

# A Fight for Rights

Property of: *Eilidh Reid*

**1907**

2<sup>nd</sup> July

My name is Eilidh Reid and I am ten years old. To tell you the truth, I'm not much good at writing but I thought I'd try and keep a diary seeing as I am living through such an exciting time of revolution and change. Who knows, my diary may even become one of those historical papers that are used to find out about the past.

**1908**

5<sup>th</sup> January

Tomorrow Mama is taking me to my first ever Suffragette meeting! I've been begging her for ages to let me go and I am so excited I can barely sit still. Mama is telling me I have to go to bed now as we're getting up early to catch the train to London. I'll write more soon!

**1909**

7<sup>th</sup> January

Yesterday's meeting was absolutely fascinating- I learned so much about the fight for women's suffrage and there were so many inspirational speakers there. There were other people from Edinburgh going to the meeting too, including a little girl called Bessie who is only nine years old! She is the youngest member of the Suffragettes which I think is extraordinary. I do hope we will be friends.

4<sup>th</sup> March

I went to another meeting with Bessie today and she told me that she and her mother are joining the WSPU which is the other organisation for women's rights. I asked Mama about it and she said that it was created by Emmeline Pankhurst because she was frustrated with the NUWSS's approach. Now my loyalties are divided as I desperately want to join the WSPU with Bessie but Mama thinks that it is too violent and is worried that I will get hurt or arrested. Whatever am I supposed to do?

30<sup>th</sup> April

I have joined the WSPU and Mama is absolutely furious with me. It was a difficult decision as I don't want to quarrel with Mama but at the same time I feel as if I must be true to myself and what I believe in.

6<sup>th</sup> June

Mama still isn't speaking to me. It makes me so sad that women are being divided at a time when they should be sticking together. After all, we are all fighting for the same thing. I understand why she is worried but I wish she would help me instead of making it harder. I have to sneak out when I want to go to meetings and I feel awful for going behind her back.

5<sup>th</sup> September

I think I shall burst with excitement! Bessie has just come running to tell me that the WSPU have decided to hold a procession in Edinburgh and that she is playing the bagpipes at it! I can't believe it's going to be in Edinburgh this time instead of London where they always are. What an honour to hold such an important event in our very own city! Mama has finally forgiven me and I am so glad. Now I just have to persuade her to join the WSPU...

**1910**

10<sup>th</sup> November

We've finally made progress! A bill has been passed in the House of Commons that will allow property-owning women to vote! I can't believe it's actually happened. I'm trying not to get my hopes up because it still has to become a Law but it's the most progress we've made in years. It isn't fair that only women of the upper classes will have the vote and I can't say that Bessie and I agree with it but it's definitely a starting point.

17<sup>th</sup> November

We have just received the news that the bill will not become a law after all. I don't know what to say, no words could possibly convey how disappointed I am. Nevertheless, if they think this is going to stop us- they can think again! I have a feeling that the 'peaceful' demonstration planned for today will not be quite so peaceful after all...

18<sup>th</sup> November

Bessie has been hurt! I am so scared. I don't know what to do. What if she dies? I must get a grip on myself to try and explain what happened. At the march on Friday things escalated so quickly that I don't even know how it happened. Suddenly a policeman was hitting Bessie and I tried to stop him but Mama was holding me back. Then he threw her into the hostile crowd of spectators and I lost sight of her. The only thing we know is that she was taken to The Royal Infirmary. I feel so sorry for Bessie's mother, I can't even imagine how she feels. We're all pretty shaken up. I cannot believe that a policeman would do something so horrible to a ten-year-old girl, especially someone so small and frail as Bessie.

I have just come back from visiting Bessie and the doctor said that she will be fine. I am so relieved that I could cry! She was sleeping for most of our visit but we got to talk to her for a few minutes. Apart from being a little confused, she seemed alright and was very happy to see us.

**1911**

9<sup>th</sup> February

Bessie has completely recovered and thankfully has suffered no lasting damage.

**1913**

4<sup>th</sup> June

At the Derby today the most awful thing happened. Emily Wilding Davison ran out in front of a horse and has been injured. I am praying that she will be alright as it would be too awful if she died.

8<sup>th</sup> June

Emily Davison died today. I'm shocked as I really thought that she would be alright. I can't believe the horrid things people are saying about her already- do they have no respect?

**1915**

15<sup>th</sup> October

We are in the middle of The Great War and all I can say is that there is nothing great about it. When I look back on my previous diary entries it feels like different girl entirely must have written them. I can't even remember what life was like before the war and as for the Suffragette Movement, our campaign has largely come to a halt. Although I am still deeply passionate about it, it's hard to get motivated in such a depressing time.

**1918**

28<sup>th</sup> February

Finally a law has been passed allowing some women to vote. It's nice to get some good news for a change instead of all the bad news we've been getting recently. Hopefully it won't be long until this awful war is over and we can focus on campaigning for all women to get the vote. If they think that we will stop fighting for women's rights, they're wrong. There's a long way still to go but we will never give up and we won't stop fighting until every woman has the right to vote.

