

## 8. FORBIDDEN FRUIT

The life of the fan is a scary road. He gives his identity to someone else. The communion is temporary, but the fan seeks permanence. I have been willing to play the game all along. But I could always pull back. I could maintain my distance. Passion changes all that.

I don't know what it is. But the English performer takes things to the stratosphere. I have already felt this magic with the Strokes or Interpol. But it just seems to be a pose that they adopt for the stage. And they try like hell to keep it up in their everyday life. In England, there is this point where the musician tempts the divine.

It could just be a belief on my part. Something about the accent. He is reading the King James as if he is dictating it himself. That is my great fear. I reach out my hand, and I have been transfixed by his touch. I have seen that spark in Jason or Cam. But Passion is in a place way beyond any of them. Bowie must have projected the same radiance in his day. Now I am bathed in it.

We first meet Passion after one of Jason's gigs. The band is playing a club gig at the Barfly in London. This is to prepare for the festivals. There's not much of a back stage area. We are all falling over each other. I first think that Passion is Bobby Gillespie of Primal Scream. It didn't make sense. Bobby is a little older than Passion. He resembles the young Bobby. But Passion has that same magic. I know it from the moment that I am close to him

Of this Age had never been one of my favorite bands. I always found them too derivative. Glam wannabees. They have already recorded three albums. In a land where the music press is gospel, Of this Age are the anointed ones. They feel that heat and are not about to surrender their crown.

Passion is not in it for fame. It is only a vehicle. That is why he is here tonight. He is enthralled with Jason's music.

Jason introduces me, "He's helping to manage this amazing band in the States."

Passion gives me his hand, "Any friends of Jason's is a friend of mine." And so the love affair with the master begins.

I don't want to pretend that it's a physical thing. I have never denied that side of myself. But Passion is not about that. I know that so many of his fans see him in just that way. But they've got it wrong. You'd know that if you met the man.

After the show, we head to Jason's hotel to hang out and party. Passion spreads his thin frame out on one the beds. He is showing off. He is immediately the hit of the party. There are a bunch of people that have drifted over with us. A thoroughly strange crew. Some industry people—various labels reps.

Barry is in the bathroom at this point with a couple of girls that he's met at the gig. He's showing them some Tennessee hospitality. They are impressed with his down-home drawl.

Jason comments on Barry's antics, "Now that he's in England, there's nothing to hold him back. I just hope that he doesn't pass out at any of the gigs." Jason is remembering some of his own craziness when he was younger.

Passion doesn't need any artificial stimulants. He is the drug. A few teens are crowded around the bed hoping that they might participate in his essence. All that he can do is coo a few times. There are muffled ahs that accompany anything that he does. These girls are surprised

that he even breathes oxygen. The average fan would never have realized that Passion was a fan of Jason's, so the girls have lucked out. Sara takes the lead among the pack. If she can just touch his stigmata, then she will have participated in the miracle of her lifetime. Passion marvels at their idolatry. He's an artist, somewhat way beyond any of it. But his public persona thrives on constantly encouraging this sort of thing.

Passion jumps on the bed. I am ready for a pillow fight with feathers being cast everywhere around the room.

Jason comments, "I've got to sleep there."

Barry comes out of the bathroom with two little mod types. The girls have elegant bangs and lovely short dresses. Both are in colored tights. They speak in a strange Tweedle Dee-Tweedle-Dum dialect that only they can understand. They all sit on the other bed. I find a chair next to Passion's perch. It is already entertaining. Jason tosses me a beer. He's drinking a water. It's his usual moderated self.

"I tried to swear off intoxicants. My meditative period. But when I finally reached my Nirvana, I just wanted to maintain that high. So I had to go back to the artificial. After all that's what I'm all about. Artificial manna for the masses."

None of us really mind his mix of religious traditions. He is the perfect representative of a new ecumenicalism. Saint Passion.

