

**For every child who dares to dream big.  
- JFM**

**For Florence, and thank you Asia  
for all your support!  
- DR**

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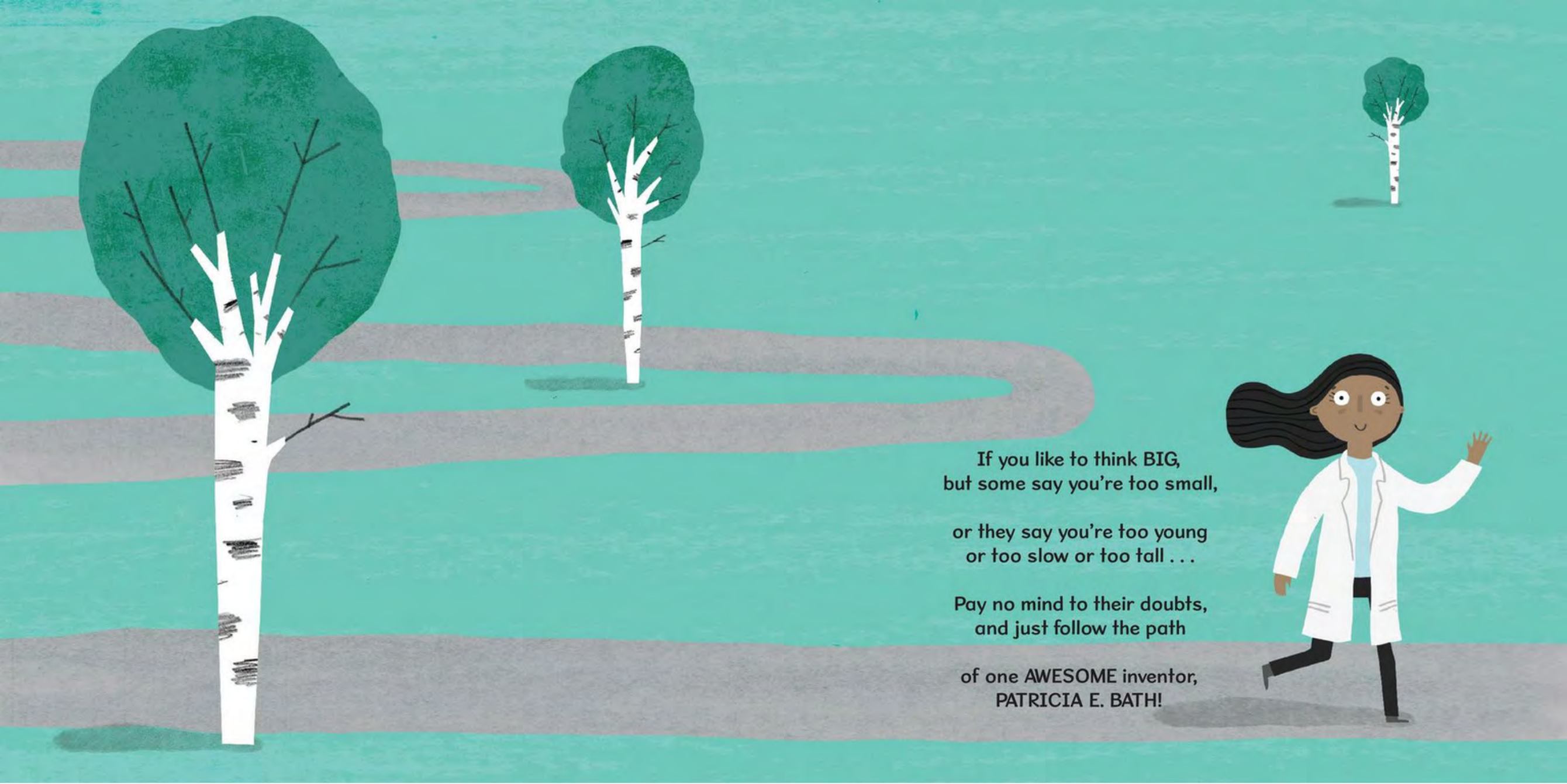
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# THE DOCTOR WITH AN EYE FOR EYES

The Story Of Dr. Patricia Bath





If you like to think BIG,  
but some say you're too small,

or they say you're too young  
or too slow or too tall . . .

Pay no mind to their doubts,  
and just follow the path

of one AWESOME inventor,  
PATRICIA E. BATH!



On the fourth of November  
in Harlem, New York,  
  
one family, the BATHS,  
got a gift from a stork.



