

# Changed My Life!"

by Melissa B.

my whole life and that Daddy didn't want me around anymore. I realize now how upset and concerned they were about me, but all I could feel then was despair and loneliness.

## "I SIMPLY WITHDREW"

It wasn't like me to have tantrums and rage. I simply withdrew even more into myself. All my feelings were kept locked up inside, and I agreed quietly to all their plans.

The day I left for Los Angeles, Daddy saw me off to the airport alone. "You're still my girl," he said, hugging me close. I wanted to cry, but instead I nodded dumbly and boarded the plane without looking back.

That's how things were with me when I sat in the principal's office at Hamilton the next week, waiting for my class schedule. I hardly noticed when someone sat on the bench next to me until I heard "Hi! You new too?" I looked up into David Cassidy's friendly hazel eyes.

I nodded and looked back down at my shoes, but David continued. "My name's David Cassidy. What's yours?"

"Melissa." I answered shortly, studying a scuff on my toe with great interest.

His laugh made me look back up at him. "I love the way it sounds when you say it." A closer look convinced me that he wasn't laughing at me, and to my surprise I returned his smile.

"Ah, you've got braces, that's why you lisp! Too bad, it'll probably disappear when you get them taken off!"

## "HE WAVED AT ME"

His name was called then, and with a wave at me, he was off. I stared after him in total disbelief. I had never met anybody who was that nice to me before! If he could be my friend... but the old defeated feeling took over again. Why would anybody—especially a guy who looked like him—be interested in me?

During the next weeks, I adjusted to my new routine as well as I could. My classes were simple for me, because I spent all my free time reading and studying. My aunt, who was quite a bit older than my father, was pleased that I was such a nice, quiet girl and after asking if I had made any new friends a few times, she left me pretty much alone.

Alone? I couldn't have been more lonely if I were living by myself on a deserted island! I didn't even

speak to anyone at school, except for David who always shouted hello to me when I saw him. It gave me a quick, warm feeling to see his smile—but he was always with someone else and I would run away quickly, before we could exchange any words.

## "IT WAS DAVID!"

Then one day, as I walked slowly home from school, I heard someone running up behind me. I moved over so they could pass me, but the footsteps stopped and joined mine. "How's it going, Melissa?" It was David, acting as if he walked home with me every day of his life!

"Uh... okay, I guess," I said in a faint voice. My face must have showed my surprise, because David's grin got wider.

"You don't mind if I walk a ways with you? After all, you're my oldest friend here!"

His oldest friend! I couldn't do more than manage a weak smile. But David's face was suddenly serious.

"Y'know, I've wanted to talk to you before, but you were always hurrying off somewhere..." His next words stopped me cold. "Is there anything wrong?" His eyes were full of concern, just like Daddy's had been that day at the airport, and

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