The girls want to take turns kissing their patron. I am having a wonderful time just watching the proceedings. The blessed soul is hardly going to give in to the sinners. The road is going to be long and hard for their true salvation. If he could only dispense his ambrosia as readily as Barry, then the miracles would manifest themselves with much effort.

"There's more to looking great than just showing up." Even though he appreciates Barry's talent, Passion is needling him for his glib party skills. Besides Jason and me, I wonder who is really catching Passion's humor. His fans are glazed over. The girls with Barry are oblivious. And the drunken execs don't realize that they are being taunted to no end.

Passion doesn't care in the least. He knows that he's going to be a hit at the festivals. After that point, the world will again turn on his every word. For the time being, he is being digested in bite-sized bits. The full regimen would collapse all these lightweights.

Passion is trying to get some kind of handle on Jason's Nashville influences. For all his career, Passion has been trying to impress on his audience that he is more than a follower of the latest trend. In fact that is the man's very genius. He sees beyond the moment. He has always been smashing together various genres of music. In *Our Age* really made a name for themselves by creating a hard-edged dance music. It was always very sexual. At the same time, guitars played a prominent part in the works. That was his real skill. He both made fun of the guitar god and celebrated his prowess.

In fact, Passion dances on the bed as if he is stroking a guitar. The girls only wish that he was demonstrating the instrument for them individually. He pushing things out so far tonight that is espousing something very asexual. Desire becomes so turned on that it is totally neutral. He wants revelation not climaxes.

The girls get aroused just watching his gyrations. Even Barry's entourage is distracted by the wonder himself. Barry is a little envious of Passion's skill. But Passion is returning the favor for Barry's rudeness at the beginning of the evening. He's telling him, "If you're going to do

drugs, you better include me.”

Passion indulges both by his denial as by his profligacy. Tonight he is playing the ascetic. He will be martyred upon a cross of sacrifice.

“You can only taste what you disallow yourself!”

I love his riddles.

Passion’s goal is to outlast everyone. But his immortality is being curtailed by some heavy Tennessean party boys. Jason wants to make sure that his guys don’t embarrass their English host. But when it comes to indulgence, they are way beyond any restraint. Jason still does his best to impose some kind of etiquette to the festivities.

At one point, it seems that Barry and one of his female assistants are going to show us their wrestling skills. Jason will have none of that. He is not looking for a tawdry little performance. He just has to break it up gracefully.

The other nymphet now considers Jason fair game. Revenge seems to be the order of the night. Love is the preferred weapon.

All this is interrupted by more extravagance from Passion. He strategically removes his shirt and passes it to the waiting girls. They are read to faint. He is on the bed doing something that roughly resembles a hand stand. He cleverly lands in the midst of the three waiting girls. It is almost as if they are meant to catch him. They proceed like a pack of beasts to lick his naked torso. Barry douses everyone with Jack Daniels. Passion pretends that he has never known such excess. He is grateful to his cowboy friends for showing him a good time.

By the end of the night, everyone finds some corner to crash in. Passion is a little miffed that he no longer has a willing audience. But even he gives in to the River Lethe. With one eye half-open, I am able to survey the battlefield. What a campaign this has been.

From this point on, Passion seems to take to me. I have been invited in his inner circle. I wonder what I showed him. I could hardly provide him with the best colloquies on Memphis blues although he was impressed that I made my way in the lovely city. He pretends that he himself is an incarnation from Memphis.

Before he leaves the hotel room, Passion tells me, “I know what you’re searching for. I’m looking for that too.”

About thirty miles north of Edinburgh is the World Peace Music Festival. It is one of the premier festivals. Line in Delphi and Of this Age are both playing. I ride up with Jason’s band. They are still on a shoestring budget and are in a van. Once we get to the festival, we are treated like royalty.

Even though we are down on the bill, we frequent the artist’s tent. They have managed to list me as their crew so I can eat along with the band. I look around. This place is the indie fan’s dream. Through the site I notice Interpol, Dinosaur Jr, The Arcade Fire, Hot Hot Heat, The Dears, and The Faint. Everyone is hanging out casually by their dressing room areas or talking to each other in the common area. This is the Mount Olympus where Zeus is trying to flag down Apollo to talk about a new recording project.

