

# FEMININE FOOTSTEPS

*By Deena Gomersall*



ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS

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A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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## **FEMININE FOOTSTEPS**

**By Deena Gomersall.**

### **Chapter One: LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER**

My name is Samuel..Samuel Jordan, though I'm mostly known as Sam. I am writing this as I am not quite sure just where my life is leading right now or what may become of me; a sixteen year old boy ...well, seventeen on the 18th of September. That's in two weeks time ...I think I'd better try and explain things.

I was one of a pair of twins born in Essex, England, three weeks after my Mom and Dad got married. My Mom is a very famous singer; you will have heard of her, Kay Taylor. Yes, Kay is my Mother.

Well, as you will have no doubt read in the newspaper, Mom no longer sings since contracting that throat virus which ruined her career. Anyway, at the height of her career she met my Dad and, after a brief affair with him, she became pregnant, carrying not one child, but two of us.

Mom knew that having children would put a strain on her singing career and she had never even considered marrying and settling down. Many of her friends and especially her agent recommended that she have an abortion. Maybe she would have considered it if she hadn't found she was carrying twins.

Dad was besotted with her and offered to marry her. She obviously didn't think quite the same way as Dad. Even though she was very attracted to him, she was not in love with him. She saw their affair as just that, an affair.

After taking advice on her future and weighing all the pros and cons, she accepted Dad's hand in marriage but told him that after the birth, she wanted to resume her career. She told Dad she owed that much to her many fans.

She was of the hope that she could leave her two infants with him while she went away on tour or. Dad readily agreed to be a full-time father to us. It was a small price, he thought, to be wed to a famous and beautiful woman. He would be the envy of all of his friends.

So it was that Mom and Dad were married in August 1973. They rushed the marriage through so that their children would not be born out of wedlock. Mom may not have loved Dad but, always the optimist, Dad believed her love for him would grow. After all, she would not always be the in-demand, international star that she was at present; one day when she finally decided to retire, they would settle down to a normal married life.

My sister Maria was born three hours before me and although we were not technically identical twins, we were as close as two twins of different gender could be.

Mom was very proud of having a daughter that so closely resembled her. I, obviously, also had a strong resemblance of Mom being my sister's twin, but Mom never put the same emphasis on that fact. I suppose I had more of a boyish resemblance to her.

The thing that needed me though was that Maria was very obviously Mom's favorite, I could not compete for her attention, nor could Dad.

Every time that Mom returned back home from one of her concerts or tours she would bring gifts and shower affection on Maria. There would be a hug and a kiss for me and hardly the time of day for Dad who had been looking after the two of us for weeks on end. Dad would have been contented if only he had received some love in return, but it was very rare that Mom gave him affection.

Even I, only a few years old then, felt discarded. I wasn't even sure just who Mom was or where she kept going off to. I knew that she sang on records. Dad would always remark, "That's your Mommy!" whenever he played them on the stereo.

What I *did* understand, even at that young age, was that I missed Mom just as much as Maria and would have liked to get the same love and affection from her that Maria received on her return home.

The older I grew, the more I felt it. I knew that Mom did really love me, I just felt jealous of the amount of love Maria received. I would be lying if I said that it didn't lead to my resenting Maria and it prevented us from ever becoming really close as brother and sister.

By the time Maria was twelve years old she really did bare a striking resemblance to Mom while I had taken on a slightly rougher, more boyish appearance.

The newspaper and magazine journalists always made a big deal about the resemblance and carried stories of Kay Taylor's look-alike daughter. It was making Maria into a bit of a celebrity herself and I found it all very unfair. Everything was about Maria. There was not a mention anywhere about the twin son. It was almost like I didn't exist.

Why should this be? I was also a child of Kay Taylor and the same age as Maria. Was it just because Maria was a girl? Maria was becoming famous while nobody ever heard about *me*.

I did, of course, have one ally ...Dad. He shared the same rejection as I did; he realized how I felt. He took more time with me and tried to spoil me in the same way as Mom spoiled Maria, but it wasn't the same.

