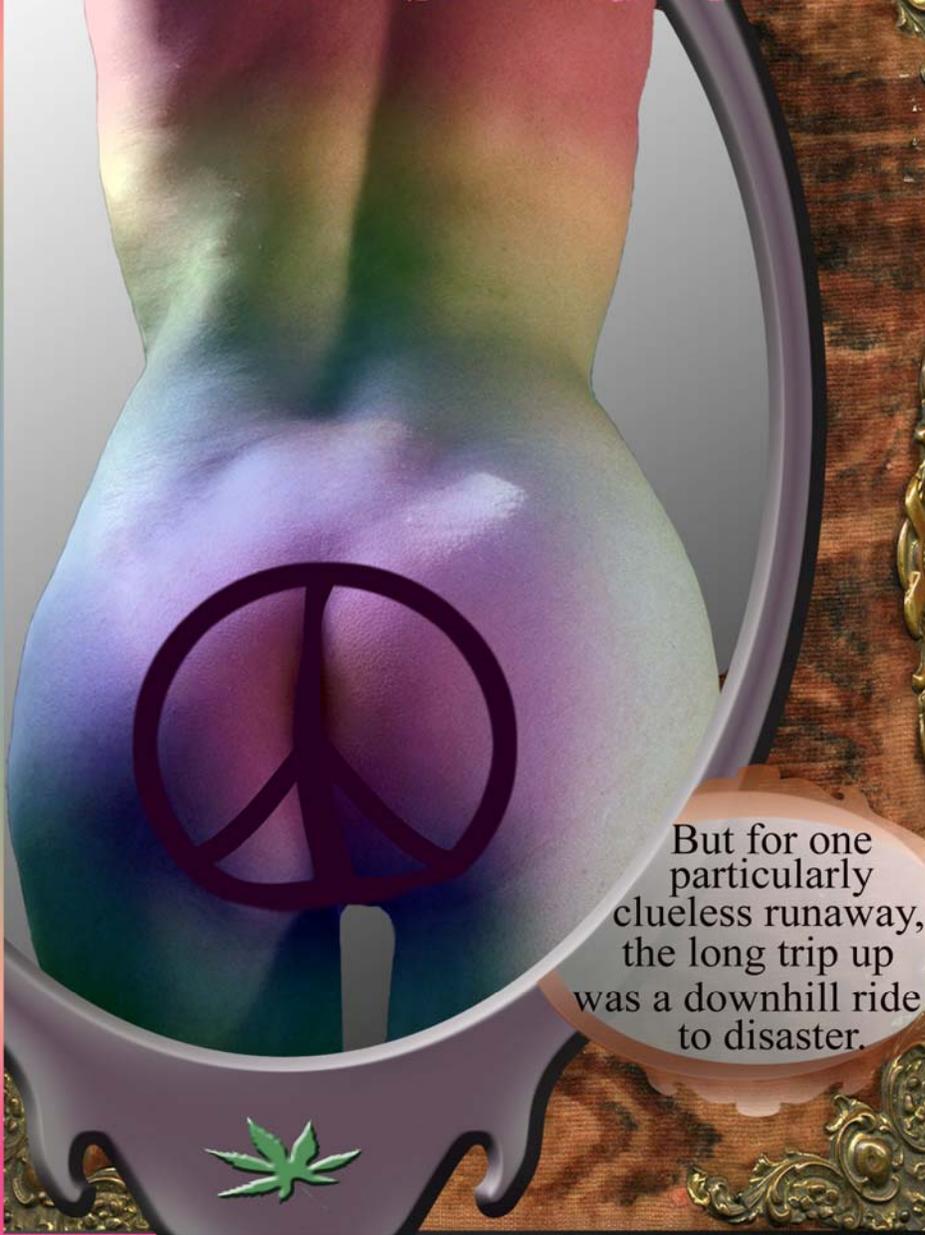




1967 gave us the Summer of Love. Johnson.  
Nam. Psychedelia. Sex, drugs, and rock 'n'roll.  
L.A. was the pits, Haight-Ashbury the place to be.



