Boxes

By Alfie James from the play “Little old Alf”

**BILLY:**

What’s wrong with the world? When did we stop listening? When did we start taking quick glances at people and then assume everything about them? We’re just automatically put into tiny little boxes like machines: categorised and scanned...computer says Yes...computer says No... With sticky little labels stamped onto us: Gender, Sexuality, Culture, Age, Skin-Colour, Rich, Poor, Ability-Disability. Who sat down and made these labels up and then made the definitions and rules for each category? Was it the Politicians? Church? Or is it some kind of sign of the Technical age symbolised by a God-like figure wearing a suit and dangling the rest of us by a piece of string? People are always saying that the older generation fought in the War so that the other generations could live in peace and freedom. Well I don’t really see much peace or freedom going on? I still see fighting, people getting bullied because of who they are and the ordinary people getting screwed over by the fat cats. I still see a Dictatorship. It’s just a different kind of Dictatorship. So, what went wrong, ah? Who lied and broke the promises of living in a better and free world?

I used to sit in the school assembly listening to the teacher telling us to always be true to yourself and be yourself and respect others. Don’t just judge a person by their appearance they’d say but love a person for who they are and not for what they are. How can you do that now when nobody ever speaks – they all just type and text? Nobody dates anyone – they scroll down a mobile phone clicking on faces just hoping that the person they’ve clicked on isn’t another fake. What happened to talking to people, listening, laughing, and actually interacting? When did it disappear? What’s next? What’s left for people like my friend and I who don’t have pretty pictures to share and are undesirable to most people because we don’t fit into the right category...what happens to us then? It’s already happening. You see a homeless person and you instantly see a bum, drop out or a failure. Instead of helping them out, the Police are now being ordered to fine them and throw them away in prison so they can’t be seen. You see a family living in a caravan and you hold on to your purse or if you see a woman on the tube wearing a hijab your heart instantly skips a beat because you think of a suicide bomber? Who put these thoughts into our head? Was it the same people that created the other little boxes?

Politicians tell us that it’s to keep order and to keep us safe, but isn’t it really just to control? I wish that I could see that Teacher from my school assembly again because I’d like to ask him how? How can I be true to myself if I’m not allowed to make my choices when so much is dependent on what box I’m in? Everyone thinks that I was in love with my friend and maybe I was? Does that mean I’m Gay? If so, does it mean that I’m only then allowed to love other guys because I’ve been put into that particular box? Do I have to be really camp and hang about outside the Gents toilets or only go to Gay Nightclubs and wear loud, outrageous clothes? I don’t get it. Why can’t we fall in love with someone because of who they are and because we’re soul mates? I’d like to walk up to my Teacher and that Priest that stood up in front of us in that school assembly and say Bollocks...Bollocks to being yourself because it’s not possible. Not unless you’re born into the right box. Other than that, and well, the rest of us are fucked!