**SISTER:**

*(She steps forward holding a photograph)*

What makes a good Nurse? Compassion and having a deep awareness of and sympathy for someone else's suffering without judgement? Is it about making a real difference? Is it about respect for others and caring about doing what's right? Being honest with others and remaining calm under pressure. They say to be good nurse you should be disciplined, organised, time efficient and detail oriented. You should be an excellent Communicator and listener. You should be knowledgeable. All these are what they say makes a good nurse.

But what happens when you're forced to work long hours until you’re so exhausted you can’t remember if you're standing up or sitting down. When you have too few supplies and equipment? What happens when the pain relief runs out and the patient is screaming in agony? What happens when you have no beds and a patient desperately needs one and all you can do is say no. I’m sorry.

I am not a good Nurse. I don't float upon the wards like some Nightingale. Nor do I have an angelic face and soft hands to reassure others and to take away their fears. I struggle to feel. I do not want to feel. If I do, then I’ll remember my Bernard. My husband. Missing in action. I’ll start to look at the door every time a patient is brought in wishing and hoping that it would be him. The sweet man that he is. The way that he would take me in his arms and hold like no one else is watching and I’d bury my head in his chest and feel his warm heartbeat. But I cannot feel. I do not want to feel. Otherwise I would look at every young boy brought in and see the face of my own son and I would remember that night before he left. I’d remember the words we carelessly spat at one another. The way that we both refused to reconcile from that stupid, stupid pointless argument about him joining up. I’d remember the wasted silence before he left. I’d feel that sharp blow I felt when I was told that he’d been taken away from me. Cut down in some no man’s land. I’d remember those three unspoken words and that kiss ungiven. I try not to feel. I cannot allow myself to. That’s why I am here. One must keep busy. One must be a moving target. That’s what my Bernard would say. I miss them so, very much. But, being out here makes me feel as I am doing all right. For every wounded soldier there's a mother, a wife behind that man. Just like me. That's why I'm here. Because I don’t want to be alone. Because I don’t want them to be alone. I don’t want them to be like my boy. But that doesn’t make me a good Nurse. I’m just trying to get by.