

"All the kids knew my parents were getting a divorce but me..."

The story of David Cassidy's childhood has been told many times—but never by David himself. Here, for the first time in his own words, is the heart-breaking story of how a child reacts when his whole world falls apart before his very eyes . . .

David could feel the tears just behind his eyelids and he opened his eyes wide to keep them from spilling over. He took a deep breath—so deep his face got red

and hot. He dug his tiny fists even deeper into his pockets. **If only his dad were here!**

He wasn't going to let those guys see him cry. He wasn't a sissy. His dad would prove they

were liars, he told himself. But his dad wasn't there. And without him, what could a little boy do?

"It's not true!" he yelled at the big kids, in the hardest, toughest voice he had. But the words came out scared, and he knew it. What if it were true? Where was his dad?

David Cassidy backed away from the bigger kids, turned, and on a dead run, headed for home. A block from his destination, his footsteps lagged. Daddy wouldn't be there. He knew that. Mostly he was gone, it seemed. Why wasn't he there tonight, when David needed him so desperately?

Hot tears made rivers down his cheeks, and David swiped at them with his sleeve angrily. He didn't care. The big kids couldn't see him now, and the only thing that mattered was that he was nearly home and his father **wouldn't be there.**

He was only six—a little boy terribly vulnerable to the jibes of his schoolmates. They'd taunted him with words he really didn't understand. He just knew they meant

tragedy. They were brutal scary words. His mother and father were "getting divorced" they'd said. His parents were "fed up" with each other! Boy-style, he kicked at a tin can **hard**, and it arched high into the air and flew over a tall fence. David didn't even look back to see where it had gone.

Jack Cassidy's small son had no inkling that disaster was about to strike his happy home. Tearfully, he'd relayed the story to his mother. Sadly, she'd told him it was true.

"I cried a lot," he said later. "I thought I had lost my father. I really thought he wasn't my father anymore." He wished he could shut the whole world out of his thoughts. He wanted to fight the unseen enemy that had somehow robbed him of a happiness he'd always taken for granted before. But he had to resort to the only weapon a small boy has. During the long, lonely nights, that followed, he sobbed his heart-break into a pillow dampened by his tears, trying to understand.

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