

7 This week's TV highlights 7days

GETTING TO KNOW...

RIK MAKAREM

Rik, 29, plays Emmerdale's Nikhil, who finally finds out about Gennie's true feelings for him this week...

I'm happiest when... I'm out on my mountain bike, caning some hardcore trails. Probably learning my lines at the same time! I live in the Peak District and I go into a serene place when I'm out in the fresh air. Time goes so fast, and suddenly I've cycled 25 miles.

The proudest moment of my life was... when I played Jesus in a very big Passion Play in Scotland in 2005. It was a hard role and it was a great honour to do it. Winning the Laurence Olivier Bursary [awarded to acting students with potential] was also a proud moment.

I get angry... very rarely, and usually if I see people being harmful or disrespectful to others. It's really more about that person's

insecurity and inadequacy. They aim that at other people, which makes me mad inside. However, I try to turn the other cheek.

My earliest memory is... my dad coming home when I was about two and a half and giving me a little AA van, which I could actually sit in. I spent a lot of time in that van, repairing the sofa or the video recorder.

In 10 years, I'd like to be... still working as an actor and in a happy place. I can't see that far ahead just yet, but whatever comes in my life I'll see as a blessing.

My greatest fear is... hard question! I probably have a lot of fears but my mum taught me to 'feel the fear and do it anyway'.

When I was a child I wanted to be...

a carpenter. Then I wanted to follow my sister into the police force, before getting the great idea to be a Formula 1 driver. Somehow Lewis

Hamilton and I have switched places at birth – he's got the fast car and beautiful girlfriend and I've got the delights of working with sheep on *Emmerdale*!

The last time I cried was...

recently, seeing my grandfather going through quite a hard time with his health. It's seeing his courage through adversity at his age that touches a deep place in me. He's still got this will for life despite the problems.

My heroes are... definitely my family – my mum, my dad and my grandfather are all inspirational to me. If I were to pick some kind of idol, I think the actor Will Smith is a legend. I love everything he stands for. He lives his life in a positive way, and inspires so many other people. He brings an energy to this world which is wonderful. On whatever level, I'd like to do the same.

My favourite TV show is... *The Wire*. I discovered it about three years ago, and I keep watching it. I am James McNulty – or at least, I should have been, they cast the wrong guy! And Idris Elba, who went on to star in *Luther*, is a fantastic actor. I'd love to play a villain, because it's an extreme and so removed from the way I am normally.

My secret talent is... I can do the splits! I've been into martial arts since I was five years old. Every so often, at a party, I drop it in there if I think it's going to further my chances of happy times.

The last album I bought... was Aloe Blacc's album *Good Things*. 'I need a dollar dollar, a dollar is what I need...' The album is amazing – a combination of musicians John Legend and Anthony Hamilton.

My secret crush is... Nicole Scherzinger, because she's got the whole package. Also, our very own Cheryl Cole is taking a bit of a battering at the moment but I think she's wonderful.

My friends would describe me as... loyal and compassionate.

I hope they would say that, as I do value my friends and I make sure they know that. I can count my close friends on one hand – they may be from different circles but they are all pivotal to my life.

If I wasn't on TV... I'd be doing the splits at parties! Or I'd probably be working in the Formula 1 motor racing world, because that's my other love in life. I would have to be somewhere creative. Music is also a big thing in my life, and I write songs.

I'd most like to work with... someone like *The Wire*'s Dominic West. But I'd also like to have been involved in a show like *Friends* back in its heyday.

My biggest regret is... not learning the piano when I was younger. I'm getting there slowly, though. I can play by ear but now I'm going back to do it properly.

My worst habit is... biting my nails. It's an easy thing to start when you have a demanding job.

I can't leave home without...

my iPod. Although I'd like to take my piano and mountain bike with me everywhere, too.

My last meal would be... low GI, on the off-chance I'd live. I don't think it would be my last meal, though, because I'd survive! 

See Rik in ITV1's *Emmerdale*. Turn to page 90 for times



How will Nikhil react to Gennie's shock admission?