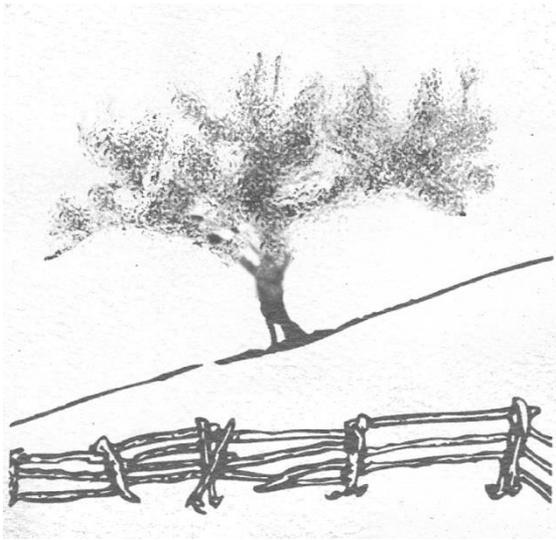


Emma Field

Book Two

A novel by

Carol E. Williams



Journey Publishing

Copyright © Carol E. Williams, 2009
Second Edition

Journey Publishing
Merrickville, ON., Canada
emmafieldnovels.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication
Carol E. Williams, 1961-
Emma Field book II: a novel / by Carol E. Williams.

Co-published with Greyweathers Press and
[New Author Publishing](#)

ISBN 978-1-928054-00-9

Editor: Christine Stesky
Design: Larry Thompson
Calligraphy: Holly Dean

CHAPTER I



NINE PARTNERS

EMMA FIELD?" ASKED the tall, strong man, with hesitation.

"Yes! Yes, I am Emma Field," the young woman replied. She placed her suitcase on the wharf and firmly shook his hand.

Instantly his eyes widened. He touched the brim of his hat.

"My goodness," he said, "I was expecting someone older and in plain dress. My name is Jonathon Spier. I live near the boarding school. I was asked to fetch thee. When I did not see thee aboard the steamboat I was certain -"

"I came by packet sloop," she said, nodding toward the elegant sailboat behind her. "I have never seen such a beautiful craft. It has a fireplace in the forecabin and mahogany on every wall of the cabin. Come, I will show it to you."

"No. I thank thee," Jonathon smiled and shook his head.

"Last night there was dancing on the deck. It was a most glorious night with music playing and the sails snapping in the gentle breeze."

Jonathon picked up her suitcase and nodded toward a team of sturdy brown horses standing under the shade of the nearest tree. "Then thee may find my grain wagon a little crude," he said apologetically. "The stagecoach from Gregory's Hotel does not run on First Days and since I was delivering grain to the wharf yesterday, the Superintendent of the school asked me to stay the night and meet thee."

They walked toward the wagon.

“The wagon may be crude,” said Emma, “but your team is certainly not. They are lovely beasts. My father worked only with oxen.”

“I thank thee,” said Jonathon.



Emma felt Jonathon watching her during their journey. They chatted as they wound their way through the dusty streets of Poughkeepsie, New York, and across the rolling countryside to the east. Hours later he slowed the team and stood to pluck three yellow apples from an overhanging branch.

“For thee - the first apple of the season!” he offered.

“I thank thee,” said Emma with a royal bow of her head.

Jonathon took a bite. “Oh! They are almost as sour as rhubarb,” he said, his lips puckered in response to the tartness. He pointed down the hill.

“Here we are. The tall brick building is the Hicksite Meeting House. Thee does understand that is the place of worship for Friends?”

Emma laughed.

“Thee uses plain speech but -“

“When I remember to!”

“-but thee does not dress as American Friends do.”

Emma laughed again. “That is because I am not a Friend. I am only from a village settled by Friends from this area. What fine buildings thee has here in the Hudson Valley!”

“I suppose we do. That Meeting House was built in 1780 when the original log one burned. But thee will likely never attend Meeting there. It is owned by the Hicksite Friends, the

radical ones.” He rolled his eyes. “The school is run by the Orthodox Friends. It is just up the road in a building that was once a store and an inn. Some say when it was built, it was the finest building in this part of New York, but those students who have attended it call it the ‘Old Quaker Gaol.’

“I live down there on the right. We have sheep on the first farm. It is not a big farm for this area, but it is a big farm for Friends.” He took another bite from his apple.

