

problems just taking care of myself so how could I consider starting a family. I don't take marriage lightly, you see."

Susan interrupted our conversation to dart into a small boutique on a side street. The owners of the store had decorated it charmingly with bright pink, orange and yellow paper flowers and had put an artificial grass rug down on the floor. It was like being inside a country garden. Susan was fascinated with the arrangement and she started chatting with the sales girl to find out how to make the paper flowers.

"I've rented a small house to stay in out in California," she told me, "and I'd like it to look as cheerful as possible. My whole family lives in Mt. Kisco a suburb of New York City, so I'm all alone out here. If they saw my house looking as pretty as this shop when they came out to visit, they would know that I was perfectly happy and it would relax their worries about me."

Susan grabbed an armful of ruffled midi-dresses to try on. "Come on," she said, "we can talk in the dressing room while I see how these look."

I was dying to get back to the fascinating subject of her relationship with David Cassidy so I quickly agreed. "OK," I continued when we were alone, "it shows good sense that you and David think that you are too young for marriage now. But can you imagine yourself ever marrying David? You certainly look as if you would be a perfect couple."

Susan shook her head, "I honestly can't imagine that. I'm not so naive that I don't realize that our marriage would be a press agent's dream but there are some very good reasons why David and I would probably not be too happy together."

"David's very honest about himself and he realizes as much as I do that it will be difficult for him to find somebody to love. And I certainly don't fit the bill."

"What exactly makes you so sure that you and David wouldn't be happy together?"

Susan sighed and adjusted the hem of the midi-dress before she replied, "Well, I don't think I'm giving away any deep dark secrets if I say that David finds it difficult to trust women. I think he had a couple of unhappy romances when he was very young - but those aren't what did it to him. After all, everybody grows out of puppy love."

"But David's family has been split up several times in his life and it has left him with emotional scars that are hard to heal. He has some bitter feelings about show business and what it does to married couples and

I don't think that he could even consider the idea of marrying a girl who wanted to have her own career."

"You see, David's parents were very busy with their careers when he was just a little boy and he spent a lot of time with his grandparents. Of course, they were wonderful to him but he still would have liked to have his Dad around all the time."

Then when his father, Jack Cassidy, divorced David's mother and married Shirley Jones, David felt as if his world was caving in. I know that he and Shirley really get on well now, but there must have been times when David felt that she had 'stolen' his Daddy.

"After all," Susan said wisely, "young children sometimes find it difficult to believe that adults have their own emotional lives and personal problems. Kids want grown-ups to be perfect and strong and it is something of a shock to discover that this isn't ever true."

David finally adjusted to Shirley and his mother got married to a director, I think his name was Elliott Silverstein. David told me that he directed Cat Ballou which was the funniest western I've ever seen. But when David was in high school his mother and Silverstein also separated and that really tore him up."

"But what does all of this have to do with you," I asked.

"I'm getting to that," Susan said, "the point is that David is looking for someone who can give him a very stable, secure emotional life. He always acts as if he were happy but I suspect that there isn't anyone with whom he really feels super-close. In a way, I wish people would stop talking so much about a romance between us because that makes both of us up-tight. It would be better if David and I could react to each other as close friends and then we could really share our common feelings."

Susan stopped talking for a moment and gazed happily at her reflection in the dressing room mirror. The dress she was trying on was a checked blue gingham, reminiscent of the styles of frontier days. "I look as if I should be on a horse going West," Susan joked. "Isn't it funny that everyone wants to look like their great-great-grandmother these days. But I really enjoy this ruffled romantic kind of fashion. Maybe I could learn how to faint also," she added teasingly.

"Would you like to act in Westerns, Susan," I asked.

"That is just the problem. I really am not sure what I want to do for the rest of my life. I love being on, 'The Partridge Family' but I don't know where I want to go from there. I'm pretty sure that I wouldn't want

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