

## **Dear Nurse... True Stories of Strength, Compassion and Care**

The premise of this book is to celebrate the nursing and midwifery professions, creating a beautiful love letter that will inspire future generations.

A contribution from the sale of each book (50p) will go to the RCN Foundation to help with their important work supporting nursing and midwifery staff across the UK as they care for patients and improve the health and wellbeing of families and communities.

Illustrator: Michael Foreman

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Format details: Hardback, 112 pages, colour illustration, 246x189mm, £14.99

Target audience: ages 8–99!

### **Details for contributors**

- We are looking for anecdotes and stories from people who work/have worked in the many different nursing and midwifery roles.
- These anecdotes/stories will be positive in feel, aimed at both celebrating nurses and midwives and their roles, as well as encouraging children to consider a nursing role as their future profession.
- Content of anecdotes/stories: observations or direct experiences from members of the nursing profession, appropriate for readers aged 8+.
- The Team at Scholastic will edit contributions for consistency and to help make them inspiring and appropriate for all ages.
- The anecdotes/stories will be between 200 and 500 words long – a variety of lengths would be ideal. We're looking for a maximum of 100 contributions to go into the book.

We've included some examples on the following pages to provide some inspiration:

#### **1. A memory**

- This piece is by Emma Thompson – it's a great example of a memory written down in story form. The longer pieces in our book could be written in this informal way. However, note this piece is for adults (as you'll see from the content!).
- 'Story starters' for a memory-based piece:
  - One of the most interesting things about ...
  - I must tell you about...

#### **2. A factual event**

- This is a profile of Hamdi Ulukaya written by Sally Morgan. It's a good example of a more factual piece, useful if the contributor is writing something about a specific event or certain person/themselves. This example text is targeted at 8+.
- 'Story starters' for fact-based piece:
  - On the 21<sup>st</sup> of [month], 20xx...

- A.N. Other was the my inspiration...

### **3. An anecdote**

- These are two examples of anecdotes, written for ages 8+. This is a good example for those contributors who perhaps wish to say why they became a nurse or midwife, or want to reflect upon an event that has always stuck with them.
- 'Story starters' for an anecdote:
  - I remember when...
  - When I was a nurse...

1.

## DAME EMMA THOMPSON

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This is a memory of an NHS experience that I will never forget. It was the middle of the night and suddenly the light was on and my eighty-five-year-old mother, who suffers from Parkinson's, was standing in the doorway of our bedroom in her nightie, which was on back to front.

'Oh God,' I thought. 'She's died and has come to tell me herself.'

Which would have been typical and hard enough but no, she spoke. 'Gaia's in hospital,' she said.

Gaia, our daughter, was eighteen at the time.

Greg, my husband, who has the aural capacity of an anxious bat, leapt from the bed – naked – to grab his clothes. My mother shrieked at the sight of his flailing gonads approaching at speed. I too leapt from the bed and fell over my clothes, bashing my head on the wardrobe door, which I had ill-advisedly left open. It was suddenly a scene from a Brian Rix farce but performed in an experimental style by French actors.

We put my mum, still trembling, back to bed and drove at an illegal speed to the Whittington Hospital in Archway, London. The A&E was quiet, no one was screaming and there was no blood on the floor. Our daughter was sitting in bed surrounded by five girls all laughing like drains. She informed us with great brio and apparently no pain that she had slipped over at a friend's party and opened her head on a sharp bit of tile.

The junior doctor in charge was very young and very kind. Gaia told me that when she arrived, brought in by my friend whose son's party was still in progress, the doctor had – very apologetically – asked if it was all right if he just quickly went to eat something as he was too hungry to concentrate. But by the time we had arrived, he was back from swallowing a sandwich – and very quick to do what was necessary.

