

# SISTER ACT

*A NEW GIRL IN THE FAMILY*



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# Sister Act

A New Girl In The Family

By Tiffany Mellis

“You're doing it again Alan” 'Nette said tiredly, her hands resting on the steering wheel. Like good drivers everywhere she kept her eyes on the road even though some of her attention was on me.

“Why do you always do this? Why can't you make up your mind? You want to stop. Then you don't. You're bursting for a pee - then 'that place looks too dirty' knowing full well that there might not be another gas station for miles. Why do you do this to me? I'm starting to feel like I'm the bloody husband around here! Almost like one of those cartoon characters they have on TV.”

She really didn't look as if she was about to lose her temper, so I managed a laugh. “I like just to keep you on edge dear. But I'm not really that bad. That last place we were at? I did want to stop - not for a pee, as you so gracefully put it - but just for a chance to stretch my legs. It's okay for you. The driver gets to 'do' something. Has a mental exercise to keep him - sorry, her – awake keeping feet on the pedals, eyes on the road sort of thing. The passenger doesn't have that stimulation - gets bored easier. And anyway, that last place was not altogether that appetizing looking. Some of these guys lounging around looked pretty rough..”

She laughed and seemed to be getting out of her bad 'mood'. “So? Protecting my honor - or was it yours?” she asked with a slight grin.

“Whatever.” I said carelessly. I used the wrong tone. Knew it as soon as the words were out of my mouth. She lost her good humor in a hurry.

“Whatever - my ass! Seriously? Not just this particular moment but too damned often? It's getting pretty difficult to go along with your decision making process.” She paused, then added. “It's even worse when you demonstrate exactly how much you care, like you just did. I'm really getting tired of it. Learn to make a commitment and stay with

it. Is that asking too much? I'm trying hard not to be a nag, but you can make that difficult you know."

I had to make allowances for Annette. We'd driven across the width of the United States, leaving from the East coast and were now hauling through the desert, just before reaching Los Angeles. It was boring – to say the least and she'd driven the whole way. According to my map, we had to get over the Cajon pass, through San Bernardino, then it was pretty clear sailing to her mother's house in Pasadena. Annette, my wife, had driven the full distance without one single moment of bad temper or complaint. I knew that she did not care for the way I could shilly-shally at times - I'd been lectured before, but I was pretty sure that this little show of temper had very little to do with my logic, or lack of it.

"Nette" I said as placating as I could. "I'm sorry if I bothered you, but you did agree to go to your mother's you know. Do you have to take it out on me now?"

She bridled a little "Maybe. Maybe not. But you were the one that instigated visiting her. Wasn't me that did that. I'd never have let the old witch even know that we were coming close to her on company business. It was you that had to write that goddamn letter!"

I bridled myself a little bit although I had learned that this did not always pay around my wife.

"Well, she is your mother." I said tartly. "And your sisters? How long has it been?" I added with emphasis. "You know damn well! We've been married almost a year, and I've never met them. It's okay for you. You at least grew up with sisters - I had nobody but my parents. Now that they're dead, you're all the family I have. I just hate the idea of having family, and not getting to know them..." I could hear the tears of self-sympathy.

Her face softened. "Yeah. I can see that. Not that I see you having any problems with my sisters. Sylvia's a doll, and Carol is maybe even nicer. Maybe it's because she was adopted.. Even Mom will love you. She thinks that the sun rises and sets in any man's ass. Definitely loves men!" She deepened her voice, mimicking her mother, as I'd heard her do before "It is a woman's role in life to make sure that her husband is happy in all aspects of the marriage.. After all, he is the breadwinner and deserves obedience .It makes absolute sense that the female makes sure to keep him that way .."

I'll buy that. Most sensible thing I've heard you say all day" I laughed "I've been meaning to talk to you about.."

She elbowed me firmly in the ribs. “Knock it off! And by the way. I've been meaning to talk to you about your hair. When are you going to get a haircut? I mean, pony tails have been out for years. If it gets much longer, I'll make you tie it up with a ribbon .. Pink ribbon? And when was the last time you shaved?”

