



**Only a punctured raft
between me and the sharks.
Someone fetch a bicycle
pump – quick!**

Evelyn had misgivings about the venture. She'd just been offered a star part in a Hollywood stage production of the musical, *And So To Bed*. There was a part going in it . . . only a small part – for a young boy. Why not David?

She put it to him, and he started getting enthusiastic about the idea. An audition was arranged and the director of the show rang Evelyn afterwards.

He almost shouted down the phone in his excitement. "He's great. David's really great! He's got the part!"

Evelyn says with pride looking back on the experience: "Each night in the show David got better and better. He had a solo number in which he sang and danced, also a small dialogue scene with me.

"Night after night he stopped the show with his song and dance routine, often getting a standing ovation. Somehow I sensed that the hundreds who applauded him in the theatre would one day grow into thousands. But I never dreamed that they would become millions and multi-millions who would watch him on TV in *The Partridge Family* and buy his records."

Now let David himself take up the story, because this is where he really took a hand in shaping his own

destiny:

"When I left high school, I didn't want to continue my education – not in the formal sense of the word, that is. All I wanted to do was to get to New York City as fast as possible. I knew that all the golden opportunities were there.

"I had it all figured out. I'd live with my Dad, get a day job, enroll for a dramatic and musical course in the evenings, and do the rounds of the Broadway theatres in my lunch break to see what was happening in show-business.

"Well, I got my first job as a messenger boy for a large textile company just a few blocks from Broadway. The boss had a really super Cadillac car, and every morning he'd drive up to the office and park it right in front of the building. He'd get out of the car and I'd be waiting to jump into the driver's seat and run the Cadillac to his garage.

"One day I got there to find a couple of cars ahead of me waiting to park. I tooted the horn just to let them know I was there, but the guy who was handing out the tickets took it the wrong way.

"Even at a distance I could see this really *tall* really *big* really *strong* and *sinister* cat giving me the ice-cold once-over. As the other cars pulled away, I switched off the ignition, took the keys out, and swung the door open to get out, trying to keep my cool.

"Very slowly, with a nasty sort of

smirk, this character gave me a ticket, took the keys, and said "You're some smart kid, ain'cha!"

"I just stuck my nose in the air and walked away. But I'd forgotten. I had to collect the car again for the boss at the end of the day. When the time came, I was dead scared – so scared I walked round and round the block about four times. I was sure this cat would be waiting to beat me up, and I'm not the fighting type."

"Suddenly a hip sort of voice called me: 'Hey, you – you kid with the big car!' I pretended not to hear. Then I saw that I was being hailed by a different attendant, a real nice guy this time.

"Man, was I relieved! I collected the car as fast as I could. As I drove away I asked: "Who was that cat here this morning?"

"The guy laughed and told me I wouldn't be seeing him again. The boss had hired him, but he'd been so rude to the customers he'd been fired the same day!"

All the time David had this job as a messenger boy he was taking singing lessons. His teacher was also showing him how to *move* as he sang.

As he explains:

"Acting and singing on the stage or before the TV cameras involves your whole being. An actor must be involved in his work from the top of his head to the tip of his toes, physically and mentally.

"By that I mean the way you think, the way you look at people, the way you absorb what's going on round you, the way you see and interpret life, even if it's just gazing at the blossoming of a rose.

"Acting is all-embracing. I've learned that not only from my mother and father, but also, from watching all the great stars."

So David's drama lessons extended to all sorts of other arts. He studied movement, dancing, speech, fencing – even karate for a time. When he felt he was ready, he began to go the rounds of the agents as 'David Bruce'. He refused the temptation to trade on the famous name of Cassidy, though lots of agents would have been happy to help the son of a big star like Jack Cassidy.

Like all out-of-work actors, he carried a folio of his pictures to show agents, telling a few white lies here and there about the Broadway shows he'd been in (none actually!) and wearing the big smile that Broadway looks for as the hallmark of success, even if he didn't feel particularly successful.

His first real break came when he was called to audition for a new musical, *Fig Leaves Are Falling*, along with a lot of other young actors.

"There were a few guys sitting in the front row. I figured they must be writers, directors, and producers. I had to sing as well as read lines.

"Just as I finished doing my thing,