



# Disposable People

*Ezekel Alan*

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## **Disposable People** Ezekel Alan

Ten year old Kenneth Lovelace often went to bed without dinner. Instead of feeling hunger, however, what he mostly felt was fear and shame, knowing that his family's poverty was the reason he had no food. Kenneth also recalls his bitterness whenever his parents locked him out of their tiny, one-room house to act on their 'urge'. This was in the 1970s, when Jamaica's socialist regime was dragging the country into bankruptcy, and when an Old Timer had told him that he was cursed since birth. Beginning with his earliest memories, "Disposable People" traces the life of Kenneth Lovelace, now a consultant living in the USA. After a string of failed marriages, bad relationships and other misfortunes, Kenneth looks back at his life in his old, hateful village with hopes of finding the roots of his latest tragedy. What comes out is a story of mischief and adventures, sex, prejudice, evil spirits, adversities and, progressively, violence.

"Brian was already dead when they got there, but they still got something to watch as some of the farmers continued to chop. Chop, chop, chop. Some dogs find it hard to stop barking at cars that have long driven away.

Diary entry: Watch him wail. Wail Brian wail. See them chop. Chop, chop, chop. See him bleed. Bleed boy bleed. See them hack. Hack, hack, hack.

Here are three things I just can't do, no matter how hard I try: (1) I cannot spell Nietzsche without looking it up in the dictionary; (2) I cannot prepare Jamaican fried dumplings perfectly, no matter how many times I see others do it; (3) I cannot get this image out of my head: a large group of men swarming my cousin like flies, killing him, and continuing to chop as though they were also trying to get down to his soul.

A little while later, our older family members also came. Brian's papa, Uncle Thomas, came. Said nothing. Just stood there. By then he was well into his can only make love twice a month stage of life but, like a true Jamaican, still wanted it to be with two different women. His mom, Aunt Beverley - Auntie B for short, also came. Not one intelligible word from her either, but her body shook and trembled like a Pentecostal caught by the spirit, before she was taken away by Aunt Josephine and Aunt Frida.

Aunt Martha came also, and she led the screaming. She was in her 300th month of pregnancy (growing up I cannot remember a time when she wasn't pregnant), and we all worried for her health as she hit those high-pitched notes. When I looked around I saw that Miss Jacky had come as well. She was not a member of our family, just one of those that lived on the other side of the yard. Like a second-hand car, she always had a used look about her. She lavished more attention on her face, and had more control over her hair than she did her kids. I remember she spent endless hours at the hairdresser and beauty salon, and took those birth control pills that reduce acne. Anyway, I digress, perhaps because I was distracted by her long, flowing, artificial hair at the time.

Every one of the other older folks also came, except Grandpa, who had something (not someone, for the Old Timer was long past that stage), eating him. [For clarity: cancer had taken over where the girls had left off]. After his second heart attack, he was stuck on his veranda with spit on his chin, hanging down like stalactite. Useless and abandoned like a condemned building, he sat there with his shriveling skin looking like a roll of wet toilet tissue put out to dry."

## Disposable People Details

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## From Reader Review Disposable People for online ebook

### **Cristian Iglesias says**

This was by far the most depressing book I've read. From begin to end Kenny took me on the dreadful journey of his childhood growing up in Jamaica. While his innocence accounted for a few laughs, it was his conscious that would bring us back to "that hateful f\*\*\*\*\* place". These were stories that very few rarely open up to talk about. When you ask someone what their country of origin is like, they usually respond with how beautiful it is, how kind the people are, the positive aspects of their culture. But rarely do we come across someone as brave as Kenny who goes beyond a foreigners inquiry, and truly expresses what its like to grow up in his home, Jamaica. For that, I really appreciated the read...but I've got my own problems to worry about.

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### **Calzean says**

This was a surprisingly good (I assume fictional autobiography) book. Jamaica is not the sun, beach, rum and fun place I thought it was. It does have abject poverty, under employment, drugs and alcohol and a very high murder rate.

