

**In A Town Somewhere North of Milton Keynes
By Joshua Val Martin**

Characters

DENISE

Female.

ALISON

Female.

ROZ

Female.

THE TOWN

Female, with a terminal illness. Plays all characters not identified above (THE JOB CENTRE, JO THE JOURNALIST etc).

THE BAND

Musicians. Perhaps formed by the actors playing the above roles.

Pre-show

THE BAND enter their bedsit, sipping cheap lager from tins.

The album THE BAND are about to play, 'In a Town Somewhere North of Milton Keynes,' tells the story that is to unfold.

THE BAND warm-up, tuning their instruments

ROZ picks up a guitar, and begins to play.

ALISON watches DENISE as she sits down.

Once DENISE is sat down, ALISON disappears.

Crescendo of this noise.

DENISE does not stand up for a year

The noise becomes a steady beat.

THE TOWN and ROZ play a song to set the scene.

ROZ.

We were in a small church hall
You could hear the organ's drawl
It was very fine
I was on Cloud Nine

In this town, by the park
Dealing dibs out in the dark
It was very nice
Yellow lamps and white lightening on ice

On that day, that delightful day
It was very fine
I was on Cloud Nine
On that day, that delightful day
It was very nice
Yellow lamps and white lightening on ice

It is a year to the day since DENISE sat down-

The song becomes ROZ sat playing acoustically and alone.

The song becomes-

Side One: Track One: Drive By Shooting

Morning. ROZ is playing guitar beside a bus stop.

THE TOWN appears and tosses her a coin. THE TOWN sings.

THE TOWN.

On that day, that delightful day
It was very fine
I was on Cloud Nine

ALISON appears towards the bus stop. ALISON spots ROZ.

ALISON avoids being spotted by ROZ.

ROZ spots ALISON.

THE TOWN starts playing as ROZ stops.

ROZ. It's been a while since I've seen you this side of town.

ALISON. We're hoping to encourage new businesses into the area.

ROZ. I wouldn't see the point.

ALISON. I don't suppose you'd understand- I mean, neither do I half the time.

ROZ. I'm just on my way to work anyway.

ALISON. At the job centre?

ROZ. Nice seeing you, Ali.

ALISON. Alison.

ROZ. What?

ALISON. You said Ali; my friends call me Alison.

ROZ. Obviously.

ALISON. Give my love to Denise.

ROZ. My Mum? I'm not sure what she'd do with second-hand love.

ALISON. Say 'hi' if it's easier

ROZ. How about we catch up? Right now.

ALISON. The bus will be here any second- I've a big day- and I'd need to check the diary.

ROZ. Until the bus comes then because I'm not er-working for another half an hour.

ALISON. I could perhaps stretch next Tuesday if you're not, er-working?

ROZ. I actually think I'd like to catch up right now.

ALISON. As you wish.

ROZ. So now you ask me a question.

ALISON. Okay, well- I see you're still playing that, er-

ROZ. Guitar? Yes.

ALISON. That's good, isn't it? Lots of talent.

ROZ. Lots. And I see you're still one of those-

ALISON. Councillors?

ROZ. Twats?

ALISON. Hey. I know this has been tough-

ROZ. Yeah, it's tough- I'm the girl who can't hold down a job.

ALISON. But there comes a day when you've to stand on your own two feet.

ROZ. I can't hold down a job because I'm looking after a *Mum*-

ALISON. So she's still sat down? You can't let her keep you from moving on.

ROZ. Do I get any help? Do I fuck: Do - I - Fuck

ALISON. Just breathe Roz, you'll have people staring.

A double decker bus drives through the puddle and soaks ROZ but not ALISON.

ALISON. Oh look what you've done now- here, take my coat

ROZ. I don't want your coat

ALISON. How about money? Here I've a few notes here if you're desperate.

ROZ. I don't want money either

ALISON. Well then what do you want?

ROZ. Money doesn't cook or clean. Money can't keep me company.

ALISON. Money keeps us going.

ALISON again offers ROZ a note or two. ROZ considers.

THE TOWN.

On that day, that delightful day
It was very nice
Yellow lamps and white lightening on ice

THE TOWN begins to change, become, set up as THE JOB CENTRE.

ROZ. Thank you. *Alison.*

ROZ rips up the note into the tiniest pieces and throws it into the puddle.

ROZ. Money can't do much as maybe a little time.

ALISON. You ungrateful little shit. I'm trying to help. How dare you.

ROZ. Sorry, I'd better go, or I'll be late.

ALISON. Don't walk off from me now. Get back here.

ALISON stands in the way of ROZ and THE JOB CENTRE.

ALISON. I've had a very busy year. I wish I could have been there more.

ROZ. Sorry I can't talk now though maybe you can squeeze me in next Tuesday?

ALISON. Funny you're still here- don't most your age go to Uni these days?

ROZ. Not me.

ALISON. No, not you. Not Roz. You're still here.

ROZ. That's right.

ALISON. Get yourself sorted, Roz.

ROZ. Isn't this your bus, coming up?

ALISON. I've just realised- I double booked.

ROZ. That busy schedule of yours.

ALISON. Yes. There's somewhere else that needs me more.

ALISON disappears.

Side One: Track Two: A Little Spare Change

THE TOWN and ROZ appear. THE BAND makes sound to suggest a busy job centre.

ROZ. Your hair is different

THE JOB CENTRE. You know I get it set on Tuesdays.

ROZ. There's something else that I can't put my finger on.

THE JOB CENTRE. That's because it's time for change, isn't it Roz?

ROZ. I have been looking for jobs. See here- The Old Beverley Pub.

ROZ passes THE JOB CENTRE her JSA booklet.

THE JOB CENTRE. Good. Handing out CVs...

ROZ. And The Crusty Ewbank- it's a pub.

THE JOB CENTRE. *(amused)* The Crusty Ewbank's a new one.

ROZ. It's not that I haven't been looking because I have right, it's just tough-

THE JOB CENTRE. Oh I know, don't worry.

ROZ. You know what- I preferred the perm.

THE JOB CENTRE. Give over, you were just making me smile.

ROZ. Your face didn't look nearly as broad when you had a perm.

THE JOB CENTRE. My other half prefers it now.

ROZ. Well your other half hasn't known you as long as I have though.

THE JOB CENTRE. And that's why things need to change.

ROZ holds up a Doctor's note.

THE JOB CENTRE. Don't push it, Roz.

ROZ. It's a disease like any other.