still soaring show business career. Even though it was only mid-July, *The Partridge Family* telefilming sched-