The background of the cover is a watercolor illustration. In the center, a man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit and a red bow tie, stands with his arms crossed. Behind him are four other people: a man with a beard on the left, a woman in a white cap and blue dress, a woman in a white cap and blue dress to the right, and a man in a green coat and black cap on the far right. The scene is set in front of a building with a large arched doorway. The title is written in a stylized, white, serif font with decorative flourishes.

THE STORY OF  
+  
DR. DANIEL HALE  
WILLIAMS

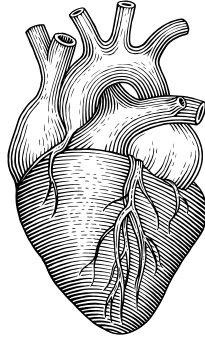
By Boone Jenkins



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

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## *Chapter One*

DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS WHISTLED AS he clipped Dr. Henry Palmer's coarse gray hair. He snipped a few stray wisps, then mussed the doctor's hair experimentally. "How does that look?" he asked.

Dr. Palmer examined his reflection. "Just a bit more off the sides, Dan, if you don't mind."

"Right you are, sir," Dan said.

"Morning, Dan! Morning, Henry!" Harry Anderson stepped into the room, clippers and comb in hand. He was a tall African American man with a deep, musical voice and smile lines etched around the corners of his eyes.

"Good morning, Harry!" Dr. Palmer said. "How's business?"

Harry grinned as he seated the next customer in his barber's chair. "See for yourself." He motioned to the crowded waiting area. "It's booming. How's your practice?"

Dr. Palmer nodded. "Oh, not too bad, not too bad . . . though I had an unfortunate case the other day. A young boy broke his leg falling off a carriage. I had to amputate it in the

end—it was just too damaged, and infection was setting in. Still, it probably saved his life. But for the most part it's going very well."

"Do you have to amputate often?" Dan asked.

"More than I'd like, but no, not terribly often. It's unfortunate, but a man's life is worth more than his leg."

"That's the truth," Harry said around the comb clamped in his teeth.

Dan squinted at the mirror, studying the doctor's reflection. He clipped once more and stepped back. "How does it look now?" he asked.

Dr. Palmer tilted his head. "Perfect. Your handiwork is splendid as always, Dan." He stood up and put on his coat. "Well, I must be off. The patients are calling! Good day, Dan. Good day, Harry."

"Good day, Dr. Palmer!" Dan said.



That evening, Dan sat in bed, staring at a heavy law text, eyes skimming the words without reading. His thoughts drifted elsewhere.

Dan and his older sister, Sally, had lived with the Anderson family in Janesville, Wisconsin, for about four years. By now Dan saw them as family—especially Harry and his daughter, Traviata. Dan's own father and namesake, a respected barber and influential civil rights activist, had died of tuberculosis when Dan was eleven, and the widowed Sarah Williams, unable to support seven children on her own, had apprenticed Dan to a shoemaker in Baltimore, Maryland. But Dan was lonely, and he hated the work. After a few months, he fled Baltimore and shoemaking, caught a train, and took it all the way to Rockford, Illinois, to join his mother.

Mrs. Williams soon tired of Rockford, though. Not long after Dan had joined her, she returned to Maryland, leaving Dan and Sally in Illinois. They stayed there until Dan was sixteen then moved to Edgerton, Wisconsin. There, Dan worked in several barbershops before opening his own at the age of seventeen. But although he enjoyed the work, he felt restless.

His father had always charged African American men and women to “cultivate the mind.” Dan—despite his fair skin and red hair—was still considered African American due to his African ancestry, so he took these words seriously. Not long after settling in Edgerton, he and Sally moved again to the nearby town of Janesville, where Dan worked in Harry’s barbershop and attended Jefferson High School, graduating at twenty-one. Now he was studying at Janesville Academy to become a lawyer like his older brother, Henry Price Williams. Eventually, the brothers hoped to start a law firm together.

The thought of Henry drew Dan’s attention back to his studies, and he tried to focus on the text again. Failing that, he flipped to the end of the chapter to see how much longer it went on, sighed, and closed the book. Law offered a respectable profession and a way to cultivate his mind, but its emphasis on technicalities bored him, and he found its constant argument and conflict distasteful. He wanted to help people, not fight with them.

Dan turned out the light and lay back on his bed in the darkness. Perhaps Dr. Palmer had shown him a new option.