But for one particularly clueless runaway, the long trip up was a downhill ride to disaster.

# Carnival

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Also by this author:

Freak	Microcosmia
Moth In The Fist	Signature
Legerdemainia	The Deep End
	For Readers Only

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All of the fictions in this character are real,  
and any resemblance to the rest of you lemmings is strictly intentional.  
This said, the author wishes to forewarn all readers that the really big questions,  
e.g. What is the "meaning" of life? Is there a God?  
What happens to us after we die? How did everything "begin?" etc.  
will be addressed, perhaps for the very first time with absolute truthfulness, herein.  
None of these answers will make you "feel good,"  
therefore, you will feel, they cannot be "true."  
This feeling (because it's being processed by your brain)  
you will assume is a thought.



**NOTHING WILL SHAKE YOU FROM THIS ASSUMPTION!**

Since you won't *like* what the author is imparting here,  
and since it runs contrary to all you've been taught to think,  
the author "must" therefore be "wrong."  
Now, as it stands, there's a plethora of standard, positive responses you can get  
from any number of informed sources with cute little degrees  
proving their owners can authoritatively repeat what *they've* been taught to think.  
So why should you pay attention to this author? You shouldn't!  
Simply continue to wallow in propagandda and put on a happy face.  
And don't believe the author when he tells you there's really no such thing  
as happiness after all, that it's an invention, a concept, and,  
albeit well-meant, an obfuscation.  
God bless the beguiled.  
Better yet, ignore this work completely. Pick up a Harlequin Romance instead.  
Just don't touch yourself or you'll go blind.

“Kevin, I’m convinced mankind’s true evolution will commence when this whole aboriginal God trip is junked!”

—Eddie

“It’s just that honesty takes all the fun out of a witch hunt.”

—Lance

“Shit, I seen eunuchs got more balls than you got.”

—Nefertiti

“I tell you, life’s a gag, man, a joke; a silly little diversion in the endless labor of creation. And I’m not saying it’s not a good joke. I bust a gut every time I think about it. But it’s like this is a *running* joke, you dig? It just goes *on and on and on!* Okay, so maybe I’m not smart enough to see the glorious purpose of this living hell, and maybe I’m not deep enough to know whether it’s a deity or demon running the show, but before I go, man, *before I go*, I’ve simply *got* to get my hands on whatever’s in charge and say, ‘Hey, Sucker! I’m hip to sick jokes, okay? And I’ll take the fall as lamely as the next second-billionth banana. But don’t leave me hanging! Man oh man oh *man*, just what the hell’s the punch line?’”

—Sahib

“Too trippy,” Kevin said, slowly shaking his head, “much too trippy.”

## **Part One**

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- 4. Beach Blanket Bozo**
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# **PART ONE**

## **BLEAK NEWS FROM THE GENE POOL**

*author's note, post-mortem:*

It's a riot, it's a romp, it's a ride. It's a roller coaster of a revolution that jangles to this day.

Actually, it's 1967, and the place is Haight-Ashbury, a district of a few square blocks just outside downtown San Francisco.

The occasion? A spontaneous gathering of revelers, all set to erupt into lawlessness, licentiousness, and madness—that roller coaster's mind-blowing feature plunge.

And it's the intent of this document to accurately describe not only the event but the times—to, in so doing, fairly portray a philosophical dichotomy that pitted American against American with a bitterness not seen since the War Between the States. The work does not mean to defend one side against the other; it strives to be an account, rather than an argument. The following introduction attempts a brief history of the political climate and social turmoil leading to that emotional maelstrom known as *The Summer of Love*.

*For Lucian*



# Chapter 1

## The Itch Of Being

*In the beginning there was a burst of energy.*



To the disillusioned it was the sweet flowering of the human spirit, the blossoming of man.

*We were shell-shocked—a charismatic young president was in the ground. Smog was in our lungs, mercury in our fish, acid in our rain. And every night the tube laid it out straight for us: the sky was falling, ghettos were ablaze, drought-stricken countries were somehow producing starving children even faster than their desperately concerned parents could frantically copulate. Amazing. And, still playing King of the Mountain, the goliaths were scrapping over some festering wound in Southeast Asia. But that was all just news and nonsense—more emphatically than all these crises combined, the Bomb made it plain. We were doomed.*

*The blossom emerged Underground, with roots in British rock, Mexican hemp, Indian mysticism, American pharmaceuticals. Suddenly there was a beat in the air. We became light-headed and gender-fuzzy, politically hip and vagabond-chic. Rather than bear arms, we bore daisies. Instead of seeking enlistment, we sought to bedevil our senses. It was*

## Carnival

*our world now, and we were going to fix it; with smiles, with slogans, with symbols and songs. At the very brink of perdition we stood, synchronizing our auras to chant the Devil down.*

*It would take time. But we were young and strong and many. We had all this energy.*

*Enough to galvanize even the witless and despondent. Enough to give the staunchest of doomsayers pause. Enough to, for a stutter in time, make a difference.*

*And that burgeoning energy was Love, flinging its seeds and budding anew, fitting piece by piece each anomalous member of the stubborn human puzzle.*

*To our fathers, however, the choreographer's hand was unmistakable. All this business about peace and love could only be the usual commie line, designed to seduce and regiment the usual parade of whining followers. And the parade grated. After Normandy, after Inch'on, after all the lost lives and limbs—that we hairy young hedonists should spew a single syllable concerning policy riled even the most moderate of conservatives. We'd turned their Beaver Cleaver streets into psychedelic playgrounds, muddied the mat of every Judeo-Christian ethic—but pacifism under fire was the final straw. They raged and appealed, threatened and condemned, hurled accusations of everything from homosexuality to treason. Almost overnight “peace” became a dirty word, and any mention of spiritual flowering made palms itch for the rough kiss of a trusty scythe.*

*Eventually the blossom shriveled. We grew bored with it all, became pragmatic, and, to our everlasting and unforgivable shame, adopted typically pedestrian lives of dollar-based drudgery, bald-faced brown-nosing, and soulless confrontation.*

*Now the Revolution is little more than a doddering irrelevancy. Yet there are those who still believe the corpse can be resuscitated, the rush reproduced. They'll bend your ear if you let them. They'll hound you with tales of an age gone by, when freedom grew wild in the Pollyanna Spring. Be gentle with them, and never broach that lesson every generation learns way too late: that all that energy—all that optimism, enthusiasm, and potential—was vested in, of course, the impetuous hands of youth.*

## The Itch Of Being

joon 28 1967

jime

wuts hapunen

man hav i gawt nooz 4 yoo

dig this i finule tawkd mi old man in2 ltn me rid up 2 frisko  
with ed an mik

4 rel

i think i wood hav split newa evn if he kp saen no bcuz i kant  
~~stumak stomak~~ stan thu thawt uv hangen urown this dump  
awl sumr

4 1 theng mi mawmz rele bin awn thu rag L8Le she keps  
thrtne 2 grown me or snd me 2 sumr skool so its u good thng  
im gtn owt yl thu gtnz good

4 unuthr theng thu vibz mi old man poots owt wood kut throo  
stil

sumtimz he triz 2 ak lik he kaerz but i bt hez ltn me go jus 2 gt  
rid uv me

thu giz u rel dinusor jime awl he duz iz sit urown hawlren an  
griprn an guzlen ber lik thaerz no 2mro

he wont lt me gt uwa with nethen

but thats kool he duzn no it but 4 3 wex now iv bin shaken  
kwrtz owt uv that sprkltz bawtl he throz hiz chanj in iv gawt  
ovr 20 bux 4 thu trip

stil b4 i go id lik 2 tl him hez jus u wrthlus old frt drenken hiz  
lif uwa

but i think hed kil me

newa i lookd in thu fre prs an fown owt thu big goldn g8 prk  
konsrts stil awn

thaerz goen 2 b so mne fr owt bichn sooprhv groups it jus bloz  
mi min 2 thenk ubowt it jfrsun aerplan kand het an thu gr8fl dd  
4 shr

wut u gas

2 bad yoo had 2 go an bus yr lag but il b ritn an il lt yoo no wuts  
hapunen ech groov stond mil uv thu wa

wl i gs thats awl 4 now im rd 2 jam

jime im so xsitd i cood flip owt thenk uv it thu hol sumr awf an  
her im awn mi wa 2 thu sit