“This is going to change the world.” It is almost as big as a UN sponsored summit. I am talking with some of the crew from Razorlight. Brett Anderson is reading poetry in a lawn chair. Jason is a little frantic trying to line up his band. They are going on in a couple of hours.

He walks up to me, “Stand by!”

“I’m going to stay right here.”

I get back to my discussion. I’m introduced to Jim O’Brady. He manages an indie label in the UK. I am telling him about the Sun Runners.

“You’ve got to get me a copy of their stuff. I can even get tour support for them.”

I feel like this trip is going to pay off. At first, I thought that it might just be a nod to my hedonism. The boys will thank me.

Jason catches up to me.

“Come on over with us to the stage. We’ve got to get ready to go on.” I am able to wait behind the stage as they load the equipment.

One of the security officers points a place where I can stand. It’s so early in the day for a rock show. But I am excited for the guys.

They kick into “It’s Never too Hot to Start a Fire.” The crowd pretends that they know the words even though the CD has just been released. “I Let it Slip Through my Hand” is a rousing second song. It keeps the energy going. Jason is strumming his acoustic. He has a big smile on. Barry is trying to push the envelope with his sound. But it’s hard to get things going so early in the day. There is this hollow echo when they stop. The daytime air will not absorb the sound.

When they strike up, “You Never Gave Much of Yourself”, the crowd acts as if the tune is familiar. It has a little bit the feel of a Britpop anthem. The festival audience is slowly warming up. As the band is close to completing the set, Passion shows up at the side of the stage. All the attention seems to shift to him. When the band heads into “Today, Tomorrow, and Forever”, he jumps on stage. The crowd goes wild. This is a song that he wishes that he had written himself. This is the song that won Passion over to Line in Delphi. There he is singing next to Jason, “I’m not, I’m not, I’m not your neverland man!”

It’s been a great set. Sure the daylight remained an impediment. But the band tried not to let it phase them. And they really finished the set with such flair. Jason hugs Passion, and Passion kisses him on the cheek.

Passion glides off the stage in his tight velvet trousers and black suede boots. He needs to get himself ready for his own triumph later on. I am watching the band unload when I feel a tap on the shoulder. It’s Passion.

“Come see me later on!”

“I will.”

I feel a little freaked out. I am feeling an attraction for Passion. It’s not that unusual. It’s just something that I’ve never pursued for long. After Brenda, it just seems so natural. I really don’t expect anything to happen.

I find Jason.

“That was an amazing set.”

He tries to make apologies.

I repeat, “Great, great. I loved every minute of it. Even some of those songs that I’ve only heard in the studio sounded great today.”

“It’s too bad that they took so long to release our album. Our new one is going to come out in States.”

I note, “They seemed to know the new stuff. Maybe they heard it on the website.”

He shakes his head, “I don’t know.”

His hand is wet with sweat. It is a hot day, and it is even hotter on stage. Even his white shirt is wet through and through.

“I need a drink to cool me down,” he grabs a beer. “I need to chill out. Maybe lie down. Get a massage. I’ll hang out later. I want to see Passion.”

I add, “Everyone does.”

As the festival wears on, I am seeing more and more Of this Age t-shirts. The excitement is building. It is going to be one fantastic show. Someone tells me that Kevin Shields of My Bloody Valentine is here. I’ve already seen Tim Burgess of the Charlatans. Things are hopping.

It’s the middle of summer so the sun hardly goes down here. Even at nine or ten, it is still bright out. It’s been overcast all day. But there’s a heat that lingers in the air. It’s not as bad as Chicago was. I am holding up well.

There are loads of great bands playing. I’m just not feeling that thing. I’d prefer to relax until Of this Age comes on. I want to go visit Passion, but it is hardly the right moment. I hear Bloc Party playing the main stage. I’d love to watch. I can’t imagine walking back there now.

