

BE MORE THAN YOU ARE

An inspirational story is contained in Candice Millard's 2011 book, *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President*.

When James Garfield was nominated for president, the party leaders paired him with Chester Arthur, a candidate from the losing faction, to be his vice president. Garfield was opposed to the spoils system, but Arthur had come up through that very corrupt structure – a way of paying off people with government positions regardless of qualification.



Arthur had no experience and certainly no qualifications to be vice president, but there he was, a heartbeat away from the presidency. Garfield sought to end this practice and replace it with a system whereby people were appointed based on their credentials rather than their connections.

Garfield was shot by a disgruntled office seeker who wanted Arthur to be president. Some wondered if Arthur might have had

something to do with the assassination attempt. He didn't, but that didn't stop the rumors.

As Garfield struggled to recover from the bullet wound, Arthur genuinely worried he might become president. He knew he would be in over his head.

In the midst of it all, he began receiving letters from an invalid woman he never had met by the name of Julia Sand. She wrote, "Your kindest opponents say, 'Arthur will try to do right,' adding gloomily, 'he won't succeed, though – making a man a president cannot change him.'"

But Sand added, "Making a man a president can change him! Great emergencies awaken generous traits which have lain dormant half a life. If there is a spark of true nobility in you, now is the occasion to let it shine. Faith in your better nature forces me to write to you – but not to beg you to resign. Do what is more difficult and more brave. Reform!"

With each letter, Julia Sand urged him to be a better man than he ever could have imagined. And that's what happened.

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Arthur rose to the occasion. Upon Garfield's death, he became the 21st president of the United States in 1881, and did what nobody expected. He went against his own patrons and implemented the reform policies of Garfield. Arthur became the better man Julia Sand knew he could be.

The lesson for us today?

There are people who believe in you – who urge you to be a better man or woman than you can ever imagine.

But even if no other human being does, God does!

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter