



*Reluctant Press* presents:

# Sissy For Life

Norman Way



ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. HAIGHT

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A YOUNG ADULT TV' E-BOOK

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# SISSY FOR LIFE

**By Norman Way**

I turned 17 on the first of June and had just finished my junior year of high school. Military life is not easy for anyone but it is especially hard on kids. About the time you make friends and get to know someone, you have to move and the process starts all over again. I was pretty much a loner but I had made a few friends wherever we had been.

Dad flew transport aircraft and my mom was working part-time while taking classes at the local university extension. I liked California. The weather was almost always perfect. When my dad was home, the first thing he would do was grab his golf clubs. I took lessons and was good enough to make the high school team but I doubted if I would ever go beyond that. I enjoyed spending time with Dad in the sun and we always did well in the father-son tournaments.

I was sitting at the kitchen table polishing off the last of my birthday cake when the doorbell rang. I heard mom gasp and then let out a scream. I ran into the living room to find her sobbing on the couch.

There were several uniformed men in the room, including the base chaplain.

My dad had been killed in a training accident. The men stayed only a few minutes. After a prayer with the chaplain, they left. I sat down next to mom and tried to comfort her. I had no idea what we were going to do next. I felt helpless and numb all over.

Somehow we got through the funeral and getting the insurance, bills, etc. taken care of.

Mom decided the best thing to do was to move back to the Midwest. She wanted to be near her sister Helen, her only relative.

Helen's husband Dan had passed away and she had leased the farm out while she worked in the office of a medical clinic. She had three daughters, Diane, who worked as a manager in training for a women's department store; Carol, who had just completed her

second year of nurses training and Connie, who had just completed her first year of beauty school.

I had just received my driver's license the week before so we would be splitting the driving. We began disposing of things we wouldn't need and got rid of a lot of stuff at a garage sale. We packed the U-Haul with the things that were left and hooked it up to the car. We spent the night in a motel and left very early the next morning for Minnesota.

Summer is a good time to travel. We had an enjoyable and uneventful trip. We arrived at an inexpensive motel on the outskirts of Rochester, Minnesota and Mom paid for a week in advance. Aunt Helen arrived and took us out to eat. A newcomer's guide was in the room; the next day we began apartment hunting.

After the funeral and all the bills had been paid as well as the cost of the trip, Mom had about twenty thousand dollars left. I had been left ten thousand dollars but Mom felt I should keep it in reserve for my education. Money would not be an issue for a while but the sooner we got settled, the better. She had two interviews lined up for the next day. We hoped to move in to a two-bedroom duplex as soon as Mom could get a job. We were both pretty anxious about the future. What happened next was a continuation of a nightmare I thought we had left behind. Returning from an interview, Mom's car had been broadsided at an intersection by a bank robber fleeing the police in a stolen car.

Aunt Helen took charge and helped me through the funeral and legal affairs. I checked out of the motel and moved in with Aunt Helen and her daughters. She was now my guardian and had control of my money and me until I was eighteen.

After the funeral, we disposed of Mom's possessions and placed the money in a savings account for my future. I moved into Diane's old bedroom upstairs. I would share the large bathroom with Carol and Connie who were still living at home while they finished school.

The bedrooms were all about the same size with ample closet space and a very feminine décor. The walls were pink with white trim and ceilings. Pink curtains adorned the window and the beds were all 4-posters with pink bedspreads, sheets and pillowcases as well as a pink chiffon canopy.

Despite these feminine surroundings, I was very glad to have a supportive family around me. I did not do much for the first week after the funeral except apply for some part-time jobs to work after school. At seventeen I was still too young for most places but I was confident I would have something before school started. I got my driver's license changed over and I bought a used compact car and insurance with the proceeds from Mom's life insurance.

With two months to go before classes began, Aunt Helen announced a family meeting for Sunday night to discuss the new arrangements I would be living under and go over my duties and responsibilities while I was living with them and going to school.

Shortly after we finished supper Sunday night, Diane arrived. After shutting off the TV, I joined them at the dining room table to discuss the future. Aunt Helen sat at the head of the table with Diane and Carol on one side and Connie and me across from them on the other side. She placed some papers in front of her and adjusted her glasses before she spoke.