In this book of startling honesty, black humour and at times unbelievable events, there is also plenty of under age sex, sex between adults, sex between adults and teens/children and sex between relations.

The narrator, now a successful consultant, looks back at his life in Jamaica and reminds the reader he will never go back to where he grew up. The writing uses poetry, flashbacks, journal entries and narratives to tell it's story of growing up, the characters in the ghetto and a reflective tone that is unique, humorous and shows the obvious relief of having escaped from the squalor and hopelessness that many of his childhood friends had to endure.

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### **Paul says**

Powerful - initially hard to get into, as the style is of a memoir, but ultimately well worth persevering with.

Left me hungry for more - a proper voice and a story needing to be heard.

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### **mellyana says**

When I finished, I was not sure about my feeling about this book. Relieved for reasons I can't comprehend. This is a kind of book that when you come to the last page, you close it (in my case: I close Kindle cover) and just be still.

I found some words are unusual and quite disturbing. I don't mean in a bad way but simply disturbing. Until later you got used to is and you enjoy reading those words over and over again. You kinda like it. At least, I do. Just like the story in this book. There are disturbing events happening, in this case in a fucked up place in Jamaica but I think I can find them in many other places. They are disturbing but often after repetition of occurrence, they are becoming the usual day-to-day things. Nothing need attention. They don't matter

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anymore. Disposable people.

So in the end, I really liked the book. It is different kind of book that I read. It tells the story of people that are not often heard and known. A story that somehow stick in your mind for whatever reason. The story is told in a way that brutally honest that makes me wonder whether the author is a teenage - well not the vocabulary but more on the way the story goes.

It's been a week after I finished it and I still am thinking about it.

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### **Suzanna Birchwood says**

Amazing read. Loved it.

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### **Ezekel Alan says**

#### REVIEW FROM THE JAMAICA OBSERVER NEWSPAPER

The pain and passion in this freewheeling text is so palpable that it is hard to regard it as fiction. It reads like a memoir, a record of hurts and darkly humorous short stories woven together with diary entries and line drawings, redolent with clever raunchiness and with language that rivals a text by Anthony Winkler.

(It is) a brilliant and often innovative offering that falls less in the realm of the West Indian tradition and more in the way of American postmodernist black humour, reminiscent of the work of Kurt Vonnegut in *Slaughterhouse Five*. Ezekel Alan has constructed a masterpiece of searing memories of his childhood in "that hateful f-ing place" in order to come to terms with them, heal himself, and honour those of the poor and victimised – the "disposable people".

Ezekel Alan writes with an intensity that astonishes. This is a rousing text, full of energy and venom, and tells multiple stories of 'disposable people' while building an understanding of the lot of Jamaica's poorer children.

Alan is brilliant in his analysis of Kenny Lovelace's relationship with his father and in the stories of abuse that most of the children suffered at the hands of the village men. His novel is a wail of agony wrapped in spritely prose, deepened with irony and a bitter humour. It reads fast and packed with surprise and horror. This is no admiring chronicle of the values of the God-fearing Jamaican peasant but a searing account of the exigencies of poverty and superstition in a demanding environment.

It is a magnificent piece of work, combining different modes of storytelling including poetry, letters, journal writing, and sketched images, and covering a plethora of issues, including attitudes to homosexuality.

Alan has done a bang-up job of presenting the memories of the boy he once was and the collective memories of the village he came from.

His coming to terms with these memories in a brilliantly innovative text is our gain and his salvation.

- Mary Hanna, Bookends Review, the Jamaica Observer

(See full review here: <http://ezekelalan.files.wordpress.com...>)

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## **Karen A. Lloyd says**

I love how refreshingly honest this novel is. It is not an immediately-fall-in-love type of read but soon enough you come to appreciate the bluntness of the language. All in all it is a rewarding experience, traversing that 'hateful f\*\*king place' with Kenny.

