

5th November 1910

Today was my sixteenth birthday, and it's been one of the best days of my life. Elizabeth appeared this afternoon and dragged me out of the house, without telling me where we were going. She led me into the centre of the city, where we were faced with the biggest crowd of people I had ever seen. I pulled Elizabeth back from the crowd, wary of the number of people. She just laughed, and pulled me further into the mass of people. The crowd hushed, the quiet a sudden contrast to the volume when we first arrived. I followed everyone's gaze up to a window where a woman was stood, ready to address the crowd. It took me a second, but eventually I recognised who she was. It was Emmeline Pankhurst; I'd seen her picture in the newspaper. I won't write down what she said, because I know those words will stick with me for far longer than this diary ever will, but all I will say, is that her speech really did change my life.

5th November 1911

I turned seventeen today! The past year of my life has been so busy, but so incredible at the same time. After years of putting up with the prejudice that has surrounded me for so long, it feels incredible to finally be doing something that will make this country a better place for girls like me. I've been busy this year attending as many protests and meetings as possible, but all the while trying to keep it all hidden from my father. As much as I want to be able to tell everyone about the wonderful things that are happening, I know for certain that he would not agree.

5th November 1912

I didn't really feel like writing in here today, but I promised myself I'd keep updates of what's going on in my life. Just a couple of weeks ago, the worst possible thing happened. I had been at an evening suffragette meeting, and when I returned home, I found my father stood on the doorstep, a bag in his hand. He looked angry. Angrier than I had ever seen him before. When I reached him, he threw the bag down at my feet and started to shout. He went on and on about how irresponsible I was for letting these women brainwash me into thinking I'd ever be equal to a man. I looked into the bag to find it contained a small number of possessions. I turned calmly and walked away, not letting him see the tears cascading down my face. I headed to the only other place I knew I could be welcome, Elizabeth's house, and that's where I am today, celebrating my birthday without my family around me.

5th November 1913

I can't believe it's been a year of living like this. When I got kicked out a year ago, I never imagined that it was serious. I was certain that he would forgive me and let me back in the house. However, 365 days later, I'm still here sleeping on Elizabeth's floor, having given up on begging my father to let me come home again. Despite all that, I still haven't let anything stop me from carrying on with the suffragettes. Some days it feels futile, as we're ridiculed again and again, but other days I'm reminded why I can't give up. Whether it's seeing a young girl look up to us in admiration, or a man finally choosing to listen to what we have to say, these moments give me hope.

5th November 1914:

Last year when I imagined my twentieth birthday, I imagined a joyful time, celebrating with my loved ones. Today has been anything but that. The war broke out in February, and nothing has been the same since. I was moved to a munition factory, as my previous factory was deemed 'unnecessary' in the war effort. I hate it. I hate working on something that I know will be used to destroy another human's life.

5th November 1915

The war is causing a constant cycle of pain and suffering for everyone, not just the men out in the field. However, despite the grief and loss suffocating the country, we've managed to get the suffragette movement back in the attention of the government. We've realised that this is our chance to finally prove that women can do the same jobs as men, at just the same level. And surely, if that is the case, we can't still be refused the basic right to have our voices heard. .

5th November 1916

I feel numb today. I've spent the past six birthdays with Elizabeth, but today I'm spending it alone.. A couple of weeks ago, we went to our biggest march yet. Thousands of us chanted our way through the streets of London, into the centre of the city where we were met with a large group of policemen heading towards us. The commotion as the two crowds met was far enough in front of us, that we thought we had time to run. The fear drove us onwards until I suddenly felt her being pulled away from me. I turned to see a police man, brutally dragging her along the floor. The last I saw before the crowd swallowed her up was her mouthing 'run'. So, I ran. I'll never forgive myself for that.

5th November 1917

This year more than ever feels completely hopeless. The war is still ploughing on, and meanwhile back at home, the government are still depriving women of basic respect. The one positive is that Elizabeth is back. She doesn't like to talk about her time in prison, but it is clear that the horrors she witnessed will haunt her forever. She was treated like an animal, just for wanting to be seen to be as strong as her male counterparts. Is that really too much to want?

5th November 1918

I started this diary eight years ago, at the start of my journey as a suffragette. It's been eight years of anger, sadness and suffering, but finally this year we caught a glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel. A monumental vote was passed in government, finally giving some women the vote. That day was one of the best days of my life. Everything we had endured had finally been given a purpose and I couldn't have been happier. We still have a long fight ahead of us until we can be truly equal, but we're a lot closer.