"Now that you are settled in Patrick and your family's affairs are in order, I wanted to go over some things with you and the girls. I know the past month has been a terrible time for you. However, what has happened is over and done with and we must put it behind us and prepare for the future. The past cannot be changed. Life goes on. Do you understand, Patrick?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Very good, I want you to feel as welcome here as if it were your own home. However, there is no free lunch, as someone once said. You will have to pull your weight here by helping out around the house. I wanted you to relax for the first week and get used to your new surroundings and get over the shock and grief of losing your family. You will be expected to keep things neat and clean around here not only in your room but the rest of the house. You will help with the laundry, ironing, cooking, doing dishes and general housecleaning, as well as mowing the lawn, raking leaves, snow removal this winter and so forth. Is that understood?"

"Of course. I am only too glad to help out when I can. I have applied for several part-time jobs around here but I haven't heard anything yet. I do need time for that as well as school."

"You have a part-time job starting tomorrow evening from 5 to 10," interjected Diane.

I looked over at her in surprise.

"I got you a job as a stock and clean-up person at the store where I work. It's only minimum wage to start with but you can work around your school hours as well as on weekends," said Diane.

"Thank you very much, but you work at a women's department store. What would I be able to do there?"

"Mostly unpacking and preparing the merchandise for the floor. You won't have any dealings with the customers; after closing at nine you will help straighten things up, clean the restrooms as well as what ever else might come up. The night stock supervisor, Miss Wong, will fill you in tomorrow night when you report for work at 5. Just be sure you follow her instructions and do exactly what you are told. They haven't hired someone as young as you for quite awhile as they have found teenagers to be very unreliable. I vouched for you, so don't let me down."

"I won't. You can count on me for sure," I replied. I was feeling relieved that my job search was over and I would be able to leave most of my savings untouched, for a while anyway.

"Your savings have been combined with your mother's and placed in a CD until you are eighteen. The CD, along with your car title, car insurance, and birth certificate as well as the death certificates for your parents are in the safe in the basement. If there is ever a question about any of those things, just ask and I will open the safe and give you access to what you need. Do you have any questions?"

I shook my head. "I think we have covered everything."

"See you at work tomorrow at 5 PM sharp," said Diane as she got up from the table.

I walked back to the living room and turned the TV on while Helen chatted with the girls about Diane's new job. After watching the movie, I went upstairs to clean up, then went to bed.

The next morning after I finished breakfast, Carol came into the kitchen and handed me a pink ruffled apron and a pair of pink latex gloves.

"Put these on and when you are finished washing and drying the dishes, come into the living room. I will get you started on the rest of the chores."

I slipped the apron over my head and was fumbling with the strings when Carol slapped my hands down and tied the apron snugly with a large bow in the back. I put the pink gloves on as she walked out of the kitchen. After filling the sink with soapy water, I washed and rinsed the dishes, then placed them in the drip dry. I took a dishtowel from the rack and, after drying the dishes, placed them back in the cupboard where they belonged. I removed the pink gloves, placed them on the edge of the sink, then walked into the living room where Carol was reading a magazine. She looked up and smiled at me.

"Vacuum the carpeting, sofa, and the chairs. When you are finished, dust and clean the windows. The stuff is on the dining room table. I'll inspect the dishes while you begin."

I nodded as she left the room. I started up the vacuum cleaner and followed her instructions. When I finished, I dusted and cleaned the windows as she had instructed me to do. I felt a little silly in the pink ruffled apron but I was no stranger to housework as I had always helped out at home before.

Carol returned from the kitchen as Connie entered the house with two bags of groceries.

"You did a fine job with the dishes. Please help Connie put away the groceries while I check out the living and dining room," She said it with that same smile again as I walked past her to the kitchen.

Connie's face lit up as she saw me in my pink apron. She opened the cupboard doors and showed me where things went. I began putting things away as she put the perishables in the refrigerator. When I finished, I walked back to the living room to check with Carol.

"Everything looks good. You did a good job. Hang up your apron in the kitchen. Normally we don't clean until Sunday night, but this week with the meeting it had to be done today."

I removed the apron and hung it up on the peg. After lunch, I spent the afternoon walking around the farm and checking things out. I ate an early supper, then drove into town to report for work.

Leslie's Department Store was located on the edge of town about twenty miles from where we lived. It was directly across an expressway from a shopping mall. I parked the car and walked through employee entrance next to the loading door. I found Miss Wong's office and introduced myself.

"I'm glad to see you are on time. We think punctuality is very important here," she said as she extended her hand. I noticed her nails were well manicured and polished as well as the fact she was immaculately dressed and made-up.

I filled out the W-2 and printed my name on a time card and followed her out to the time clock where I punched in. I started my work by separating a shipment that had just come in that afternoon into various piles according to the department they were going to be sold in. When I finished, I walked back to Miss Wong's office and let her know I was thru with the shipment.

