

well, I work a lot as an actress and to get home from the studio and scrape your makeup off and redo yourself and go to night school is something I've never had the strength for.

"When I went to New York to do *Marigolds*. I brought the thing along with me—for some reason or other. I'd sold my house and everything. I'd decided to make a complete change. I believe you should make wild, dramatic changes in your life. So when I said 'change,' by golly, I meant change! I was not very content in that house, anyway. It's a *darling* place and it had all the things you love—a beautiful pool and a mountain view. But I'm an animal-lover and when my two little doggies passed away, I just had the blues in the place. And that's when I made the switch.

"In New York a very dear friend of mine, Michael Pierman, a restaurateur, called and we had dinner. He asked me what had happened with the book. I said it was incomplete and that I'd probably never finish it. He told me that Gloria Safier, who is an actors' agent as well as a literary agent, was a close friend and that he'd have her read it. But I said: 'Oh, nobody could read that silly thing. I'm not ready.' Poor Ted Hook, my secretary, kept saying: 'She's such an intelligent gal. She'll tell you the truth in a minute. Why don't you give her what you have?' Well, I had seven-hundred odd pages typed and yet I was not at the finish. So it was way overwritten.

"Gloria called me herself. I made up a very corny excuse. I told her I'd lost the key to the trunk that the manuscript was in. 'She said, 'Well, I'll get a locksmith. We're gonna get the thing outa there.' Ted convinced me to show the book to her. He dragged the thing out and got it to her.

"She called me way in the middle of the night. 'This is a helluva time to be

waking you up but I just want you to know that I have laughed and I have cried and I'm gonna run with this thing. You're gonna finish it.' The next day she sold it to Delacorte.

"I was thrilled when Gloria called about the sale. I couldn't believe it! That is was SOLD. It was the *last* thing in my mind. But I stayed on in New York and finished it. I worked with an editor and we made the proper cuts.

"Daytime is best for me. The earlier, the better. I got up at five every morning to work on the book. The greatest part of the day for me has always been that time before the sun rises. Even New York is quiet then. But it was a terribly noisy neighborhood. I was forever hearing fire engines, rescue squads, police cars booming along. I assure you I don't miss that racket. And I must say the place I'm in over there is just so quiet and pleasant—it's a big, wonderful change."

Asked for a description of the novel's plot, Joan Blondell says: "I can't tell you what the *story's* about very well. It's kinda character study. The leading character is a man—you go from his childhood to his death. It goes from 1895 to about 1940, that span of time. The setting is circuses and midways and carnivals.

"It has things I know of. My father started in the circus and carnivals, y'see. Being from a vaudeville family I picked up stuff as a kid. That's what the conversation was about between shows. 'What I did when—' I'd overhear it and it stuck with me. I have total recall of the atmosphere and all that.

"I think it was Hemingway who said: 'You haven't got a story unless you can describe it in one sentence.' Well, I can't." She gives out with a croaky laugh. "But they bought it. That's all I can tell you.

"My reaction to the book cover was very funny. They showed me the artist's

first draft of it up at the publisher's office and I ran out of the room. Never mind seeing my name in print elsewhere—concerning a movie or a play—but *that*—to see your name that big on a book jacket—it scared me to death!"

She smiles and admits she's at work on a second book. "Yeah, I have another one brewing in my skull. Good heavens, I hope it doesn't take as long as the first one did!"

In a few weeks she'd be embarking on a publicity tour for *Center Door Fancy*. "Yeah, the book's finished and now I've got to go *talk* about it. Oh, it's a miserable thing. But you've gotta do it.

"It's strange to me. If you watch TV at all you see the *same* author go from one talk show to another. It's obviously a *hustle*. Y'know. So it's embarrassing.

"They're sending my secretary, Ted, along on the tour. When he's around, everything goes click-click. He's super-efficient. I'm getting terribly used to him—and possibly lazy." She smiles. "I find myself saying, 'Ask Ted, will you?' 'Cause I know he knows *everything*."

There's activity outside the open dressing room door. Robert Forster's portable dressing room is being wheeled into place near Miss Blondell's. The company is in from the back lot.

The actress gets ready to go over to the makeup table for a touch-up on her face. "I'm very happy to be back in California," she says, smiling serenely. "I'm close to my family here and everything that has roots for me. And I'm lucky to be working. Because there are so many people who aren't.

"This show is enough for me right now. It's extremely satisfying. If by any chance the public doesn't like the series—well, oh, *something* always seems to turn up for me." That croaky laugh again. "I never get a chance to sit around and worry about it."

—DAVID JOHNSON

## DAVID CASSIDY

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have been. That's why, when people tell me that he doesn't want to talk about my success, I can't believe it. I believe if I needed something right now, I could turn to the one man I love dearly—my dad. I'm sure he wouldn't turn his back on me."

David also has nothing but praise for Shirley. He and his stepmother get along very well and he has professed his deep love for her numerous times. Although he is still very close to his own mother, Evelyn Ward, he is equally close to Shirley. From the very beginning, she always made David feel wanted. Speaking of his three young half-brothers, he has said repeatedly, "At no time did Shirley ever show any favoritism over her own sons when I stayed at their house. I felt as much a part of Shirley's family as I did with my own mother."

So—when the news broke about Jack's and Shirley's most recent separation—David felt he had to step in, just

as he had done before. That time, he had rushed to his dad's side to urge him to go back to their Oakhurst Drive home in Beverly Hills and at least *talk* to Shirley. David then called Shirley and begged her to please listen to his dad. They both did as David asked and the result was soon in every newspaper. The two were together again.

This time, however, it seemed much more serious and David couldn't be sure that such simple tactics would work. From the beginning, there has been a great difference of temperament between these two, no matter how much they loved each other. Shirley is the easygoing one. Jack's temper can flare up at the least little thing. She never liked to argue and always let him have the final word. Jack sometimes seemed to be looking forward to a good fight—but he wasn't getting one from Shirley.

Not until she walked out this year and the ugly word *divorce* first came out into the open. It's doubtful that Jack had ever bargained for his second marriage to come to such a halt. It had happened once before, with Evelyn Ward and their son David. Could it happen again, with Shirley and their

three little boys? *Why*, David wondered, *couldn't these two he loved be talked into accepting the reality of the situation before irreparable damage had been done?*

Though David has never been one to bring his troubles on the set, it was obvious to everyone there that Shirley's and Jack's separation was gnawing away at his heart. Why couldn't they face up to facts? To the reality of *love*, not *divorce*? "When Jack and Shirley are together in a room," David told us, "you can actually feel the electricity between them. They are both jealous people who both have to feel wanted and needed.

"In fact," he added with a sudden surge of hope, "they both love each other so much, maybe it isn't my dad who did the stupid thing by leaving Shirley. Maybe Shirley is the one who is wrong and my dad is doing this for a *reason*."

It wasn't, however, something David could check with his dad. Jack Cassidy has never liked anyone prying into his private life, even those he loves. Meanwhile, David's friends were insistently warning him that—at this stage of both