

SLAM!

*Excerpt from Chapter 'Chloe'*

Chloe is eighteen; she lives in a tower block. Chloe likes a laugh; she's up for it. Chloe thinks a lot of things are bollocks. 'Bollocks,' says Chloe, she's up for it. Chloe likes trash. Chloe likes fetish clubs. Chloe's got her bottom lip pierced. Chloe's had her tongue pierced; she's considering having her clitoris pierced. Chloe's up for it. Chloe's in an all girl band called Cum. Cum have had four rehearsals. Chloe wants to gig but the other band members say they're not ready yet. 'Bollocks,' says Chloe. Chloe's up for it. She's written three songs, she's learnt the words. 'So what,' says Chloe to the other members of Cum, 'So what if we could do better.' 'So what Sharon if you're not happy with the intro on "Trouble", it don't matter. Bollocks Sharon, it's just a laugh. We'll get better. Let's just do it. Who cares if we fuck up?' Sharon's full of excuses, and the trouble is, Charlie and Grace always agree with her. 'They're wusses,' thinks Chloe, 'Scaredy cats.' Chloe really can't see what the problem is. Chloe thinks life is for the living and there's just no point in wasting time. Rehearsals are boring. Chloe knows all the words to the songs that she's written. Chloe only likes the rehearsals when they just get on with it, but too often Sharon keeps stopping and twiddling about; her, Charlie and Grace, over and over again. 'One, two, three,' goes Sharon, and they all twiddle about. Twiddly, twiddly, twiddle. As far as Chloe's concerned it's all just fear, they're all scardy cats. Chloe's not scared. She just wants to get on with it. Sharon says they need a manager, and Charlie agrees. 'Bollocks,' thinks Chloe. Chloe wants to get out there. Chloe's already asked Liz if they can play at Spank. Liz likes Chloe; she's good for the club. Chloe's not afraid to just get up on the dance floor at Spank and be outrageous. Her and Grace, wiggling and bumping. Grace is the drummer in Cum. Sharon says her drumming is weak. 'So fucking what?' thinks Chloe. Grace's brother is in a death metal band and he's got a fucking massive drum kit. Grace only uses the bass drum, snare and hi-hat. Sharon says it's limiting their sound. 'Bollocks,' thinks Chloe, 'It sounds good to me,' she says to Sharon. *Bah, bah, bah-bah, tush.* Grace's drumming it's rock solid. *Bah bah bah-bah tush.* And if Sharon would just stop being such a wuss and bloody well give it some. Sharon always was a scardy cat, at school, everywhere, but she can play. When she just goes for it she sounds like Marc Bolan. Chloe likes Marc Bolan. Her mum's got some of T.Rex's records. Ancient 7" singles. *Bah, bah, bah bah You're so sweet// Bah bah bah bah You're so fine.* Jeepster and Metal Guru: *Metal Guru has it been//Just like a silver-studded sabre-toothed dream.* It's great. Chloe and her mum leaping about the living room. *Metal Guru could it be// You're gonna bring my baby to me.* And they just leap about and scream and go mad. And it's so good cos Bolan's lyrics don't mean anything. But Chloe knows exactly what they mean. And if Sharon would stop being such a wuss and just give it some. Just forget the musicianship/fear

bollocks. Just let go. Like the first rehearsal when Shazza was a bit drunk and they were all having a laugh. *Sproing, tah-ranga sproing* went Sharon, her head kind of rocking from side to side, her blond hair over her face. And she's got these foot pedals: flange and wah-wah, and when she's just going for it she hits the pedals and it's fucking paradise. *Bah-ba tush, Sproing, wah wah wah* and they're off. Chloe thinks it's great. Grace couldn't even play at first, but she's not scared to just give it the basic rhythm. Charlie thunders on with rudimentary bass, Chloe screams and wails like a demented banshee and Shazza; *sproing, diddly diddley wha wha sproing*, like some Zinc Alloy Thunder Kid. It's great. They look great. Charlie with her school uniform and her dyed black hair up in bunches. Her skirt rolled up on the waistband so it's fantastically short, her knickers showing. Grace with her leather pants and black cropped t-shirt, her face always deadly serious; concentrating on the rhythm; *bah, bah, bah-ba tush*, banging just as hard as she can. Sharon her stupid girly glittery strappy dress and high heels, playing mad wandery guitar, looking all dreamy, but Chloe knows it works. Chloe knows it looks great. It'll send the boys wild and make the girls green with envy. So fucking what if they can't play like boys play. Chloe couldn't give a fuck. 'All you need is bottle,' she tells Sharon. Chloe doesn't care if it all goes a bit haywire when they play. When it's all falling apart she'll just wail and scream, and if needs be, then she'll do something outrageous. Chloe; like a cross between Tank Girl and Lara Croft and completely mental. Chloe can't wait to just get out there and play, but Sharon's not having it and that's that.