"Excellent!" she exclaimed. "I'm glad you're fast as well as efficient. Before I forget, here is a medical form. You have an appointment for an employee physical on Thursday afternoon at 4 PM. The address of the clinic is at the top. You will be off Thursday and the rest of your schedule is on the bulletin board. Make a note of the days you work. The new schedules are out about the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

"If you have any questions or need to make changes, let me know well in advance. Except for this week when I need you tomorrow, Wednesday and Friday through Sunday you will always work five to ten PM and nine to five on Saturday and Sundays until you start school. Let me know your class schedule immediately so I can plan your work schedule well in advance. Do you have any questions?"

"No Ma'am," I replied.

"Good. Follow me and I'll show you what I want done next."

She removed a three-ring binder from the shelf and we walked over to one of the piles of boxes.

"Drag that large table over here"

I pulled the table over to the pile where she was standing.

"Take the shoe boxes out of each case and after taking out the right shoe, apply the small adhesive tag to the inside bottom of the shoe as close to the toe as you can and then put it back in the box. Then look up the stock number of the style in the binder and apply the price stickers on the box. Let me know when you are done. Any questions?"

"No."

She turned and walked back to her office as I got started.

It was about 8:30 when I finished the last of the shoes and walked back to her office.

"Take a thirty-minute break. I'll check your work, then we'll close the store."

I walked to the break room and opened a can of pop. This was going to be a fairly easy job. I didn't need the money right so I could sock most of it away for school. I needed to get some additional clothes before school started as well as the usual school supplies but I would have several paychecks under my belt before then.

I finished my drink and walked back to Ms. Wong's office.

"Put the cases on the handcart and take the shoes out to the shoe department. The girls will show you where to stack them."

I returned to the pile of boxes and made three trips hauling them out to the shoe department on the main floor. There were a few customers in the store but most had left as half the lights were turned out. I returned the cart to the storage area where Ms. Wong was waiting for me.

"Go to the janitorial closet next to the main doors and use the wide dust mop to do the main aisle, then use the smaller one to do the side aisles between the counters. When you're finished, wheel the large garbage can to each cash register station and empty the small cans underneath the counter, then dump the large can in the dumpster out back. Next, clean the two restrooms and replenish the toilet paper, paper towel dispenser and the soap containers where necessary."

I nodded and began working as the employees were lining up to punch out. I was done with everything about five minutes of ten and walked into Ms. Wong's office.

"All finished," I announced as she looked up from her paperwork.

"Okay. Punch out and you can go home. Remember your physical on Thursday."

"I will."

I punched out and drove home.

When I walked in the house, Aunt Helen was watching television and the girls had gone to bed.

"So how was the first day of work?" she asked

"Piece of cake," I replied. "I will work tomorrow and Wednesday and then I'm off Thursday to take a physical. I'm going to clean up and then go to bed."

"Okay, sleep well. I'm glad things are working out for you."

I walked up the stairs as quietly as I could, though the old steps would creak every third step or so. I closed the bedroom door and turned on the light. I found two bottles of vitamins on my dresser with instructions from Aunt Helen to take one of each at bedtime and after breakfast. I read the labels and opened the bottles to find one contained small white pills and one contained large pink ones. I had never seen vitamins like these but after showering and brushing my teeth, I swallowed one of each and went to bed.

Work went smoothly and I drove to the clinic on Thursday afternoon. I checked the suite number on the sheet Ms. Wong had given me against the directory in the lobby and found the right office. The receptionist checked my name against the appointment list and with a rather mirthful smile, she asked me to have a seat and fill out the informational form on the clipboard.

Shortly a nurse came out and I walked back to the exam room with her. She glanced over the medical form.

"Remove your clothes and put on this hospital gown. The doctor will be with you shortly."

She left the room as I began undressing. I placed my clothes on a chair and sat down on the exam table. In a few minutes, the door opened and a stocky, middle-aged, woman in white walked in.

"Hi Patrick, I'm Dr. Gilbert," she said extending her hand and pronouncing her name "Gil-bare."



I shook her hand. She began the exam, occasionally making notes on her clipboard. When she finished, she swabbed my arm with alcohol, removed a hypodermic needle from her pocket and gave me a shot.

"Flu season will be upon us shortly so you're getting yours early. Now roll over."

I did so and she swabbed my left buttock. This time she used a larger syringe; it stung as she injected me. I winced and she laughed.

"That's a doozy, isn't it? It's a massive dose of vitamins to compliment the flu shot on top of the ones you are taking in pill form. It's another safeguard against the flu and various other infections. You can get dressed now. We are finished."

