

THE STAGE

It is a bad day, just as any other, and to make things worse, I've left my phone at home, I just hope everything is okay.

My name is Connor Evans, and I'm just an ordinary guy working in an ordinary place, but unfortunately, under extraordinary circumstances. We're in the middle of a global pandemic and here in Michigan things are getting worse and worse. I know it for a fact, since I'm a specialist at the emergency department, critical patients don't stop coming and their lives depend on me and my team.

It is 10 pm and I'm just starting my night shift. In a hurry I grab my white coat and my face mask, I quickly search for my special gear in the changing room and I get down to work. The sirens start wailing and a stranger comes lying in a stretcher pushed by two paramedics fighting for his life, but I guess we all have to act like it's no big deal. I rapidly ask one of the medics to give a report of the patient, and he tells me that that the poor guy is suffering from internal bleeding caused by the bloody virus, I swear I am sick of it. It's been 15 minutes and I'm already on the point of having a mental breakdown so I go and grab a couple of tranquilizers that will get me through the night. I tell my colleague Emma to help me stop the bleeding but just as she's taking some bandages, our anonymous individual passes away. At that moment I see a big fat tear falling down Emma's cheek and wetting her face mask, but she pulls herself together and covers the corpse with a white sheet.

It sad that we have no time to mourn our dead. My wife always calls me heartless and cold, but if I had to bring myself down with every casualty we have, I wouldn't be able to smile again. One of the most difficult tasks is not to get emotionally attached to the patients we see every day at the hospital, who kind of become part of our family.

On to another thing. It is time to check on those patients waiting for tests results. As I am talking to a really nice old man, some familiar screams reach me from the other end of the corridor. I push my way through beds and wheelchairs and some dreadful thoughts run through my head, (not another one kicking the bucket please.) I slam the door open to find out the most marvellous thing that could ever happen to me: my beautiful wife (well, not very beautiful at this moment but anyway...) is giving birth to our first child, I know she'll be mad at me, but we'll sort it out later. The moment I see my baby's face, a big fat tear rolls down my cheek wetting my face mask.

These things make me wonder how swiftly life comes and goes. While I think about the fragility of our existence, Shakespeare comes to mind with his famous quote: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances..."

Category C - Yago Pascual