

The largest screwdriver in the world is 6.32 m long and was made in India

The idea came to me after I was sent home from school on the last Wednesday of term for punching Billy Griggs on the nose. And even though he's the reason I had to miss the last two days of Year Six, I guess he's also the reason I ended up on a TV talent show in front of a live studio audience, asking the eighties pop-star Paul Castellini if he'd like to help my mum. So if you were to say, "Lucy, do you regret walloping Billy's nose?" I'd say, "All things considered – it was probably worth it."

It was the day of our end-of-Year-Six presentations. We had to do a talk on a topic we were passionate

about. Jack Perkins was up first, and he talked about the best football team in history, which, frankly, was always going to cause a massive argument. When Mrs Hunter finally got everyone to shut up by clapping her hands really loudly, she turned to Dylan Fry and told him he was next. But when he said he was going to do a talk about the *real* best football team in history, all the shouting started again. Mrs Hunter gave up on the angry clapping and instead yelled at us to be quiet. When eventually the noise had stopped, she did this massive sigh, muttered something at the ceiling about early retirement and then asked if anyone else wanted to go next. Sandesh raised his hand and started waving it about in a very eager way with his bum hovering above his seat.

Mrs Hunter did this big swallow, flopped down on her wheelie chair and said, “Okay, Sandesh, your go. I’m guessing this is on—”

And the whole class went, “Guinness World Records,” in one big droney voice.

See, Sandesh has this thing about world records. Since he started in the summer term of Year Five, after

he moved to Milton Keynes from south London, that is all anyone has heard him talk about.

For his presentation, he told us first that in India, where his grandparents come from and some of his relations still live, they have the *Limca Book of Records* and it is super popular. Then, after he had told us some facts about big stuff – big plants, big babies, big people – he told us about the longest ever fingernail. It belongs to one Mr Chillal, whose thumbnail measures 197.8 centimetres long or 6 feet 5 inches. Jack shouted out that that is the same height as England’s best-ever goalkeeper, whoever that is – I wasn’t really paying attention – but anyway, that started the football argument off again. And Mrs Hunter started with the angry clapping. Again.

After we had settled down and Jack had won himself a stretch in reflection (aka detention) at break time, Sandesh showed us a picture of the world-record-winning fingernails. They were truly disgusting. They looked like long twisty pork-crackling. Everyone made sick noises until Mrs Hunter told us we needed to be more mature than that if we were to survive when we

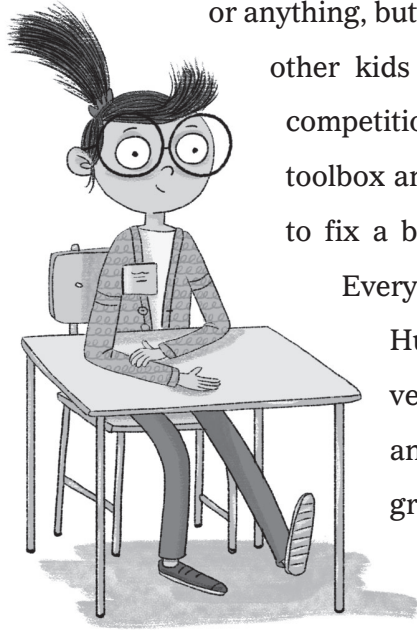
went up to Big School. But kudos to Sandesh – he had definitely won the class over.

After Sandesh was Felicity Fairclough’s talk on her favourite girl band The Megamouths and their lives, loves and heartaches. She didn’t get too far before Mrs Hunter told her to stop because the content was too mature for Year Six. It was very difficult to understand the exact level of maturity Mrs Hunter wanted us to have.

When it came to my turn, I was truly excited to discuss mending electronics. Not to sound big-headed or anything, but apart from Sandesh, the

other kids hadn’t given me much competition. I took out my little toolbox and showed the class how to fix a broken games controller.

Everyone was impressed. Mrs Hunter said, “That was very informative, Lucy,” and she gave me an A grade and stuck a sticker on my jumper that said *Superstar*. And



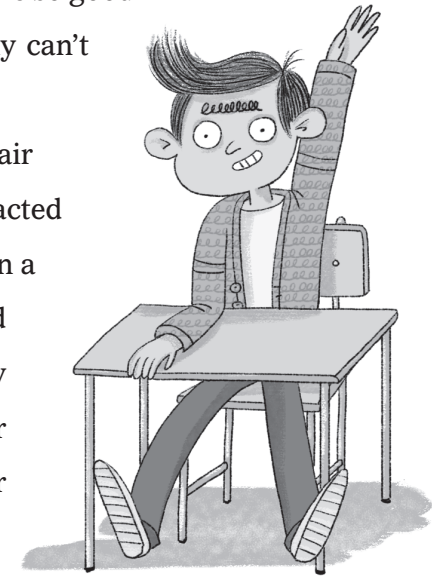
although stickers aren’t really for Year Sixes, I still liked it. Who doesn’t want to be a Superstar?

