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DAVID CASSIDY

(Continued from page 33)

were married in 1956. At first, I didn't see him too often because they moved to California (David was living in New York). But he'd come back East a few times during the year, and we'd be together. One time, when Dad was East, he told me about Shirley's movie Oklahoma!. I hadn't met her yet. Dad wanted me to see her, so he stopped at a theatre and we went in to watch the last ten minutes of Shirley's picture. When I saw her on that big screen, all I could think of was that she looked so young and so very beautiful!

"When I was 8, my father sent for me, so I took a trip to California. I had a wonderful time. From the first time I met her, I never resented Shirley or disliked her. That would be impossible. She's always been so nice to me—more a friend than a stepmother—and from the very first, we got along swell. I came out and spent time with them the next year, too. Shirley was pregnant then with Shaun, the first of my three 'kid brothers'."

When David became a teenager, his mother and he moved to the West Coast. David remembers this period as a very good one in his young life.

"This was a very happy period of my life—living with my mother and Elliot (his step-father)—spending weekends with my father and Shirley. Moving from one house to another. It was a lot of fun...

"Anyway, I went to public school until I was 16. When I turned 17, I went to Rexford, a private school. Between my 16th and my 17th year, I went through a rough period. I sort of dropped out of school...First, I had mononeucleosis and I couldn't go to school. Then I didn't care if I ever went back. I just became a lazy human being. All the while I was being lazy, it gave me a bad feeling to know that I was just a nothing, just blah—I really couldn't live like that. Before, I always had to be doing something. Now, I just moped around for a while...

"Then, all of a sudden, I had a flash of looking at the pattern my life was taking. I saw myself going down and down. I felt—well, you know—cheap. Not worth anything. I had the feeling that I was going to stay a nothing unless I woke up fast and took stock of myself. So I did. I woke up, went back to summer school, and took all the solids I needed in order to graduate...

"While I still was at Rexford, I got involved with the Los Angeles Theatre Company—strictly on my own. It was my first grown-up venture into acting. I worked with them for a while, until I finished school. Then I decided to go back to New

York. At that time, my father was starring on Broadway with Shirley in a musical called Maggie Flynn.

"While I was East, my dad and I had a long talk. He encouraged me to give acting a try. He has always been in my corner ready to back me up. So I stayed in New York for a while until I finally decided that was exactly what I wanted: to become an actor. I wanted to be in the theatre, the movies, TV. I guess I just had to follow the path that was always so close to me...

"You know, I sometimes get all wound

up about things. I find myself admitting that I'm an actor, that I compose music, that I play the guitar and drums, and I have to stop myself before I wind up sounding like Super Wonder Boy or something! Honestly, I don't think of myself that way at all. It's just that all of these things are part of me—my main interest in life. I am able, through acting and singing and composing and playing music, to release whatever it is deep inside of me that call out for these forms of expression.

"I've been preparing for all this in my own mind since I was about 11 . . . and now that it's finally happening, I'm just so thrilled that sometimes I can't contain myself. Let's face it, getting paid for doing what you have to do—because it's part of you—is a pretty darn good way of life!

"Look, I feel this way because I've reached a stage in my life where I am stable. I am mentally prepared to accept success or failure without being visibly shaken. Of course, I won't be pleased if I fail, because I do so want to make something of my life. But at least I think I will be able to meet whatever life has to hand out to me and make the best of it. Life is really so very short, why be unhappy if you don't have to be?"

That is the way that David would like to live. Accept things, as they are, and go on striving for his personal goals. When one lives this way, though, he is bound to come across certain disappointments and situations that are difficult to accept. And now David is facing one of those moments.

David was rushed to the hospital one evening to undergo an emergency gall-bladder operation. He is still in the hospital recovering from the operation, and he has been put on a carefully regulated diet that he will probably have to stick with for some time. Now David has come across a "roadbock" that he finds very difficult to get past. But in the typical David Cassidy spirit, he is working hard at overcoming this difficulty. As a matter of fact, it has even been reported that David is practicing his singing while he is laid up in the hospital bed!

But major surgery of this sort isn't easy for anyone to accept, even David Cassidy. He had no time to prepare himself mentally for the operation because it was an emergency. And as many of us know, it is a very frightening experience to suddenly find oneself being wheeled into an operating room. Because of the nature of the operation, David had no idea what was going on until it was actually time for the operation. In addition to all the emotional strains involved with the operation, David will be left with a permanent scar and that is a problem for anyone, especially for an actor who must be constantly aware of the look of his body.

But David Cassidy undoubtedly will recover and once again get back on the road of life. He will come across serious roadblocks again as he has before. Somehow, though, one gets the feeling that this young star will always be able to find a way past them.

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