

DARINA

Written by

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Based on,  
the life of the first female Lutheran pastor Darina Bancikova.

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"I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety" 1 Timothy 2:13-15

Int. - Hallway - Afternoon - 1941, Slovakia

Long school hallway with big windows through which warm light comes in.

DARINA, a woman in her early 20s, dressed neatly, a blouse and a skirt, wears glasses, sits on a wooden bench across the windows. A cross on the wall. Martin Luther's picture on the wall next to the cross.

She reads a thick book, and has many notes next to her. She nervously taps her leg. Her papers are covered with notes, highlights and stick marks. She chews on a pencil.

Suddenly she stops reviewing the papers and looks towards the big windows. Sun is shining right at her.

Next to her is a small, leather Bible. She looks at it. Picks it up with care. Opens the first page. It reads:

"To my darling girl, Darina. You will achieve great things when God is with you. Love, Mom"

She closes the Bible and starts reviewing notes again.

Door next to her opens. A guy in his early twenties comes out, confident. He looks at her contemptuously.

DARINA

How was it?

STUDENT 1

(scoffs)

Why do you care?

Looks at all the notes, then at her.

STUDENT 1

Are you here for the interview as well?

DARINA

Why else would I be sitting here?  
How was it? Did they ask about the reconciliation between the concept of a benevolent deity with the existence of suffering?

Guy's eyebrows go up. He laughs, shakes his head and walks away. Darina watches him go. She looks at a cross that is across of her. She breathes deeply.

A door suddenly opens again. A PROFESSOR in his 50s, serious, formally dressed, comes out and looks at Darina.

PROFESSOR 2  
Miss Darina?

Darina lifts her head and looks at him.

PROFESSOR 2  
Whenever you're ready.

He walks in. Darina immediately picks up all her notes, papers and the Bible and runs to the door.

She breathes deeply. Then opens the door.

INT. - CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

As she opens the door, even more light comes through. The light blinds her for a second.

Three older men, professors, sit behind a wooden table in silence. The room seems big and empty, resembling a trial room.

Wooden floor, wooden chairs, wooden desks. Big windows, white walls. On the wall behind the three professors sits a painting. The Pieta by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Next to it a big, wooden cross with dying Christ.

Darina walks across the room. The floor squeaks with her every move. Professors do not acknowledge her and go through their notes.

Darina hesitates. Professor 1 looks up.

PROFESSOR 2  
Sit down, please.

Darina looks at a wooden chair that looks so small compared to their desks and chairs.

Awkward silence.

Darina sits down accompanied by the noise of a squeaking chair. Professor 1 closes his files and finally looks at her.

PROFESSOR 1  
So, what brings you to our  
prestigious academic institution  
young lady?

Darina looks at all three of them. They are all staring at her.

DARINA

I want to solve the mystery of death.

Her answer echoes alone in the acoustics of the big room.

Professors look at each other. First seriously, then they start laughing.

DARINA (CONT'D)

(mumbles to herself)

I don't know what is so funny about that.

They stop laughing.

PROFESSOR 2

Miss Darina, please. Why are you here?

Darina adjusts her glasses. Looks at the Bible in her hands.

DARINA

I want to become the first female pastor in Slovakia.

Silence. Professors look at each other in disbelief.

DARINA (CONT'D)

I also want to become a religious education teacher.

PROFESSOR 3

(in disbelief)

Are you aware that never before in the history of Lutheran Church have women been ordained as pastor?

PROFESSOR 2

The Lutheran Church is indeed very open and progressive, but never before have we had women in our institution.

Darina looks at the painting behind them. She shuffles on the chair.

DARINA

What about Antoinette Brown Blackwell? She received her ordination in 1853 in America.

PROFESSOR 2

She was a Congregationalist. Her ordination was not recognized and she left the church.

PROFESSOR 1

Why should we admit you?

PROFESSOR 3

We do not even have facilities for women on campus.

DARINA

Is that the main reason why you do not want to admit me? Because there are no toilets for me?

PROFESSOR 1

Miss Darina, did you come to find a husband for yourself?

DARINA

If I had family and worries about my children and my husband, I would not have enough time for my work and my congregation.

PROFESSOR 3

No children? You will not fulfill the meaning of a woman in this world.

PROFESSOR 2

Would you not feel alone and abandoned?

Darina looks at the cross behind the professors.