I’m in front of Line in Delphi’s dressing room. I’m drinking their orange juice and talking to the tour manager. “I really want to get my guys over her soon.”

Roddy tells me, “Jason played some of those tracks. I know that they’re not the final mixes, but they are hot. What’s your singer’s name?”

“Cam. He has style.” I am a little reminded of Passion. But Passion has that extra something. He’s learned his lessons well. Passion is like an a sponge. He sucks up everything around him. He is always learning. He feels that his rivals are gaining on him. He wants to stay at the top of his game.

At other end of the artists’ area Passion is kidding around with his band. I watch them clowning around. I look over at Roddy.

“I’m going to go get some food. I’ve got an extra ticket for you.”

In the meal tent, I am floored by the spread. I order the salmon dish cooked with pecans. It is wonderful. I also stock up on the strawberry desserts. I am making up for days of starving myself. This is the feast that follows the famine.

Roddy points over at the other table. “There’s Graham Coxon who used to be with Blur. I was the road for them way back when.”

“That’s fantastic.”

He tells me, “You get to know everyone after a while. It’s great. But it becomes a routine. I’m eventually going to retire to Ireland.”

“The food is great.”

Roddy says, “The caterer is fantastic. He worked for Ash when I was with them. That was about three years ago.”

I am collecting all these stories. I am piecing together the history of British music for the last fifteen years. I need to learn the business. How to push the right buttons to make it all turn on.

After stuffing myself, I feel as if I need a nap. The rest of the crew is supposed to meet in the lounge for beers. Everyone is there relaxing on couches. I notice some of the guys from Art Brut and the Duke Spirit. There’s also a guitar tech who I met in the States. I’m trying to keep track of it all. I’m still basically a fan. But I am making the transition. I need to keep it all

straight. I need an assistant.

Barry is raring to go. I feel that he has taken the challenge from Passion. We're all ready for their set even though it's still an hour and a half away. The sun is going down, but it's not really going to get any darker. It will just hang behind the hills for a while. There is only a slight break in the clouds. There is a light mist in the air.

I walk up to Barry, "You were really on. I think that you won over some fans."

He admits, "I wish that I was playing now. I'm actually ready."

"You nailed it. Every moment."

He slaps me on the back, "I'm glad to hear that from you. You've listened to our stuff. It's always good to hear from someone in the know."

Jason shows up about a half hour later.

"I've been here almost a week, and I'm still feeling jet lag."

I tell him, "It's these crazy hours."

Jason agrees, "I do it to myself."

"I can hardly wait for Passion to start."

Jason wonders, "I thought that you would have watched Block Party."

"They're finished. I think that the Mystery Jets are playing now."

"Roddy told me that we should see them. They're really good."

I go back and stretch out on one of the picnic tables. Jason is talking to the sound man. I feel that I have nowhere that I have to be, not until *Of this Age* takes the stage.

Usually at festivals, I have a check list of bands that I have to see. This is all different. I am closer to the action just by doing nothing. I also don't want to cloud my viewing of *Of this Age*.

I figure that this might be a good time to visit Passion. He wants to see me before they go on. I rush over to their dressing room. Everyone there seems preoccupied. Almost solemn. I open the door. Oops!

I notice this girl going down on Passion.

He shouts, "Sorry, mate. I'll be done in a minute."

I go back out. "How come no one told me?"

His guitar player has big grin on his face, "Just a practical joke."

Passion comes out. He is doing up his pants. "I guess that was just bad timing. I didn't want you to see that."

I wonder.

Sherry comes out of the dressing room. Passion turns to me, "This is Sherry."

"Sorry about that, doll," I say. I want to be polite

"You're the guy from the States."

I answer her, "Yeah!"

"Passion was telling me about you. He said that you have great blue eyes." She stares at mine, "They are the most amazing things. You're heaven's child."

I feel a little embarrassed.

