

*Unbelievable.*

Sean had been in every conceivable crowd situation at rock shows ... had survived violent free-for-alls in the pit ... had passed out while slamdancing in the sun during downtown street fests ... had gone to Dead shows up north and done the whole hippie thing inside out ... but this ... this was *incredible* ...

He was at the Palladium, near the front of the stage ... Bow Wow Wow was up there, throbbing away with sensational Jamaican Brit-pop ... the bass and drums were rolling the crowd in waves ... Sean was wedged in with a hundred punks and cute girls and the crowd was heaving from side to side in one great mass and suddenly Sean was *lifted off his feet and carried thirty feet across the floor.*

It was thrilling beyond belief ... the mass of humanity ... the sheer number of girls ... slamdancing was a male thing ... an angry young male thing ... you had to have guts and a lot

of anger to charge into the pit with a bunch of punks ... but this was different ... Bow Wow Wow was a pop band ... the lead singer was totally cute ... a lot of girls had turned-up and were getting their first taste of a wild show ... the feeling was high ... testosterone and estrogen were pumping ... hormones and pheromones were flying through the air ... heat and sweat and bodies were rubbing in excited pandemonium ... it showed how the whole punk thing had gotten stale ... the whole adolescent punk thing with the shaved head and no shirt and stupid tattoo, like a fucking Marine ... the guyness of it all was sickening ... that's what made dance clubs so cool, new ones like the 321 in Santa Monica, with sexy New Wave chicks in mini-skirts ... dancing with girls was the best ... that's why you needed dance music, and no one did pop dance music better than poofie Brits ... London was swarming with bands like Duran Duran and Adam Ant and Heaven 17 ... not to mention the whole ska thing. England had moved on.

Sean glanced around. People would be fucking soon ... in bathrooms ... under stairways ... a smallish girl in front was pressing against him ... she looked back and smiled ... shoved her ass into his crotch ... he was getting hard ... he grabbed her hips and pushed ... she squirmed back ... for a second he thought he might fuck her right there ... she grabbed his hand and pulled him out of the crowd, squeezing through ... she was a cute little dark-haired girl in black leotards ... a tight little ass you could fuck all night ... they

went upstairs to the balcony ... the music was pounding ... it was wild, looking down, the crowd was writhing ... they left the railing, searching wordlessly ... there was an old bar against the back wall ... they lay down behind it ... he settled in between her legs ... she yanked her leotards down ... a spot of moisture ... he plunged in, rock hard ... she was sopping wet ... she started coming the moment he entered her ... little spasms ... he thrust and thrust ... he was coming ... *abhh* ... *Jesus* ... he pulled out,

came all over her stomach ... he laughed ... they ought to throw that sperm onto the crowd, anointing the faithful.

Sean lay back, panting. The girl pulled up her leotards and laid her head on his chest.

Jesus. The things he'd done here. They used to have the Academy Awards at the Palladium. His high school graduation party had been here. Hollywood High, 1977. Sean had sat at a big round table with his mom while the gym teacher led a fifties band on stage. Saw The Clash here on his birthday ... 1979 ... it was a wild show, a fucking riot ... the band stood on stage with their legs spread like sailors, like a ship at sea, waves of spit flying at them non-stop for an hour ... how weird, the way these countercultures have to suffer, have to force things ... hippies had to get beat up and jailed for smoking pot ... punks had to endure an ocean of spit from their own fans ... Sean liked The Clash but he didn't love them ... not like he loved the Sex Pistols ... he'd gone up north for the famous last show ... January 14, 1978 ... the last Sex Pistols show ever, in San Francisco, no less ... at Winterland, where three months earlier Sean had driven all night with Conrad and Billy in Billy's VW to see the Dead ... Billy was the Deadhead, had an older brother ... it was weird that you could see The Grateful Dead at Winterland, in 1977, the old ice rink packed with original Bay Area hippies who had no idea that their whole world was over ... the sixties were dead but the body was still warm ... and three months later the Sex Pistols were flaming out as a whole new counterculture was born ... it was seeing the Sex Pistols that made Sean quit school and go to London ...

After the show Sean had nowhere to go so he wandered back to the office. Melanie had made fast work, the sign was already up ... but she fucked it up! It read:

THE STONER DETECTIVE