

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

devised by Curious Directive

LISA: How can you be so compassionate, so warm and loving to people you've never met and so shitty to me.

You know why I'm here? Why I went through the hours of exams, weight training, was asked questions I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy and stayed up until 3am, yeah, until about now every night working in a bar to pay for my training?

I was seven years old. Seven. And I'm up an elm tree in my gran's garden. Winter time. I can remember it so clearly because school had finished and mum drove me down the M4 to London to stay with gran. I burst into tears because I was worried mum wouldn't take me home again. It was nearly Christmas. My gran told me, 'You can crawl through the bushes in the garden but don't climb upwards'.

And of course as soon as gran was out shopping, granddad gave me a wink and up I went, peering over the fence into the neighbours' garden.

The neighbours came out of their backdoor with their dog. I slipped.

The thump on the ground was the first time I'd ever been winded. I thought I was dying. That and the fact my radius had burst through my skin and was just stuck there under my jumper. That's why my arm's like an oxbow lake now.

I didn't really say anything. I just cried and cried and cried and cried but then I remember seeing these two green figures out of the corner of my eye, bounding towards me.

They didn't move me to begin with but started talking about The Transformers, which I thought was amazing. Asking me questions like which was my favourite? Optimus Prime - obviously. Then they asked whether I'd seen Aladdin. One of them started doing an impression of Abu, bouncing around the garden with a canulation kit ... And my crying turned to laughing, laughing so hard I was crying.

And this all came from a Transformers logo on my jumper and a VHS they'd seen on the sitting room floor as they rushed through the bay windows, down the patio steps and out to me.

We sat in the ambulance, going maybe seventy miles an hour. They raced up the high street and picked up Gran from Sainsbury's and we all sat in the ambulance singing, 'Arabian Nights' at the top of our voices and telling 'Knock Knock' jokes. It. Was. Brilliant.

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They made me feel on top of the world in the exact moment where I should've, on every level, felt like it was on top of me.

My arm was severely broken, I'd betrayed my gran, my granddad was in trouble for letting me climb a tree and I was missing Rugrats. My laughter released so many endorphins I still get a tingle up my spine when I think about it.

Earlier in that shift they'd probably seen things I'm yet to see but ... I thought they were superheroes.

And I see that in you, Sylvia. But only in moments.

Like you're afraid of what might happen if you give too much. It's like your cynicism has changed you completely - you're a set of contradictions. Why do you insist that this is the best job in the world when you clearly can't wait to be shot of it? It's like you don't even want to be here. Even though I know, I know we share similar reasons for doing this job.

Why don't you just retire and move to sunny Eastbourne, instead of prolonging your own misery?

Why is it that -