



"David, I'm sorry you had to learn about it this way. I wanted to tell you myself, and so did your father. But, it just couldn't be helped. It's better for everyone that this is happening."

And David had listened quietly, gripping the phone, trying to understand what she was saying.

"Your father and I need to be away from each other. He has things he needs, and wants, to do and so have I. And we realize that we just can't do them together." Her voice sounded hurt and David knew he couldn't ask any more questions. He murmured, "It's all right, I think I understand. Don't worry and I'll talk to you as soon as I get back, okay?"

Shirley sounded relieved and David was glad. He didn't want to make things any harder. He tried to reach his father but the lines were all busy. That was when he'd started to walk—aimlessly, searching for

answers in the streets of Rome. Exhausted, he'd found himself back at his hotel. And there, he'd sat, facing the open window, thinking and watching as the day faded slowly into darkness.

### PAINFUL MEMORIES

David knew he had to rest. He was going to go home. The trip would be ruined for him now. No matter where he went, or what he saw, he would be haunted by the painful memories that were burning his brain.

He got up slowly and went to the bedroom. The sheets felt cool against his skin and David buried his face into the pillow trying to block out the scenes that were flashing through his mind.

He'd been through all this before! Divorce. The word itself caused his heart to ache with unshed tears. He remembered how confused and

hurt he'd been when his parents had divorced when he was a child. And, now, although he wasn't a child any longer, the pain and confusion were still as deep.

He turned over and stared at the ceiling. If his father and Shirley felt it was better for them to divorce, then he knew they were right. They would be the ones to know what was best. But he couldn't rid himself of the feeling of helplessness. He wanted to help, but how?

David asked the question out loud. "How?" and the word sounded cold and lonely in the dark room. It seemed to bounce off the walls and furniture, repeating itself in David's mind. Then, David knew.

### BE STRONG

He felt calm as he sat up in bed. He knew that what he had to do wouldn't be easy. But, in order to help the people he loved go through this bad time with as little pain as possible, he would have to try.

He would have to be strong. Strong enough to face the questions his half-brothers would ask him. Strong enough to face his father and Shirley with understanding, believing that they would work things out the best way they could. Strong enough to face the ugly gossip that would hound every member of the family. Strong enough to believe in his heart that divorce isn't a final thing—it's just a part of the whole picture of life. When two people realize they are doing more harm than good by staying together, then the marriage must end. But not their lives... or the lasting hope that happiness still existed for them.

And even though his heart ached for them, David found he could smile. There had been many good times, too many to erase by a paper saying the marriage was over. The good times would remain in the minds and hearts of the people involved.

David walked to the window. Pushing the curtain aside, he felt an evening breeze fan his face gently through the open window. The city was alive with lights and as David looked down upon them, he could feel some of the cold chill leaving his heart. The good times, the happy times weren't over. He simply had to believe that if he still looked—they would be there. He had to be strong and hope.

