Rude man

By Alfie James from the play “My boy Danny”

**ANGE:**

Rude man! That's what we used to call him when he was growing up. Such a sweet little thing. He had one of those smiles that were infectious. You took one look at him and you were putty in his hand. He was fixated on being a superhero. Mind you, what four-year-old wasn’t back then? Trouble is that his idea of being a superhero was to run around the garden in just a cape and face mask. And I mean, just a cape and mask. Nothing else. Gave poor Mrs Henshall next door a right eye fall and left nothing to the imagination. He thought that he could save the world. Silly sod. He'd have us all in stitches. He was such a clown when he was that age. He'd be out there running about the garden, climbing the tree at the back of the garden. I'd swear blindly that he'd end up with splinters in his arse. But he never cared. He was a superhero. He was Rude man and that was all that mattered.

He begged and pleaded for weeks for his dad to help him turn his bike into a superhero looking machine. Even refused to take the stabilizers off because four wheels made it faster. Drove us mad, it did. His dad kept saying that it was just a phase. Three years later and Rude man was still larger than life. It was even starting to become a bit awkward. But I suppose that's what being a kid was all about back then, isn't it? Imagination, I mean. That and innocence.

I was never a touchy-feely mother. Don't know why, but he was still my little boy. I still loved tucking him into bed at night. I still felt that tingle when he would just wrap his arms around me for no reason or come running when he'd bash his head or gash his knee. I still looked at him and thought...you might be a little weird kid, but you're my weird little kid. (Short pause). Then the little shit grew up, didn't he? One day he was letting it all hang out and the next it was all suited and booted in a robotic power ranger with super-sonic phaser weapons set to kill. That's when it all started to change.

One day I found him in the garden with a cloud of smoke around him. Nearly gave me heart failure, he did. The little shit was burning his cape. I didn’t know what to say. For the past three years Id longed for nothing else. Here I was standing there sheading a fucking tear for a make belief character that had taken up the best part of our lives for the past few years. I was suddenly choking back the tears. Rude Man was no more. Rude man was dead. I looked down him trying to find the tears in his eyes, trying to find the reason. Had someone said something? Teased him? Belittled him? But there was nothing. Here I was almost balling my eyes out and my nearly eight-year-old was emotionless. Instead he just looked up at me and said, 'nothing lasts forever, mummy.' He squeezed my hand and then ran off. That was it. That was the beginning of the end. That's when I lost him.