A few days later, Dan stepped into the doctor’s office. “Good morning, Dr. Palmer,” he said, taking off his hat.

Dr. Palmer looked up from his desk. “Good morning, Dan! How can I help you?”

Dan met his eyes. "Sir, I think I'd like to be a doctor. I'd like to ask if you'd take me on as a helper."

Dr. Palmer set down a stack of papers and gazed at Dan keenly. "Why do you think you want to be a doctor?"

"I want to help people, sir," Dan said. "I thought maybe I could do that as a lawyer, but it's not for me."

Dr. Palmer was silent for a moment. Then he said, "It's not easy work, son. It's not just that it's difficult physically, else I'd take you on quick as a flash. You've got steady hands and a good eye—a doctor needs those. But doctoring is hard on the spirit. You have to watch pain, suffering . . . death, sometimes. It's not easy, holding another man's life in your hands. And you'll fail sometimes too, and you'll keep those failures with you for the rest of your life. Think carefully before you make this decision, son."

Dan swallowed. "I think I'm up to it, sir."

Dr. Palmer nodded. "Well, thinking and knowing are two different things. Think on it more, and come back in a few days."

Three days passed before Dan reappeared in Dr. Palmer's office. "My mind hasn't changed," he said.

Dr. Palmer stroked his beard. "And what does Harry Anderson think of this?"

"I haven't told him yet," Dan said. "I wanted your answer first."

"Talk to Harry." The doctor began polishing his eyeglasses. "He'll miss you in his shop. You might be able to work a few hours here and there, but I'll need you with me most days."

Harry was sorry to lose Dan—but he encouraged his adopted son to follow his dream, and at the age of twenty-two, Dan became a medical assistant for Dr. Palmer.

Dan might not have realized it at the time, but he could hardly have chosen a better man to learn medicine from. Dr.

Henry Palmer had run the nation's largest military hospital during the Civil War, serving under General Ulysses S. Grant and earning the title of Lieutenant Colonel—and he was well educated and stayed well informed of medical advancements.

In contrast, many small-town doctors at that time had little education or understanding of the human body. “Quacks,” Dr. Palmer said simply, when Dan asked him about such men. “At best, they’re blundering blindly along, doing more harm than good. At worst, they’re con artists, snake-oil-sellers, and money-grubbers. Stay away from those folks, Dan. Education matters in medicine—no man deserves the title of ‘doctor’ unless he’s earned it, and that takes hard work and study. Don’t forget that.”

Dr. Palmer meant what he said, and hard work and study dominated Dan’s life. By day he visited patients with Dr. Palmer and practiced setting broken bones, treating sicknesses, and stitching wounds. By night he read medical textbooks and journals, learning anatomy and physiology and keeping track of the latest medical developments. Soon, two other aspiring doctors joined him: Frank Pember and James Mills. The three men studied under Dr. Palmer for two years, and Dan spent his little free time barbering or playing in the local string band with Harry.

One evening, Dr. Palmer sat them down at his table. “Gentlemen,” he said, “the time has come for you to decide where to further your medical education.”

Dr. Palmer, Frank, and James agreed on the best choice: Chicago Medical College. However, Dan wavered. He believed, as Dr. Palmer insisted, that Chicago Medical College offered the best medical program available, but it required three years of study, and Dan could not afford the tuition. He might save some money by attending a shorter program at another school, but Dr. Palmer cautioned against it. “This

is the most important part of your education, Dan. Don't shortchange yourself."

"That's a bit difficult when I'm this short on change," Dan said. Frank and James laughed, and Dr. Palmer smiled. Dan laughed with them but quickly sobered. "Well," he said, "if Chicago Medical College is the place to go, I suppose I'll just have to find a way."

In addition to barbering at Harry's, he began helping string telephone wires and install electric lighting around Janesville to earn extra cash. But the pay trickled in too slowly. His first term of medical school loomed on the horizon, and Dan finally gave in and wrote to his mother for money.

She had none. She was still raising Dan's three younger sisters and could not afford to loan money to her adult son. However, she suggested he stay with her widowed friend, Mrs. Jones, who lived in Chicago. The late Mr. Jones, a shrewd businessman who had left his wife a large amount of money, had campaigned for civil rights along with Dan's father.

Dan thanked her and resolved to visit Mrs. Jones once he had the money to pay for medical school. Next, he wrote to his brother, but like their mother, Henry had no money to spare. Finally, Dan realized he had no choice but to ask Harry for a loan. "I've already asked my family," he said, "but they don't have any to spare. I'd start paying you back—with interest, of course—as soon as I get my degree."

