

# HE WOULD DIE!

by Kathleen Martin

**H**e was in the hospital for an operation on his gall bladder, an operation that is not supposed to be fatal. There was only a small chance that he might die. But at this time that small chance had never seemed bigger.

Sweat was pouring down his face. He was weak and dizzy. Never before had he felt so helpless. He wanted to wipe away some of the sweat with his hand, but he didn't even have the strength to perform this tiny movement.

His eyes felt strange. The usually sparkling eyes were dull and lifeless. They wanted so desperately to close, but he wanted so desperately to keep them open. His vision was blurred, but he did not want to close his eyes.

The pain was sharp, but he did not call for help. Perhaps because he was not thinking about the pain—he was thinking about something else. At this moment he was thinking about dying. He was alone and sick like he had never been before and now in this dark hospital room, he wondered if he was going to die.

## REMEMBERING THE PAST

Those eyes that he begged to stay open now closed. Suddenly David was no longer in this lonely room. He was back in New Jersey. It was not 1971, it was 1954. He was four years old. He saw his mother, Evelyn Ward, smiling and laughing as she pushed him on a swing. He was in his first home—it seemed so long ago. He felt happy and free as his feet seemed to be touching the trees. He did not have a care in the world. How he wished he had the worryless, carefree feeling now.

In an instant David was no longer in New Jersey, but on a little league field in California. His face and uniform were filthy. He was sliding into home plate. Everyone was screaming and cheering for him. It made him feel so proud to have others cheering for him and admiring his skill.

At this time baseball was his greatest love. Little did he know that

some day thousands of young people would again be cheering for him and admiring him—only it would be for his musical talent and not his baseball skill.

The cheers and glory of the baseball field faded now. The ghostly silence of the hospital room once again prevailed. Now he found himself in Beverly Hills at the Rexford School, the private school from which he graduated. A group of his friends were gathered around him, laughing hysterically.

As a joke, he had dyed his hair green. Perhaps it was a silly thing to do, but he sure did look funny, and he sure did get a lot of laughs. David likes to make people laugh. His friends always thought he was fun to be with because he was so unpredictable!

He too was laughing so hard that his sides ached. How he wished he felt the pain of laughter now instead of the pain of illness, and that his only problem was washing the vegetable dye out of his hair.

## PLAYING WITH SAM

Suddenly David was in the backyard of his Hollywood Hills home playing with his terrier "Sam." He loved Sam and Sam loved him. He was so happy the day he got him, and always took very good care of him. It was always a relief from his hectic schedule to be able to come home, take his shoes off, and just play with Sam. He could go on for hours, no matter how tired he was.

Once again he longed for that carefree feeling he had as he romped in the grass of that beautiful yard. The arms that once playfully lifted the dog could not even lift themselves now.

Now the scene changed from the yard to a swimming pool. He was standing on a diving board. It was a very hot day. He took a running jump into the refreshing water. It felt so good to get relief from that heat. He then proceeded to swim the length of the pool.

Thirty minutes later he was still swimming across the pool when a

friend yelled, "You're going to wear yourself out!"

"I'm not even tired," he answered. "I could go on forever."

"Such energy!" the friend remarked. "You're so lucky!"

"I haven't got one-tenth that energy now," David thought to himself. He was hot and sweating and longed to feel that cooling water now.

## HAPPY TIMES IN HAWAII

It must have been that longing for water that brought David's mind to its next destination. He was in Hawaii on one of the most wonderful vacations he ever had. First he saw the beautiful, crystal blue ocean. The waves were high and inviting. The sand was smooth and soft. Again he longed to feel the coolness of the water; and to be surrounded once again by beauty, instead of darkness.

Suddenly he was in that water. He was scuba diving with his friend Sam. It was rather dangerous, but he loved adventure. It was so exciting exploring the ocean bottom. He remembered how the valve on his mask opened, and how water had filled his mask. Luckily he got to the surface on time—but it was close! Unlike now, the danger he was in then was of his own doing. He had no control over what was happening to him now.

Then his image of the ocean disappeared. David now saw himself on a huge stage in Seattle. He saw the happy, smiling, tearful and admiring faces of his fans as he eagerly sang to them. How well he remembered the looks on their faces. He hated to end that concert. He could see in their eyes that they wanted him to keep on singing, and at that moment he felt he could go on singing forever.

## HIS FANS HELP HIM!

Then his mind traveled to all of his concerts, only all he could see were the faces of his fans, not himself. Thousands and thousands of faces were flashing before him. They were all different—and yet they all had that same wonderful look on them. It was a look that would be

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