The team pulled up in front of the enormous schoolhouse and Jonathon climbed stiffly from the wagon. Emma watched as he stroked the curve of the mare’s neck before holding the remaining apple flat on his palm. The mare bit it in two, nuzzled Jonathon and slobbered on his shoulder as he gave the remaining chunk to the second. Emma recognized his kindness. She had seen it in her father and in Ezra, the farm hand at the boarding school at home. She gathered her skirts in one hand and climbed from the wagon as Jonathon wiped his hand on the outside of his trouser leg and plucked Emma’s suitcase from the wagon.

“The girls’ entrance is there on the right,” he said. “It does not look as though they have yet returned from Meeting.” He squinted into the sun to check its location. “But they should return soon. I thank thee for thy company, Emma Field. I have never found the trip to be so short. If thee finds these folks too plain for thy liking, come and see me. I am not so iron-clad in my thinking.”

“Not iron-clad, but as solid as a rock. Thank you—thee—Jonathon Spier,” said Emma, suddenly feeling as though she had been yanked from the soil and left to dry on the hot front steps of the deserted building.

As Jonathon and the team disappeared around the corner, a heavy efficient woman in Quaker dress turned in from the road. She walked more quickly than her body indicated was her custom.

“Emma Field? How unfortunate Jonathon did not let thee in.” She shook her head and wiped the sweat from her brow. “We are all at the Meeting House. Welcome to Nine Partners just the same. I am Hannah Dorland, the head teacher of the girls.”

“I am pleased to meet thee,” said Emma, as she began to curtsy.

Hannah led the way into the building. “As thee can see this is a sizable school. We instruct one hundred and twenty-one students, seventy-two boys and forty-nine girls. I would guess thee has taught much smaller classes at West Lake Boarding School.”

“I ...I have not taught at West Lake. I worked in the school’s kitchen.”

“Not taught? Oh. I misunderstood, then.” She took a second look at Emma’s dress. “Thee is not a Friend either, is thee? Perhaps Jarvis Giffin misinformed me. But we need not stand here determining matters. The Superintendent will return the day after tomorrow. Thee must be tired after such a long journey. Come in. I will show thee to thy room in the attic.”

Emma followed Hannah Dorland up the two flights of stairs to the tiny room adjoining the girls’ sleeping quarters.

CHAPTER II



SECOND DAY

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING Emma waited beside a band of sunlight illuminating the wall of Hannah Dorland's empty classroom. Her eyes scanned the room for clues to the personalities and activities that would soon fill it. A floorboard squeaked and Emma jumped.

"Hello," said a girl, the whites of her eyes and teeth flashing.

"Hello?" said Emma.

The girl swayed, placing the back of her brown hand on the crown of her head.

Emma stared at the dark creases and pinkness of the girl's palm.

"I'm Jessabelle-Rose. I'm a charity scholar. Dee?"

"I - I am Emma Field, Jessabelle."

"It's Jessabelle-Rose. Dat's my first name. 'Madeson' is my last name. Jessabelle-Rose Madeson."

Emma shook her head in bewilderment, "I am sorry to be so rude. I am pleased to meet thee, Jessabelle-Rose."

"Why is dee looking at me like dat? Has dee nebber seen a colored girl, Teachah Emma?"

"No, not up close. Thee is the first nigger I have ever talked to. Are there others -"

"'Nigger' is the word slave holders and slave catchers use," the girl said in a scolding tone. "Friends call us 'Colored'."

Emma blushed. "I am sorry - it is just that my father -"

“No harm done, Teachah Emma. De only uber Coloreds here are Cook Hester and her Emmanuel, but dey live here. I’m just staying for a bit ’fore I go to Canada. I suppose I need to speak real proper when I go there. Teachah Hannah said thee is from Canada.”

“I am. But why does thee want to go there?”

“Oh, Teachah Emma, thee don’t know nothing if thee don’t know why I want to go to Canada.”

A small bell rang deep within the school and the room began to fill with girls, most of them pretending not to notice Emma, some smiling as they passed her. Hannah Dorland and a tall, hefty girl were the last to enter. The teacher’s face was sterner than it had been the night before. She stood squarely at the front of the room. The girls fell silent as they took their seats.

“Girls, this is Teacher Emma Field, from Canada West.”

“Hello,” said Emma, leaning away from the wall and putting on as casual a smile as she could muster.