She signed the form and handed it to me.

"Take this back to your employer. You're fit for work or anything else!" she said with a grin.

I got dressed as she left and drove home, my left hip still smarting from the booster shot.

The next few weeks went by quickly. It was getting close to school time and I wanted to get things in order. I spoke to Aunt Helen about it and she said we would discuss it the following Sunday night. After work, we had supper, then sat at the dining room table.

"I have pre-registered you for school," she announced matter-of-factly. "I don't believe in public schools and private ones are far too expensive. You are to be home schooled. There are several parents in the county who feel the same way I do who have also pulled their kids from public schools. The Johnson farm is about eight miles down the road from here. Mr. Johnson passed away several years ago and Mrs. Johnson had their house remodeled to accommodate six students. You will be going there to be educated until you finish the twelfth grade. Then you will take a state test, the passing of which is equivalent to getting your high school diploma. You will get your textbooks and other supplies at the school on the first day. Understood?"

I was quite surprised by this but nodded in agreement. I was only too happy to abide by it since school is school no matter where it is and the small group meant less congestion and hassle going from class to class as well as a much shorter commute each day.

"What about clothes?" I asked. "I just brought the bare essentials with me and I need to replace my underwear and socks as well as get my hair cut."

"Actually, I have some things for you already. After you bathe tonight, you can try them on and see how they fit. Your hair looks fine to me but Connie can snip a little off later this week. By the way, you are taking your vitamins, aren't you?"

"Yes I am."

"Good. Starting tomorrow, first thing in the morning you will join the girls in the basement for an exercise routine. We all believe in eating healthy and exercise. Now run upstairs and wash up. Leave your dirty clothes in your bedroom and put on the robe I left for you on the hook in the bathroom."

I went upstairs, undressed in my bedroom, and left my clothes on the bed. After showering, I slipped on a pink fuzzy bathrobe that was on the hook and the pink scuffs that

were left on the floor. I wasn't crazy about all this pink stuff or the fact that the only bar soap in the place had a slight feminine scent to it. I walked into the bedroom and opened the top dresser drawer where I usually kept my clean underwear.

My briefs, t-shirts and white socks had all been replaced with an assortment of pastel colored panties. The socks were pink and the t-shirts had been replaced with slip-type garments in colors that matched the panties. I could hear Aunt Helen coming up the stairs. As she walked into the room, I wanted an explanation.

"These are a girl's underclothes not a boy's," I said. "I can't wear these!"

"Nonsense!" she screamed. "These are perfectly good for you to wear. Diane and Carol have outgrown them and they are too good to throw out. Now, take off your robe and try on a pair of the panties and one of the camisoles to see how they fit!"

I picked up the first pair of panties. They were powder blue. The elastic waist and leg bands as well as the four rows of ruffles across the back were white. I put them on, then slipped the matching camisole over my head. Aunt Helen adjusted the straps and stood back.

"They fit you just fine. The panties are a little tight but with the exercise program, you will be losing a little weight anyway. Now, take off the camisole and put another one on."

I removed the blue one and proceeded to try each of the others on. Aunt Helen adjusted the straps so they fit. I was angry and concerned about all this femininity. I had to admit the nylon tricot had a very cool, sensuous feel to it. At the home school I would not be undressing for gym class, so there was no way anyone would find out I was wearing lingerie under my boy clothes.

"Your old pajamas and jeans were pretty ragged so I cut them up for dusting rags. Open the second drawer and try on one of the baby dolls."

I was incredulous. I opened the drawer to find a half-dozen sets of a similar fabric, also in pastel colors. I was about to voice my objections when a stern look from Aunt Helen stopped me cold.

"These are perfectly good for you to wear to bed. There is no sense spending money on what we don't need. Now, take off your camisole and panties and try them on."

I removed the lingerie and stepped into the baby doll panty, then slipped the top on. This set was a deep purple color. The waist and leg elastic was black as was the lace-trimmed neckline. The shiny fabric looked and felt like satin. Again I was struck by how wonderful it felt next to my skin. I tried on the other sets and they all seemed to fit pretty good except for being a little snug in the waist.

"Good enough," remarked Helen. "Now go to bed. Remember, tomorrow you start exercising with the girls so set your alarm for a half-hour earlier. You will find sweatpants and a top in the closet. I noticed you haven't begun shaving. Hair is a breeding ground for disease. Starting tomorrow night, shave your beard AND your body when you take your bath. You will find a razor and shaving gel in the cupboard in the bathroom."

I nodded and got into bed.