Passage 1: *from* The Other Side of Courage

by Robert Nordmeyer

The following text is from a historical fiction novel about Elizabeth Blackwell, who became the first woman in the United States to graduate with a medical degree in 1849.

1 "I'm back," Emily called when entering the waiting room.

2 "Finished so soon?"

3 "Yes, I have enough material for my needs so I thought I'd stop by here to see if you needed any help." The young medical student had spent the day at the library doing research for her thesis.[1] She was staying at the house with Elizabeth.

4 "Ah, excellent, I can always use your help. I'm pleased you came early."

5 Emily gave a quick glance around the room. Three patients filled the small space. "Looks like a reasonable afternoon," she said.

6 "Normal caseload," Elizabeth said lowering her voice.

7 "All nonpaying I assume."

8 Elizabeth shrugged. "I don't ask. If they can pay they will. But generally not."

9 Emily looked at the list of patients to be seen. There was nothing too serious; conditions she could handle herself. But she was only there to assist. Being that she was only a medical student at Western Reserve University in Cleveland, she could not attend to anyone medically. However her help was of value to both sisters.

10 "I received a letter from Mother yesterday," Emily said.

11 "Oh, what did she have to say?"

12 "She's concerned for your safety."

13 "My safety? What on earth for?"

14 "The mean-spirited and vulgar letters and comments you got when you first started your practice."

15 ''They were harmless," Elizabeth insisted. "I paid them no mind."

16 ''Is all of that over with now?"

17 "Well," Elizabeth answered pausing. ''Not really. Just today I received another rather nasty post; crude and quite insulting. I still don't understand what those in high positions find so objectionable about a woman practicing medicine."

18 Emily drew back and gave a short laugh. "Don't understand? Elizabeth, those letters told you why they objected to you being in medicine."

19 ''But those are just idle insults, no reasoning; no logic behind them. Calling me a woman of questionable morals are simply flagrant[2] attempts at intimidation."[3]

20 ''So it's continuing then? And are you hearing any more lies from the physicians about you being incompetent and untrained and practicing medicine illegally? You know, it's a shame that people listen to those men and believe them."

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[1] **thesis:** a lengthy document written as a requirement for a degree at a university
[2] **flagrant:** noticeably bad or offensive
[3] **intimidation:** the act of pressuring, threatening, or forcing someone to do something

21 "No, I haven't heard any further comments. But it doesn't matter if people believe those lies, the poor don't, Emily, and that's who we're serving, which," she said looking around the room, "I believe we best get back to doing."

22 Emily hesitated. "You remember don't you, Elizabeth, that I must leave tomorrow to return to Cleveland. I'll be graduating in January."

23 ''Yes, yes, I do remember and I do so much want to attend your graduation."

24 "Oh, you'll have to make an extra effort. I won't have much time after graduation since I'll be sailing for England for my training soon afterwards."

25 "I will certainly try, Emily. But if for some reason I'm unable to attend I will definitely see you before you sail for England." Elizabeth reached over and took a hand towel off a rack and began drying her hands. ''You know, Emily," she said turning to look at her sister, "as I see more and more women patients I realize that someday soon I will need to make some changes."

26 Emily's eyes squinted. ''Meaning . . . what? You'll need help? Are you thinking that perhaps I should come here after graduation and train with you on the job?"

27 "No, no, of course not. You can't do that. You wouldn't be licensed. No, what I'm saying is that I foresee the day when I will need to enlarge this little operation of mine into something bigger and by then you will have finished your training and may want to join me in this growing venture."

28 Emily drew back and turned to look away.

29 "You have time to think about it," Elizabeth added quickly.

30 "No, I don't have to think about it, Elizabeth. Of course I want to be a part of your vision. It's just that . . ." she turned around to look at Elizabeth.

31 "Yes, just what?"

32 "It's just that I'm afraid you may be pushing yourself too hard. There may never be an opportunity for a new . . ."

33 "Don't worry, Emily. I certainly have no plans of wearing myself out. I'm a practical person. I'm no fool. All of what I have worked for would be wasted if I became incapacitated[4] and could no longer pursue my passion. You don't have to worry. I'll be here strong and able when you've finished your training."

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[4]**incapacitated:** lacking in strength to the point of being unable to perform tasks

Passage 2: Elizabeth Blackwell, Doctor

by Barbara Krasner

1 Born in England, Elizabeth Blackwell (1821–1910) came with her family to settle in Ohio when she was 11 years old. Her father was an abolitionist. He also believed in women's rights and encouraged Elizabeth to take up whatever career she wanted. At first, Elizabeth had no interest in becoming a doctor. She wanted nothing to do with the study of the body. She preferred history, so she became a teacher.