"Don't feel bad about what happened when you burst in. I'd do the same for you if that's what gets you going."

She has this big smile. I can't take my eyes off of her.

Sherry says, “I came up with Passion from London. I think that I saw you at the Barfly last night.”

“Oh yeah, I was there.”

“You’re friend played a great set.”

“Thanks. He was great tonight as well.”

Sherry agrees, “Yeah. I think that the crowd really got into it. I love that country thing. He really turns it into his own style.”

I praise Jason, “There is no one like him.”

She asks, “You didn’t catch the Arcade Fire.”

“No, I missed them. I’ve just been hanging out.”

She tells me, “I have a friend who caught them in a club. She said that they were just wonderful. I did catch the Dears earlier today. Murray is totally marvelous. I think that he’s a fan of Passion. But he is never going to admit it.”

I feel a little envious of her proximity to Passion. But it’s not like he’s closed off anything to me. Passion walks over to my side.

“Come on in with Sherry. I’m going to go on in a few minutes. I want you there.” He puts his hand on my shoulder as he leads us both back in the dressing room. “You’re going to come with us to Captivate.”

I hesitate, “I’m not sure. I guess so. I’ll have to see.”

He is certain, “You’ll be there.” He kisses Sherry’s lips. She perks up.

I sense that I am part of a ritual. He mumbles to himself. Then he walks over to me and again touches me on the shoulder. He rubs his hand along my back. I have been blessed.

It’s only a short while before we are all waiting in the dark for the show to start. Every light is out. Lighters start to come on. And then the explosion. The bass kicks into fuzz tone. It is this dancing line. Then the drums add a disco beat. The wah-wah guitar chop up the rhythm. And then Passion leaps on stage. He lights flash on. Everyone is yelling. It is totally off the hook. This is the perfect mix of Madchester and 60’s San Fran psychedelic. He starts to sing “Rattle”. “It is a spiral. It’s a revival. Wraps its way around you. Read it, it’s your Bible. Shake you in its ocean. Drink its magic potion. It’s a renewal. It’s psychic fuel.” Now he is flying. The drums beat the death roll. He shakes his body around the stage.

He leans down to start another song. He is crouched on all fours. “Got to see it just to receive it, with arms open, he barely feels it. He’s going under. He’s way down below.”

The guitar plays these echoing cries. Then the bass and drums bring in this martial beat. Passion looks like he is undergoing some kind of fit. The pitter-patter is now relentless. The crowd is jumping up and down. Everyone is part of the celebration.

“Can she listen, she’s too far gone, I’m too far gone, it’s going on. Helpless.”

There is this dead stop and then everyone comes back into the chorus. “I’m passing through. It’s not something that I want. It’s just something that I have to do. I’m passing through.” Duh, duh-duh duh. Duh, duh-duh, duh. The beat is driving through everyone. They are being broken apart. They embrace the sound!

I had been convinced that nothing could top the Sun Runners or Line in Delphi. I was wrong. I feel as if I need go back to the drawing board. I have to rethink everything.

The band goes into a 15 minute version of their hit “Sunflower Starshower”. Serendipity

creeps up, sleeps up, lost all day. Sunshine going to get you up, get you down.” There is a swirling organ part. I dive into the ocean of sound. I am swimming along with the music. Now the insistent rhythm. Passion wails, “It’s in the seeds, it’s in the weeds, they all recede, they all RE-SEED. RE-SEED! RE-SEED! RE-SEED!”

The song enter the break. The swirls of grown more pronounced. There is a shaking tambourine. This deep bass tone seems to come alive in its pulsating. “RE-SEE! RE-SEED!” I am straight. I can barely hold myself together. It is a psychic blast. I feel as if I’ve been dosed. The strobes now blast on. Colors off the strobes. This high pitched guitar sound. Feedback. “Break me free, break me free, I’m not free, it’s the way that it’s got to be, not free. Break me free. AWAKE!”

The lights come up and everyone is going crazy. You can feel the festival site moving. One more song.