The large girl, now sitting at the back of the class, raised her hand. “Why is Teacher Emma here?” she asked.

“That is being determined,” Hannah Dorland replied. “There is a possibility she may help me in thy instruction for a period of time; but now it is time for breakfast. Laura Brown, Abalona Comstock; Charity Haight, ... ” The girls rose as their names were called and hand in hand silently filed out the room and down the hall.

Hannah Dorland motioned for Emma to join her in following them. “We train the intellect here at Nine Partners,” she whispered as they began to descend the stairs, “but the mind is secondary to the moral character of each child. They are to maintain order and decorum at all times.

Teacher Susan Gough is at the front of the line. I will introduce thee to her later.”



Emma ate bread and drank water along with the girls seated quietly around their long wooden table. As she returned her dirty dishes to the kitchen, a wisp of a woman scurried toward her.

“Teachah Emma,” she said. “I am Hester.” She hastily wiped her hands on her apron and reached to take the dishes from Emma.

“I am pleased to meet thee.”

“And I am pleased to meet thee. I am de cook here. Jessabelle-Rose told me thee was a young sapling of a teachah.” She leaned in and whispered, “Just between thee and me, that’s just what this overgrown old woods needs. If there’s anything I can help thee with just come and see me. If I can’t help, then my Emmanuel surely can.”



The order of the dining room continued after breakfast as the girls returned to their classroom and began their arithmetic.

“Gauging – Case 1,” Hannah began. “What is the content in wine and beer gallons of a cube whose side is 60 inches?”

Each of the girls began to write the heading in sweeping strokes of her slate pencil. Some began making pyramids of calculations. When some girls finished quickly, Hannah commanded them to help the students seated nearest them.

“Do not miss a step,” she reminded them. “If they do not understand, it is only because thee have not explained it adequately enough.” A hum rose through the room.

Emma’s heart pounded; she knew that she was unable even to begin solving the question. As Hannah stood beside her, Emma whispered in astonishment, “I have never witnessed such a way of teaching, although I suppose Mary Varney, at the West Lake Boarding School, teaches in a similar manner.”

Hannah smiled, though her gaze remained fixed on Jessabelle-Rose, “I suspect Mary Varney has very different ways of teaching ... very different ways ... I am watching Jessabelle-Rose. She is working at a junior level, but Teacher Susan—well, it is better that the girl does her lessons with me. She is learning her multiplication tables and I believe she is getting frustrated. Does thee see the way she is pulling on her hair? I need to adjust the lesson for her sake.”

“What will thee do?”

“I do not know, but by the time I get to the front of the room, I will. ‘Continuing Revelation,’ Emma Field! One needs to be open to ‘Continuing Revelation,’ if one is to teach well.”

Emma watched as Hannah invited Jessabelle-Rose to the teacher’s desk and began counting with her fingers. Within moments Jessabelle-Rose was counting on her own hands and quickly scratching her answers on her slate.



The noon meal of juicy roast beef and boiled new potatoes had ended. Emma stifled a yawn as she scraped the last of the

rice pudding from her bowl and recalled the image of Jonathon Spier stroking the neck of his horse.

“Is thee tired?” asked Hannah as they followed the rows of silent girls up the stairs.

“Yes. It is a lot to take in.”

“And it is a sleepy time of day,” Hannah agreed. “We need to treat the children differently now. Others disagree with me, but I believe there is little value in fighting their after-dinner fogginess.”

“How does thee do that?”

“I read to them. Has thee learned Latin?”

“Latin? No. How does that keep the girls awake?”

“Most times it does not, but we will spend more time on that this afternoon. If they are awake and are able to absorb what I read, it will enhance their later learning. If they sleep, they will at least be rested and able to learn the later lesson—or not.”

“Thee can lead a horse to water, but thee cannot make it drink,” said Emma, thinking again of Jonathon.

“Ah, but thee can make a horse drink when it is thirsty!” beamed Hannah. “That is the most important thing to know about teaching.”

She picked up a rusty colored book from the shelf. “Has thee read any of Caesar’s work?”

“Caesar? The Roman statesman?”

Hannah nodded.

“He wrote?” Emma asked, feeling foolish.

“He wrote beautifully, but there was little he did not do well! He was a distinguished military and political leader and an expert astronomer and mathematician. Thee knows he established the calendar we use today?”

“Yes, July was named after him,” Emma replied, pleased with herself.

