

I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU

She lay there on the grass and looked at me, I must confess that a certain feeling of warmth spread through my body as I stared at her breasts. So plump and ripe; like sweet succulent pears just waiting to be tasted.

“Why don’t you come over here,” she smiled. I gulped and looked away guiltily. She had read my innermost thoughts and now she was moving in for the kill. I mumbled to myself as I rolled over next to her. She grinned and nudged me affectionately and the shiver that ran up my spine was nothing short of electric.

“You’re not scared are you?”

“Me scared?”

Of course, I was scared, she wasn’t just your ordinary woman; not the kind you’d find walking down the streets of metropolitan Melbourne. This was a goddess come to life, someone whose exploits I had admired on the stage. She was a singer in a rock and roll band and I had queued for hours, along with thousands of other fans just for a glimpse of the black shining leather pants and white shirt that were her trademarks.

And how did I get to be lying next to my idol?

You wouldn’t believe it if I told you.

But if you insist I’ll attempt to cram twenty-four hours into the space of a few lines. It just so happened that my manager had signed me to a venue in the city. One of those run of the mill type places, ‘The Black Dog Tavern.’ I was to play in the ‘snakepit’ and believe me, the name fitted. Every kind of misfit and outcast went to the snakepit; it was that kind of place. They drank themselves into oblivion every night and slept off their hangovers by day, a bit like the vampires in a novel I’d just been reading. Come to think of it, some of the women even wore makeup that resembled that of a vampire at feeding time.

I could hardly see through the clouds of smoke that wafted over the stage. My nostrils caught the distinctive smell of dope—well at least someone was out for a good time tonight. It was 10 pm. when I took the stage and battled my way through three sweaty Blues numbers. I’ve always been a Blues man and this was that kind of club. I cast my eyes over the crowd as I stepped back and prepared to belt out an old Chuck Berry number—no response it was as if I didn’t exist. The only reaction was from a blonde woman near the back door, who applauded loudly whenever I finished a song.

I’m a vain person by nature, don’t get me wrong, it’s not as if I get off on the sound of my own voice. I’m not like all those movie stars and rock stars, who just love to have their picture taken wearing the latest Don Giovanni whatisname outfit. But I do have a secret desire to become famous, even if it’s only for fifteen minutes. At least then I’ll know if I want to live the lifestyle of the rich and shameless, or go back to being anonymous. I desire some sort of recognition, my mother was the same when she was alive. She wanted people to comment on the state the house was in, to my knowledge no one ever did; they just took it for granted that the house would always be spotless.

And so I played for this blonde woman sitting up the back. I couldn’t make out her face, because the lights were shining in my face but she was an audience. When I think about that night now, she was the only member of the audience who had noticed that I was indeed up there on stage; with an extremely loud guitar, bellowing into a microphone. My eyes were starting to water with the smoke that filled the room, people

seemed more interested in admiring the latest trashy outfit, than my act. And who could blame them I reasoned as I slid into an old Buddy Guy number.

My antics on stage seemed to drive her into a strange kind of frenzy and she whistled and cheered whenever I looked in her direction. So how come no one ever noticed that here was this rock goddess, who had come down to visit us poor mortals? How the hell should I know, I'm still trying to work that one out for myself, although the crowd was extremely drunk and she was wearing a wig and dark glasses.

My stint over for the night, I waved to the crowd, and at least this time I got some response, probably because of my one adoring fan up the back. Come to think of it, she had a way of bringing the spotlight to bear on me. Maybe she was used to spotlights, or maybe she was sick of the spotlight on herself, and just wanted to shine it on someone else for a change. Who knows, those rich and famous people can be a little weird at the best of times, must be all those bright lights and cameras...

"So how was the crowd tonight?"

I rolled my eyes in disgust at my manager, who was waiting backstage in a dingy little office that doubled as a dressing room.

"Pretty piss poor...although there was this one woman up the back who cheered every time I opened my mouth."

My manager chuckled as he lit a cigarette.

"You know who that was don't you?"

"Don't tell me," I snarled as the smoke billowed from his mouth, (Christ as if I hadn't breathed in enough smoke for the night), "the Queen of bloody Sheba."

"Close enough," he nodded and nudged the glossy tabloid across the table towards me. I stared at the article he'd been reading. It was my idol—I shook my head in disbelief as I recalled the woman who had cheered me on.

"You mean?"

"That's right," he smiled slyly, "she dropped by after the last song and left a phone number," he winked slyly. "And a written invitation to one of those fancy hotel parties."

I held the piece of paper in my hand as though it was a winning lottery ticket. "Jesus."

"That's what they'll be calling you from now on," he leaned forward and nodded towards the door.

"Now get outta" here before you get a big head and start giving me the shits."

It was barely three hours after I'd stepped off the stage that I found myself on another kind of stage. This one had no adoring crowds; it was a very private stage with managers, agents, and publicity people playing the part of the crowd. I lapped up the opulent surroundings; here at last was the inner sanctum that I had for so long dreamed about. They wrote volumes of words about these kinds of places.