He injected Gaia with a local anaesthetic and allowed me to hold the pieces of skin together while he stitched her up. Gaia was immensely cheerful – probably owing to the alcohol that had

led to the fall in the first place. I'll never forget that doctor – his kindness, his patient care and, most of all, his infinite fatigue. I thought, this is all wrong. People doing this kind of vital work shouldn't have to be at it so long that they get this tired and too overworked to eat. Why do we do this to our doctors and our nurses?

In the A&E there was also a man of about fifty who too had hurt his head. He was very anxious about his mother – he was her principal carer and had no one to turn to in his hour of need. We offered to help but there was nothing we could do, he said. He just needed to get treatment and get back to her as soon as he could. There would certainly be no one but the NHS to look after him.

You've heard of The Untouchables. You've heard of The Expendables. That doctor, that hurt carer, belong to The Indispensables. Right now it is no exaggeration to say that they are the only ones standing between us and complete calamity. Who else, doing what job and in what capacity, can make that claim?

Four weeks into lockdown and I've listened daily to the stories of heroism and sacrifice and unimaginable loss that occur every moment of every day and every night within the NHS – and in hospices and care homes and ordinary homes. I marvel at the courage; I weep for the losses and I know that after this we will never be the same again. At least, I hope we won't. I hope we will realise what is important: not profit but people. I hope that every priority we have had to accept as 'normal' changes and that we find our way towards a society that cares first and foremost about its indispensable workers.

First of all, let's stop pretending that there's no need to pay them generously because caring professions are 'vocational'.

We can clap and we can whoop and holler our gratitude from the rooftops, and we should, and we do – but after this we all have to insist that whatever government is in place takes immediate action to recognise The Indispensables by raising their wages. By listening to what has been and is being learned, and what we now know is essential to have in place for the next time this happens – which, the science seems to suggest, is inevitable.

Our NHS was created after a great crisis – a world war. After this crisis must come a great and deep reckoning: who and what do we really value and how do we protect, nurture and support them.



1972 –

**Businessman | Philanthropist**

Hamdi Ulukaya grew up in Turkey, herding sheep to make cheese and yoghurt with his Kurdish family. He went to school to study to be a teacher but left before he had finished his education. Hamdi became involved in political organizations that spoke up for the rights of Kurdish people who had suffered from persecution in Turkey and throughout the Middle East.

Hamdi moved to the United States to study. His father suggested that he should start a cheese factory. It was hard at first and Hamdi worried a lot about how he would be able to pay his employees each month, but he persevered.

In 2005, Hamdi saw a sales listing for a yoghurt factory. He took out a small business loan and bought the factory. He called his company 'Chobani', which means 'shepherd'. At this time, Greek yoghurt made up about 2% of all the yoghurt sold in the US – today, Greek yoghurt makes up over 50% of the market and much of that is due to Hamdi's company. Chobani now makes and distributes yoghurt all over the world.

Hamdi believes that employers have a responsibility to look after their employees. He pays good wages and gives employees shares in Chobani. Hamdi speaks up for the rights of workers and refugees, and has pledged to donate the majority of his wealth to refugee causes.

**One thing you can do:** take what you know and think about how you can make it work for you, and how it can potentially help others.

3.



### EMILY HIBBS

"When I was little, one of my nana's favourite songs to sing was 'The White Cliffs of Dover'. Before I knew anything about the Second World War, I knew half the lyrics to that song. As I got older, she and my grampi – who had been in the RAF – told me about their experiences of the conflict. While researching this project, I discovered other hidden tales from this significant moment in history and hope that, through our stories, you will too."

*Emily is an author and editor who has written on everything from unicorns to footballers.*



### E.L. NORRY

"When I was at school, learning about the Second World War was a topic that fascinated me and captured my imagination. Being Jewish, it was enlightening to write from the perspective of a Kindertransport child, and with *Empire of the Sun* being a favourite film, having the opportunity to imagine life in a POW camp was interesting."

"I've enjoyed taking time to imagine the lives of children who had to live through and endure such extreme and difficult times."

*Emma is a rising star as a writer with a particular interest in exploring difficult issues and complex characters.*