“He fought in France, Spain and Africa and extended Roman rule to the Atlantic and across the English Channel. The Gallic Wars is about his campaign to conquer Gaul: what is now France.”

“I did not think Friends would study wars!”

“We do not, but we study authority and bravery and ambition and many other things which are ingredients in war and everyday life.”

“Oh,” said Emma, wishing she had something better to say.



A cinnamon smell of phlox filled the classroom. A slender girl was carefully placing pink cosmos amongst the purple phlox in a crock on the teacher’s desk.

“How beautiful, Faith!” declared Hannah.

“They are for thee, Teacher Emma,” said Faith, sweeping a few hairs over her left ear.

“Faith Talcott is able to create beauty like no one else,” Hannah explained, as she carefully lowered herself onto her chair.

The rest of the girls returned: some leaned back in their seats; others put their heads on their desks. Jessabelle-Rose took a piece of partially stitched fabric from the basket sitting on the floor by her desk. Sitting as straight as the dry daylily stalks outside the window, she threaded blue cotton thread through the needle and began to stitch.

Hannah began, “Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres...”

Emma looked around the room. The smallest girl at the front of the classroom studied the shadows cast by her fingers. The girl beside her slid her tongue along her upper teeth. They all acted as though every day someone stood at the front of the class and uttered words they could not understand.

“The Gallic Wars, by Julius Caesar,” Hannah said, and began to translate. “All Gaul is divided into three parts, one of which the Belgae inhabit, the Aquitani another, those who in their own language are called Celts, in ours Gauls, the third. All these differ from each other in language, customs and laws, ... Of all these, the Belgae are the bravest, because they are furthest from the civilization and refinement of our Province, and merchants least frequently resort to them, and import those things which tend to effeminate the mind; and they are the nearest to the Germans, who dwell beyond the Rhine, with whom they are continually waging war.” Hannah closed the book and placed it beside the flowers. She sat on a stool by the window.

The girl nearest her lifted her head and said, “It seems silly to say one is brave just because one is far from civilization. If that is true then my cousins up north, near Lake Ontario are braver than me.”

“Is thee braver than we are, Teacher Emma?” asked Hannah.

“I do not think so. Besides, if that theory were true then all of you would be braver here in the Hudson Valley, than those who live in New York,” said Emma brightly.

“He said they were near to the Germans. They had to fight frequently. Is that what kept them brave, Abalona?” asked Hannah of the biggest girl at the back of the room.

“Scared—that would keep them scared!”

“Are brave people scared, Margey?” asked Hannah of the girl next to Abalona.

“No.”

“No,” agreed a few of the girls, raising their heads from their desks.

“Think about a time when thee was particularly brave. Was thee scared?”

Jessabelle-Rose laid her sewing down on her lap. Her eyes were as shiny as melted chocolate. “I was once so scared, I wet myself. My papa ... some men banged down our door in de night. Dey took my papa. Susannah told me to stay under de blankets, but I couldn’t. I stuck a branch with dead leaves in de fire so’s I could see who dem men was. Dey threw de branch on de blankets and dey started a fire, but I threw water on it and put out de fire. I saw who dey were – dey were Mas’r Jones and Mas’r Milverton. Susannah said I was a fool. I could have killed us all, but Mama said I was brave. She said it was best that we know where evil lurks.” Jessabelle-Rose searched the blue and green and hazel eyes of the room. She turned to face her teacher. Her shoulders slumped.

“What happened to thy father?” asked the girl beside her.

“I don’t know. We never saw him again.”

The filmy curtains danced in the breeze from the open windows. Emma looked out at the lone orange daylily flower amongst the hundreds of dried stalks.

“Was thee afraid?” Hannah asked softly.

Jessabelle-Rose nodded.

“Was thee brave?”

“I know I was, no matter what Susannah said.”

Hannah nodded her head and stood up slowly, her hand on the small of her back. “I think thee was too, Jessabelle-Rose.”



By the time the girls took their afternoon intermission—some retreating to the sleeping quarters in the attic, some tumbling into the outdoors—Emma felt as though a clean wind had swept through her life. It had been an orderly day with a rhythm and synchronization Emma had never felt before. All of the eating and sleeping and dreaming and learning in this one huge building felt more orderly than life with her father in their own small cabin had ever felt. “How could our lives at home have felt so chaotic and this complex beehive of a place so orderly?” she asked herself. Emma thought of her cousins blown in on an east wind and deposited on her doorstep. All of them were there now, cooking on her hearth and eating from her plate. She thought of her father and of Elizabeth and John and her stomach felt as sloppy as a bucket of scraps saved for the pigs. She forced her mind back to the comforting order of the boarding school.

