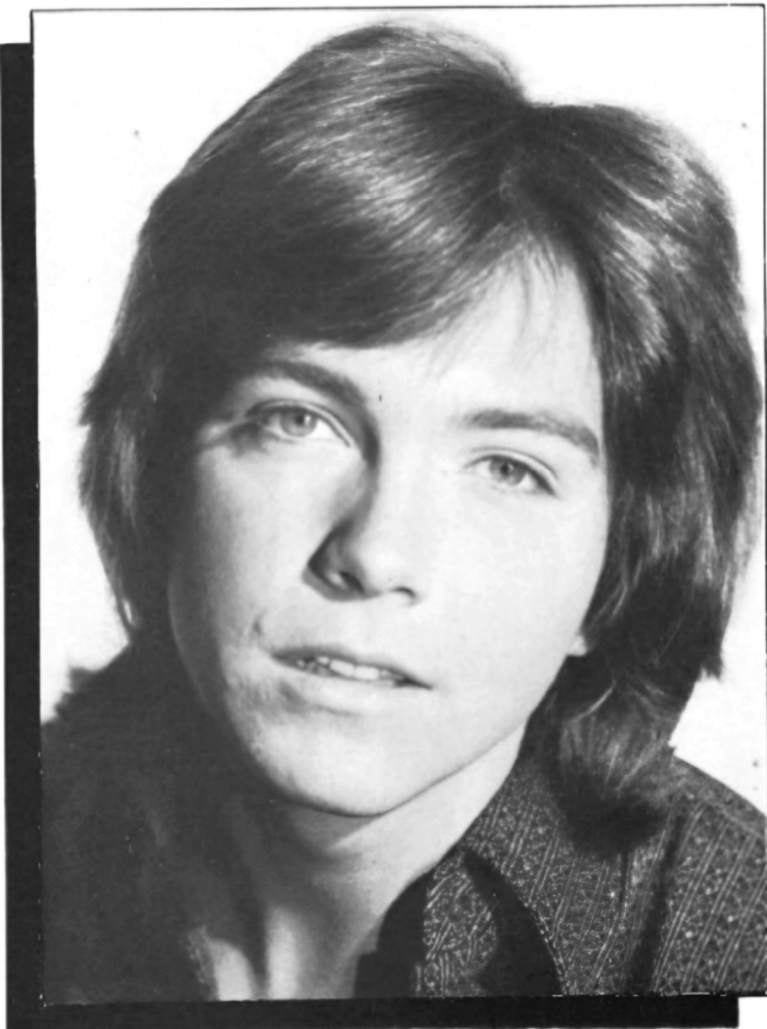


WHY IS LIFE SO UNFAIR? —DAVID

David's heart skips a beat when he meets somebody who really could feel sorry for himself. There was nothing David could do to help.



David parked his car near the hospital and walked quickly towards the side entrance. He was late — by five minutes. The traffic had been heavy. Some of the nurses nodded at him as he walked along the polished and gleaming passageways.

"Sorry I'm late Sister," he said to the nurse sitting outside the children's ward. "Oh Mr. Cassidy that's quite alright," she said in an Irish lilt and

smiled at him. "We've got a new arrival here, a boy of nine who was brought in last night after a car smash. He's in a bad way and his brother, who was driving was killed. Perhaps you could do something to cheer him up."

David walked into the ward. Several of the patients waved at him. "Hello David," one little girl shouted out and David smiled at her. Last week she'd cried for three hours before an appendix operation. David stopped and chatted with some of the other children — the little boy who'd had his tonsils removed two days ago.

Then David followed the nurse to the end bed. "This is Mike," she said, and David looked down at the small figure lying under a white blanket. His arms and hands were bandaged heavily and he turned his head as David sat down beside him.

"Hello Mike," said David. "You're in a bad way aren't you?" After a pause Mike said slowly. "I don't want your sympathy. Go away." David was startled and looked up at the nurse. She shrugged her shoulders and whispered: "Perhaps you'd better leave him alone and come and talk to the other children."

David was deeply shocked — he didn't expect such a reaction. For the rest of the afternoon he chatted away to the other children. But he couldn't concentrate and kept looking back to Mike's bed. Mike didn't move or even look at what was going on around him. He just lay there staring up at the ceiling. On the way out David stopped and talked to the nurse. "Don't let it worry

you," she said. "He's just suffering from shock."

Driving home David kept thinking about Mike and wondered how he could get through to him. Then he began to think about himself too. Perhaps he was expecting too much, perhaps he was conceited in thinking he could help Mike at all. Such thoughts haunted David's mind until he returned to the hospital two days later.

"How's Mike?" was the first question he asked the nurse. "Not very good Mr. Cassidy. He doesn't want to know or chat to anyone and even when his family came in to see him last night he wouldn't talk to them. We just

