

ALL THESE THINGS

by Dana Pride

CHAPTER 1

"And now, the band you've been waiting for, all the way from 48th and Englewood, let's give a big welcome to The Others!"

As the announcer scooted off the stage, the lights flashed on and the first note of the music blasted through the enormous speakers. The huge crowd cheered loudly, greeting the valley's most popular band to the stage of the state fair.

Dash kicked one leg high up in the air while striking his guitar strings on that first note, the energetic entertainer in his natural forum, with a huge smile on his face as he played one of his favorite original songs. He stepped up to the microphone amid the screams of the hundreds of fans and began to sing.

"So you think, you think you want to be a star,
Go for it!
If you think, you think you can go far,
Go for it!"

The music accented the words and the audience screamed more loudly. Dash's fingers flew across the guitar strings almost faster than anyone could see.

"Well, we've all got a dream,
Sometimes they rip at the seams, (seems to me)
You better do somethin' 'bout it, don't ever doubt it,
Go for it!"

Dash leaped up in a scissors kick, synchronized with the music as the cameras flashed on the band. His smile and enthusiasm during the performance made the audience feel as if they were participants in the performance, not just spectators, interacting with Dash and the band.

"If you see someone sweet walking down the street, what do you do?" Dash asked in his song.

"Go for it!" the audience shouted.

"If you see a dude you want to meet," Dash sang.

"Go for it!" the audience replied.
"Well, we've all got a dream, (all got a dream)
Sometimes they rip at the seams, (seems to me)
You better do somethin' 'bout it, don't ever doubt it,
Go for it!"

The music got louder through the musical interlude. The people at the front of the crowd were either waving their arms to the beat or just screaming. Dash kept smiling at them.

Dash glanced at the other band members as he played his guitar lead. He jumped up and kicked his long leg over guitarist Paulie Barrett's head. Dash began to sing the final verse.

"If you've got something that's got to be done,
Go for it!
If you can make money doing something fun,
Go for it!
Well, we've all got our dreams, (all got our dreams)
Sometimes they rip at the seams, (seems to me)
You better do somethin' 'bout it, don't ever doubt it,
Go for it!"

As they finished the song, they made the transition into the next song, a lively love song written by Ham. Ham and Dash harmonized beautifully, and again, Dash played an intricate lead. At the end of the song, Dash addressed the crowd.

"How ya all doin' tonight?" he asked.

He was answered by more than twenty thousand people, shouting and screaming their approval.

"We are The Others, and we are glad to be here with you tonight. I'd like to introduce the members of the band. Joe Sellers on the keyboards and backing vocals..." Dash paused while Joe took a bow to the screams of approval.

"... Ham Hockinson on bass and vocals..." Ham smiled and hit a chord and raised his hands.

"...Paulie Barrett on rhythm guitar..." Paulie waved. He looked like a smaller version of Dash: he dressed like Dash on stage and imitated his movements during the performance, though Paulie did not go to such extremes as Dash did.

"...and always on time, never missing a beat, more reliable than a drum machine, Lenny Hand on the drums!" Lenny hit the symbols.

"And I'm Dash, on lead guitar, and sometimes vocals," he told the shrieking fans, as he struck the chord to signal the beginning of the next song.

The performance went well, without a technical error or artistic mistake. The crowd was screaming and singing along to most of the songs, as Dash took every opportunity to play with them, not to them. He was so touched when he saw tears in the eyes of most of the girls when he sang the love songs, he began to get a lump in his throat. He was connected to his audience, not as a performer on a pedestal, but just another one of them - the one who happened to be singing and playing his guitar.

After three encores, the band left the stage as the cheers and chants grew louder and louder.

"Others! Others! Others! Others!" they shouted.

Dash led the band out for one last bow and the crowd went wild, throwing phone numbers, flowers, socks and various undergarments on stage as the cameras flashed again and again.

Backstage, reporters and photographers from the local newspaper and TV stations were crowding around with pens, paper and cameras, each desiring an interview with Dash and the other members of The Others. Lindsey Station from one of the TV stations cornered Dash and began to question him as the cameraman wiggled to get in place for the interview. The other reporters turned to hear Dash speak. Dash, in his outgoing way, extended his hand over his guitar as the rest of The Others gathered behind him.

"Hi, I'm Dash," he said with a genuine smile.

Lindsey, caught off balance, yet already comfortable with the young star, shook his hand and shuffled her notes, regaining her composure.

"I'm Lindsey Station from Channel 23, and it's nice to meet you, Dash. How does it feel to be the leader of the hottest band in the Northwest?"

"I'm not the leader of the band. I'm the lead singer and lead guitarist, but I'm not the leader. I'm just twenty percent of the band, the same as the other four members. We all write songs and we make all of our decisions together," Dash explained. "But to answer your question, I feel great."

"But you are the leader, each of the 20,000 fans tonight could clearly see that," Lindsey protested.

"No, we are all equal members. I sing some songs and Joe sings some, and Paul sings some, and even Ham sings a few."

"So, in what direction are you going to take the band from here?"

"I'm not taking the band in a direction, because I'm not the leader. We make all of our decisions together."

Not flustered, Lindsey referred to her notes. "Our viewing audience would like to know how you got started in the music business."

"I've been playing guitar since I was about 6 years old. My older sister had a guitar and I picked it up when she was at school. I watched her learn how to play, and she taught me to read music. We went to Disneyland when I was 7 and I saw a band performing on a stage. From that moment, I knew I wanted to play music. My sister stopped playing after a couple years or so, and she gave her guitar to me."

"So you have been playing guitar for 15 years?" Lindsey asked, astonished.

"Yeah, a little more than that."

"But you weren't born with a guitar in your hand?"

"Well, it feels so natural, I guess God gave me the gift of music at a young age, as well as the desire and ability to play."

"What are your plans for The Others?" Lindsey asked.

"I don't have plans for The Others, because I'm not the leader. I just plan to stay with them and keep playing. Things have been happening fast for us, ever since we toured with Clear Blue Castle. We plan to record some of our songs and play as much as we can."

"On stage tonight, you interacted with the audience throughout the show. Do you always do that?"

"I can tell this is the first time you've seen us in action," Dash teased. "We get energy from the people there with us. We don't see them as an audience, they are part of the show too. The more they participate, the better we can play with them."

"One last question, what goals do you have set for your band?" Lindsey read from her notes.

"Okay, this time I am the leader," Dash said, flashing a smile at the camera, "and I would like to see the band playing on a regular basis. We also have enough material to record at least two albums, and as soon as we do that, I hope you and all of the viewing audience will buy copies of each." The rest of The Others patted his shoulders and shouted in agreement.

"Thank you, Dash, leader of The Others," Lindsey said, turning to the camera. "This is Lindsey Station reporting for News 23."

Other reporters began to shout questions at Dash, and he stayed another forty-five minutes answering them while the rest of the band changed their clothes. Security guards were holding the fans back, out of the dressing rooms and hallways. When the reporters were finished and hurrying to edit their stories, an older man approached Dash with a smile.

"Hi, my name is Benny, and I own Bruback Moons down on Second Avenue. I heard you playing tonight and you are excellent! You are just the kind of act we've been looking for. I was wondering if you and your band would be willing to play as our house band?"

"I'm sure we would love to, but I need to discuss it with the other members of the band. We make all of our decisions together," Dash repeated for the third time this evening.

"Oh, I was under the impression that you are the leader," Benny said.