2 Then, a close friend who was dying told Blackwell that she had been too embarrassed to seek treatment from a male doctor. The friend might have been helped if there were women doctors. That got Blackwell thinking. She decided to overcome her fears and become a doctor.

3 In the mid-1840s, however, medical schools did not admit women. Blackwell applied to more than two dozen medical schools. She hoped that one of them would give her the opportunity she needed. She had to study on her own to prepare. She was rejected from every school—except Geneva Medical College in upstate New York.

4 The 150 male students at Geneva were asked to vote on whether to accept Blackwell. Thinking the idea of a woman doctor was just a joke, they voted her in. But it was no joke to Blackwell. She faced hostility from students at school and people in town. She put up with crude remarks by her male classmates. She dealt with professors who were reluctant to teach her subjects that they thought were not suitable for women. When a professor asked her to step out of the room so he could lecture, she refused. Slowly, she earned the respect of her teachers and her classmates.

5 To gain practical experience, Blackwell spent her summers at the Blockley Almshouse in Philadelphia. She met with prejudice there, too. Male patients did not want her to examine them. Her colleagues seemed to dislike her purely based on her gender. Still, she refused to be stopped. In fact, she became a leader in treating typhus. The disease became the subject of her doctoral thesis.

6 In 1849, Blackwell graduated at the top of her class from Geneva Medical School. After graduation, she continued her studies in Europe. First, she worked in a Paris maternity hospital where she became a skilled obstetrician. After treating a baby with an infection, she caught the infection and lost the sight in her left eye. Despite the disability, she continued her studies at a hospital in London.

7 Armed with valuable experience, Blackwell returned to the United States. In 1851, she opened a practice for the poor in New York City. At first, she did not attract many patients because people were not used to women doctors. Soon, she expanded her practice to form the New York Infirmary for Women and Children in 1857. Treating women and children seemed a more acceptable approach. Blackwell's younger sister, Emily, joined the new practice. Emily was the third woman in the United States to earn her medical degree.

8 Blackwell fought not only for women in medicine, but also for social reform, family planning, hygiene, and other causes. She opened a medical college in New York City in 1868. In the mid-1870s, she returned to England. She helped start the London School of Medicine for Women. She died in London in 1910 after sustaining injuries from a bad fall. During her life, Blackwell wrote important books that paved the way for women in medicine. The titles included *Medicine as a Profession for Women* (1860), *Address on the Medical Education of Women* (1864), and *Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women* (1895).

Passage 1: In Pakistan, a Self-Styled Teacher Holds Class for 150 in a Cowshed

by Abdul Sattar

1 Every day, shortly after breakfast, more than 150 noisy and eager-eyed kids, coated in dust from top to toe, troop into a mud cowshed in a sun-baked village among the cotton fields of southern Pakistan. The shed is no larger than the average American garage; the boys and girls squeeze together, knee-to-knee, on the dirt floor.

2 Words scrawled on a wooden plank hanging outside proudly proclaim this hovel to be a "school," although the pupils have no tables, chairs, shelves, maps or wall charts—let alone laptops, water coolers or lunch boxes.

3 Nor are there any teachers, except for one very young woman who is sitting serenely[1] in front of this boisterous[2] throng, occasionally issuing instructions, watched by a cow and a couple of goats tethered a few feet away. Her name is Aansoo Kohli.

4 Aansoo is a 20-year-old student in the final stages of a bachelor's degree. She is the only person in this village with more than a smattering of education. Her mission is to change that: "I'll make these children doctors," she says. "I'll make them teachers and engineers."

5 The kids in Aansoo's cattle shed are from Pakistan's Hindu community—a marginalized,[3] sometimes victimized, minority in an overwhelmingly Muslim nation. Their village has for centuries subsisted on the tiny income produced by picking cotton and green chilies for feudal landlords.

6 The mass exodus of Hindus to India—50 miles to the east—during the 1947 partition of the Subcontinent seems to have passed by this remote community.

7 The village, Minah Ji Dhani, lies deep in the countryside of Pakistan's Sindh province; you have to drive across fields to reach it. There is no road. Nor is there electricity or running water. Its inhabitants are among the poorest of Pakistan's roughly 200 million population.

8 A crude wooden crutch lies at Aansoo's side. She needs this because she lost the use of a leg as an infant due to a botched medical procedure. Her father, an illiterate farm worker, realized she would be unable to work in the fields, so he packed her off every day to a government-run school miles away.

9 As an impoverished and disabled Hindu girl in a highly conservative and patriarchal[4] rural society, Aansoo says her school years were difficult. "People would laugh at me when I went to school," she recalls. "They'd say, 'What's she going to do once she's educated?'"