Harry clapped him on the back. "Of course I'll give you a loan, Dan. Only keep in mind that I've got plenty of mouths to feed here too. I'll do my best, but it may come late sometimes."

Dan thanked him and wrote Mrs. Jones, asking to visit. She agreed, and he arrived in Chicago wearing a new suit (a gift from Harry and Traviata) and with his red hair and newly grown mustache fashionably trimmed (also courtesy of Harry).



When he reached Mrs. Jones' mahogany door, he took a deep breath, straightened his tie, raised the ornate brass knocker, and brought it down sharply three times.

A butler greeted him. "Welcome, sir. Mrs. Jones is expecting you in the parlor. May I take your hat and coat?"

"Yes, thank you." Dan stepped inside, gazing around the room. Patterned wallpaper and embroidered draperies decorated the walls, porcelain vases stood proudly atop spindly, claw-footed tables, and a glittering chandelier dominated the high ceiling. His feet sank deep into the soft, springy carpet. From somewhere within the house came the faint, elusive scent of jasmine.

"Right this way, sir," the butler said, motioning him into the parlor.

"Mr. Williams!" Mrs. Jones said as he entered. "You look exactly like your father. How nice to see you!" Her clothing matched her house's finery, and even in his new suit, Dan felt shabby and out of place. "How is your mother?" she asked once they had seated themselves on the soft velvet couches in her parlor. "I haven't seen Sarah in years."

"It's been a few years for me, as a matter of fact, but she's well," Dan said. "She's in Maryland with my younger sisters." He didn't mention that his mother could spare him no money; Mrs. Jones struck him as someone to whom status meant a great deal.

"I'm glad to hear it." Mrs. Jones said. "I was so sorry to learn of your father's passing, and of course so was John, bless his memory. But I imagine they're together now up in Heaven, talking about old times and waiting for us slow womenfolk to hurry along and join them. But excuse me, I'm rambling. What brings you to Chicago?"

"Well," Dan said, "I'm here to study at Chicago Medical College to become a doctor. I'm sure you're aware that many

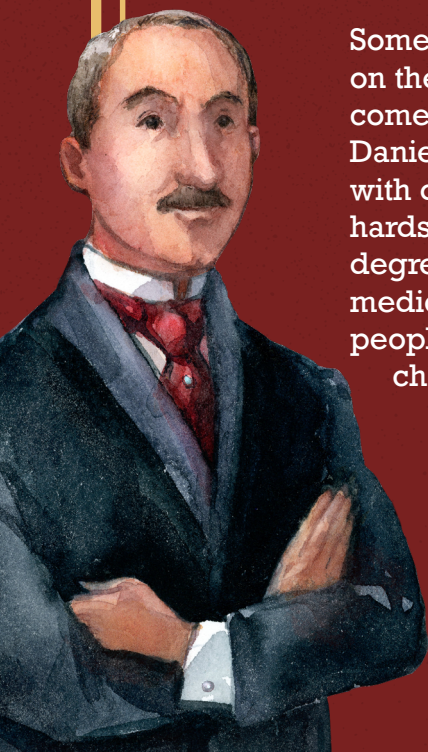
black people can't get good quality medical care, and I'm hoping to change that. I've been working under a doctor in Janesville, Dr. Henry Palmer, for the past few years."

Mrs. Jones smiled. "Ah, you are your father's son in spirit as well as in looks. He was always looking for a way to improve the black man's lot in America. You should be proud to carry his name, and I'm sure he'd be very happy to hear you plan on becoming a doctor. I, for one, would be glad to have you as a physician."

"Thank you," Dan said. He took a deep breath. "As a matter of fact, I was wondering if you'd take me on as a boarder while I attend medical school."

Mrs. Jones eyed him critically. "Well, I've never had a boarder before, but I think I might be able to manage—for Daniel Williams and Sarah Price's son." She smiled. "You are welcome in my house, Mr. Williams."

# THE STORY OF + DR. DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS



Sometimes the impact a person has on the world isn't seen for years to come, and that was the case with Dr. Daniel Hale Williams. Though faced with discrimination and financial hardship, Dr. Williams pursued a degree to help provide quality medical care for African American people. In July 1893, Doctor Dan's life changed forever as he found himself facing an enormous decision, one that could end his career and ruin his reputation forever but might just save the life of his ailing patient.



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