



Reluctant Press presents:

Petticoated For Life

Norman Way



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MISTY MALVEAUX

A 'HER TV' E-BOOK

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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PETTICOATED FOR LIFE

By Norman Way

My dad was a counselor at a local high school and my mom taught English. They earned a modest living and we had a good life. I had just celebrated my fifteenth birthday in late May when there was a drive-by shooting near the school just as my parents were getting into their car. Both of them gave a statement to the police and a short time later, the suspect and the driver of the car were apprehended. The Police advised them to be watchful and report anyone in the neighborhood they didn't recognize or anybody following them to and from work.

School let out for the year and I was enjoying the summer free from my studies. We had planned a vacation to Lake Louise in western Canada and I was looking forward to my first trip to a foreign country and well as the magnificent scenery that area had to offer. We had planned to back pack and bicycle our way around. My parents firmly believed in good health and exercise. Except for an occasional burger and fries or a pizza, we ate a healthy regime of home-cooked meals. In addition, we spent many hours walking or biking thru the many parks and trails the area had to offer.

I hadn't really thought much about the admonition by the cops to be watchful until we went grocery shopping one evening about a month before the trial began. A dark green sedan squealed around the corner as we approached a stop sign. I was sitting in the back seat as the windows exploded. The pop pop pop of the gunshots rang in my ears as I slid down to the floor of the back seat.

My mother was screaming as the car coasted through the intersection with my dad slumped over the wheel. Frantically, she steered the car to a stop along the curb and punched 911 on her cell phone. The ambulance took my dad to the hospital. Mom had some cuts from the flying glass and I was unhurt. As I stood outside the car and saw the bullet holes in the metal, I wondered what was going to happen to us.

The police gave us a ride home. The tow truck took the car to the police impound so they could retrieve what was left of the bullets for evidence. I could not describe either the driver or the gunner as things had happened so fast. I was pretty certain the green car was a Pontiac, as our neighbors used to have one just like it. Mom called her sister who picked us up and took us to the hospital where my father died several hours later in surgery. He had been hit in the neck and head and had not regained consciousness.

After the funeral, we were given police protection; because they believed the gang shootings were connected to an out-of-state organization, the FBI was called in to give us some information about the Witness Protection Program. We had protection until after the trial of the two men in the shooting. They were sentenced to lengthy prison terms but the two that had killed my dad and nearly killed mom and me were still on the loose, though the police found the green sedan abandoned about three miles away in a shopping mall parking lot.

A female FBI agent came to the house about a week after the attempt on our lives. She sat down at the dining room table with Mom and me and went over the things she felt we needed to do. There would be some help in getting my mom a job in the new city as well as new identities for both of us. She left and after supper, Mom and I discussed the things she had covered.

The first thing we talked about was where we would go, though we might not have many choices there. We discussed the difficulties in using disguises, leaving town and getting used to being called by different names. Then there was also the necessity of getting a different car. We had sold Dad's sedan after it was repaired and Mom's minivan had a lot of miles on it. We began selling a lot of the "stuff" that had accumulated over the years.

The last week of July, we checked into a motor lodge for a month. The last of our furniture had been sold and the house was listed with a friend of Dad's who sold real estate. The female FBI agent came to see us again to go over the details of our relocation. We all sat at the small table as she went over the itinerary.

"It won't be until next year that you can return to teaching," she began. "I know you worked several retail jobs while you were going to school so I have found you an assistant manager's job in a western apparel store near the Twin Cities. You will be able to start there right after the Labor Day weekend holiday. You will live in a two-bedroom duplex that is close to the mall where you will be working and about ten miles from the school where you will begin teaching a year from now."

She paused for a minute, then looked at me with a smile as she began again.

"Now, I know you won't like this, young man, but for your safety and well-being during this transitional period, it will be necessary. You are a very bright young man so I know you will understand this. You have a slight build and a very pretty face. I think we should disguise you as a girl. Remember, they are looking for a woman and a son, not a woman and her daughter. I have made appointments for both of you at a local beauty parlor. Your hair will be dyed and you will get some different clothes. I know the manager of a large department store in the same mall as the salon and she has agreed to help you out by letting you come in after hours to get the things you need. Here are the places to go and times for you to be there. Please be on time.

“I have arranged for a local used car dealer to buy your car. You will rent a U-Haul for the drive to the Twin Cities. I phoned ahead and when you arrive, another agent will help you get your driver’s license changed over and a new vehicle with the appropriate plates. Do you have any questions?”

