

THE
SELECT

the
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F. Paul Wilson

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NEW YORK

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To Mary,
who makes it all possible

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CHRISTMAS BREAK

THE INGRAHAM COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Laurel Hills, MD

Known as the "24-karat medical school," the Ingraham (pronounced "ING-gram") College of Medicine has become one of the most respected and prestigious institutes in the nation. Nestled in the wooded hills of Frederick County, Maryland, less than an hour's drive from both Baltimore and Washington, D.C., it has built its teaching staff by culling the great names from all the medical specialties. The Ingraham faculty is considered without peer.

The same can be said of its student body. Every December, the nation's highest scorers on the MCAT are invited to The Ingraham (as it is known) to take a special entrance exam. It is a highly coveted invitation: The Ingraham is entirely subsidized by the Kleederman Foundation—its students pay no tuition, no book or lab fees, and receive free room and board. (A strict condition of acceptance is that you must live on the Ingraham campus the entire four years.) But academic excellence is only part of The Ingraham's requirements. The Admissions Office stresses that it is looking for "well-rounded individuals with something extra, who will be

committed to the *practice* of medicine in a primary care setting, especially in areas where it is needed most." Academic brilliance is, of course, an important requirement, but they state The Ingraham is not looking to turn out academic physicians who will spend their careers hunched over microscopes and test tubes. The ideal candidates are pre-med students who were not only top in their class academically, but who were also class officers or active in campus affairs.

The Ingraham alumni are considered the cream of the crop. Without exception, its fifty annual graduates are offered the medical world's most highly regarded residencies. Yet an extraordinary number of alumni eschew the high-paying subspecialties for primary care and can be found practicing in the nation's poorer areas, especially the inner cities. They have earned The Ingraham an unequalled reputation for academic excellence and social commitment.

from American Medical Schools in Perspective
by Emmett Fenton (Bobbs-Merrill, 1993,
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C H A P T E R . 1

“Quinn! Quinn, come on!”

Quinn Cleary heard the voice but continued to stare out over the cluster of buildings below her and at the surrounding fall-dappled hills beyond. From here on the hilltop, the high point on campus, she'd been told she could see three states: Maryland, of course; West Virginia to her right, and Virginia due south, straight ahead.

And down the gentle slope beneath her feet, perhaps a dozen yards below, sat the circle of beige brick-and-stone buildings—the classrooms, the dorm, the administration and faculty offices, all clustered around the central pond—that made up The Ingraham.

A touch on her arm. She turned. Matt Crawford stood there, dark curly hair, deeply tanned skin, dark eyes looking at her curiously.

“Are you in a trance or something?”

“No. But isn't it beautiful?” She looked again at the manicured sloping lawns, sculpted out of the surrounding wooded acres. “Isn't it almost too good to be true?”

“Yeah, it's great.” He gripped her elbow gently. “Come on. We don't want to get too far behind.”

Reluctantly, Quinn let herself be turned away from the grand view. Her long legs easily matched Matt's strides as they hurried to catch up with the other hopefuls following Mr. Verran on the campus tour. She was tall and slender—too slender, she thought whenever she'd catch a look at herself in a full-length mirror. Almost boyish-looking with her short red-blond hair and her mostly straight-up-and-down body. She'd look at herself morosely and think that the only rounded things on her body were all above the shoulders: a round Irish face with clear pale skin and high-colored cheeks, a round, full-lipped mouth, and big round blue eyes. She'd

never liked her face. A dopey Campbell-Soup-Kid face. She'd especially disliked her lips, had always thought they were too fat. She'd looked at her face as a teenager, and all she'd seen were those lips. But now her lips were the in thing. Full lips were all the rage. Movie stars were getting their lips injected with silicone to get them to look like the lips Quinn had been born with and had always hated.

Who could figure out fashion? Which was why Quinn was rarely in fashion, and when so, purely by accident. She favored loose and comfortable in her slacks, blouses, and sweaters. No tight jeans or stretch pants, and good God, no Lycra bicycle pants. She'd look like a spray-painted Olive Oyl. She glanced down at her slacks and her sweater. A little behind the times, perhaps, a bit generous in the cut, but good quality, bought on sale.

Most people wear baggy clothing to hide bulges, she thought. I'm hiding the lack of them.

But Quinn knew neither looks, body type, nor fashion sense would make a difference when she and the others sat for the entrance exam tomorrow morning. What would count then was what was between the ears. And she was pretty sure she had good stuff between her ears.

But was it the right stuff? Was it the stuff the Ingraham College of Medicine wanted from its students?

They've got to take me, Quinn thought. They've just *got* to.

The Ingraham was like a dream waiting to come true.

Medicine was Quinn's dream—had been since she'd been old enough to dream—and The Ingraham was the only place that could make that dream come true, the only medical school she could afford.

Suddenly she heard running footsteps behind her.

"Hey, Matt! Wait up."

She turned and saw a vaguely familiar-looking guy trotting up the walk from the main campus.

"Timmy!" Matt said, grinning as he held out his hand. "I thought you weren't going to make it."

"Almost didn't," he said. "Got a late start from A.C."

"Atlantic City?" Matt said. "What were you . . . ? Oh, no. You didn't."

Now the newcomer was grinning. "Pass up some easy cash? How could I?"