DARINA

Do you question the presence of Jesus Christ with your statement? Why should I feel alone?

Darina squeezes her Bible tightly.

Lifts her head and looks at the professors again.

DARINA (CONT'D)

What is truly stopping you from accepting me to your school?

Professor 1 looks at the files again, crosses his arms and sighs.

PROFESSOR 1

I think we are done here.

Darina looks confused at one professor at a time, then at her Bible.

Her eyes start to tear up.

Professor 2 points towards the door.

Darina covers her watery eyes and slowly gets up.

DARINA

Thank you for your time.

Silent sigh of disappointment comes out of her mouth.

Professor 3 leans to Professor 1.

PROFESSOR 3

This is precisely the type of sensitivity we do not need here.

All professors nod in agreement.

Darina stops on her way suddenly.

Her Bible is still opened on the page of the note from her mother. She starts flipping through the pages.

She approaches the professors again.

DARINA (CONT'D)

If you won't let me study here, it will destroy me. This is why I was born and I know it is a calling from God. I feel that I am needed in His ministry. The essence of my being lies in His service.

Professors significantly irritated by what she's saying.

PROFESSOR 3

Sounds like the devil is talking to you, not God.

Sits down on a chair again.

DARINA

No. I am sure that this calling comes from God alone. Look at Mary Magdalene.

(MORE)

## DARINA (CONT'D)

In all four gospels she is described as being with Jesus when he was crucified. When Jesus rose again, it was Mary Magdalene and a group of other women who found the empty tomb, making her one of the first witnesses to the resurrection! She is mentioned by name 12 times in the gospels, more than most of the apostles. God chooses women in the same unexpected ways as men.

Professors are silent for a moment.

## PROFESSOR 1

There are rules miss.

## PROFESSOR 2

There are discussions about celibates for women. Are you okay with that? Do you ever intend to marry?

## DARINA

Believe me, I am not suited for marriage. By accepting me you are doing a service to mankind. Marrying me would be like the Ten Egyptian plagues.

Professors smile a little. Their facial expression changes.

## PROFESSOR 2

No modern clothing. Prescribed colors are gray, black or blue.

## PROFESSOR 3

No slacking. You couldn't miss one class.

## PROFESSOR 2

Your classmates might refuse to get ordained with you.

## PROFESSOR 1

You are aware that even if you manage to become a pastor, people may not accept you as one. Superiors will send you to serve in the most remote parts of the country. People can stop going to church just because they have never seen a woman behind the altar.



DARINA

I understand.

PROFESSOR 1

The way you'll be, the way you talk, the way you study, behave, walk, write, eat, who you are with, will all influence future generation of women who desire to study at our institution. The way you'll be, so will your followers.

DARINA

All the songs we sing are masculine. Even those written by women, because it's so customary. Don't you find it funny? Faith is universal, so it should speak to everyone, not only men.

Professors look at each other.

DARINA (CONT'D)

If you look at how the Bible is written, most of the characters are male. Why? Because translators almost always thought that a woman couldn't say such profound words, it had to be a man. Such erroneous, unsubstantiated reasoning leads us to conclude that every essential person in the Bible was a man. Women go to church too, they have brains, thoughts to say. The same two hands to pray with. Shouldn't church welcome everyone, equally? Is this not what the Church is really all about?

A moment of silence. Professor 1 looks at Professor 2.

PROFESSOR 2

Would you give us a moment?

Darina stands up again, and walks to the painting of Martin Luther.

Silhouettes of professors in the background talking, discussing.

Follow focus from Darina's face to professors.

PROFESSOR 2 (CONT'D)

Miss Darina.

Professor 2 invites her to sit down again.

PROFESSOR 1  
Well, your wit and optimism has  
saved you.

PROFESSOR 2  
You're accepted for the first year  
of theological studies.

Professor 1 extends his hand towards hers.

PROFESSOR 1  
We will see you in September.

Darina stands up and shakes her hand with Professor 1. She  
looks very happy, smiles at them.

CUT TO:

INT. - HALLWAY - DAYS LATER

Bell ringing.

Darina walks down the same hallway. She comes to the door and  
slowly opens it. As the door opens she sees a classroom full  
of men chatting loudly. They turn their heads to look at her.  
She smiles.

DARINA  
Hi, I'm Darina.

Men continue staring, startled.

**THE END.**