“I shaved last week sometime” I said defensively “Don't tell me I'm needing another one already?” I flipped the visor down, and peered at my reflection in the mirror. I felt my face for hair, but couldn't find any. “Would you stop teasing about my non-existent beard?.. And, anyway, I thought you liked my hair long? But please? Enough of the pink ribbon bullshit!”

She nodded. “Sorry about the ribbon – I'm just not into guys with long hair – though I'm getting used to it, I guess. It's just that mom always seemed to like short hair on a guy.. She could possibly give you some static when we get there. I hope that you're aware of that fact.” Then she shook her head in sudden disbelief “Can you believe this shit? Me! Me worried about what mom will think about my husband? About your hair? As a matter of fact, leave your hair alone - I want to see her face when she sees that my hair is shorter than yours.”

“She's surely not THAT bad?” I protested a little nervously.

She laughed. “Not to worry dear. I'll protect you!”

I found myself warming at the thought of being under my wife's protection. Cuddled into her side a little. I think that she noted how I acted because a smile crossed her face.

The rest of the trip passed pleasantly enough. I was amazed when, about three hours later we pulled in to the long driveway of a large, well-tended, two storied house, set well back from a quiet street in an obviously expensive neighborhood. I thought I saw the water of a swimming pool - and the fence of a tennis court.

“You didn't tell me that you guys are rich” I exclaimed. “You mean that you ran away from this place? I can't believe it!”

'Nette just looked at me sideways. Then she shrugged and beeped her horn

Two girls then run out into the driveway at the horn, waving their arms as we pulled in. Both were dressed in extremely feminine dresses, bright floral chiffon, white gloves, large floppy hats secured with bright ribbons. Both had brown hair, just long enough to show under the hats - just a shade or two lighter than mine. Beautiful, feminine, girls.

"Can you see me dressed and acting like that?" 'Nette asked me quietly as she cut off the engine. "I couldn't - and that's one reason why I ran away. Mom was determined to train me into being a mindless wife for some man - and I was damned if I was going to do it. Simple as that." She opened the door. "Girl's!" She shouted at the two visions. "You're all grown up - and gorgeous!" She hugged them both ferociously while I got out of the car, then spun them around to me. "Sylvia and Carol? This is Alan, my husband."

Neither girl gave her a chance to finish, both leaving her, running to me and embracing me. I was surprised at the evident strength in their arms under the softness of their dresses and the fragrance that surrounded them. I was hugged and (was it my imagination, or did I get a couple of pats on my behind at the same time?) kissed. "Alan? That sounds awful formal" one of them giggled "What does Annette call you?"

"Well. She does call me Alan now and then" I explained, barely catching my breath from the onslaught "But only when she's mad at me.."

"Which isn't very often these days" 'Nette interjected "But there again, I've had a year to train him.. but that's ok girls. You can call him Allie if you want. But why don't you drag him in and introduce him to the battle axe? I'll bring the luggage in."

And, pretending to protest at leaving 'Nette with the luggage, I was pulled inside a beautiful home (were these little pats on the rear accidental – they seemed to keep coming? Though I figured that with both girls being delighted to finally meet me, that a few love pats were in order), and into a bright sunny library, where a woman - an older edition of 'Nette waited for me. From all that I'd heard of her personality, I was expecting a mean-faced, bitchy looking woman. The reverse was true. Tall, slim, beautifully costumed in a gray woolen dress, a bright scarf around the neck, a maroon belt and matching shoes. Brown hair, starting to show a little gray, but under the care of an experienced hairdresser and, most surprising, an open, smiling face showing a friendly welcome. She advanced on me, arms wide.

"Alan. It's so nice to meet you, finally! Thank you so much for bringing my family all back together. I hope you'll stay as long as you possibly can... I know Annette said just a short visit... But you will stay with us while you're in Los Angeles..?"

Again, I received a surprisingly strong hug, and got a whiff of expensive perfume as she gave me a peck on the cheek. She finally let me go, and took a step back, to survey me. "I'm surprised." she said "No offense, but I always thought that Annette would have gone

with a big husky man. She always gave me the impression that she liked her men big.”