CHAPTER III



THIRD DAY

THE SUPERINTENDENT of Nine Partners Boarding School returned the next morning. He was a short, squat man, his balding head small for his body.

“Emma Field,” he said, puffing his chest up as he beckoned her to sit opposite him at his desk. “I believe there was a misunderstanding. I was not aware thee is neither Friend nor teacher. This is an odd situation.” He held his stubby hands in front of him, his fingertips touching. “Teacher Hannah will be indisposed for the next few months. We need a teacher. Thee has come a considerable distance for employment. I will see to it that thee is employed long enough to warrant the trip, but should a teaching Friend make our acquaintance, I will need to employ her. This is, after all, a Friends boarding school.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Emma.

“Please refrain from calling me ‘sir’,” said Jarvis Giffin. “I am Superintendent Jarvis and for the duration of your time here I expect thee to use only Friends’ plain speech - and that includes the use of the singular pronoun, ‘thee’.”

“I understand. I am sorry, I thank thee, Superintendent Jarvis.”

“Thee will instruct with Teacher Hannah’s supervision this morning. This afternoon thee will take over the class.”

“Oh. But I do not believe - oh - I thank thee,” said Emma, her tongue tripping over itself with uncertainty.



Hannah was sitting at the desk in her classroom, her temple resting against her palm.

“I did not realize thee was leaving so soon,” said Emma.

“I did not realize I was either,” said Hannah, looking up. There were dark circles under her eyes. “I have not yet prepared the girls, nor myself – nor thee, for that matter! I was trying to determine what might be easiest and most enjoyable work for them and thee. I think it best if they work on Cowper’s ‘The Task.’ Many of the girls enjoy memorization and recitation and that will shift the responsibility off thee and onto them for a short while. It may help with the transition.”

“I am not at all prepared to be their teacher,” whispered Emma, her gaze darting from one empty desk to the other.

“I understand,” said Hannah, “so begin with what thee does know.” She held up a worn copy of *The Scholar’s Arithmetic*. “Is thee familiar with this book?”

“No.”

“Perhaps thee knows the verse, ‘Thirty Days hath September?’”

Emma nodded.

“Jacob Willets, the man who wrote that verse and this book lives just up the road, past the Brick Meeting House. Both he and Deborah, his wife, once taught here. They now have their own school. They are brilliant minds... The sundial in front of the brick Meeting House was calculated by Jacob. Deborah is such a fine grammarian Gould Brown, author of *Institutes of English Grammar*, often consults with her. They are fine

teachers, too. I have learned a great deal from both of them.” Hannah rubbed her eyes. “They follow James Mott’s beliefs that children should be punished sparingly and motivated by the teacher’s examples and expectations. Humpf. But I am rambling, I am sorry. This book is rich with mathematical riddles that the girls enjoy. Now ... William Cowper ... where did I put that book?”



“We will begin with a mathematical riddle,” announced Emma, as the girls became silent. She could feel her heart pounding against the book she nervously clutched at her belly.

*When first the marriage knot was tied between my wife and me,
My age was to that of my bride as 3 x 3 to 3.
But now when 10½ years later we man and wife have been,
Her age to mine exactly better as 8 is to 16.
Now tell, I pray from what I've said.
What were our ages when we were wed?*

Emma watched Jessabelle-Rose slump until her fingertips almost touched the floor.

“This is quite difficult,” Emma assured them. “But give it a try. Let ‘x’ represent the age of the wife ...” Several other girls including Abalona Comstock in the back row slumped in their seats.

Her head still bowed in concentration, Faith raised her hand. “The man’s age is forty-five, his wife’s fifteen.”

“Correct!” said Emma. “Please show thy calculations on the board, Faith. Abalona, thee has a question?”

“That is a year older than me! It is not right for the girl to marry someone so old.”

“Thee may have to!” said Margey, the girl beside her, with a sneer.

Emma interrupted. “There are to be no harsh or ill words!”

“I would rather be a spinster than marry an old man,” continued Abalona.

“My mother was fifteen when she married my father,” said another girl. “His wife had died and he had five children to raise. He had to marry.”

