



Roxy Music

"More than This"

Avalon

05/1982

E.G. Records / Polydor

More Than This

Mary Thompson

I could feel at the time

You tiptoe over to the horseshoe-shaped pool and swim thirty awkward lengths in your lurid orange swimming costume, while he feasts on your skinny ankles from his lifeguard chair.

And a year later you spot him again when you pop into the job centre in search of work as you need money or you can't go out (and you have to go out as at 17 you're yearning and restless), and he produces a card for a job in Lowe's, slicing cheese and chopping up ham on the deli counter, and when he calls to see if it's still available, the whole time he's speaking, his eyes are on you.

Then after, when he says, *meet me for a drink*, you say, *yes, okay*, and as you're descending the stairs, you can't help smiling as you know he's watching you again.

There is nothing more than this

After a dinner of steak and red wine, the fluorescent lights of the restroom bore into you as you're sticking your fingers down your throat.

All you really want is to be normal.

And when he drives you home, the car vibrates with tunes you don't know. You lean forward and pick up a cassette case. It's covered with song titles scrawled in black ink: "Avalon", "Jealous Guy", "Love is the Drug"...

He parks up on the verge in the shadow of your father's church. Then his hand is on your thigh, his tongue in your mouth. And as you kiss, the sultry sounds of "More Than This" transport you from this remote village to a place you don't yet know.

You dream of sex that night, but the next day you're still a shy girl with wispy hair, slender wrists and a protestant priest for a father.

It was fun for a while

He takes you to your first party, in Glasgow, in another universe, and people his age cluster round you in a darkened room pulsating with sound. They ask you sweet questions and talk to you softly as though you're a pet, something to be admired and protected. You kind of like this, and yet you don't. But the music beats on regardless and the drugs and wine soon take hold.

There was no way of knowing

When the summer arrives, he says, *let's go camping in France*, but your mum says no, unless you have separate tents that is, to which you agree, saddened by the fact she believes you.

You crash out on the ferry, disorientated after too many beers and are gently awoken by an assistant saying, *we're in Calais, love*, so you wander below deck to find your beau back on the coach listening to his walkman.

Where were you? he mutters. *When we get back, we're finished!*

And you sob quietly as the coach meanders through the quiet suburbs of Paris and the rolling countryside of the south.

But by the time you arrive in Avignon he's seemingly forgotten, so you smile a little and begin to relax. You allow yourself to think that this really could be quite romantic, until you zip up the tent and discover tree frogs in your sleeping bag.

It's a joke, he says. *Lighten up*, while you are shaking and hyperventilating and trying not to show how you truly feel as you want this to work. You really want this to work.

Like a dream in the night

He moves away six months after you meet and you stay in touch by letter and telephone.

One day he says, *come for the weekend*, so you're in London for the first time. It's 1988 and he has tickets for New Order. But you feel invisible next to him, your small hand in his; cool, older people all around you.

The next afternoon he plies you with martinis then pushes himself inside you on his big double bed, and you sunbathe afterwards in your tiny bikini, in his tiny garden, your head rolling from the booze, the sun all tingly on your unprepared skin.

Maybe I'm Learning

You want it to last, but he says it won't. *You're only 18. It's all going to change.*

No, you plead. *Uni is three years, not long at all.*

It's longer than you realise, he says.

And you cry and cry, unsure how you'll ever get over this, but a month later when you're starting your next relationship, you start to realise he was right.