“You make me so good. Is that what you know. You take so much. Is that how it goes. Goes, goes away.” It is an Indian-influenced tune. The guitar almost sounds like a sitar. The sustained tones. The swelling of the percussion.

Nothing can stand in the way of Of this Age. They have completed the festival to astound everyone. The crowd wishes that they would never stop, never stop. Passion is unapproachable. He has fused musician and god. He is adored.

When I see him back at the dressing room, he is dripping with sweat. I am so totally amazed. There are loads of people surrounding him. Sherry is somewhere in the crowd. I see Jason. I wave.

“I think that we’re going to head out soon.”

Their next gig is in Manchester. They are not going to play Captivate. I am going to have to make a decision.”

I find Roddy.

“You’re welcome to ride with us. We’ve got space on the crew bus.”

I feel as if I can’t miss another performance. I don’t want to separate from Jason. Jason lays it out for me, “I’d go up there if I wasn’t going to play a gig. This is the most awesome thing that I’ve ever seen.”

“It is pretty wicked.”

“Your stuff is on the bus. You still have about an hour. I’ll make sure that I remind you before I leave.”

I admit, “This is a bit of an adventure. I’m not sure what’s going to happen next.”

“That’s why the guys is so electric. There is nothing like this. You can’t just experience it. You have to absorb it. You have to make it part of you. You have to grasp it. It’s a mystery.”

I come back, “That almost doesn’t make sense. This has been frightening. That one man could do this on stage.”

“It’s not just him. That guitar player is something else.”

“Raf is the ultimate. There were these soundscapes that expanded as they spread through space. This was all about dimension. I became lost inside.”

“We all did. I still am lost. I feel as if I need to settle down. It wasn’t even my show.”

I am bursting over with enthusiasm, “they say that it’s going to be greater tomorrow.”



Jason notes, "It's hard to top a Scottish crowd."

"You may be right. Too many punters and trendies tomorrow."

"It's all about the pose down there."

I encourage Jason, "You're going to have a good gig in Manchester. They've got you in Night and Day."

"I am looking forward in going to the city that made so much of it possible. The Smiths, The Stone Roses."

"I wish that I could go."

Jason reminds me, "You can't be two places at one time. Follow your heart."

"My heart tells me to stay with my friends. I just don't want to miss Passion again."

"You can catch us back in Nashville. This might be a once in a lifetime thing."

I realize he is right. Passion is going to the summit. One day he will crash. I just want to see as much of it as long as he's still in play.

Jason repeats, "Come get your stuff in 45 minutes."

"I'll be there."

I am on the clock. There is a little bit of tension in the air. The performance has been so wound up. It's going to be hard to come down.

I want to drink. But that's not really my style. I've already had a few. This is a good time to stay sane. Everyone around me is losing it. I need to stay even.

Passion sees me in the middle of the crowd. He keep waving until I make my way over to him. He has his shirt off. He puts his arm around me.

"I was glad to have had you out there, mate. You were there for me."

He wants to find a more private place to talk to me. He pulls me outside to some corner that is secluded. It's his party, but he wants to get away.

Passion says, "I've been watching you. You're like an owl. You take it all in. You mean everything to me."

"That makes me feel good."

He is stumbling a little. But he wants to make his point. "This is not bull shit. Every one else wants something from me. I always have to give them a part of myself. You're just here to enjoy. That's what I love about you. I do love you. You're my brother." He gives me a friendly hug.

He continues, "I don't think that anyone else understands. They're liars. All that I trust is the music. Maybe Raf knows. I'm not sure who else. It's a journey. I hope that you've figured that out. And there's all this excess baggage that prevents you from getting to your destination. You've got to throw all that over the side."

There is this weird pause as if he wants to kiss me. I feel that is why I am here. But I don't do anything. We remain silent

He helps ease through the embarrassment. "You're totally my kind of guy. You're not engaged in flattery. No bull shit. You don't have to say anything. It's about being. I know that you are here!"