“Had to marry?” asked Emma, before she realized she had opened her mouth. “Friends do not have to marry. Besides Friends’ marriages are always marriages of equality!”

“I don’t think women and men are ever equals,” said Jessabelle-Rose.

“What?” said Abalona and Margey in unison. “Of course, we are equals,” continued Margey. “Male and female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam’ - their name!” she said, quoting the Old Testament.

“Thee can quote all de scripture thee wants, but I ain’t seen it with my own eyes. De white men protect white women like they are children. And de colored women - well there ain’t nobody protecting them - no white man’s going to, even if he is de papa of de woman’s children, and no colored man can cause he just as likely be sold at any time to anyone, anywhere. He don’t own nothing. There ain’t nothing he can give them de Mas’r don’t already give - ’cept maybe love, but that’s hard to give when he only sees de wife and children on Wednesday and Saturday nights de way it is if they marry abroad.”

Emma looked at Hannah, who was nervously watching the superintendent stride by the open window, his hands clasped behind his back.

“I would ask that thee speak a little more quietly,” said Emma.

“That’s de way it goes with de white folk all de time!” retorted Jessabelle-Rose. “‘Equality’ they say! They say one thing - but they really mean another.”

“Stop!” hissed Hannah suddenly. “Thee is not listening to Teacher Emma! Please listen. Does thee not see the superintendent outside the window? If thee continues talking loudly we will all be in trouble. Every one of us. I am not angry with thee, Jessabelle-Rose. I want thee to continue speaking. Will thee do so quietly?”

“No,” said Jessebelle-Rose crossing her arms across her chest. “It is always de same. There are always these laws that appear out of nowhere, protecting de white folks.”

“White men, perhaps - but there are no laws protecting white women,” Hannah added softly.

Jessabelle-Rose continued staring straight ahead. “Maybe de colored women don’t need no laws. I always thought if you took a colored woman and made her white, no white man would marry her. They would be too afraid.”

Margey laughed out loud. “Theodore Weld would, if he were not married.”

“Who is Theodore Weld?”

“Has thee ever heard of the Grimké sisters? Angelina and Sarah Grimké?”

“No.” Jessabelle-Rose uncrossed her arms. She left her right hand across her belly and hooked her thumb under her jaw.

“Tell her about Angelina Grimké,” said Margey to her teacher. “Tell her about them burning down Pennsylvania Hall.”

“Teacher Emma, would thee like to hear about this?” Hannah asked, looking around the room, “or would thee prefer to continue with arithmetic?”

“No – go ahead,” said Emma stepping aside.

“Would thee like the short version or the long?” Hannah asked of Jessabelle-Rose.

“De short,” said the girl slumping in her seat.

Hannah sighed and began: “The Grimké sisters were well-to-do daughters of a South Carolina judge, who was a plantation owner and slave holder, and his wife. The sisters disagreed with slavery, came north and joined the Religious Society of Friends. Before long they found themselves the only women amongst a group of men being trained by Theodore Weld to speak on abolition.

“Tell Teachah Emma what abolition is. She don’t know nothing about slavery,” said Jessabelle-Rose.

“I am certain she knows that abolition is the doing away with slavery completely.”

“I thought thee said this was de short version,” interrupted Jessabelle-Rose once again.

Hannah hesitated, as though to discard any unnecessary fragments of information and then proceeded, “As I was saying, the sisters began speaking first to women in private parlors. Their experiences as southern white women and their understanding of the lot of the female slave made them so popular that within weeks they were required to move their engagements to churches. Before long a man joined the women. He was escorted out, but the next man to attend

refused to leave. Within months the audience – this time in Poughkeepsie – had three hundred men and women, whites and coloreds, in attendance. A few weeks later, in Massachusetts, there were a thousand people! Many clergymen were outraged that women would speak in public. They warned their congregations against listening to female lecturers and repeated Saint Paul’s injunction that women keep quiet in church. The Grimké sisters were denied access to churches and halls all over the country. Mobs gathered. Stones and rotten tomatoes were thrown at them. The press slandered them. The sisters suddenly realized that before they could raise their voices against slavery, they needed to defend their own right to speak in public!”

Jessabelle-Rose shook her head. “That’s crazy!”

