

WELCOME TO FABULOUS ANGELES

Mick spun in like a hummingbird, too fast for focus. A phantom earthquake struck. The epicenter: me. I made out mascaraed eyes, a triangular nose, and pouty lips.

Jagger slapped a low-five on Moxie and then me. Moxie's eyes danced. "What it is, Mick."

Mick pulled his collared shirt out of his cuffed trousers. “Where’s the party?”

Mick’s sparkly date followed him into the room and the door got bolted.

I whispered to Moxie, “That’s Jerry Hall, the model, Mick’s girlfriend.”

Mick sashayed my way. I wanted to hang and hide at the same time. Mick and Jerry settled on the couch by the window, behind a coffee table. Fifty thousand volts rushed through my bloodstream. A man in a beanie threw a switchblade into the wall to a chorus of roars.

Another pasty-skinned Brit sauntered by. We knew he’d played keyboards for the Rolling Stones on the 1978 *Some Girls* tour of the United States, due to land at Anaheim Stadium in two days. He’d also tinkled ivories in his previous band, the Faces: Ian McLagan. Like an old friend, the man known as Mac handed me a mirror lined with streaks of crystalline powder, the rock star delicacy of the day: cocaine. He motioned with a rolled-up hundred-dollar note. “Care for a blast?”

Moxie grinned. My eyebrows shot to the ceiling. “Sure, Mac,” we said in unison.

I accepted the Benjamin bill, snorted one line on each side, and passed everything to Moxie. My nasal passages got hit by a snowstorm. The moisture in the back of my throat dried as I tried to garner enough saliva to swallow. My Adidas danced on the carpet. I became infused with more verve than Sammy Davis Jr. in a Vegas show, complete with a Sammy-style droop that paralyzed my lower lip.

Moxie gave Mac a hug and I mumbled my thanks. But McLagan’s acceptance of our presence didn’t calm me down. So far, I’d kept the heebie-jeebies inherent in our trespass under control—until I got jacked up on a Schedule II narcotic laced with amphetamine. I scanned the room for a beer to take off the edge, without success.

The clamor increased, the cork on another bottle of champagne popped, and tobacco smoke ricocheted off the ceiling. A steak knife

hit the phantom dartboard on the wall. I tried not to stare at our hero: the Marquis de Mick. I spotted a gleam in one of his upper right incisors and recalled reading, in *Creem* magazine, that Mick had gotten a diamond implanted in a tooth.

I gawked at Mick—Mick Fucking Jagger. He jabbered from the couch, all shop talk—stages, trucks, roadies—enunciated in that unmistakable Dartford drawl, spun on a million vinyl discs, all transmitted with a performer's intensity.

"Showco . . . Showco . . . Showco . . ." He asked tons of questions about the lighting and sound company handling the tour, displaying the business acumen he had refined in his student days at the London School of Economics. I could listen all day, no matter how mundane.

Mick escorted Jerry into the hall, turned back, and headed my way. I ogled his full head of floppy brown hair, smoother than my wild same-colored mane. My pulse throbbed in my throat and sweat leaked over both palms. I didn't say a word, way out of character for garrulous me—a guy nicknamed "Gabby," a guitar player whose fantasy involved a night on stage with the Stones. With Mick a foot away, I rose to trembly feet.

"Tonight in Tucson," the most-admired lips in rock and roll said, "Linda sang 'Tumbling Dice' with us." Ronstadt, who'd topped the charts with that Stones song the year before, grew up in southern Arizona. "She got so worried she'd slide off the stage in her huge heels that she tugged on my shirt. I thought she'd pull me down with her."