

by **EVELYN WARD**

CHAPTER THREE

Lend an ear — and an eye — while Evelyn Ward, David Cassidy's lovely actress mom, continues her fascinating story of David Cassidy's childhood.

WHEN DAVID was a youngster, my husband Jack, myself (and, of course, little David) lived with my mom and dad in West Orange, New Jersey — except for a couple of years during which David was three and four years old, when we lived in nearby Rutherford, New Jersey. Because West Orange and Rutherford are both so close to the beach, David spent many weekends at the shore — either at Asbury Park, Belmar or Ocean Grove. Since I felt that David was too young to go into the rough Atlantic Ocean, he didn't learn to swim then. Though David loved to go into the water and made a valiant effort to swim, he didn't accomplish the feat of actually swimming on his own until he was five and a half.

I'll never forget the occasion because I was in Nantucket, Massachusetts, doing a musical in summer stock when David called me. At that time, he was going to day school summer camp in New Jersey and he had been receiving swimming lessons there. I never heard David so excited as he was when I picked up the phone that day.

"Mom, Mom, I can swim! I can swim!" he kept saying over and over again on the phone. Finally, he calmed down and I congratulated him and assured him that the moment I got home I would have him put on an "exhibition" for me.

David's love for the water has grown with him. In fact, there was a time (later in California) when he fell so madly in love with surfing that I actually thought he was going to become one of those "surfer bums" who continuously go around the world looking for the perfect wave! Nowadays, David spends much of his spare time taking scuba lessons (scuba is deep underwater diving with one of those air tanks on your back) and snorkeling lessons. But that's getting ahead of my story. Many things happened before all this — some joyful and some sad.

DAVID'S GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT

Just before he turned five years old, with a troubled heart

I realized that a big disappointment was about to come David's way — his father, actor-singer Jack Cassidy, and I were destined to become divorced. In a sense, it was a classical story of two people meeting and being swept off their feet by their love for each other, and then finding out later that neither of them was really prepared for the great responsibility that comes with marriage. In other words, Jack and I were not only too young when we fell in love and married — we were also too immature, in the sense that we were still learning a lot about life.

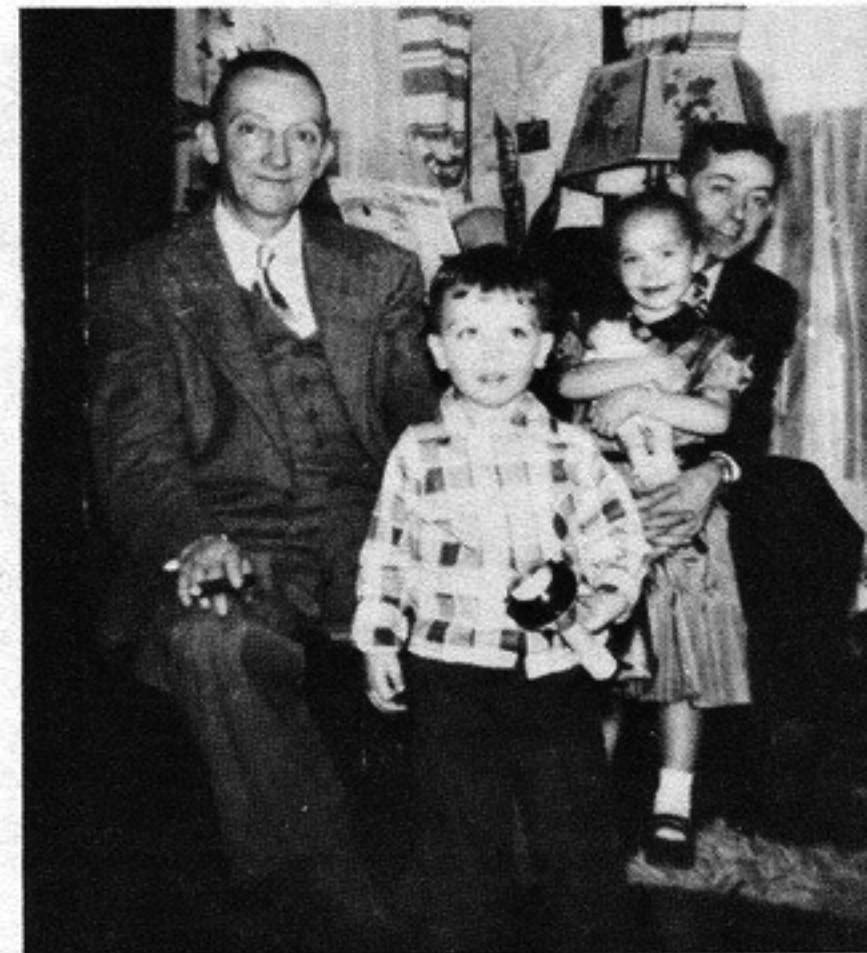
The fact that Jack and I were slowly drifting apart had not infringed on the happiness of David's young world. He had come to accept that "Daddy" was away a lot (because of Jack's work on the road or whatever), and actually I, too, had *had* to be away from David once in awhile. But, on the whole, David had a safe, secure, well-balanced life. So, at the age of five, when he learned that we were getting divorced — well, the shock caused him a great deal of sadness. At the same time, as tragic as it was, this intrusion of cold reality into David's ideal existence actually helped him to mature a bit and to one day be able to face any other disappointments that might come his way.

MUSIC, CUB SCOUTS & RUNNING AWAY

As I told you before, music was very much a part of David's life from the very beginning. Because it was integrated throughout the family (we all either sang or played instruments), it was inevitable that music would be a part of David's destiny. He was singing with the family and on his own by the time he was four and one half. There was one interlude in David's life when he almost became a "long-hair" — in the *classical* music sense! From the ages of six to eight, David took violin lessons and, though he never continued them, I feel that that training has been a great asset to David to this day. (Later, when David was ten and



David's fourth birthday. That's his cousin Barbara on his right — look closely, and you'll see his Mickey Mouse watch on his right wrist.



At four, David celebrated Christmas at his Uncle Stan's house. Left to right are Grandpa Fred, David (with his "Buck Rogers" flashlight), Cousin Barbara and Uncle Stan.

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