## **Africa Donaldson says**

I have finished and I love it. I will admit that it took me very long to read and several times I has said that I was not going to finish it but I got through it and I am happy that I finished it.

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## **Darcy says**

Ezekel Alan's novel, "Disposable People," is a difficult, yet rewarding read. What I mean by "difficult" is twofold. First, difficult in that vivid language is used to describe the brutality, degradation, and hopelessness that torments real people struggling under the weight of poverty, loneliness, and hopelessness. For those expecting a read about Jamaican locals who work in the tourist industry, the settings are far from the resorts and posh hotels along the beautiful coasts. I've read "A Small Place" and "Lucy" by Jamaica Kincaid (one of my favorite authors), and Alan's tale takes Kincaid's prose to the next level with his mixture of stream-of-consciousness, journal entries, storytelling and poetry. Second, I said this was a "difficult" read because the book is very long and digresses often--making it a true exercise in concentration to keep all of the characters straight and reap the true reward at the end where the author connects people, place, and events across decades of time. I am glad I stuck with Alan's story until the end, however, I think I could have enjoyed this book more if it were a shorter length. Congratulations to the author for daring to put pen to page and write about often unspeakable and "invisible" truths.

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## **Marie says**

I was drawn to Disposable People by the description of the story and decided to enter the first-read giveaway and to my surprise I was a winner! I found this book to be an interesting read. To see the cultural difference and also to see how someone's life can change.

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## **Emily Rodolff says**

culturally speaking, I was way out of my element on this one, and as a result did not enjoy reading it very much. It did open my eyes to the reality of what is possibly the "norm" in this place that we as Americans view as a tropical paradise. Crude and harsh.

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## **SheLovesThePages says**

Great book!

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## **Kate Policani says**

## Disposable People

by Ezekel Alan

Poverty and desperation describe the start of life for Kenneth E.S. Lovelace, or Kenny. Born into a squatters village called a "Depression" in 1970's Jamaica, he struggles with all the dangers and trials of poverty. He and his kind, living in one-room self-built houses on someone else's land, are "Disposable People." Kenny shows us his world through a collection of diary entries written to Semicolon, his true love. Peppered with bits of his writing collection, poetry, and reminiscence over time we gradually hear his tale. This novel takes a train-of-thought approach to Kenny's experiences. A progression of understanding, rather than a chronology, takes the reader scene by scene through his childhood and out of the "Depression", or "That hateful f\*\*\*ing place", and into his life as a successful author, far from the squalor of his childhood.

Ezekel Alan's book wowed me on so many levels. Kenny is thoughtful and honest, confessing all his sins to Semicolon. Ezekel displays gorgeous poetry, joy, beauty, culture, ideals, horror, sin, murder, fear, suspicion and faith, all surging through his tale. The graphic nature of many of Kenny's experiences are often witnessed while Kenny and his cousins eavesdropped without shame "because we all knew that everything we did was being quietly observed by the cold unblinking eyes of Eternity." It's all part of the honesty and depth of every bit of the book. Kenny bared his soul to Semicolon, telling her what he experienced and valued, but also what he felt, learned, and how he failed. Scandalous or horrific scenes are highlighted with a knowing, dark humor, but contain profound lessons learned.

There seemed to be a kind of love/hate relationship between Kenny and his old home. Though he describes it with stark and unforgiving frankness, he does so with an underlying pride and affection.

Even the source of the book is mysterious and poetic, "A Novel Inspired by True Events". Somehow I heard the voice of my own grandmother, transported across time, culture, race, and nationality. I guess some opinions appear everywhere: "If he had gone to church, none of this would have ever happened to him."

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### **Anderson Charles says**

This book got me hooked in and I stayed hooked until the last page. The stories were vivid and took me to that place that the author seems to hate but love because it was home. The imagery was concise and to the point. I would recommend this book.

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