A baby! PATRICIA—  
quite clever was she.

All the good she'd accomplish,  
the world would soon see!



Now, this girl from New York . . .  
she loved playing with boys.

Her big brother, so **THOUGHTFUL**,  
shared all of his toys.



Every **HOBBY** he had,  
she would copy. It's true.

She said, "Anything **BOYS** can do,  
**GIRLS** can do too!"



Yet the toy she loved most—  
she will never forget—

was a gift from her mother:  
a CHEMISTRY SET.

Well, it got her to thinking,  
“Hey, science is NEAT!”

This new passion of hers?  
It just couldn't be beat.



As she grew a bit older,  
she yearned to do more.

“With science, I’ll HELP  
the world’s sick and the poor.”

And a friend of the family’s,  
a DOCTOR so swell,

INSPIRED the teen.  
“I can be one as well!”







But doctors back then?  
Most were men, you will find.

Still, Patricia stood firm.  
That did not change her mind.

See, her father was **SMART**  
(and a jack-of-all-trades).

He had taught her:  
“We’re **EQUAL**—all genders, all shades.”



Yes, her parents were thrilled.  
They encouraged her goal.

They said, “Nothing’s off limits—  
no job, dream, or role.”

The Baths didn’t have much  
but were **WISE** nonetheless.

“**EDUCATION**,” they said,  
“is the **KEY** to success.”

Now, the problem with that?  
Every nearby high school . . .

was only for white kids  
with money—NOT COOL.

So, to high school by TRAIN.  
Nothing stopped her, you see,

and though most kids took four years,  
she finished in THREE!



