



Debbie and her daughter Carrie Frances, 3, share a cup of milk while a disinterested Todd Emanuel, 2, takes care of the cookies.

# my life has just

*As her divorce from Eddie Fisher becomes final this week, this vivacious actress tells her own story—her interests, her*



Debbie was 16 when she won Miss Burbank contest which led to the movies.

FOR THE PAST few months, columnists and some of my friends have tried to link me romantically with a number of eligible and not-so-eligible bachelors. Whether I go out with Harry Karl, Bob Neal, or anyone else, there is prompt speculation that I'll soon be headed for the altar.

These people can't see how a young woman can be happy unless she's married. They can't understand how she can run her family efficiently by herself, and they feel that without a man a girl must be lonely, frustrated, and bored.

True, without my children I *would* feel lonely and unfulfilled. But as for being bored or not knowing what to do with my spare time, my invariable answer is: "What spare time?"

Most of my supposedly "free" hours are spent in behalf of a wonderful and worthwhile charity, the Thaliens, a group of young people connected with show business and dedicated to helping mentally and emotionally disturbed children. In the beginning, it was the difficulties of my marriage with Eddie Fisher and the urgency to keep busy at all costs that spurred my enthusiasm for this organization, but I have tried to sustain it ever since.

Then there's my work, of course. And now, being both father and mother to my two youngsters is an

extra responsibility which gives an added purpose to my existence, an additional, wonderful challenge for the future.

So the way I look at it, life has just begun for me. If I can remain as happy for the rest of my days as I am today, I will be the most blessed person in the world!

A year has gone by since I got my divorce. But even today, well-meaning people take it upon themselves to feel sorry for me. I can tell it in their eyes, their handshakes, their whole attitude.

I wish people wouldn't feel that way about me. There's no need for it.

I HAVE LEARNED that unhappiness can turn you into a "martyr" and make you and everyone around you miserable. Or you can profit from unhappiness and benefit both yourself and those who depend on you.

In spite of all that's happened recently, I am grateful for a most rewarding life: I have a promising career ahead of me, I have a number of really close, dependable friends. Most of all, I have my children, Carrie Frances, who is three, and Todd Emanuel, two.

In short, I feel I have a wonderful future. It's