

Box Chicken©

Characters

Aileen Weeks- (Daughter)- Fifteen

Ryan Smith- (Aileen's friend)- Twenties

Rose Weeks (Mother) Thirty Sevenish (Has been for the last four years)

Kyle Connor- (Rose's Boyfriend/ Common Law Husband)- Forty Six

Silco Weeks- (Rose's Brother)- Forty Five

Tatiarna Chela-(Used to go to Aileen's Secondary School)- Seventeen

Settings

Takes place in Wembley. The settings are:

Manhattan- A run down chicken shop.

Rose's kitchen- In an upstairs flat.

A street- Positioned near Rose's flat, the chicken shop Manhattan and the Brent council office. All within close reach of each other.

Act One

Scene One

Ailleen and Ryan are sitting in the chicken shop- 'Manhattan'. The shop is closed and the interior is in a state of unready; ladders up; signs to be hung; paintwork to complete; furnishing to assemble and order. There is a gambling machine to the left of the counter. Above the counter displays the worn out chicken and pizza meal deals, obscured by aged grease. Abba is playing from a CD behind the uneven counter.

Ailleen I wish it was 1976 and I was hearing Abba for the first time. I wish my hair was platinum blond an I had heavy blue eye shadow. Deep blue an heavy. (Sings). You can dance, you can ji- ive, having the time of your life. (Ailleen continues to sing, although it is now less audible).

Ryan That'll be you A, on your 16th birthday, Dancing Queen. (Beat). But blue eye shadow an platinum blond 'air, woz all dat about.

Ailleen (Touches it, stops singing). Jus' something my mum says. Could do it for my 16th.

Ryan It's the big one A, Kyle'll be pushing da boat out.

Ailleen My Mum's doing something special, she's planning it.

Ryan (Beat). Bet you can't wait. (Beat). I member my 16th, it weren't nuffin. My mum give me diz 25p wrapped in a bit of old newspaper, told me it was lucky. She saw me in da street. I woz wiv Terry. Hadn't seen 'er fur months. 'Tek diz, true say it would bring you luck'. Me an Terry when in da shop, and he seen da cover a Brent Leader, bout a man dat did turn 'is love a fishing inta a business. Like any udder black person, dare's nuffin Terry loves betta dan chicken, so all dem years late-a, he turned dat love inta management a this chicken shop an me inta helping him out. So maybe she was right. (Beat). I'm trying a persuade Terry to get some new tunes up in here though.

Ailleen Natalie at schools a vegetarian an she's black. She said she only eats coleslaw.

Ryan Daz cos she carn afford to eat nuttin' else. (Beat). When I was at school dare weren't no such ting as a black vegetarian.

Ailleen

Ryan Tell your dad dares a pile a computer parts an a fridge, top a Church Road, I seen a microwave in Monks Park too.

Ailleen (Pause). What time would you go to? If you could?

Ryan (Only half listening and changing the menu above the counter). 1979. The Sugar Hill

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By Max Katz

Gang: Rapper's Delight. (Sings). To the black, the white, the purple an yellow.

Aileen Do you think I'm ugly?

Ryan I think you're bout-i-ful. I'm always telling you dat A.

Aileen Do you mean it?

Ryan Man of my word.

Aileen (Staring out the window at passersby). What you think's wrong with her? Or him? Maybe when he goes home he beats his wife, or maybe when she goes home she takes an axe from under her bed an secretly sharpens it every night at the bottom of the garden. Or maybe he keeps a bag of poison in the wardrobe.

Ryan You an your riddles A. I'm trying out the fryer.

Aileen If you peel the skin away from someone do you think people would recognise who they were? From their voice, or from the way their eyes moved, or from how their teeth fit together. (Beat). Do you think Ricki'll find a way out- for my birthday? Prisoners escape don't they.

Ryan Some do. But I'm not sure he's been captured.

Aileen It's what my Mum says- If he wasn't captured he'd come back.

Ryan (Beat). Iz not dat easy Aileen- Jus' ta pick up an leave.

Aileen Which war did he go out to fight- How long's he been there now/

Ryan We bin through all dis Aileen. War's continuous, everytime you get a new Prime Minister, you get a new war- Iz not important which war he when out for- Jus' dat 'es out there now an won't come back/

Aileen Can't/

Ryan But, if 'e woz a prisoner a war- couldn't, I mean wouldn't the government do sum'ming about it- search- negotiate- It'd be on da news an everyfing/

Aileen Ricki loves Mum. He's being held against his will. If Ricki came back, mum wouldn't be the way/

Ryan Your mum being the way she is, is more'n about Ricki- She's, she needs ta get her head straight. Straighten up an fly right, like one a Terry's songs go. All your mum needs is you and Kyle to do dat.

Aileen. (Beat). Do you think chickens have souls?

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Ryan (Placing the new menu). Well they got feet, so they must got soles. (Goes to the fridge).

Aileen Maybe, I could write to the Ministry of Defence/

Ryan Focus on your birthday Aileen, that's what mat-ers. Ministry of Defence aint interested in people like us. Ministry of Defence aint writing to soldiers in the desert- it'd only get sent back, address unknown.

Aileen Mum would know his last regiment, she'd know his last address/

Ryan You could ask, but ain't your mum got enough on her plate.

Aileen If I had a son, I'd want to know where he was.

Ryan You're 15 Aileen, wot you going on about sons for/

Aileen I'm sixteen soon/

Ryan Sixteen don't make you a woman, it jus' makes you one year older'un 15.

Aileen (Beat) If I was Ricki's aged I'd try/

Ryan Well you're not, so lez jus' try out this fryer yeah. How many wings you want? You can 'ave six, eight or 12.