10 Aansoo's cowshed "school" is her answer to that question. She has no teaching qualifications and works without pay. This hasn't deterred[5] her from pushing ahead with a personal campaign to give her village's children—girls as well as boys—the chance to get educated.

11 "I love these kids," she says. "I'm urging them to study."

12 You only have to watch Aansoo at work for a short while to realize that to describe her cattle shed as a school, or her as a teacher, really is a stretch.

13 Overwhelmed by numbers, she teaches some of the older children, who then squat on the ground and impart what they have just learned to the smaller kids, some as young as three. Somehow the village whipped up enough money to buy some dog-eared government textbooks and hand-held blackboards.

14 But there is another goal here. Talk to Aansoo, and it soon becomes clear she has assembled these kids in part to draw attention to a chronic problem blighting her country's young, especially the poor.

[1]**serenely:** calmly or peacefully
[2]**boisterous:** loud or noisy and lively
[3]**marginalized:** confined to a lower or outer edge, as of social standing
[4]**patriarchal:** ruled by men
[5]**deterred:** prevented or discouraged an action or behavior

15 Over the years, government teaching jobs in Pakistan have routinely been handed out as political favors. Thousands of so-called "teachers" pocket wages but do not go to work. There's a girls' school less than a mile from Aansoo's village that has long been closed because the teachers never showed up.

16 Aansoo's aim is to generate the kind of publicity that will send a message to people far beyond the confines of her village: "I want to tell Pakistan's teachers that you have a duty to the nation's children. Please come to school and teach!"

17 "Aansoo is posing a question for all of Pakistan," says Janib Dalwani, a Muslim social activist from a nearby village who's playing a central role in Aansoo's seven-month-old campaign, publicizing her efforts and rallying villagers to the cause. "If someone with her disadvantages can teach, then why can't teachers who're sitting at home drawing salaries go out and teach?"

18 The task of persuading parents to allow their kids to go along to Aansoo's cattle shed fell to Dalwani. He says they were initially reluctant to release their children from working in the fields and doubtful about the benefits of education.

19 "I told them God's on their side," says Dalwani. "He'll help them."

20 This seems to have worked. Ram Chand, a farm worker, has allowed three of his daughters to go to the cattle shed: "I am very happy," he says. "We don't want the children to lead the life we've led."

21 Aansoo's message is being heard beyond her village. Liaquat Ali Mirani, a principal in the Sindhi city of Larkana, runs a website that publishes the names and photos of absentee teachers in the hope this will shame them into doing their jobs.

22 "I fully support Aansoo and have a lot of sympathy for her. May God help her," says Mirani.

23 He estimates four out of 10 teachers in the province never set foot in a school: "Some of them run shops, some work in the media, some for feudal landlords."

24 In 2010, Pakistan's federal constitution was amended to make education compulsory[6] and free for all children age 5 to 16. But education is run by provincial governments; they haven't yet turned this amendment into law and it seems unlikely they will. This helps explain why, according to estimates, nearly half of Pakistan's 58 million kids of school age are not in school.

25 "The state of education is very bad in Pakistan," says Farhatullah Babar, a leading figure in the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the late Benazir Bhutto's party that governs Sindh. "In fact, we have what we call education emergency."

26 Babar says that although the PPP bears much responsibility for the education crisis in Sindh, it plans to fire absentee teachers and make government teachers take a proficiency[7] test.

27 "I think these measures indicate a very strong realization on the part of the PPP that if it was responsible for the mess, it is also determined to clean the mess," says Babar.

28 For now, though, the kids in the cattle shed are on their own. Their chief hope is Aansoo's determination—and their own enthusiasm.

[6]**compulsory:** required
[7]**proficiency:** the quality or state of having a sufficient level of skill or ability

Passage 2 Audio Transcript: *from* Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech

In 2012, when she was 15 years old, Malala Yousafzai was shot by a member of the Taliban militant group in Pakistan for speaking out for the right of girls to go to school. She survived and continued to speak out for the right of all children to receive an education. In 2014, she received the Nobel Peace Prize. This is part of the speech she gave when accepting the prize.

Transcript: from Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech

00:00 Speaker 1 (Malala Yousafzai): I'm very happy that we are together fighting for an important cause. This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change. I'm here to stand up for their rights, to raise their voice. It is not time to pity them. It is not time to pity them. It is time to take action so it becomes the last time, the last time, so it becomes the last time that we see a child deprived of education.

01:21 Speaker 1: I have found that people describe me in many different ways. Some people call me the girl who was shot by the Taliban and some the girl who fought for her rights. Some people call me a Nobel laureate now. However, my brother still called me that annoying, bossy sister. As far as I know, I'm just a committed and even stubborn person who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants to see women having equal rights, and who wants peace in every corner of the world. Excerpt from "Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech"