

THE EXCITING LIFE OF DAVID CASSIDY

A young, slender boy stands looking out of a hotel room in a city somewhere. He's relaxed now but won't be for long. He may not even be sure of what city he's in, but he knows where he'll be in a few hours—on stage in front of thousands of very excitable girls. He's David Cassidy.

It's around seven in the evening. He's already munched a tuna fish sandwich—his usual light meal before a concert.

A manager pops in for a minute and tells him the show is sold out, and that everything is ready. That makes him smile.

Other people drop in for a second and he's polite to each, but his mind has already begun to prepare for the forthcoming performance. Soon he knows he wants to be alone and, if necessary, asks everyone to leave for a few minutes.

Alone in his hotel room he puts himself through a brief but intense exercise routine—some deep knee bends, a few jumping jacks, general limbering up exercises, just to get his muscles ready.

He hums lightly to himself, goes over in his mind the order of the songs he's going to do, wonders if the band will remember to speed up when they're supposed to.

The show is scheduled to start at eight o'clock, but he knows there'll be girls standing in lines hours before that. And it isn't until well after the show has started that he even leaves his hotel, which is always situated close to wherever he's playing.

Shortly after eight the show does begin, with the other acts each doing their numbers—and David is still in his hotel, limbering up and getting excited.

There's a knock on the door and it's time to go. The road manager tells him everything's set and the routine will be the same as it usually is—no problems expected. The sound and lights have been checked and security has all been worked out.

David walks downstairs quietly to a waiting car. The musicians and other roadies are already there. David is always the last to arrive.

The car pulls in through a back gate and right up to a back door of the theatre. The door opens quickly and David disappears inside the arena and is taken immediately to his dressing room.

A guard has pushed everyone outside the dressing room and just David and his assistant are there. David's at work now, doing one of the things he likes doing most. He changes quickly into the white jumpsuit with the fringe, puts on his own make-up, brushes out his hair and feels the tension mounting in his stomach. A knock on the door and his manager sticks his head in to tell him "Just about three minutes to go".

By this time David is doing what he describes as "buzzing". The tension is so intense and David is full of excitement. He can barely think. People ask him questions or wish him well and he can only nod.

He paces and jumps about like an over-active little child. His palms sweat. He clenches his teeth until his jaws hurt. His stomach is one big knot. He is certainly "buzzing".

The time comes—a group of guards and road managers form a V-shape with David safely between them and rush him straight on to the stage.

There's a burst of flash bulbs that's enough to blind a person—but David's done this often enough to know to close his eyes for a second when he first gets on stage.

He goes straight into the first number without even taking a breath—and he's transformed from a vulnerable little boy into a star!

On stage he's more alive than at any other time in his life. He rushes from one end of the stage to the other. He sings! He shouts! He points! He reaches out to touch each person near him. The energy flowing into and out of him is incredible. He loves it. He wants to touch every person out there.

After what seems to him like only seconds, he's into the last number and his mind must begin to focus on getting out of here alive. He's been caught once by a crowd of excited fans like this after a concert and he never wants that to happen again. He must get out quickly. There's no chance for an encore. This is it. This is all he can give them.

The last words come out of his mouth even as he's dashing off the side of the stage, where he's led straight into a waiting

car—this time it's an anonymous looking van parked at a different door than the car he arrived in, which is now surrounded by a sea of girls.

The van's motor is running and it pulls away as David hits the floor in the back and is quickly covered up with a blanket. It drives unnoticed away from the arena and out into city traffic.

Laying on the floor, David feels the energy flow out of him. He takes a deep breath and realises he's exhausted. His palms are cool and dry now and he has no strength left to even clench his teeth. All he wants in the world is a shower and some sleep.

Back at the hotel he drags his weary body up to his room, only to discover the place filled with people who want to congratulate him—friends who just happened to be in town; the mayor with his teenage daughter, the promotor and his kids, the hotel manager and his kids and others he can't even recognise.

Once again he's polite. He signs autographs, poses for pictures and graciously accepts congratulations for the show.

Soon someone else shoos them all out and David falls on the bed. For a few minutes he thinks about the show—was the band tight enough? Should he change the order of the songs? Could anything be faster or slower?—But soon, without warning, his body takes what it needs and he's fast asleep.

But tomorrow he'll do it all again! ★