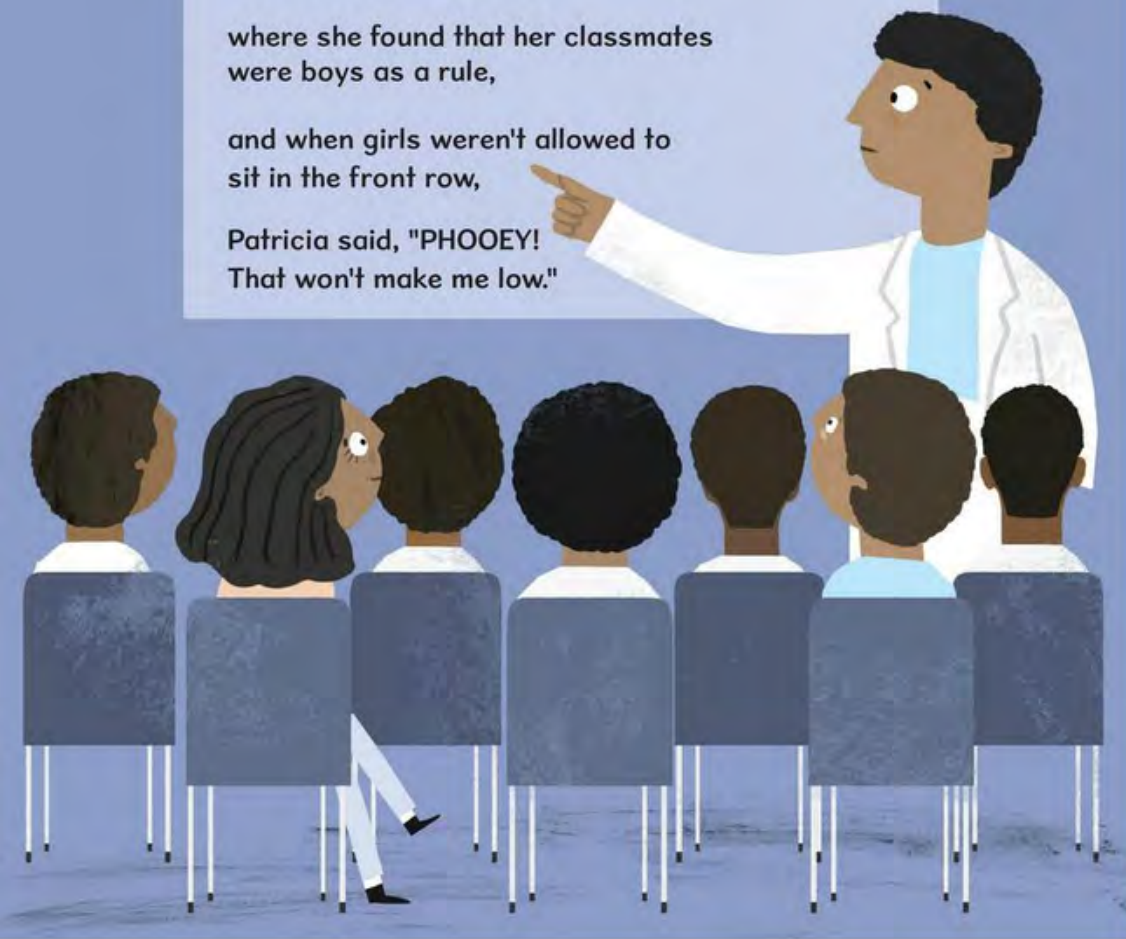


What next? Off to college.  
Then MEDICAL school . . .

where she found that her classmates  
were boys as a rule,

and when girls weren't allowed to  
sit in the front row,

Patricia said, "PHOOEY!  
That won't make me low."



All those unfair restrictions  
did not bring her down.

There were more pressing matters  
and no time to frown.

A decision was due—  
what her FOCUS would be.

"I've been thinking," she said.  
"I will help people SEE!"







Then she studied the EYE  
as an eager intern.

Treating hospital patients  
was what helped her learn.

Through her work, she discovered,  
“There’s something not right.”

Her black patients were **BLIND**  
two times **MORE** than the white.

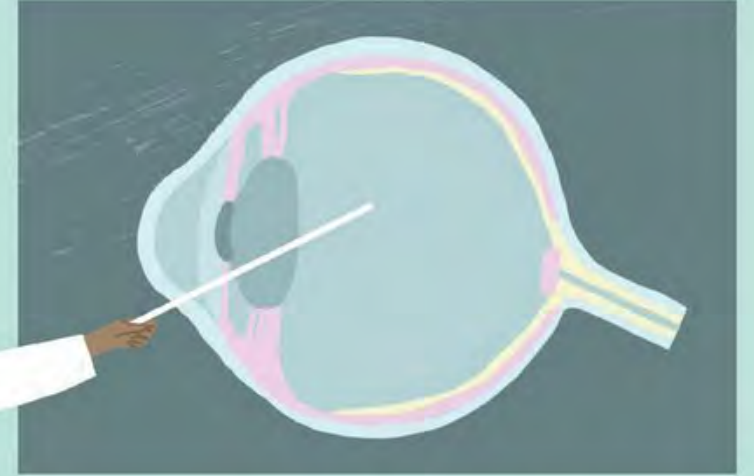
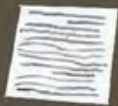


“What has caused this to happen,”  
she wanted to know,

“in locations like Harlem,  
where money is low?”

She came up with a plan:  
“We must CONQUER this plight.

The public,” she said,  
“must PRIORITIZE sight!”



With this MISSION in mind,  
the new doctor went west.

At a school near the sea,  
she spread word of her quest.

She was young, but her KNOWLEDGE  
and SKILL made her wise.

She taught hundreds of students  
to understand eyes.





But it wasn't all cheery.  
Some things she would FIGHT,

like the desk in a DUNGEON  
that barely had light.

"No, thank you," she said.  
"I will need a new placement."

'Cause NOBODY puts  
Dr. Bath in a basement!



Well, she GOT that new desk.  
Then she hit a GRAND SLAM,

when she started an eye  
doctor training program.

She would LEAD it for years,  
and what makes that so sweet?

She'd be the FIRST WOMAN  
to achieve such a feat!



Do you think she stopped there?  
No siree, she did not.

All her GOALS to help people?  
She still had a lot.

“I will find better TREATMENTS  
for blindness,” she swore.

Straight to Europe she went,  
where she studied some more.

In cities like Paris,  
she learned about LASERS.

“These light beams,” she said,  
“will be little EYE-SAVERS.”





She practiced for months.  
Oh, and one final mention . . .

Her research? It led her  
to make an **INVENTION!**



This tool she developed—  
a new **LASER PROBE**—

fixed the **EYEBALLS** of patients  
all over the globe.

And because of her work,  
those without sight for years

(like fifteen or twenty  
or THIRTY more years) . . .

DR. P. BATH



They could finally SEE!  
We should give her THREE CHEERS.

HOORAY, Dr. Bath!

HOORAY, Dr. Bath!!

HOORAY, Dr. Bath!!!







But WAIT! She did more.  
She CREATED a place . . .

A place to bring HOPE  
to the whole human race.