We both look up as if we are in the presence of something bigger. We are waiting for our calling. Until this moment, I have never felt as if it was my life. Now it is. It is my life, and I am loving it.

I wonder how Hattie or Brenda would get on. I admit to myself that the reason that I wanted Hattie all along is that she has this tap into the unattainable. Brenda knew about it. But she wouldn't risk herself in the same way. We shared the nostalgia. But only Hattie offered me that danger.

Even Hattie only dabbled. She listened to My Bloody Valentine. But she wasn't Kevin Shields. She was some mixed up girl in Memphis.

This is the real thing. I am giving everything that I have to Passion. We are both looking up in the sky. We make a passageway to the stars. We both go in with this incredible high. This is greater than acid. Greater than mushrooms. This is complete. I feel as if I am walking above the ground. No one can even see me. I embrace the feeling.

Sherry briefly talks to Passion. Then she comes over to me.

"I think that he likes you a lot."

I am embarrassed by the attention. "I guess that he does."

"You know that I made you an offer. I know what you're feeling. It's sometimes good to complete the circle."

"I'm flattered. Really, I am. But Passion's my friend."

"You don't understand," she tells me. "He's giving me to you."

"I really couldn't." I kiss her on the forehead and give her a hug.

"I have to get my stuff from Jason's van."

I rush off to catch them just in time. I tell Jason what has happened.

"That's a little freaky. Watch that girl. She's trouble. It could destroy everything that you have with him."

"I know." I shake Jason's hand and wave by to the rest of the guys. Then I rush back to Passion. Security stops me. I show them my laminate and explain things. They wave me on.

Everything is fast coming to a close. It is dark everywhere. I feel so alone. For a few moments, I feel that I can't find Passion. I am going to be stranded here. I need to find them. Then I see Raf in the shadows. I follow him.

He tells me, "Roddy is looking for you. The crew is going to leave a little before we are."

"Amazing. I better hurry."

I want to say something to Passion. He still has people around him. It's going to be too difficult to say good bye. Sherry is at his side. She sees me. I wave to her.

Roddy is in a corner with the sound guy Adrian and the lighting tech Sean.

Roddy tells me, "I see that you have your stuff. Let's clear out of here."

When we get on the bus, they show me where my bunk is. Roddy, Adrian, and Sean head to the back to smoke some hash. I'm hanging out front with Malcolm and Rik. Rik is the guitar tech. He has his own band in Liverpool.

Rik and I start to talk about Liverpool bands. Then he brings up Jason.

"Jason is one hell of a dude. I was at the Barfly show. That guitar player of his is also a trip."

"Barry."

"Yeah, that's it! Great bunch of guys."

"I was going to Manchester with them. But then Passion bit me with the bug."

Rik confesses, "I think that I've always wanted to play with his band. Raf is a genius."

“He’s such a good player.”

Rik has more to say about Raf, “I’ve learned so much about him. We all hate to admit it. But there is a freaky side to Passion. One moment he’s a your friend, the next he’ll turn on you. But Raf keeps it all livable.”

Malcolm asks me if I want a drink. He is a buddy of Rik’s from Liverpool.

“Just get me an orange juice or something.”

Malcolm asks, “Are you in AA, or is it something religious?”

“No. I’ve just had a crazy day. I’m try to collect my wits.”

We keep on into the night exchanging band stories. Then it’s time for bed. It’s a little weird fitting into the bus toilet. But I get ready for bed.

At first, I am afraid that I am going to crawl into the wrong bunk. After all the stuff with Passion, I don’t want to leave the wrong impression.

When I lie down I string a towel from the top of the bunk. I want to make sure that I don’t hit my head if I suddenly wake up. It’s just a reminder. I curl up and am ready to fall asleep.

No one can imagine my excitement about everything that has happened. Sure it’s an illusion. I’m waiting for the bubble to burst. I wish that I could share all these things that have happened. It is so overwhelming. And I am only in the middle of things. For once, I feel that this is my life.