



Heart and Soul: The Story of Florence Nightingale

Gena K. Gorrell

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In Florence Nightingale's day, if a person was sick – and lucky – he or she was nursed at home with caring family members tending the bedside. Hospitals were horrible places from which few emerged alive. The nurses were often drunks and prostitutes. Doctors had rudimentary skills.

Thus the privileged Nightingale family was appalled when Florence, who had done her share of household nursing, announced that she wanted to train to work in a hospital. After all, her role was cut out for her: she was to be a decorative, witty lady. A career, much less nursing, was out of the question.

It took many years, but Florence found her calling in Crimea. More English soldiers died of sickness there than died in battle. If they were wounded they were almost sure to suffer in misery, lying on pallets caked with old blood, hungry and thirsty, without anyone to offer them so much as a sip of water. Florence caused a revolution in her insistence for cleanliness, wholesome food, and kind treatment of men, who were considered to be nothing more than cannon fodder.

Florence's campaign resulted in reforms to health care for millions of people. Although she was in frail health for much of her life, her sense of outrage and her extraordinary stamina in the face of prejudice and almost criminal ignorance make her story one of the most inspiring in history.

Dozens of photographs, posters, and cartoons bring the past to life in this memorable biography.

From the Hardcover edition.

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