Its motto is this:  
Rich or poor, black or white,  
healthy vision's important.  
It's everyone's RIGHT!

Now, for all that she's done  
and the **PROGRESS** it brings,

Dr. Bath is well known.  
She's accomplished **GREAT** things.

But applause for her work?  
Well, to her, it seems strange.

Fame was never her wish.  
What she wanted was **CHANGE**.



Yes, that girl from New York  
with the chemistry set

(who was born when most doctors  
were men, don't forget)

grew to be quite a **HERO**,  
but she'll never boast.

It's her will to **HEAL** people  
that matters the most.





So, if helping the world  
seems too hard, you are wrong.

If some say you can't do it,  
don't listen. Be **STRONG**.

Like Patricia, stay **FOCUSED**.  
Push **FORWARD**. Shine **BRIGHT** . . .

And you'll find all your **DREAMS**  
will be well within **SIGHT**!



Dear Reader,

Rx

Begin each day by asking a question.  
Let the answer lead you to another question  
and you will discover that learning and knowledge  
are an infinite playground.



Image courtesy of Dr. Patricia Bath

Dr. Patricia Bath



## FUN FACTS AND TIDBITS FROM THE AUTHOR'S CHAT WITH PATRICIA!

### Seeing Beyond Boundaries

As a child, Patricia Bath was never what you might call a girly-girl. "I would play and interact and hang tough with the boys," Bath said, when asked about growing up in Harlem, New York. During these years, her older brother always included and encouraged her. "I thank my brother for sticking up for me. When I wanted to play the male role of the doctor, and not the nurse, he would support that," she said. In fact, Bath believed that having supportive male friends played an important part in her future. "I think that was something which allowed me to have limitless horizons. I was not simply saddled with the games of girls or the toys of girls."



### Learning No Limits

Who would have guessed that a simple toy chemistry set would spark a lifelong passion for science? Bath's mother, Gladys, for one—the very person who gave her the gift. "My mom kind of knew I had a curiosity," Bath said. "I was always interested in fixing things, discovering how things were made, or taking things apart." From her father, Rupert, she inherited a deep appreciation for culture. "He worked on oil tanker ships that went all over the world," she explained. "I attribute my internationalism to those early childhood experiences of Dad coming home with [shipmates] from Sweden or Africa or Germany." Yet Bath admitted the most important gift her parents ever gave her was a lifelong respect for education. "Mom and Dad felt that education was the ticket to achieve whatever you could dream of, and they were right!"



### Eying the Possibilities

Perhaps nothing helped young Patricia envision a future in medicine more than two important role models. The first, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, was a white physician who spent decades in West Africa treating people with leprosy and other deadly venereal diseases. "It was very inspiring, especially because of the racial situation in America," she said. "There were whites who didn't want to associate with blacks, and there was segregation in the schools and at the lunch counters. [Dr. Schweitzer] was just an amazing humanitarian, and that really impacted me to see that." Someone else who inspired Bath was her very own doctor (also her father's best friend), Dr. Cecil Marquez. "There's a saying: 'You have to see it in order to believe it,'" she explained. "So to have someone in your inner circle—a member of the extended family who was a professional—I think that was important!"



### Training for Success

If there's one trait that clearly defined Bath's early life, it's perseverance. As a teenager, she learned that African-American girls were not accepted at any of the high schools near her home. "When school would let out, you'd see hundreds of white students, with generally red or blonde hair, right there in the middle of Harlem. So, it was anomalous," she described. Eager to learn, Bath "walked to the subway and hopped on the A train." Each day, she traveled downtown to attend Charles Evans Hughes High School in Manhattan, where she excelled and even graduated early. "I think [an obstacle] just inspires you to kind of reach to your inner strength, since you're not getting a leg up or a boost, and you just have to propel yourself," she said, adding that complications only motivated her to "swim faster, swim harder!"

### Breaking All Barriers

Although women attending high school in the 1950s were generally discouraged from pursuing careers in science and technology, Bath was always ahead of her time. "I don't see that there's a reasonable or philosophical barrier, or even a scientific barrier [between sexes] in terms of knowledge and skills," she explained, noting that stereotyping activities as male or female is a learned behavior—one her own family never reinforced. "Even the toy manufacturers are beginning to realize that they have a bias if they only have action figures that are boys. I think the movie industry is beginning to recognize that, too, with a lot of the new movies that are featuring girls and women as SHEroes." For a renowned female doctor like Bath, the progress was overdue. "It's ABOUT time!" she said with a laugh.





