

The last of the bandages came away. David winced and exclaimed: "There's light in this room and I don't like the feeling of it."

"Don't worry, David," the doctor chuckled. "You're going to learn to love it."

He put some drops in David's eyes, and fitted him with dark wrap-around glasses which he wore for two weeks, taking them off only in the evenings to get used to the light again. Even the gentlest of light hurt David's eyes like sandpaper being rubbed over a wound, but he persevered bravely with the exercises Dr. Cogan prescribed for him.

Weeks turned into months. Finally the day came when Dr. Cogan phoned David's mother. "We're finished. David's A-OK. I'm releasing him today."

And when David walked through the doorway Evelyn had to move her hand quickly across her face to brush away the tears that were rolling down her cheeks. She just sat there for a while smiling at her son, looking into a pair of clear and flawless hazel eyes.

David's first drama lessons with a local Hollywood group were hardly a success. It was not until years later, with the creation of the Partridge Family, that he learned how to integrate totally with a team of actors.



Right from boyhood, David wanted to become a singer and actor — but then the Cassidys were a musical clan like the Wards, his mother's family.

The first instrument David studied was the violin. Then, at the age of ten, he graduated to guitar and clarinet. But the piano was always his favourite. His grandmother on his mother's side was an accomplished pianist and whenever she found him sitting on the piano stool, she gave him a lesson.

She was also a concert singer, so she took a special interest in David's voice which could be heard every Sunday when he sang with the junior choir of his Sunday School.

When Evelyn Ward and David's father, Jack Cassidy divorced, it was inevitable that Evelyn should want to have her son as close to her as possible. This wasn't always easy. As an actress she was sometimes in shows on Broadway, sometimes right out of town playing in summer stock.

You could say that David was really a "pro" from the age of six onwards when his mother got him a tiny part in a summer play she was rehearsing.

"When David wasn't acting himself, he'd hang around the wings watching the other performers. This way he picked up all sorts of little skills."

But there was one time when David definitely didn't want to perform, and was positively stubborn about it. His mother was doing a radio interview with David watching her on the other side of the glass booth.

The interviewer happened to mention the old hit song *'Wish You Were*



There was a time — as his mother recalls — when David was scared stiff of the mike. Today he almost kisses it as he records another beautiful song!

Here' which David's father was currently singing in a musical on Broadway.

"You ought to hear my son David singing it," said Evelyn proudly. And indeed, it was David's favourite number at the time. So the announcer brought him up to the mike to sing it.

Silence. Absolute silence! David clenched his mouth and refused to utter a note. As soon as he left the studio, of course, he sang at the top of his voice—which was no consolation to his mother. Aren't kids always perverse when you want them to shine?

Not long afterwards David got his first chance to appear on TV in a play called *'House On High Street'*. Evelyn remembers switching on her set to watch his debut.

"I could hardly believe my eyes. He was good — well, let's say competent, giving quite a performance. Yet somehow it wasn't my son, David. I sensed that inwardly he was panicking. Afterwards we had a long chat. I told him that, if he wanted to act, he must work for it and learn his craft.

"As a result David started taking singing and drama lessons. But somehow he couldn't seem to 'make it' with the drama group. There was still something very private and insulated about his personality. He yearned to be a performer yet somehow he couldn't let go. I'm sure that part of it was a feeling of insecurity, a fear of being rejected. More and more I came to realise that my son David was a very complex person."

Don't get the idea that David's teenage was spent just doing lessons at school and preparing to be an actor
(Continued on page 20)