I knew what Dad was doing and I was very grateful to him. I loved my Dad but it didn't really compensate. I didn't want showering with gifts, I didn't want my photograph taken for international magazines. I just wanted some of Mom's love and affection. Little did I realize it would get worse rather than better.

Mom began paying for Maria to attend singing classes. She obviously saw her as someone who, one day, would follow in her footsteps. I found this grossly unfair.

I could not deny that Maria had a lovely voice but I, too, had inherited my Mom's singing abilities ...in fact I was deemed a better singer than Maria by our school's music master, though Mom overlooked that fact.

She could, of course, have paid for us both to attend singing classes, I really enjoyed singing and she could definitely afford it, yet she never even asked me. When I asked Mom if I could also attend the classes she said she didn't think that singing would be a good career for me. She thought that I would be far better off going into finance as Dad had done before wedding Mom.

Later that year, Maria and I left our coed school and attended new schools. Maria went to a girls' high school and I was sent to one for boys. Mom was enjoying great success and was about to embark on a world tour.

The tour took her away for seven months and she was planning also to work on a new recording contract while in the States.

Poor Dad! He'd put up with so much. I was now beginning to understand things better concerning male and female relationships; although I obviously didn't know Mom and Dad's bedroom secrets, he could not have been getting much from my Mom in a sexual way.

This was made worse by photographs of Mom on the arm of other men when attending functions and banquets in newspaper articles. It seemed there was always some journalist wanting a scoop who would write things like, "Kay Taylor's marriage in difficulty" or "Mystery man escorts Kay Taylor". I suppose Dad had become used to such reports over the years; they would appear every so often and had for the past ten years.

At first Dad would just laugh them off or ignore them completely. Recently, though, it had begun to put a strain on him.

Where Dad could offer me some comfort in place of Mom's lack of attention, I could not substitute for what Dad really needed. Finally overcome by the reports of his wife being escorted, or worse, bedded by some of the most famous celebrities in the world, he, in turn, began to date a stream of other women.

He was still young and good-looking and had no trouble in picking up girls; there were many who got a kick out of dating the husband of Kay Taylor.

In a way I was pleased that Dad had started to enjoy himself again. I didn't feel any real resentment towards him for what he was doing. It was no more than Mom deserved, but it also meant that I began to see less of him as he was going out more often. After a long absence he was once again getting a taste for clubs, booze and girls while I found myself most nights with baby-sitters.

Maria was more fortunate as she attended evening classes three evenings a week for her singing lessons and another night each week she went to dance lessons, all paid for by Mom.

Then, several things happened when Maria and I reached fourteen. Dad had met a girl called Geena at a plush nightclub that he went to occasionally. Geena was a model and was very beautiful with all the assets that you would expect from someone in her

profession. To say that Dad was besotted with her would be an understatement. He found in her all the love which he had been craving for so many years.

At first he had attempted to keep it a secret but a newspaper reporter had managed to take a photograph in a restaurant of them together.

The following day's headline was "KAY TAYLOR'S HUSBAND HAS AFFAIR WITH TOP MODEL". Mom had been in Paris when the news broke and there was a blazing row between the two of them on her return.

I don't know what was said and who was accusing who but one thing was for sure: the news was out and Dad didn't attempt to deny it.

It was only a month later that another article appeared announcing that Kay Taylor was having an affair with a leading American actor. I hadn't seen or heard anything of Mom for two weeks as she had been working in America at the time and hadn't contacted any of us but I still felt the hurt and the pain of Mom and Dad's marital breakup. Maria, of course, felt the same hurt; they were, after all, both our parents.

For once, Maria and I shared something: grief. Because Maria had had an easier life than I, she was the stronger and more self-assured of the two of us and it was she that took the lead in things.

Even Dad now was rarely at home to talk to or comfort us, preferring to spend as much time as he could with Geena. Mom was still in America. She didn't even bother to come back and try to sort out her marriage. What she *did* do was serve a divorce paper on Dad through her American attorney. Dad did not oppose it.

So it was that Maria and I became the forgotten children of a broken marriage, caught up in the middle of the divorce, a divorce that was currently making headlines around the world.

At least by this point, Mom was keeping in touch with Maria by letter. They were always addressed to my sister and would merely say "Give my love to Sam," in the last paragraph.

