

slowly, "you just have to look into the camera as *straight* as you possibly can—and they'll take several pictures and later we'll pick the very best one. O.K.?"

"Aw, Mom, please don't make me go!" David said, with tears brimming up in his eyes.

As Evelyn sat and looked at her son's beautiful hazel eyes, she decided that the time had come to do something so that he would be forever free from the fear of his eyes not focusing properly or of his eyes looking crooked or crossed. But more important than that was Evelyn's fear that—sooner or later—David's eyesight *might* one day be permanently impaired.

Once again, Evelyn found herself and David sitting in the office of an eye specialist. This time it was Dr. Cogan, who had been recommended by the lawyer at the dinner party. In his back office, Evelyn saw the same machines Dr. Graham had back in West Orange, New Jersey. But the difference between Dr. Graham and Dr. Cogan was that Dr. Cogan was also an eye *surgeon*—and one of the best in the world. As Dr. Cogan examined David's eyes, he said to Evelyn, "Your Dr. Graham was absolutely right. If David had been operated on years ago, he would have had the same trouble again. So exercises *were* the perfect thing. Now we'll have to take the *present* step-by-step."

Soon little David was doing eye exercises again—and visiting the eye doctor twice a week! And though he didn't seem to get any worse, he certainly didn't seem to get better *permanently*. Finally, one day Dr. Cogan called Evelyn and told her to come to his office—he wanted to speak to her.

"Somehow, I knew exactly what he was going to say," Evelyn remembers. "So the next day I sat David down and had a little talk with him. I told him that we both were going over to the doctor's office and he was going to wait outside while I went inside to talk to the doctor." Then Evelyn spoke very softly to her son, "David, I think there may be a possibility of an operation."

Evelyn said these words to her son to prepare him for the shock of such an eventuality if it should come—and, sure enough, it did!

"WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO OPERATE!"

Later in the day, as she and Dr. Cogan talked privately, he said, "Evelyn, we have been working with David for quite awhile and we cannot seem to get his vision corrected *permanently*—so the time has come to operate. I know if I could operate and see what's causing the malfunction of these muscles, I could straighten it out. That's it. This *isn't* a simple operation, but it's one that is done all the time."

Evelyn thought for a moment and then she said, "All right, Dr. Cogan, but I think David should come in here now. He should hear your decision and then we should hear how *he* feels about it. I want him to feel that at least he's been consulted. After all, this is important—and it *is* something that is happening to *David*."

At this point, little David was ushered into the room. He stood there with his California crewcut—a sort of skinny, big-eyed kid, exhibiting a great deal of bravery in hopes of hiding his fear.

"David," Dr. Cogan said, "I've come to a decision about your eyes. I feel that it's time to operate. We've done everything we can and you're not getting any better. How do *you* feel about this?"

As Evelyn watched her son, she saw by his jaw muscles that he was grinding his teeth together. He was supremely shocked by these words, but his courage wouldn't allow him to show it. David pursed his lips—a lifetime habit he still has to this day when he doesn't know what to say or do. Finally, he spoke.

"All right," he said in a strong little voice. "O.K., if that's it, that's it!"

Evelyn sat blinking back tears. She had never been so proud of, yet so concerned for her son.

The day before the operation, Dr. Cogan consulted once again with Evelyn Ward. He explained to her in detail not only what he expected to discover when he operated on David's eyes—and *both* of David's eyes would have to be subjected to surgery!—he also explained to her what David would have to go through. And when Evelyn heard the grim details, she almost withdrew her permission to operate.

Dr. Cogan sensed this and he leaned forward at one point in the conversation, grasped her arm and said firmly, "This operation *must* be performed. It is the only way David can ever possibly have normal vision."

Evelyn sighed helplessly and said, "All right, all right—I think I know what I have to do." With tears in her eyes, she left the doctor's office, drove home alone and prepared herself to spend that evening getting David ready for the incredible ordeal he would have to face the next day. By the time she drove up to the house, Evelyn was calm, cool and collected.

"David," she explained, "I'm going to tell you this just like the doctor would. You are going to go to the hospital. They'll give you something to put you to sleep. It's very easy. You'll just fall asleep and you won't know anything about what is happening to your eyes. And when it's over, you'll just wake up. The only thing is this—when you wake up from this operation, you will not be able to open your eyes for awhile. Your eyes will be bandaged. It won't be that you cannot see, it's just that there will be bandages on your eyes. You'll be in the hospital for several days and then, when you come home, you'll have to wear the bandages for awhile.

"I just want you to know this—" Evelyn continued, "I'll be there through the whole thing. And when you wake up, I'll be *right beside you*. You won't be able to see me, but I'll be there. Do you understand?"

David nodded slightly. "Yes, Mom." He was beginning to sound a little less frightened.

"O.K., hon," Evelyn said. And she kissed him lightly on the forehead, trying not to betray her overwhelming feeling of love and concern. Evelyn knew that if she started to cry, David would start to cry—and they both might not make it to the hospital the next day!

But what Evelyn Ward didn't know was that the following evening her son would wake up screaming, "Help, help—I'm blind!"

To find out what happens when David goes to the hospital and to learn the whole, true story about his terrible illness, be sure to get a copy of the August SPEC—which goes on sale June 1! Reserve your copy now!!



David with his next-door neighbor and buddy Hal— it was Hal who accidentally clobbered David with the golf club!