At that point, she put a hand over her mouth. “I’m so sorry about my tactlessness but you’re actually quite a bit smaller than Annette, aren’t you? Not much bigger than her two sisters...” She turned a false reprimanding look at Sylvia “And I’ll swear that if you don’t stop eating so much, you’ll probably outweigh him as well!”

“Oh mummy!” Sylvia yelled. “I probably do outweigh him - but he is pretty tiny, you know. My eating...”

Just then, 'Nette came in with the luggage, and dropped them with a thud on the carpet. She had what I'd learned to recognize as her 'friendly – but wary' expression on her face.

“Did I hear something about eating? I’m starving! Allie here thought the places I suggested were too rough, and then I realized that you’d definitely have something for us when we got here. ”

As she said this, she and her mother walked together, eyed each other carefully, then threw impulsive arms around each other, and kissed. Each whispered something to the other, but their voices were too muffled to hear what was said - but it was obvious that each was more than glad to see the other.

We all went in to the dining room. The table was already set with crystal and cutlery. Sylvia and Carol looked at each other then excused themselves quietly, and went into the kitchen.

Some minutes later it didn't take a blind man to see that 'Nette and her mother were obviously trying to think up some way of breaking through the ice that had formed over the years and I figured I would best leave them alone so, rather than being in the way, wandered off to where the noises of the kitchen were coming from - I could hear the clatter of utensils and other things. When I walked in the door I got a surprise. Both girls had thrown on aprons over their dresses, taken off their hats, and wore scarves, tied in a kind of turban fashion around their hair. They had changed from being extremely decorative to outright functional in a very short time. Still gorgeous mind you, but ready for work.

They didn't see me come in at first, and I guess I scared them a little when I said “You girls like a hand?”

As they both jumped in surprise at hearing my voice, they both put their hands over their hearts, scowling ferociously then they giggled girlishly, putting their hands to their mouths, and peeking at each other. “Oh no... I don't think so...” Carol said “You're a guest. But it

was very nice of you to offer...Not like the men that Mummy is always going on about! Why don't you go back to the dining room, or even better, just wander around outside? Talking to mummy and Annette might not be the best idea right at this minute? But you can't work in here. We'd get killed if we took you up on your offer."

I had to explain. "Well, it took me a little while, but I could see that they do have a lot to talk about, and I felt it best to leave them by themselves for a little while. I have the feeling that they might be starting to talk to each other again – and I certainly don't want to mess that up. Hence my offer to help. I'm bored – and everybody else seems to have something to do."

Sylvia looked a little embarrassed "But... mummy would be ... kinda upset to see you in here. Men don't belong in a kitchen – this is a woman's world!"

At my look of puzzlement, she continued to explain. "Mummy feels that anybody in a kitchen should wear an apron - and a turban. If we're going to be around food in any way, that's one of her rules.. and she's pretty strict about it."

I threw up my hands in mock horror "Well? If I'm the wrong gender I'll have to escape from here before you two change my sex – or even make me wear a turban! My oh my! Excuse me girls." and I left, giggling at my own humor, to the sound of their soft laughter.

I checked. Back in the dining room, 'Nette and her mother were still deep in conversation and I was going to pass and go outside for a walk. They saw me though and smiled at me then beckoned me into the room. "Thanks for giving us the chance to talk Allie" 'Nette said. Then she turned to her mother "We'll talk later. Ok?" Her mother smiled in agreement. They touched hands lightly and I had the feeling that they might even have kissed, but they didn't as the girls in the kitchen called out to us to get ready as the meal was coming in.

A few minutes later, still in aprons and turbans, the girls brought in the lunches, served us, deposited their own plates, then went back to the kitchen to discard their 'uniforms', and were back with us at the table in no time at all. Again their transition was amazing. 'Nette' was no slouch when it came to good looks, but she had been traveling a long way that day. Even then, I felt like the proverbial thorn amongst flowers – though I was starting to feel very glad about my wife and her mother, and just made myself comfortable in the bosom of lovely company – my new family.