



interrupted. "I'll see you in a few minutes." He replaced the phone quickly and went to dig out some towels. It wasn't until he had thrown everything into the back of his white Corvette and was on his way that he thought again about the way Susan had sounded.

By the time he picked her up at her house, he was really curious. He had just seen her on the set yesterday, and everything had seemed fine.

Susan ran down the steps to his car. She was wearing a striped shirt and her eyes were hidden behind huge sunglasses. "Hi, David. I think you had a great idea once I managed to get out of bed!" she smiled, hopping into the front seat and offering him a bite of the apple she was eating.

A Serious Talk

"Mmmm" he answered, devoting his attention to the apple and backing out of the driveway. As soon as he could speak, his first words were, "What was that bit on the phone about wanting to talk to me?"

Susan's smile vanished. "Oh, it's silly, I guess. Maybe I shouldn't have mentioned it."

"Oh no you don't. I want to know. Something is bugging you. Come on, you can tell an old buddy."

She sighed. "That's just it. We are old buddies, but..."

Now David was really interested. He reached over and took the apple. "You won't get it back," he teased, "until I get the whole story!"

So Susan told him how she had decided to go shopping for some new jeans after work the night before. There was a small boutique by her house and when she got there she found some groovy new tops that she'd been looking for for ages. She was in one of the dressing rooms trying them on when she heard the two girls talking in the next booth.

They Hated Her!

"Did you see her?" said one. "You know who *she* is, don't you? Ugh!"

"Yeah, I recognized her right away. She looks pretty stuckup to me!"

"Well, you'd think you were pretty hot stuff too if you had David Cassidy twisted around your little finger!"

That's when Susan had realized that they were talking about *her*! The conversation went on and on, until Susan couldn't stand to hear any more.

"I wanted to go in there and tell them that what they thought wasn't true!" she said to David. "But all I did was put on my clothes as fast as I could and rush out. They think I'm madly in love with you and trying to keep you all to myself and all sorts of things like that!"

A Different Kind Of Love

David had listened quietly to Susan's story, and now finally he spoke. This time his voice wasn't teasing at all. "We do love each other, Susan. What those girls didn't understand was the *kind* of love we share. And no matter how much you want it, there will always be some people who will try to make something out of that."

He pulled the car into a space at the parking lot and switched off the ignition. "Now I want you to forget all about it, hear?" He gave her hair a soft tug. "Don't get so upset over things you can't change! I don't like to see you this way. Here's a present for you 'coz I like you so much!" With a grand gesture, he handed her the apple core.

"Oh David, you're such a nut!" Susan finally grinned. "You always do make me feel better. And look how blue the ocean is! Let's get on the beach!"

They were both laughing happily by the time they had their towels spread

out on the warm sand. After a quick dip they lay down to savor the hot sun on their faces when Susan sat up suddenly. "Oh no! I forgot to bring any lotion! Did you bring any?"

"No," David yawned, half asleep already. "I don't use it after my tan gets started."

"Wow! If I don't get some I'll burn to a crisp! And I don't see anyplace to buy any!"

"Excuse me..." said a soft voice. David and Susan looked up to see a small, dark-haired girl standing by them. "I heard what you said about burning," she said shyly. "I have fair skin too, and you're welcome to use some of my lotion, Susan."

"Why thanks, I'd really appreciate it," smiled Susan. "You came by in my hour of need!"

David sat up and patted his towel. "Sit down for a sec. You know who we are, don't you? But what's your name?"

Very Special Words

"Sandy," the girl answered happily, looking at both of them as if she wanted to say something. Finally the words rushed out. "I noticed you right away. I wouldn't have come over or anything though if I hadn't heard Susan say she needed some lotion. But y'know what? It made me feel so good to see the two of you fooling around just like Keith and Laurie do on the Partridge show. Like it's all true, and you really do feel like a real sister and brother!"

David's eyes met Susan's startled ones, and then both of them laughed. Impulsively, David leaned over and kissed Sandy warmly on the cheek. "You've made our day, Sandy, do you know that?"

"But I don't understand..." the girl blushed. "I just told you how I felt."

"You *do* understand," answered Susan softly. "And now I think I do too."