I rarely got any attention from Dad now and I was feeling totally rejected by *both* parents.

By the end of the year, Maria and I made up our past differences; we needed each other as Mom and Dad were now divorced. Dad was planning to marry Geena.

Mom meanwhile was having a very publicized affair with Hank Tomkiss, her American actor lover. She was still living in America and enjoying the success that her latest record was bringing; she'd had the two of us flown there for three week's holiday but that hadn't been much fun.

Mom made a big fuss over Maria but I was left feeling like someone else's child ...as if Mom was my Aunt rather than my Mom. All I really wanted was to have her hug and kiss me as her son, show me affection, be proud of me.

Actually, I did like Hank. I had seen a few of his films previously and it seemed strange now to be spending time with him. He seemed to like me, too and would drive me places in his car. I wondered if he and Mom would end up getting married.

Although Mom was a star, being my Mom she was just like an ordinary person to me. It *was* thrilling, though, to think of having a stepfather who was a famous Hollywood actor! Still, if I could have made a wish it would have been for Mom and Dad to still be together and loving each other, as well as for them both to love *me*.

It was then that Mom suffered the throat infection. Maria and I had been back home for five weeks when the news broke. She had been forced to cancel all of her upcoming concerts and began receiving treatment by an American specialist.

The virus got worse over the weeks and in February 1988, she was advised by doctors that she would not be able to sing again.

Rather curiously, Hank Tomkiss broke off his relationship with her at the same time, saying he was too busy working on a new film to have a relationship. Mom was devastated and I felt really sorry for her. I no longer liked Hank and I made sure that I turned off any of his films that came on the TV. Anyway, he never could have taken the place of my Dad.

Mom returned home to England in April. She was different, more vulnerable. Her career had been cruelly taken from her and she was still struggling with the break up with Hank.

For once, she actually needed the comfort of *both* her children. Yes, me too! It was heaven and we were almost like a family, except that Dad wasn't there. But, that wasn't too bad. I had the love from my Mom that I had always wanted.

She remained very popular and she would take us out to parties and functions hosted by some of the country's top celebrities, I was beginning to feel part of her world and part of her success.

Dad kept in touch, too. He would see us every weekend and sometimes he would take Maria and I out in the car with Geena. At least he and Mom kept on civil terms and there was no animosity or ill feelings. Mom was even friendly with Geena.

Although my parents were no longer together, I was happier than I had ever been and I was receiving affection from both of them. There was, however, a cruel twist to come in my fortunes.

Maria soon tired of going out on day trips with Dad, Geena and me; often it was just the three of us while Maria spent more time at home with Mom. Even when Dad invited us to go on holiday to Switzerland with him and Geena, she declined.

I had come to really like Geena by now. I guess I disliked her before because I didn't really know her; I saw her as someone who had taken Dad's affection away from me. Now that they were married, Dad was once again giving me more of his time.

It may have even been understandable for Geena to resent a child from his previous marriage sharing the love of her new husband, but she didn't. And, where she may have liked to have had Dad all to herself on a romantic holiday in Switzerland, she seemed honestly happy for me to go along with them ...even though I got in the way of their privacy.

It was this that made me warm to her. I found out she was far more than some big-busted bimbo, she was a really nice person. I was now very happy that Dad had married her.

While we were away, Mom took more of an interest in what was happening to Maria. It dawned on her that although *she* could no longer be the great singing star that she had once used to be, Maria *could* be. With the remarkable resemblance between mother and daughter plus Mom's many contacts, Maria virtually had her future sewn up for her already.

So it was that when we returned from holiday, I discovered Mom had intensified her interest in Maria and was totally dedicated to making a success out of her daughter.

This of course meant that much of the time Mom had been affording me suddenly disappeared. Once again, I was finding myself left out in the cold.

I discussed my feelings with Dad and he paid for me to start taking singing lessons too, though in a different school than the one Maria was attending. Why I don't know, but Mom resented what Dad was doing for me. The once amicable divorce suddenly developed into a bitter feud.

