Meeting Sister

**SISTER:** I know what visions have brought you here and I’m happy that they have carried you to our door but that’s where you must leave them. At the door. You’re not an angel of mercy swooping down to mop the brows of grateful men. You’re a worker here and you’ll do whatever you’re asked no matter how dirty, no matter how dull. Do I make myself clear?

**LOTTIE:** Yes Sister.

**SISTER:** Hands? *(She exams them)* Airs and graces will not be tolerated here. Especially from those whom have come down from an ivory tower. If you have any doubts about being here, then the door is there, and you should leave now and not waste neither yours nor my time from being here. I don’t want anyone here whom only wants to play at being a nurse and thinks this is a kind of poetic personal crusade.

**LOTTIE:** I assure that –

**SISTER:** You are to only speak if you are asked to.

**LOTTIE:** Sorry, Sister.

**SISTER:** Your duties commence at 7.50 am sharp and end at 8 pm. Where possible you will be given three hours off usually between 2pm and 5pm. Night nurses duty commences at 7.50 pm and ends at 8 am. All shifts begin and end with prayers. You’re rather young. Are sure that you of age?

**LOTTIE:** Yes, Sister. I celebrated my nineteenth birthday only a few days before I left to come here.

**SISTER:** Duties are hard and days long. You will be responsible for cleaning, tidying the bedside lockers, making beds and cleaning sluice rooms. You will also be required to fetch and carry things, mop the floor, hand out drinks and meals, roll bandages, fold slings, sterilise instruments and tidy rooms.

**LOTTIE:** I have worked as a nurse before. I can –

**SISTER:** It will remain to be seen what you can and cannot do. I’ll be the judge of your competence. *(Pause)* If you think your duties are dull and mundane and you’d rather be back home playing a dutiful wife then –

**LOTTIE:** I’m not married. Nor spoken for.

**SISTER:** Oh. *(Pause)* I’ll have someone show you to your room where you can get settled. There may be a time when you may be asked to accompany the ambulance drivers. You don’t suffer from travel sickness, do you?

**LOTTIE:** No, Sister.

**SISTER:** Then you can meet Miss Feilding later.

**LOTTIE:** Miss Feilding? I beg your pardon, but did you say that she was an Ambulance Driver?

**SISTER:** That’s right.

**LOTTIE**: I’ve never met a lady Ambulance Driver before.

**SISTER:** Are you sure that you want to be here, girl? This is no place for the weak hearted.

**LOTTIE:** I am sure, Sister. I’ve never been surer about anything in my life.

**SISTER:** Off you go then.

**LOTTIE:** Thank you, Sister.

**MRS ANDREWS:** She quickly settled and emptied her small suitcase. Her lodgings were very basic with a small bed and a blanket. There wasn’t much time to wash or unpack before she was called to meet Miss Feilding out front by one of the ambulances. Forgive me, I wasn’t sure how we would create an ambulance on stage. The budget is…

**DAVID:** Minimal? Yes, I guessed. Imagination and acting, my dear. Here – two other Actors will enter the stage to help create the picture! That and some simple sound effects! I said – sound effects!!

*(The sound of an old ambulance engine is heard. DAVIES and ROBERT enter with three chairs, placing them into position)*