

My life as a woman in WW1 by Hana Coolbaugh

My name is Laura, I used to just stay at home with my children but now I train mules to pull carts ever since my husband died. Violet and Cecil stay at home with my sister Catherine and her 13-year-old girl Lucy. My cat Midnight, comes and goes whenever she wants. I have two children; Violet, who is 5, and Cecil, who is 10, [found a kitten in our garden poor thing it would of if we hadn't found the poor scrap. Violet named the kitten Midnight because it was black.] My sister Catherine had a dog walking business before the war, so she takes the children and her daughter out to do dog walking, but they have to be extra careful with the air raids going on because of the war.

I was married but, after a few months, I got a telegram from the war office saying had died. Violet and Cecil are wrecked; they won't speak of the war. I just hope the war ends.

I am enjoying my new job training mules, I have to get up at 6:00am to walk to the train station at 6:30 to catch the train to the countryside so I can walk to the stables to feed the mules, donkeys and horses then I change into some scruffy trousers. There are two other girls to help with training the mules, donkeys and horses because it is one girl per breed, I am with two girls called Elizabeth and Charlotte. I like working with women it feels more comfortable. It also feels weird working. When I get to work I feed the animals, put water in their bowls and put fresh hay in their paddocks. But we also have to train the mules, donkeys and horses to pull the munitions to the front line and I always see a munitions girl [who is my neighbour] Rose. I don't always like being the **one** that has to cleaning out the dung.

I work six hours a day, looking after the mules, donkeys and horses and I only get paid 2 shillings a day. My job is dangerous because you can get kicked in the face.

After a long day at work, I find my sister Catherine and her daughter Lucy doing the laundry while Cecil and Violet are playing with their Diablo. Then I have to go make dinner, so I warm up the water and chuck in some Ox tongue. While I wait for it to cook, I start mending some of Lucy's old clothes for Violet, then I have to bath the children including Lucy.