

November 10, 1972, a cold, wild night in Southern California. A terrific wind tears at the trees.

Jack Cassidy is on his way home in the middle of a major traffic jam, when suddenly he senses a tremendous force at his back. As hard as he tries to apply his brakes, they don't stop in time to prevent him from piling into the car ahead. He's in the middle of a five-car crackup.

Amid the shattered glass and blood, they close the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Beverly Glen. Ambulances are on hand administering first aid to the victims. The Lincoln Continental with the license plate JAC 9 looks completely demolished.

In the quiet of Beverly Hills, in a warm and snug house, a pretty lady dresses for a much-awaited date with her husband. Shirley Jones was in her bedroom selecting her evening dress when the heavy rains began to pound against her window. The downpour did scare Shirley a little, but she thought she was being foolish.

As the hours pass by, she thinks: Maybe Jack was late coming home from a business meeting, or his recording session ran longer than expected. She should see him any minute now.

Nervous now, Shirley poured herself a drink. The phone rang. Jack? The voice on the other end spoke clearly, "Mrs. Jack Cassidy—your husband has been in an accident." Tears welled in Shirley's eyes. Unable to speak, she listened for instructions. Jack, the caller told her, had been involved in a five-car accident. Though stunned and bruised, he mercifully had been spared serious injury and had been driven back to the bachelor apartment he had moved

into when Shirley and he had separated. Though Shirley would have preferred that Jack were taken to their home, she immediately got her belongings and headed for the apartment to be with him.

Shirley knew that she had to have complete control of herself if she was going to be any good to Jack. She flipped on the radio to try to calm her nerves and turned to an FM station, which was playing the score from "Carousel." She heard her own voice singing: "What's the use of wondering, he's your fellow and you love him. . . ." She started thinking of her first days with Jack, when the two sang together; tears streamed down her cheeks. The rain seemed to be pounding harder than ever!

She knew Jack was a good driver, never reckless, never daredevil. How could this have happened? Jack would always give David lectures about driving carefully, never to be reckless or a show-off, and David, like his dad, would listen carefully and behave. "Oh my God," Shirley sighed. "My sweet husband, the father of my children." He could have lost his life.

The ride to her husband's "other home" seemed endless. Her inner strength, which many call the backbone of the Cassidy family, was failing. She had visions of Jack lying unconscious in a pool of blood, gasping for breath. She was a complete wreck.

Shirley approached Jack's home on Fitzpatrick Street in Hidden Hills, a beautiful part of the valley. It was quiet when she reached the cul-de-sac where Jack's house is located. Fathers were home with their families after a hard (Continued on page 107)