

He looked up at me with beady little eyes from the edge of the tub where he floated in about seven inches of water.

He had the same expression in his eyes that I've seen once or twice in David's when—at great risk of loss of limb—he's actually managed to cook a piece of bacon in the morning, only to have it fall to the floor when he tried to take it out of the pan.

I had the distinct feeling that the alligator in the bathtub was personally disappointed that I hadn't stepped in. He might not have been able to take a very *big* bite, but he had been counting on at least one healthy chomp on my ankle, or whatever I gave him first shot at.

### WHAT'S IT DOING?

I wrapped a towel around me and steamed down the hall in the direction of you-know-who's room. I threw the door open, and there he was, a stack



DAVID singing—what "he" thinks he does best. You probably agree!

NOW "Partridge" is back to 7 people since Ricky Segall & Alan Bursky were axed! David's always told me how much he enjoys doing the show, but this is his last season. Word is that David's replacements (if the show's not cancelled) might be Andy & David Williams! Catch the 13th show of the season so you can see them when they guest-star & see for yourself if you want them to be regulars on TV! David had fun with them on the set, and you'll get the scoop in next month's TB!



of Hydrox cookies tall enough to commit suicide from at his elbow, and a book in his hands entitled—I swear to heaven—"Enjoy Your Alligator."

"What is that prehistoric beast doing in *our bathtub*?" I shouted.

"Living there," David said without looking up. "What'd you think, he was waiting for a bus?"

"But why," I asked in my most reasonable voice, "why in the *bathtub*?"

"He doesn't know it's a bathtub. He thinks it's a swamp. Just don't let him bother you. He's choosy about what he eats, so your feet are safe."

"I'm not taking a bath with an alligator," I said firmly.

"Take a shower," he suggested. He sat up on the bed and flipped back a few pages. "Listen," he said, running his finger down a page, "that animal hasn't changed in *two million years*—"

"About as often as you change your socks," I observed. He didn't even stop

talking.

"—and he's got more teeth than a shark. Isn't that far out? Let's feed him."

We got a piece of hamburger and took it in to Albert. David put it in front of his nose and we waited for the voracious animal to strike in true killer fashion.

Albert just looked at it.

David shook it up and down. "I'll make him think it's a ground-up fish swimming by," he said.

### BELIEVE ANYTHING

"If he'll believe that, he'll believe anything," I replied. "No *wonder* he hasn't changed in two million years."

"Very amusing," David said glancing up at me, "but you'll see—OUCH!!!!" He yanked his hand from the water and looked at his bleeding finger. The hamburger drifted unnoticed to the bottom.

"He's grinning," I said. "What a

great pet."

"You can't blame him," David said, "it's his animal nature. Anyway, it's not too bad—I've never been bitten by an alligator before. But we've got to get him to *eat* something; he can't live forever on the memory of my finger."

"You're just being modest," I said. "That finger is one of a kind."

"You try it, if you're so smart," he said. And, since I'm *not* actually so smart, I did... and got a bleeding finger. The hamburger lay on the bottom like a rejected idea. Albert looked up at us from the great dim recesses of his prehensile mind and waited for the next stupid finger to be stuck in his face.

He got it almost immediately as I tried to at least get the hamburger out of the bathtub before it turned into something horrible, and Albert managed to hook a tooth into my other index finger.

"Shame you can't buy a bag of fingers at the store," David said as I washed my cut. "He'd be fat and happy."

The next day, operating on the assumption that alligators are too aristocratic to eat hamburger, we bought an ounce of steak at the market and fed it to him at the end of a long fork. He grabbed at it as if it was the first food he'd seen in the whole two million years he hadn't been changing.

It is now three days later and that piece of steak is still hanging out of his mouth. Apparently, he likes his meat aged.

In the meantime, David and I are taking showers only, and we dance the whole time. It seems an alligator won't bite a dancing target.

More about Albert next time, maybe.

Sam