

Casualty 1909 is back with a bang this week, as staff at The London Hospital are rushed off their feet dealing with the victims of an explosion. And when police want to question the wounded patients as they search for foreign anarchists, no-nonsense matron Eva Luckes is anything but happy.

'Eva thinks the hospital should be a safe haven,' explains Cherie Lunghi, who plays her. 'She is concerned only with looking after her patients and saving lives, and she doesn't want the hospital getting involved in any of the politics of the day.'

Tragically, one of the young victims of the explosion dies on the operating table as new young doctor Harry Ingrams (Tom Hughes) volunteers as anaesthetist to senior surgeon Hurry Fenwick (David Troughton). Meanwhile, Sister Ada Russell (Sarah Smart) is busy dealing with a young prostitute, and clashes with star surgeon — and secret cocaine addict — Mr Henry Dean (Paul Hilton) over a patient's diagnosis.

Cherie has also starred in *Casualty* as Professor Camille Windsor, so she has seen the vast differences between a modern hospital and an early 20th century one. Many life-saving treatments were being



Treating the injured

DRAMA
Casualty 1909
BBC1 • Sunday

'I'm Cherie Lunghi can't stand the sight of blood... squeamish'

pioneered, while the NHS was still decades away.

'People going into medicine have always been dedicated and compassionate,' Cherie says. 'But when you walk into an operating theatre from 1909, it's almost closer to medieval medicine than it is to modern medicine.'

Even though she has also played Eva in *Casualty 1906* and *1907*, Cherie says that she isn't a fan of the show's more bloody scenes, and could never have been a nurse in real life.

'I'm quite squeamish, and would have keeled over if I saw a scalpel going through

skin, or just blood,' she admits. 'I'm not good with gore. There have been times when I have fainted at the sight of fake blood. I've actually passed out.'

Cherie, who is currently filming a third series of *Secret Diary Of A Call Girl* with Billie Piper, says appearing last year on *Strictly Come Dancing* had a great impact on her.

'It's the most popular thing I've ever been involved in,' says Cherie. 'It felt like training for the Olympics. By the time I woke up on a Sunday I felt like I'd been run over by a truck!'

Nick Fiaca