

**Music No. 15b: TAX PAYER'S BENTLEY**

## SCENE SIX

RITA returns to the maisonette. She walks in the door, closes it, takes her coat off. A radio is playing, radio one, chart hits, quietly.

RITA Eddie, Eddie!?

*(She looks at her watch. Goes to the foot of the stairs.)*

Graham! Sharon! I'm gonna do fish fingers!

*(Silence.)*

Mash and peas! *(Beat.)* Alright! I'll do chips! Graham!? Sharon?!

*(Deadly silence. She runs upstairs and straight back down again.)*

*(To herself.)* Eddie!!!!????

*(She goes into the kitchen and then finds the letter on the table. She opens the letter. EDDIE sings.)*

**Music No. 16: THE LETTER**

EDDIE

I JUST CAN'T TAKE THIS ANY MORE  
I'M GONNA TAKE THE KIDS AWAY  
FOR A DAY OR TWO – I'M NOT SURE

I KNOW I'M NOT ONE FOR TALKING  
BUT I THINK YOU KNOW WE SHOULD  
SO IF YOU'RE EVER AROUND  
YOU NEVER KNOW,  
MIGHT DO SOME GOOD

COS I CAN'T DO THIS  
ON MY OWN, NO MORE  
I NEED YOU AROUND  
OR ELSE WHAT IS THIS ALL FOR?

I NEED YOU TO STAND BESIDE ME  
I NEED YOU TO BE MY WIFE  
IT'S SUCH A SIMPLE THING  
I NEED YOU IN MY LIFE

*(RITA sits and starts to cry.)*

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE SAYING AT WORK?  
I'D TELL YOU IF YOU WERE EVER HERE,  
"READ HER THE RIOT ACT, KEEP HER IN LINE  
GET HER IN THE HOUSE, AND YOU OUT FOR A BEER"

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE GONNA SAY BEHIND MY BACK?  
WELL I'D TELL YOU IF YOU WERE EVER HERE  
"WHO'S IN CHARGE? WHO WEARS THE TROUSERS?  
MAYBE HE'S, YOU KNOW, A QUEER"

COS I CAN'T DO THIS  
ON MY OWN, NO MORE  
I NEED YOU AROUND  
OR ELSE WHAT IS THIS ALL FOR?  
I NEED YOU TO STAND BESIDE ME  
I NEED YOU TO BE MY WIFE  
IT'S SUCH A SIMPLE THING  
I NEED YOU IN MY LIFE

WELL YOU SHOULD SEE THE STATE OF THE PLACE  
THE STATE OF YOUR SON AND DAUGHTER  
WE RAN OUT OF MILK LAST NIGHT  
SO BREAKFAST WAS CORNFLAKES AND WATER  
AND YES, I'VE BURNT THE TOAST  
AND THE SAUSAGE AND EGGS TOO  
AND THE STUPID WASHING MACHINE  
WELL IT ONLY EVER LISTENS TO YOU

AND OH THAT LOVELY SHIRT  
WE BOUGHT FOR SHARON IN CANNING TOWN  
WELL IT USED TO PINK BUT I IRONED IT  
AND NOW IT'S MORE SHIT BROWN

AND WHEN I HAD TO CLEAN THE BOG  
 I TELL YOU, MAN, IT'S SCARY  
 I COULDN'T FIND THE BLEEDING BLEACH  
 I HAD TO USE THE FAIRY!

AND I CAN'T DO THIS  
 ON MY OWN, NO MORE  
 AND I NEED YOU AROUND  
 WHAT THE FUCK IS IT ALL FOR?  
 AND I NEED YOU TO STAND BESIDE ME  
 I NEED YOU TO BE MY WIFE  
 I NEED YOU TO UNDERSTAND  
 YOU'RE THE LIGHT THAT LIGHTS MY LIFE

HOPE YOU DIDN'T GET IN TOO LATE,  
 HOPE THE MEETING WENT ALRIGHT  
 I HOPE YOU'VE DONE YOURSELF PROUD  
 AND BY THE WAY, THE KIDS SAY GOODNIGHT.

*(Doorbell. She stands in hope that it's EDDIE, rushes to the door opens it. It's LISA.)*

RITA                    Oh, it's you.

LISA                    I'm sorry, is this a bad time?

*(RITA is close to tears.)*

RITA                    Eddie's left me! He's taken the kids!

LISA                    I'm sorry. That must be very painful, but –

RITA                    – I'm a mother and I've lost my kids!

LISA                    You're a brilliant mother and you have not lost your children.

RITA                    This ain't worth it.

*(RITA hands LISA the letter from EDDIE.)*

- LISA Rita, Rita. You're caught up in something, and it's taken over, for now. You have to be strong, and sacrifices have to be made.
- RITA Not my children!
- LISA Eddie will come back, with the children. You're making history, Rita.
- RITA What?
- LISA Yes, history. Like Rosa Parks.
- RITA Who?
- LISA Rosa Parks. She was a black woman, she refused to give her seat up to a white man on a bus.
- RITA Where? Stoke Newington?
- LISA Alabama. 1955. What she started, Martin Luther King finished.
- RITA You know they shot him?
- LISA Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, they weren't on their own. You know what Gandhi needed?
- RITA A sandwich.
- (They laugh.)*
- LISA A lot of women, not just working class women, they've seen you in the news, we want to support you.
- RITA I can't do it. Anyway I don't know how to talk this union stuff.
- LISA Yes you do. Just be yourself and remember why you're doing it.
- RITA Why am I doing it?
- LISA You have a daughter. Now, what are you going to wear? For the TUC. It's on TV.
- RITA I dunno.

LISA                    You know my Biba dress? You can borrow that and you'll look fantastic. You are not alone.

*(They hug. End of scene.)*

**Music No. 16a: INTO PARLIAMENT**

SCENE SEVEN

*Outside Parliament, by the Oliver Cromwell statue. CLARE, BERYL, CASS.*

CLARE                    Who's that?

CASS                    Oliver Cromwell.

CLARE                    I like her boots.

BERYL                    Are we early or is Rita late?

CASS                    One o'clock outside Parliament. Rita's late.

CLARE                    I can't wear thigh length leather boots on me wotsit.

BERYL                    On your head?

CLARE                    On me wedding day.

BERYL                    Depends on the dress, dunnit.

CASS                    In an ideal world, what would be your dream wedding dress, Clare?

CLARE                    White o' course.

BERYL                    You can't wear white, you daft slapper, you've already had it off!

CASS                    You'll have to have peach.

BERYL                    Or salmon.

CLARE                    My Ken don't like fish.