## Carnival

mab il ml yoo sum pawt bkuz i no wel b gtn hi up thaer  
wl thats awl iv gawt 2 rit 4 now im awn mi wa  
bi thu tim yoo gt this ltr il prawble b gtn it awn with sum groopz  
or rapn with hendrix az we pas u joent  
don b srprizd if i gt 2 yootopu an dsid 2 nvr cum bak thaerz  
nuthen down her evn wrth remmbren  
xsp 4 awl mi soopr tit frnz uv kors  
wl i gs thats awl jime so b kool an sta hi  
kevin

Kevin ran his eyes down the letter lustily, nodding with savage glee. The thing was a bombshell, all right; just the kind of brutally crafted, carefully polished communication he needed. A sprinkle of subtle allusions, a dash of trenchant wit. Something to play cat and mouse with the imagination. Jimmy's frustration would be calamitous, and this missive would lodge, hopefully, at the very root of the hobbled boy's misery, remaining to fester all summer long while Kevin, hundreds of miles up the coast, tapped salt in the wound with further letters exaggerating his own good fortune.

Now Kevin dropped the sheet of paper and wrung his hands, visualizing Jimmy, confined to his room in Long Beach, receiving an endless stream of mail postmarked an instant before arrival. This letter would be the first irritation—the first indication of the itch that couldn't be scratched. Kevin could just picture Jimmy's face contorting, the paper in his trembling hands smoldering with tales of high adventure and lush conquest. Kevin clenched his fists with the image, pounded his big paws together and nodded harder. For the briefest moment—so brief he wasn't sure it had really occurred—the boy's mind went utterly blank, like the switching-off and immediate switching-on of a hall lamp. This instant of blackness was accompanied by a sick pain behind the eyes, of such brief duration it, too, was questionable.

Strange.

That had been happening a lot lately. Or had it? He felt anxiety coil in his chest and pass. Stranger still. There wasn't any reason to be anxious, was there? Things couldn't be more bitchen.

## The Itch Of Being

Outside his bedroom rose a thundering, heart-stopping bellow of absolutely mindless passion, finally punctuated by a tremendous two-footed stamping that rattled the windows and shook the door. A string of black obscenities, another bellow, and a long groan followed by a truncated curse. Kevin, so accustomed to these outbursts he hardly noticed, folded the letter and slid it into an envelope. Before repetition could sour the image of Jimmy's frustration, he licked the envelope's gummed edge and sealed it, trapping the image inside. But while laboriously centering Jimmy's address in thick block print he felt his enthusiasm slip away, almost as if it were leaking out the pen's felt tip. It was an old problem, this relentless sinking of spirit, connected, in some way, to the effort expended in concentration.

At least he was pretty sure it was an old problem.

Hadn't he just, only seconds before, been thrilled, awed, or expectant about some notion, conviction, or gambit related in some way to some plan or other? He wished he could put his finger on it, and wished, too, that he could include in his letter some reference to this problem—if there really was a problem—and maybe get his friend Jimmy's advice. But it was too late, the envelope was sealed, and besides, Jimmy really wasn't that close a friend. In fact, Jimmy wasn't much of a friend at all, the prick. When he had moved to Long Beach there had been no goodbye for Kevin, no acknowledging the big shy boy as a human being worth remembering. Kevin had procured Jimmy's new address from an acquaintance in common, and had continued the charade of having a pen pal (even though he'd never received a note in return) only because he so desperately needed friends. His emotional turmoil had not diminished with time. But Jimmy would be sorry now. He sure as hell would. Kevin looked around for some assurance, for some kind of tangible evidence to support his excitement, and saw nothing but the dirty, cracker-thin walls of his bedroom, coldly returning his stare. He tore through the clutter on his desk, found a clipping scissored from the *Free Press*, held it up to his eyes as if it were pornography:

HAIGHT-ASHBURY—Now that the long-awaited and much-ballyhooed Summer Solstice Festival is history, the Hashbury flower children are clamoring for more. And apparently their very vocal reactions to the Festival, a disappointing assemblage of less than 5,000 on Golden Gate Park's Speedway Meadows, have inspired several hip organizers to rally freaks statewide for a comeback which, in concert promoter Bill Graham's opinion, will be a tribal gathering to dwarf even January's highly-publicized Human Be-in. And *so*—in effect—this new festival will simply be an extension of the big July 6 concert announced in the *Freep*'s May 7 issue. Since the date for the festival coincides with what is expected to be the peak of Hashbury's Summer of Love invasion, San Franciscan officialdom is doing some pretty tough talking. By now, however, it must be obvious even to the hard-hearted civic council that any effort to halt an enterprise involving such a multitude of freaks would only exacerbate the situation. After endless bullying and cajoling, the *Freep* was granted an interview with Mayor John Shelley Himself, whose outlook on the festival was something less than positive.

*"It's a disgrace,"* the mayor stated. *"It's an outrage! You people think you can exploit the common goodwill..."*

(and here Kevin skipped down the column impatiently)

*"...latent communists...swinish habits...hotbed of drug users and runaways...Haight Ashbury district...reputation as a haven...rebellious types...indications of this cancer spreading to the park proper...over three hundred men covering the park, and drugs will not, repeat will not be tolerated!"*

Then some obviously inflated figures dealing with current Park Station manpower, followed by one of Shelley's stock got-it-covered speeches. Kevin frowned smugly and read on:

The mayor's precautions, however, are bound to prove embarrassing. Reports from The Berkeley Barb—and rumors substantiated by reliable underground sources—indicate an expect-

## The Itch Of Being

ed crowd of some 30,000 freaks from Marin, San Mateo, Contra, and Alameda counties, and a possible influx of up to 20,000 from other parts of the state.

Kevin dropped his arm and let the lost smile slowly reform. Although he'd read the clipping a hundred times, the joy he now felt came as something new and refreshing. Oddly, the repeated readings hadn't improved his spelling and punctuation comprehension a whit. He was one of those essentially lazy individuals who absorb the world selectively. If it required any work, any *application* that did not result in instant gratification, it was far too abstruse for Kevin. But he carefully folded the clipping and filed it in one of the flimsy plastic windows in his wallet, where he could always reach it and, like a fresh convert riffling Bible pages, search it for those familiar words so vital to his ambition: *flower children, Summer of Love, drug users, runaways. A haven. A hotbed. Freaks, underground sources.*

It was way too good to be real.

Just emancipated from high school and one week into a promising summer—a summer that had, only two weeks ago, presented all the horrors-to-be of a long and depressing three months divided into neat halves: six weeks of summer classes, followed by six weeks of stewing around the house dreading each confrontation with his parents. That this prospect was no less unappealing to the parents had been revealed by the father's uncharacteristically quick compliance. Big, tough, irascible Joe—who wouldn't let no goddamn punk kid of *his* get away with doing any goddamn thing he wanted t'do, and just who the hell d'you think wears the goddamn pants in this goddamn family—big, booming, diehard Joe had, for some obscure reason, readily acquiesced to his son's desperate request. And Kevin, always forced to remain in the neighborhood, had felt new wind under rusty wings. Unaccustomed to independent thought, his mind was suddenly teeming with plans. And slowly an idea had taken shape, at last solidifying to become The Secret: Kevin had no intention of returning to this zoo—ever. But The Secret had to remain a secret. If Big Joe found out his son had pulled one over on him he would kill the boy, slowly

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