I was really rocked when Mom suggested that, as I seemed to be so much closer to Dad and was happy for him to pay for my singing lessons, maybe I ought to just go and live with him. I'm sure you will agree with me about the absurdity of it all but you cannot argue with adults and you will *never* figure them out.

Dad did accept me into his new home but I had the feeling that I wasn't really wanted. Weekend access and shared holidays were one thing, but me living with him and his new wife wasn't something he really needed in his life at that moment.

Geena was still really nice and if she preferred that I wasn't there she never let that show, though I sensed it. Dad never actually spelled it out, either, but there was a change in his attitude and a feeling I could sense in the air. I was getting in the way of the two of them and I think Dad perceived it as Mom's way to try to put a strain on his marriage.

Dad didn't have the same knowledge of or contacts in the world of music and entertainment that Mom did, so Maria was progressing far better than I was.

Now that I was living with Dad, I didn't get to see Mom very often; she didn't pick me up for days out as Dad had done with me. I therefore saw very little of Maria, so the new bond I had made with my sister was lost. I set out instead to show the both of them that I, too, would make a success of my life, better than Maria did.

We did have a shared birthday party for our fifteenth; it was the first time I had seen either Maria or Mom in seven whole weeks. The first thing that Mom said to me wasn't how much she'd missed me or how big I was getting, but that I should get my hair cut!

I suppose it was rather long. I was becoming a bit of a rebel but it was now also fashionable for men to wear pony tails and I was growing my hair so as to put my hair into a pony tail, too and be trendy.



Dad never said anything to me about it. He didn't really care how I dressed or looked. I could have grown it down to my knees or have it all shaved off in a skinhead cut as far as he was concerned. That Mom didn't approve of it only drove me to grow it even longer just to spite her.

Maria and I both received individual presents from Mom and Dad, but then Mom came up with something which totally ruined my birthday and made me resent both her and Maria even more than ever.

"Darling," Mom addressed Maria. "I have a surprise special birthday present." She went on to tell Maria that she had managed to get her an audition to sing in front of one of the country's top talent scouts, a close friend of hers.

Of course Maria was thrilled with the news while I just gave Mom a look as if to ask, "So, what about *me*?" Dad took the initiative and declared, "Our Sam is doing really well in his singing classes, too."

I was grateful to Dad for jumping to my defense though I should point out that he had never yet actually come to one of my classes to hear me sing or see for himself how I was getting on. Still, I was proud of him for defending me.

Mom's only response to his words were a condescending "Oh, are you Darling? I really *must* try to come and hear you one of these days." There was not much conviction in her voice. Well, of course, I had very little real chance of competing with Maria.

This agent, Mom's friend, was suitably impressed with Maria and took a very active interest in her, gave her expert voice training and got her into singing as a supporting act in a string of his clubs. Her name soon began to spread.

It didn't take too long for her to be publicized as the daughter of Kay Taylor which brought all the more interest in her. Nothing was rushed; after all, Maria, like me, was still only fifteen and a half years of age. She still had the best years of her life in front of her.

We both left school at sixteen. I was trying to prove myself to Mom ...who still hadn't come to hear me. Maria went straight into a singing career and began working the night clubs up and down the country.

Mom had Maria cut a demo tape which she then sent to a few colleagues back in America.

They said that they were really interested in getting Maria over to the States where they would set up a tour for her along with a mega publicity campaign centered, of course, on Maria being the daughter of Kay Taylor.

I really am being honest when I say I was pleased for Maria; she did have a lovely voice and deserved a break. I was pleased for Mom, too. Her whole world had collapsed when she was no longer able to sing herself. Now, Maria was here to take her place, in the same mold.

The only thing I resented about it all was how Mom didn't take any interest in me, give me the same amount of encouragement. Wasn't there room for her to be proud of us *both*?

The American agent spent thousands of dollars publicizing Maria and old fans of Mom's were already eagerly snapping up the tickets to her daughter's concerts.

Then tragedy struck.

Maria had been singing one evening up in Newcastle and was being driven back home in the early hours of the morning when the car she was in collided with a gasoline tanker. My twin sister was killed instantly.

The newspapers ran the story of the accident but were unaware that it was Maria Jordan who had been killed. The headlines said that a young girl whose body was so far unidentified had been burned to death.

