

Mary & Willow - Storytellers for Scarborough Stories

Mary's story is about adoption.

Willow's story is about her love for acting.

MARY: When I was 5, I was adopted. I say that, but I don't actually remember. I had no clue what was going on. I remember - the dress, the shoes - sure! But not the 'getting adopted' bit. I remember one thing - I'd been with them for a while and we were getting ready and she was tying my shoes and I looked at her and wanted to call her my mum really badly, but I wasn't allowed. That made me sad. Because even before I was adopted, she was my mum.

WILLOW: The first memory I have of being on a stage is during the primary school nativity. Something inside me clicked and I knew I had to be on stage. I was lucky and got to play Mary, it gave me this sense of accomplishment and when the opportunity came again, I knew had to do it. This the Angel Gabriel, sing, dancing and actual lines. The applause at the end gave me a feeling, the sound and cheers made me feel like I belonged. That I was needed. The stage was my home, and it was at that moment I knew performing was what I wanted to do.

MARY: 2 years after us, my sister got adopted. We knew she was coming at some point. So it was the anticipation of that. On the day she came, we sat down in the room, I got out a small jigsaw, one of those 50p ones. And she just watched me doing it. Not longer after, we all went to Mexico. My first holiday. The memory of my whole family being together and feeling in place. We went to the beach, and there were these ladies all in a row, braiding hair. I got mine done. It actually really hurt! Then we were on the boardwalk and this man was like 'Take a picture with this toucan!'. I had no idea what was going on, Just holding this big ass bird!

WILLOW: In secondary school, I got to perform on a proper stage. "Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Hover through the fog and filthy air!" Working within the ensemble, a cast coming together, not needing the leading role to know that I was part of something special. Feeling that sense of swelling accomplishment at each curtain call, filling me with so much joy. It could only lead to one thing, auditioning for GCSE drama. And this girl got in!

MARY: I was like twelve, when my adopted mum went into hospital. It was a rocky turn. The bliss was interrupted! My birth mum was in hospital a few years before but it didn't affect me in the same way. I was concerned, but with my adopted mum, I'd never been that worried before. It hit me like a ton of bricks how much she meant to me. She's always been my mum in that kind of way that my biological mother wasn't. Mum was in 5 weeks. It seemed like every week something different came along. But she's fine now, I guess. As fine as she can be.

WILLOW: Three amazing years, Brecht, choir, live theatre, devising and script building: all these skills! However there's always those who don't take it seriously. Those that muck around and see it as the easy option. And guess who ended up working with them? Me!

Your group broke character. Your group doesn't know their lines. Your group obviously doesn't care. It's unbearable to hear when I know that I can do better. It broke me. It took away my passion for performing. But I didn't give up, and finished with the highest grade of all my GCSE's- an A! But I had lost the spark for something I had once loved. I was burnt out.

MARY: I got to A level and finally my choices felt like my own. In so so much of my life, everything has been out of my control: adults have made all the choices for me. My parents were literally chosen for me! Although I'd pick them again and again to be honest. But at A level, and the age I was then and now, my choices are my own. I chose Psychology which feels like a passion of mine. I love helping people. I mean, I was helped, wasn't I? I have my own voice and I want to use it!

WILLOW: When college came around, teachers were pushing me to follow my lost passion: do A level drama! But I just didn't want to. What's the point? If people don't care and piss about? So I did film studies instead. Better stay behind the scenes. Turns out I am terrible at editing and filming. Way better at performing and acting in front of a camera. But hey, at least my group doesn't break character or forget lines. It's the wrong director. It's the wrong camera shot. It's like you don't care. But I don't care about the cinematography of random films. I care about the stage I want to be performing on. I care about musicals, Tony's, Oliviers and staging. See, I do care! London was probably one of the best memories!

MARY: Oh my gosh! We can go again this year!
I didn't know anyone else in the class so I was like - let's share a room!

WILLOW: Yeah, you'll do! But then we kind of like bonded. On this trip, everyone else- there was drama!

MARY: The trauma of Hard Rock cafe! Everyone else was taking it so seriously.

WILLOW: And I was like - with her - why not just be friends? You're not that bad!

MARY: So we went to the Natural History Museum. The World Travel Market. I love travelling! For me the travel show was inspiring. It made me realise I was made for more. Travel gives me the freedom to explore. To find my voice more. This giant exhibition centre. All the countries in one. Except Romania.

WILLOW: Romania wasn't invited. Don't know why. We went to China town. Hard Rock cafe...

MARY: Don't! Oh, we went to Premier Inn.

WILLOW: We didn't stay in a Premier Inn.

MARY: I thought it was a Premier Inn?

WILLOW: It was a proper fancy ass hotel!

MARY: And I couldn't sleep and started cleaning at 4am.

WILLOW: I was like, 'Mary, go to bed!' Oh and Shaftesbury theatre! We went to see one of my favourite shows, '& Juliet'. The show started and I got chills. Then something amazing happened. It was climax of the show, and Jordan Luke George who was playing Romeo was coming down from the rafters on a huge sign singing 'It's my life!'. And I knew. I was supposed to perform. I was supposed to be on stage, not behind the scenes. I changed my entire career path.

MARY: I'm Mary. Yes, I'm adopted. But I'm so many things. I like buying books but not reading them. I love the beach. I like going on long walks then coming home to binge watch. I'd actually like to be a journalist in New York. Or London. I was born for something bigger. I have no real idea what I want to do in future. But I have so many choices. I want to make an impact. Messages that need to be heard, aren't heard. I have a voice and it needs to be used and not dampened by my past.

WILLOW: I'm Willow. I have my sights set on Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. And I will do anything to get there. And when I graduate, I'll be working my ass off to make it. On the West End, and even, maybe, just maybe...Broadway. When people say they want to be an actor, they usually mean they want to be famous. I couldn't care less about that. I just want to perform. I'd be happy as the unnamed 'new wave girl' in Heathers or an extra ensemble member in Les Mis. I just need to perform. Because I do care.

MARY: Authentically me. We just want to be authentically us. And we can be with each other. (silence) The awkward silence.

WILLOW: The awkward salads?

MARY: What are you on about? The awkward silence! WILLOW: I don't ever feel judged. She gets me.

MARY: She just understands. She just has to look at me and she will know what I'm thinking.

WILLOW: Yeah, you'll do!

MARY: We'll do. I have a voice and you hear me. WILLOW: And I do care.