But then, during questions, Billy Griggs stuck up his big hand and said, “If you’re so good at fixing things, Lucy, why can’t you fix your mum?”

His words hung in the air for a moment. My body reacted before my brain did and, in a flash, I was airborne and flying over the front row of desks. Later, when Mr Balls the head teacher read the report to me and Auntie Sheila, he said I

had shouted, “Why don’t I fix that smile right off your face with my fiery fists of fury?” They both agreed it wasn’t a very “Lucy thing” to say, but secretly I thought it made me sound rather dangerously exciting.

Anyway, Billy and I ended up in a full-on fight on the floor. He’s much bigger than me but I landed a punch right on his nose. We both felt the crack. We looked at



each other for a moment, neither of us knowing what to do. But when the blood started pouring out of both his nostrils, Billy started bawling – and I mean really bawling. He said it was broken and he was going to sue me. Mrs Hunter grabbed a handful of wet paper towels, moved me out the way and pressed them on Billy’s mashed-up face.

She told us all to sit down while she took him to the school nurse. I did as I was told and sat down at my desk and I noticed my hands were shaking. I think I was probably in shock as I’d never hit anyone before – I’m not really the punchy type. As he left, Billy shouted at me that he’d see me in court. That worried me, because I didn’t want Mum getting upset about having a young offender for a daughter on top of everything else she seemed to be upset about.

Felicity, who was sitting in front of me, swung around and looked at me with these huge eyes and an even huger grin and said, “Oh my god, Lucy. That. Was. Just. So. Savage!”

I stared at an ink splodge on my shirt and growled, “Stop smiling at me.”

She did not pick up on my mood at all. Instead, she clapped her hands together and said, “I can’t, I just *love* all the drama!”

I didn’t know what to say to that.

Everyone began whispering to each other and even though I really didn’t want to cry in front of my class, my chin had other ideas and started to wobble.

Because I was trying to overpower my wobbly chin, it took me a second to notice that Sandesh had wandered up to my desk. I glared at him, but he didn’t even flinch, he just said, “Do you know that Cecilia Brækhus, also known as the First Lady of boxing, has thirty-two wins from thirty-two fights, which makes her the longest reigning female boxing world champion?”

And I said, “Shut up, Sandesh.” Which I totally feel bad about doing now, because I think he might have been trying to detract attention away from all my savagery.

He said, “Fine, whatever, Lucy.” Then he put my glasses on my desk, which he’d picked up off the floor, and backed away with this wounded-looking face. And

for some reason, I felt worse about that than the punch.

While twenty-eight pairs of eyes bored into me, I turned my glasses over in my hands. I hadn't even noticed that they'd fallen off in the scuffle. One of the arms was broken but I didn't mind that much as it meant I'd get to use my teeny-tiny screwdriver later. I'd won it in a cracker the Christmas after I'd turned nine. Mum had got a tiny plastic moustache in hers. She didn't take it off because I jokingly told her it suited her. Then she spent the rest of the day speaking in a Belgian accent and pretended to be Hercule Poirot, who is some TV detective I'd never heard of. But that was when she was well.

When Mrs Hunter came back, she made me take my sticker off my top and told me that someone from home was coming to get me. I really hoped it would be Mum who would be waiting for me at the school office, but it wasn't. I suppose I knew it wouldn't be really. Mum had been struggling again. She'd been sleeping so much. She probably wouldn't have heard the phone. Instead, it was Aunty Sheila standing there, with her pink hair and rainbow-coloured kaftan looking all concerned.

After we'd listened to how disappointed Mr Balls was with me and that I was suspended for the last two days of school, Aunty Sheila gave me a big hug and told me that punching people in the face was something that I shouldn't do, even if the person really, completely deserved it.

It was on the car journey home that I realized something. And that something was that while Billy Griggs is a genuine, first-class birdbrain, he was right. Utterly and totally right. I'd read on the internet that people can get over depression, so why not Mum? And if I was so good at fixing things – which I absolutely was – then it really was up to me to fix her.

And in that moment, I decided I would. I just had to figure out how.