



Model Fredrica Myers occupies some of David's time—but he's careful not to let himself get pinned down by one girl. Both share similar interests in sports, but since David's recent gall bladder operation, he's had to slow down for a while.

By BRETT ASHLEY

The rich, the famous, the revered few are as susceptible to the fickle finger of fate as their admiring fans. And there comes a time in every boy's life when his potential manhood is tested by such a quirk of fate—when his soul must walk that narrow line between success and failure, between life and death. The decision is always painful—and the result is always final.

David Cassidy's life seems, from a quick glance at his official biography, to be one continual upwards line on a chart. But to his friends and family, who can read between the narrow lines, the chart appears more fragmented. Certainly, there have been many upward climbs: his success with his first Broadway show, *Fig Leaves Are Falling*; his arrival in Hollywood; his success with *The Partridge Family*; and his recent whirlwind concert tour. All of these have contributed to David's happiness and security—both financial and emotional. But there have been downhill periods, also, for this

WHY ONLY SHIRLEY JONES COULD HELP HIM IN HIS TIME OF NEED

twenty-one-year old boy. The breaking up of two families—mother Evelyn Ward's divorce, when David was only five, from Jack Cassidy was the first of many blows. Then Evelyn's divorce from step-father Elliott Silverstein. There was also a near-miss when Jack Cassidy and Shirley Jones almost tossed in the towel with their own marriage. And, more recently, David's own serious operation that could have cost him his life.

It was during David's stay in Los Angeles' Mt. Sinai Hospital that he recalled for us his most recent near-brush with tragedy. "Man, I was scared during that ride to the hos-

pital! I was so scared that I didn't even talk." He glanced at his mother, Evelyn Ward, who was sitting alongside David's hospital bed, as if seeking some form of reassurance from her. "None of us talked," he continued. "I just prayed all the way. I thanked God that my mother was with me. Do you know what it is to have to undergo that type of operation? And at *my* age!"

While a gall bladder operation is not extremely serious in its early stages, David, regretfully, had let the condition become aggravated by his indifference to the warning stomach pains that preceded the boy's operation. "Like most people, I just figured they were caused by something I ate. But then the pain got so bad I had to go to the doctor. He examined me and said I had to have surgery *immediately!* I was so shook at that," the pale boy continued, "I thought I was going to faint."

Although David's condition was rare in such a young person, his gall bladder was (Continued on page 66)