

**World War 1: Remembering the War to End All Wars**

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It's a chilly fall day in France, 1918. I can feel the cool wind on my face and blowing through my golden hair as I walk to my post at The British Red Cross. Today is going to be a busy day because the last battle ended only a week ago. I'm feeling sad because I will be leaving the friends I made in France when I finally go home in two days. Also I feel guilty, for I survived and many of them did not.

As I approach the hospital I can hear the deafening sound of sirens. I see the brick red walls and touch the cool, wooden handle as I open the heavy door. Patients on stretchers are being rushed through the halls. As I report to my first patient I realize that I probably will be here for much longer than the normal fourteen hours. Hoards of patients are being examined by one nurse. When I walk into the room that holds my first patient, I'm slammed with a heavy wave of emotions as I realize that the patient in a fatal condition, is my little brother, Liam.

My heart skipped a beat. I start pacing around the room. My head is spinning and I can't think straight. I finally stand completely still, just barely keeping myself from letting the tears that so desperately wanted to fall from my eyes, spill onto my face. It felt like I was standing there for hours. My friend Clarissa finally walked in and snapped me out of the daze that seemed to consume me. She asked what was wrong but I only responded with an request for help. We had to go through many different treatments and by the end Clarissa, Liam, and I were all exhausted. The only thing that could help Liam now was getting rest, so we have to postpone our trip back to Pennsylvania. The treatments and medicine that I used were very effective. I have had many patients and have performed blood transfusions, amputations, surgeries, and bandaged wounds every day. I also have to deal with patients with shell-shock and patients with asphyxiation. Many medical advances have been made during World War One, so the survival rate is much higher.

After two weeks, my brother Liam and I finally could board a ship and sail back to America. The boat ride took three weeks. There were not many things to do on the boat. So I spent most of my time sitting, feeling the cold water spray my face, and drawing the scenes around me. I drew birds gliding through the air, wings gracefully flapping with the wind, and the sunrises and sunsets with colors that blended together with incredible beauty. The day we approached the shore line was a unseasonably warm October day.

After three long days on a train to Pennsylvania, Liam and I arrived at our old brick house on 723 Glenville Road, Shanksville, Pennsylvania. I was nervous to see my parents again. I pulled the golden handle connected to the bulky wooden door. I called for my parents and heard only silence. After hearing no response, Liam and I went into separate rooms to look for them. It's been two years since Liam and I have seen our parents. I walk down the hall that I missed with every inch of my heart while I was gone. As I approach the door I am hit with the rancid smell of death, which I know well. I storm through the door and see my mother lying on her bed, not moving or breathing. I scream. I scream an earsplitting scream that lasted for so long I lost my voice. Rivers of tears are running down my face as I fall down onto the floor in a fit of anguish and rage. Liam walks into the room and sees the horror. I try to tell him to get help, but the words came out dry and hoarse. He immediately left the room, though I did not notice he was gone. I was too overwhelmed by the reality of what was happening. I feel an incredible guilt, knowing that I will never get to say I love you to her ever again. Ten minutes later, Liam and team of doctors rushed in and placed her on a stretcher. They asked if I wanted to come with them to the hospital but I responded only with more tears. The ambulance finally left and Liam and I stayed, lingering in an eerie silence and a tension that heavily blanketed the air. An hour later we went to the hospital and received the news that she had died in her sleep, which somehow brought comfort. We also learned that Liam and I leaving caused our parents to separate from each other. My dad lived in a different house than my mom. We went to the address, and he was there, welcoming us with open arms.

I spent the next week grieving while my dad tried to find me a job, but there was no luck. The returning soldiers had taken all of the available jobs. My first job offer was four months later. Being back in the United States was incredibly different than when I left. There were cars on the street that were used by ordinary citizens, not just ambulances, and the U.S. had an economic boom. Also there were raised taxes, and tolerance for people that were different had changed. Many soldiers had returned with serious cases of shell-shock. They were dealing with the unspeakable things they had seen and done on the battlefield. The biggest impact of the war was new technology. Medical advances have been made. Electricity is available to more houses and weapons have become more advanced. World War One also has popularized chemical warfare, which will impact future wars. Overall World War One has changed the economy in an immense way.

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