Mom was devastated by the tragedy ...we all were. I cried for days, but it was Mom that took it the worst. It had happened on the brink of what could have been a sparkling career.

Neither Mom nor Dad wanted to be pestered by the press at such a traumatic time so it was agreed to keep Maria's identity secret. This also made it possible to have a private funeral for Maria without thousands of fans turning up.

I don't think that Mom really noticed me that day. I tried to be very brave and hold back my own tears and comfort her in her time of grief. Dad came over and gave her a hug of support. I suppose he could do little else seeing as Geena was also there, so, it really was mostly up to me.

That evening I had a word with Dad and suggested that I go and stay with Mom for a while to comfort her and help her about the house. Dad readily agreed. While it might have been partly to have the house back for Geena and himself, I believe he was truly concerned about Mom's welfare.

Dad broached the idea to her and Mom accepted my moving back in with her, though she really would have agreed with anything at that point. She was in a world of her own.

So it was that on the 23rd of May, I packed up a couple of bags and moved home with Mom for a while.

My intentions were completely honorable. I wanted to look after her but I was, I admit, also hoping that since there was now only me, I might receive the love and affection that I had been yearning for.

I also hoped that Mom would pay some attention to my singing and help me the same way she had helped Maria.

To this end, I arrived home dressed as some kind of rocker, wearing a pair of blue denim jeans with torn knees, a leather jacket over the top of my denim jacket and a pair of round-rimmed sunglasses. With my long hair, I looked like someone from a heavy metal group ...which was the sort of music I was into.

Naturally, Mom didn't quite see it like that. Her music was ballads and C & W and she was always smartly dressed. Maria had easily fit into that same image. I realized that if Mom wasn't into the same kind of music that I was, that might have been the reason that she wasn't helping me out.

“Sam! Just look at those shabby clothes!” she said on my arrival. “Is that the way your Dad allows you to dress? And just *look* at the length of your hair!”

“Most of the kids dress like this now, Mom,” I protested. “This is how most of the guys who sing and play heavy metal music dress.”

For the very first time, Mom inquired exactly what I did at music class. I could tell that she did not approve of my taste.

She actually came along that very weekend to hear me but it was obvious that she would prefer a child of hers to sing the songs that had made her famous.

“I never realized it before, you *do* have a nice strong voice and a good ear for music, but I think you are wasting it by snarling and yelling down the microphone. *Anyone* can scream and shout like that.”

She asked me to try singing softer, more melodic songs. She added that, as my voice had not yet broken, I could get away with singing those kind of songs. She even offered to personally tutor me. That was what I had been wanting for so long! I had to give it a try.

I actually sounded pretty good singing pop songs and ballads. Then, Mom again turned on the way I was dressed.

“What ever did you do with your jeans?” she asked. “How on earth did you manage to tear them like that and why didn't your father buy you a new pair?”

I told her that these *were* a new pair. All the kids wore jeans with the knees and backside torn through. I had done it myself on purpose.

She was furious with me about that and told me that she had no intentions of buying me any new clothes until I learned how to respect them. Apart from being chastised by her, I was able to sit and discuss things with Mom better than I had ever done in the past.

Mom always kept herself immaculately dressed in fine clothes and pretty, feminine things. I realized that I was letting her standards down and spoiling her image. I now understood why Maria was always given favor; being a girl, she portrayed Mom's image in a way that I never could.

I did try to improve my appearance. Mom was as good as her word, refusing to buy me any new clothes until I learned to take pride in my appearance.

She did, however, consent to allowing me to keep my hair uncut as long as I kept it in a pony tail or tucked away under my baseball cap, which she also allowed me to wear even though she didn't approve of it.

Thereafter I would wear either my denim jacket or my leather jacket, never both together, along with a shirt and jeans. I was trying to look as respectable as I could. I really *did* want Mom to be proud of me.

Mom transferred me to the music school Maria had attended; once there I was encouraged to lift my voice an octave higher. This gave me a higher pitch reminiscent of a choir boy; it also helped me to reach high notes easily and smoothly without straining or going out of key.