She was sitting on a sofa over in the corner whilst they fawned over her. She accepted it with all the grace she could muster, but her eyes were only for me that night. Somewhat nervously I made my way over to her and nodded as politely as I could, my mind had gone blank.

"I enjoyed your act," she smiled. I nodded.

"You mean that?"

Her blue eyes flashed warmly.

“Of course I mean that, you don’t think we’re all lying assholes do you?” A ripple of laughter went up from the people sitting beside her.

“Umm no,” I ran a hand through my hair and tried to think of something intelligent to say, but my pools of wisdom had dried up for the rest of my life. She inclined her head towards the balcony.

“Come on outside we’re just sitting around talking horseshit, you wanna’ join in?”

“Sure.”

So much for all the things I had been dying to tell her for the last three years. It seemed like she either wasn’t interested, or already knew what I was trying to say and didn’t want to embarrass me. She seems to be that kind of woman you know; she likes to put you at ease and gets really uncomfortable when people say: “*Gee I loved every song you ever sang,*” she knows they only bought the last album. And that was because they had been invited backstage and didn’t want to look like dickheads. I guess she just wanted me to be myself.

We spent the whole night together, it seemed like she couldn’t get enough of me, like I was the first real person she had spoken to in twelve months.

She asked me to show her the sights the next day and I obliged. But I was kind of stuffed if you know what I mean. I mean to say, just where do you take a woman who’s been to Paris, New York and Rome. She’d been all over the world. But I’m an inventive bugger even if I do say so myself, and so I opted for the local park.

“It isn’t exactly Hyde Park now is it?” I ventured shyly. She laughed and lay back on the grass.

“No it ain’t mate, it’s better.”

“Right?” I scratched my head and tried to work out if there was some kind of hidden meaning to her statement but either I’m a bit thick, or she was just being polite. “You’re not like the rest of these assholes,” she inclined her head in the direction of her entourage.

I frowned, “now you’ve got me buggered, what do you mean by that?” She laughed, “I love that expression of yours, buggered, it has totally different connotations in the States.”

She studied me for a moment a bemused look on her face. “You’re a real person, you talk about real things and not my latest album. God I hated that one.”

“You did?” Thank God I didn’t tell her I’d loved it, she would have thought I was a real dickhead.

“You’ve no idea how relaxing it is to sit down and talk to another human being about the weather, your lousy boss, or your dog leaving hair all over the carpet.” She stared up at the sky before glancing over at me. “You think I’m weird don’t you?”

“Umm, no,” of course I thought it was weird, who wants to know that shit?

“Liar,” she teased. “You think just because I get my picture in all the magazines, that life’s just one big bowl of cherries right?” She didn’t wait for an answer. “God what I wouldn’t give just for some free time. Where I could be by myself and not have some agent or publicity agent hanging all over me, telling me that I’ve got another photo shoot in fifteen minutes.” She fell silent.

“So you don’t get to walk along beaches all by yourself?”

She chuckled and replied in the negative. “The last time I lay with a boy in a back yard was ten years ago.”

“That is weird,” she looked away and my face went bright red, “umm...I’m sorry I uh...”

She laughed, “I agree, perhaps I should do it more often.”

“So tell me,” I ventured hesitantly, “what was it about my singing that you liked?” Like I said I’m not an egotist, but I do like to know if I’ve done the right thing as I can hopefully repeat the formula.

“You mean you don’t know?” She rolled her eyes in despair, “Jesus are you Aussies all like this?”

“Well sort of,” I mumbled as I reached for another drink.

“You got what I ain’t got, at least not anymore. You got up in front of a crowd that didn’t care whether you lived or died, and sang your heart out. I couldn’t do that. If I thought that people weren’t going to like what I was doing, I’d probably run back home to mom or something stupid like that.”

She sat up suddenly and shook her head in disbelief. “It’s like all my life I was chasing this dream of being a superstar and now I am, I find myself recoiling from the image. Like I don’t know what to make of this woman they write about. When I first started out I was like you, didn’t give a hang what people thought of me. Then I got the first break and before I knew it I was sitting in Hollywood, being wined and dined and the ride still hasn’t stopped. I guess you brought it all home to me. Took me back to the beginning, that’s why I loved your act.”

She stared intently at me for a moment before delivering her closing line.

“You wonder why I invited you back? It’s because you got something I want..you got courage to keep going when the rest of the world walks away. Believe me, that’s something so few of us in my position have got anymore. You believed in yourself and I don’t always believe in myself. I think sometimes I believe more in what my agent tells me.”

I must admit, I was struck dumb by that admission, I don’t think I’ve ever been that honest myself, what could I say?

“I believe in you,” my throat was beginning to go dry, “that’s why I buy your albums...and I umm, did love your last album even though you hated it.”

She brushed an errant tear aside and leaning over, brushed her lips against mine.

“Thank you kind sir, it’s so much nicer coming from you.”

So that’s how I came to be sitting on the grass with this goddess, and if you doubt my word? Just ask around for me, people will know who you’re talking about; my name is the Dreamer. And you can see me whenever you turn on your television set, or flick through a magazine. Maybe I’m inside your head right now—who knows?

Written By Alastair Rosie © September1997.