

## DAVID CASSIDY

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David's used to sneaking out the backdoors of restaurants so that he won't be trampled to death, and during his fifth day of the England tour, David had charged around London with great difficulty. It seemed that everywhere he went he was followed by hoards of adoring girls. Maybe they couldn't dine or even speak with David, but at least they could catch a glimpse of him and for his fans, a glimpse means so much!

David was the last one who ever would have anticipated the tragedy that was to come this fateful night.

During that day, David had come and gone from his London Hotel several times for rehearsals. Fans by the hundreds started to gather around his hotel in hopes of seeing him.

"David, I love you!" one sign read, and holding it was an anxious English girl whose face proved she meant every word her message spelled out. She *did* love him, as best she could—from afar.

"Super puppy, show us your chest!" another sign read, obviously referring to the magazine layout David had done last year.

David looked out of his room with amazement. To some who don't understand how deep these feelings can go the whole scene might have seemed absurd. But not to David's fans, and not to David either, who values his following and knows it's the very secret behind his phenomenal success.

As this fateful day went on, however, the crowds seem to swell to enormous proportions. At first it was easy enough to deal with them—the hotel had erected a makeshift fence to keep the emotional girls from getting too close and disturbing the coming and going of other guests.

But the numbers grew—from just a handful earlier in the day to literally thousands that night. The streets overflowed with people, mostly girls, all clutching autograph books, pictures, and record albums that they might be lucky enough to have David autograph.

As David looked down from his penthouse window, he could sense trouble. The crowds were starting to sway, back and forth; they were starting to sing but after a few moments the singing gave way to shouting. Soon a cry went up in unison—"David, we want

you!"

But fearing the worst, David was not about to come into the teeming crowd. Even though he loved each and every girl out there the mob had become so frantic that he feared for his very life. He knew if he ever came into the middle of that crowd he'd surely be torn apart and trampled. It was plain suicide.

Something would have to be done, and fast. After David appeared at a window again, one of the girls spotted him, and started screaming hysterically. "David! David!"

It was like an epidemic! Pretty soon everyone was screaming, and what had been a peaceful gathering began to get violent. Fans were besides themselves with adoration, some of them even fainting and being stepped on by others who didn't see them.

A hotel spokesman came out with a megaphone and warned the crowd to disburse. But they wouldn't leave—not without David!

The hysteria grew into a riot. People began hitting each other, gasping for air in the crowded streets. Again they were warned to leave, but it was too late for logic!

As though out of nowhere, a screaming voice went up from the mass. "They've turned the hoses on us!" one terror-stricken girl exclaimed.

And indeed, they had! From all sides, high-powered water hoses had been turned on David's loyal fans! Instead of disbursing them, it only created more panic.

"Oh, my God, David! Don't do this to us, we came because we love you!" another girl shouted before falling on the slippery pavement.

When the water hoses didn't work, two ferocious guard dogs were turned onto David's loving followers.

The dogs were growling and vicious. It was like a battle scene out of a war movie! Girls were running everywhere, trying to find a safe escape. But some of them were trapped!

Water was being sprayed everywhere and the sounds and growls of the dogs scared everyone to death!

Some found escape, in alleys, and even in trees. One girl was found sobbing hysterically. "How could David have done this to me?" she asked, almost unable to speak because she was so upset. "I waited here five hours just to see his beautiful face and what did he do, turn the hoses and those horrible dogs on us! I'll never forgive him. I don't know if I'll ever feel quite the same again."

After almost an hour the crowd had filtered out. But still, all around the hotel, single solitary girls holding kerchiefs to their tearful eyes could not believe what had happened. Even though they saw it themselves, they couldn't believe their love and loyalty had been paid off like this!

"I'll never follow David anywhere again!" one lovely Mayfair teenager said. "I took time off from school just to travel around to see him. David thought the crowd would harm him, that's why he did it! But we wouldn't have harmed him at all, we loved him. This is the most terrible thing that's ever happened to me," she started to cry, her clothes still sopping wet and torn from the terrible melee.

Newspapers all over carried the story, reporters announced that "David Cassidy turned guard dogs on his fans!"

"Not true, not true!" David himself

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said the next day, both to the press and in telegrams to reporters who'd carried the story.

"I never, ever gave the order to turn guard dogs on my fans! It was the hotel's own idea. They didn't consult me at all. I was so angry I moved out immediately!"

Close sources reported that David was so upset he even thought of cancelling the rest of the tour, but he felt that wasn't fair to his fans.

"I know David never gave that order," a close friend said. "He may have done some rash things in his life but he loves his fans too much to ever harm them. The hotel caused him terrible embarrassment. They ordered the high powered hose and dogs and

David got all the blame for it." David tried to explain what happened, but to many of his fans it just didn't matter who gave the order. "David gave the order!" one of his fans said. "He's just trying to pass the blame now because he knows he's lost many of us."

Because of the terrible confusion, no one may ever know who gave the word to use such drastic means to control David's wonderful fans. All they know themselves is that they were standing for him when suddenly, horribly, all hell broke loose!

It's hardest of all, perhaps, for David because there's nothing else he can do to reassure his friends that it was all done without his knowledge.

Even moving out of the hotel right away didn't prove anything to anyone.

"I used to call him 'super puppy,'" one girl said. "But those awful German shepherds weren't my idea of super pups!"

According to all reports, no one was seriously injured, and everyone is thankful for that.

But the scars remain, mostly inside in the hearts of these hundreds of fans who, in spite of his fervent denials, still know that the night they waited for their beautiful David outside his London hotel turned into the most horrible night of all their lives—one they will never be able to forget.

By RACHEL HAMMER