

them, and they were running toward me, and then, suddenly. . . .

Suddenly, all I could see was blue. Tall policemen, wet in blue wool, appeared from nowhere and surrounded me, and the next thing I knew I was being spirited off in the other direction, unable really to control my direction or speed, and from behind me I heard the girls' voices grow fainter and fainter, calling my name!

The next thing I knew, I was sitting in a limousine, being whisked off toward the hotel, and I was asking *why?* Well, the man who had come to meet me said, they were afraid of a scene. They were afraid I might be harmed!

"There were only a few of them!" I said. "They didn't want to hurt me! Anybody could have seen that!"

"We can't take chances," he said. "Suppose you *did* get hurt. Suppose those girls, trying to get your autograph, made you slip on the wet asphalt, and suppose you hurt your back. What would your *other* fans, the thousands who are going to be at the concert tonight, say when it was cancelled?"

That stopped me. I thought it over all the way to the hotel, and when the limousine pulled up, all I saw was guards—policemen and off-duty policemen and men in hotel uniforms! It looked like a military parade! There were a

didn't, so what were they doing there? I wanted to get close to those people, all those wonderful people who had come through the rain and the cold to see me, and the guards were keeping me from doing it!

When I got onstage, it was really something! The audience was so warm, so *loving*, that it really made me mad that I couldn't show them how I felt. I tried to work extra hard, so they could see that they had touched me, but it didn't really satisfy me—and then it happened.

TOUCHED MY HAND

A girl came forward, got past the men in blue, somehow, and took my hand. Thrilled at the touch, I sang right to her as if she were everybody in the whole place! And then my favorite ring—one that my dad gave me, which has been in the family for years—slipped off my hand!

I wanted it back so badly—but I couldn't just stop singing! She must have read my mind, because she slipped it back onto my finger, and I was so touched that I bent forward and kissed her, and then I heard a sound like I've never heard before in my life, a kind of scream, and I looked up to see *hundreds* of girls, streaming down the aisle toward me.

I started to back up, kind of wondering what was going on, and then I saw a girl fall and the girl behind ran right



ALL ALONE, DAVID WONDERS about the time, just hours away, when the huge arena will be

filled with his fans. But will they ever understand how much he longs to be close to them?

few hundred people waiting, but the line of guards kept them from me, and the most contact I could manage was a smile and a wave, before the doors shut on us and drowned out their calls. I went up to my room, feeling miserable!

GETTING NERVOUS

The room turned out to be unheated, and by the time I had finished locating and moving into my new one it was time to go to the auditorium for rehearsal, so I didn't have much time to think about much of anything until showtime. Anyway, I was getting pretty nervous—I had giant butterflies in my stomach, flying around, bumping into one another, and by the time I had eaten dinner I knew I wasn't actually nervous at all—I was scared to death!

Backstage was the same thing—guards everywhere. In fact, for a moment I didn't think they were going to let *me* in! My manager convinced the man (who said he never watched television) that the show wouldn't go on without me, and at last he relented.

But everywhere I looked backstage, there were guards—guards at all the doorways, guards at the edge of the stage, and I began to get mad all over again! I didn't feel like I needed protection, and I knew for sure that my *fans*

over her! At that moment I got scared! Suddenly I understood that a crowd of running people—no matter *how* much they may like you—is really dangerous!

And then, just as I thought they were going to storm the stage, the guards appeared and started turning people back, as gently, but firmly, as possible. I signalled the band for another song, and when it was over I left the stage quickly and stood in the wings, my legs shaking beneath me so hard that I thought I'd fall if I didn't hang on to the curtain!

It was a lesson. For one moment I had felt real fear, and now I know why the guards are there, why they usually won't let me get close to *you*. I want to stop and talk to each one of you, but usually I can't. If something happened to me it wouldn't be fair to the others—whether it's the ones who have tickets for the next concert, or the people who never miss the television show, or the people who listen to the records! I have to think of all of them—and *you're* one of them, too, or you probably wouldn't be reading this article!

So the next time you see me, if I'm half-hidden by a screen of guys in uniforms, don't hate them for it! They're just trying to help me and protect me and you—and that's not such a terrible thing to do, is it?