“Theodore Weld and others in the movement became afraid that talk of women’s rights would detract from the topic of slavery and cautioned the sisters to remain focused on abolition. The story goes that Angelina Grimké and Theodore Weld locked themselves in fierce debate over this and many matters until they realized their love for one another and married.”

“Really?” asked Jessabelle-Rose.

“Really.”

“I ain’t never heard of a white woman being spunky like that. ’Cept for Lucretia Mott, that is. What did thee say about burning something down?”

“Pennsylvania Hall – and it involves Lucretia Mott, who both attended and taught at this school, as did her husband. ...Where was I? Oh yes: Public opinion began to turn against the abolitionists and it became very difficult to find public buildings that would host anti-slavery events. The wealthy

abolitionists of Philadelphia built their own hall they called Pennsylvania Hall. It had a large auditorium, offices for a newspaper and a free-produce store. The whole building was lit with modern gas.”

“It was beautiful and decorated in the most striking shade of blue with white. The chairs were upholstered in blue plush and the sofas in blue damask,” interjected Faith.

Hannah continued, “The hall was opened during the Second Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, the day after Angelina Grimké and Theodore Weld were wed.” Hannah laughed. “Theodore Weld were wed! That is hard to say!”

She continued, “Many Philadelphians, already threatened by the notion of abolition, were outraged that colored women were included in the convention. They were also horrified to learn that coloreds had attended the Grimké and Weld wedding. They placed notices throughout the city calling for all citizens to ‘interfere, forcefully if they must’ with the convention and so a large mob assembled outside the hall. To make a statement and keep the women safe, Lucretia Mott –” Hannah hesitated and smiled at Jessabelle-Rose, “she had the women exit the building, two by two, a colored woman linked in arm with a white woman. The mob dared not touch them, but later that night ransacked the hall, burned it to the ground, and proceeded toward the Motts’ home to do the same. They were averted only when a friend of the Motts shouted, ‘On to the Motts!’ and led the crowd in the opposite direction. Tragically, they burned a church and nearby shelter for colored orphans.”

“Oh my,” said Jessabelle-Rose, her hand over her mouth. “Did any orphans die?”

“Yes,” said Hannah.

“Why did they do that?”

“Who?”

“Those people hurting free colored folks and burning beautiful buildings?”

“I suspect it was just as thee explained yesterday – they were afraid. The abolitionists were challenging everything they believed to be true and many of them had very little to start with.”

“And de abolitionists? Why did they do what they did?”

“They knew things had to change and they were prepared to face the opposition that would be a part of it. At least some of them were. Others abandoned the movement that very day.”

“Why did thee not want Superintendent Jarvis to hear this?”

“Because he is staunchly Orthodox. He does not approve of any of this – especially of Lucretia Mott herself. But I did not mean for us to discuss this. I am afraid this is not the best introduction to Teacher Emma about what happens in our classes. You all do know that I will be absent for a period of time. I had thought I would have the week to prepare you for that, but Superintendent Jarvis has instructed me to leave after dinner today. Teacher Emma will take over the lessons this afternoon. I ask that you give her all of the respect you have given me and I will return in a matter of months.”

It was as though a swarm of bees had descended on the classroom as the girls jumped from their seats and implored Hannah to remain, at least for the rest of the day.



Later that evening, as the shadows of the school touched the edge of the eastern field, Emma looked out her window to see two horses, their heads held high, trotting through the tall dry grass. Emma slipped down the stairs and outside to where Jonathon Spier stood looking from the mares to the front of the boarding school.

“Hello, neighbor!” Emma called.

“Oh. Hello!” he responded. “How is the teacher?”

“Happy and thrilled! It was a splendid day, so much more than I could have imagined. The way Hannah teaches is like nothing I have ever seen before and Superintendent Giffin has asked me to take over the class in her absence. Isn’t that fine?”

“Fine, indeed! Thy happiness is contagious. Listen to Franny whinnying in response! I have never seen her do that with a stranger.” They both laughed as the mare whinnied again.

“I must return. I am on duty with the girls tonight.”

“What does that mean?”

“I am to read the Bible to them, then walk their room until they are all asleep. It is lovely to see thee again, Jonathon Spier.”

“And it is lovely to see thee,” he said with a wide smile. “I trust I will see thee again soon.”

“I trust thee will too!”

End of sample.
Enjoyed the preview?

[Buy the print version from Amazon.com](#)
[Buy the Kindle e-book from Amazon.com](#)

[Return to New Author Publishing](#)