

Waiting for *Today*

It felt like a moment - a new beginning. Before the noise. Before the shouting. My wall was NME. My news came from Melody Maker.

Grunge felt raw and angry, but the Pumpkins were different. A psychedelic burst of distorted guitars and melody, carrying lyrics that spoke directly to my soul.

I lost myself in the bitter sarcasm of *Today*, its sadness hidden beneath something that sounded almost joyful.

It empowered.

Emboldened.

Allowed me to be me.

I waited. Endless adverts. My music was harder to find, rarely seen on MTV outside genre-specific shows. Alternative Nation became my call to arms. There was no YouTube or Spotify to satisfy my need to hear *Today*. Perhaps that's what made the music more memorable. We didn't have an immediate fix.

We had to wait.

Waiting filled the spaces between everything. Between school and sleep. Between songs. Between who I was and who I thought I might become. Evenings stretched out endlessly, the glow of the television the only light in the room, my finger resting on the remote, afraid to move in case I missed something important.

There was time then - uncomfortable time. Boredom that lingered long enough to turn into imagination. I'd sit on my bedroom floor with the CD booklet open beside me, studying lyrics like clues, tracing meanings that probably weren't there but felt vital all the same. The guitar leaned against the wall, slightly out of tune, waiting its turn.

Learning meant repetition. Rewinding tapes until the sound warped. Playing the same four bars until my fingers ached. No tutorials, no play-throughs. Just instinct and persistence. When it didn't sound right, I played it again. And again.

Silence mattered because it existed. It framed the noise. It made the moment when the music finally arrived feel earned - not delivered, not recommended, not instant.

Waiting wasn't empty.

It was formative.

Do I dare switch channels during songs I didn't care about? What's happening today? News travelled slowly then. No phone cameras. No instant footage. Just headlines catching up with events later. Like *Today*, we waited.

Even the adverts felt different - small stories unfolding over months, like the Nescafé couple - making the breaks feel less disposable. We didn't want fame. We wanted to

belong. To share something. If I'd known what reality TV would become, I might have revelled in the boredom of waiting.

Then finally, like the ice-cream truck from the video, it appeared.

Guitar in hand, I tried to learn everything I could, getting it wrong again and again, until suddenly something clicked. I was playing it. I couldn't help but sing along. Learning the words felt more meaningful when those words couldn't be found so easily, because for a moment, everything felt possible.

Even today, I still pick up the guitar and play the same opening, and for a moment I'm back believing it's the greatest day I've ever known.