My mom shook her head no. I was going to ask how long I would have to be dressed like a girl but thought better of it. Our lives were at stake here and we had to do whatever it took to stay alive. The agent smiled and got up.

“I won’t be seeing you again, so good luck to both of you.”

As they walked to the door, I overheard the agent tell my mother “You know he is so pretty, he probably should have been a girl. I’d love to see him when you get him in a dress!”

My mom laughed as the agent left and she closed the door.

The next two weeks went by very slowly. We had nothing to do but keep our eyes peeled for someone who was out to get us. Finally, we had one more weekend left before our Monday morning start towards our new life.

I spent most of the time between when the agent informed us of the radical changes our lives would be undergoing and when we were going to depart contemplating what was ahead of us, especially what was ahead of *me*. Yes, Mom’s life was going to be upturned, but not nearly as much as mine was. After all, I was a boy who was about to start a new life in a new city in a new gender. What greater change could one experience? I recognized the necessity of this upheaval but that doesn’t mean that I wasn’t nervous—VERY nervous—about it. How could I *not* have been?

We arrived at the beauty shop just at closing time on Friday night. After the shop was locked and the shades were drawn, we each took a seat in one of the chairs. Mom had her blonde hair died black and restyled as well as getting a manicure and pedicure.

It had been awhile since I had gotten a haircut. Before dying my blonde hair brown, the stylist trimmed a little off the side, then combed some of the top down over my forehead to form bangs. She pinned a small pink bow at the top, then pierced my ears. In addition to my manicure and pedicure, my nails were shaped and painted with pink nail polish. The girls were all smiles as they handed each of us a complimentary sample bag. I could hear their giggles as we went out the door.

Saturday night, we went to the department store just as it was closing. We were ushered into the manager’s office. After the store closed and the employees went home, we went out to the main floor.

I undressed and was measured. My mom picked out several white blouses to go with a black and a navy pleated skirt. She selected a dozen pairs of panties in pastel colors, six pairs of pink and six pairs of white athletic socks and a pair of pink running shoes. She added to that a pair of black patent dress shoes she called “Mary Janes.” A pink stocking cap, pink mittens and a gray winter coat completed my ensemble.

Mom picked out a few things but she didn’t need very much. We left and went back to the motel. Monday morning, the car salesman showed up at nine and handed Mom a money order for the minivan. He drove mom to the U-Haul place and she came back

shortly with the small truck. We loaded everything into it. She dressed me in all pink: panties, socks, jeans, tee shirt, sneakers and of course my hair bow. I waited in the truck while she checked us out.

Our trip was uneventful. We got everything moved in and Mom took the truck back to another dealer. The next morning an agent took her to the DMV and got her drivers license changed. She was now Marjorie Mann, instead of Marjorie Mayer and I had become Nancy Mann instead of Nathan Mayer. That afternoon she went with an agent to get another minivan and when she returned, we packed up my boy clothes and took them to the local thrift store.

That evening after supper, we were both pretty exhausted. Neither one of us knew how long this charade would continue.

“You should try that sample of bubble bath the girls at the beauty shop gave you,” she said. “A hot soak will help you relax, I certainly feel better.”

I decided to take her advice. She was right. As I sat in the sea of yellow foam, amid the scent of lemons, my body did feel good. It was a rather girly thing to be doing but I did enjoy it. I slept soundly that night in my powder blue nightie as well.

We had arrived too late to register for a public school but a cancellation at private girls school about ten blocks away opened the door for me. I was two blocks from the bus stop and about a thirty-minute ride to the LaFarge Girls Academy.

A meeting was set up and Mom took me to a two PM appointment on a Thursday before the holiday weekend. I was wearing a pair of light blue panties under the navy skirt, a white blouse, white socks and my Mary Jane shoes. Just before we got out of the car, she cautioned me again about my actions.



“Remember, you are a girl now and your name is Nancy Mann. Walk slowly. Smooth your skirt before you sit down. Don’t be loud or argumentative. I know you haven’t had much time to practice but it’s very important that you be accepted as a girl until our situation is resolved.”

“Okay, I’ll try,” I answered.

We got out of the car and headed for the front door. We entered the building and proceeded to the administrative offices on the first floor. As we stopped at the counter, a woman got up and greeted us.

“Hi, you must be Marjorie and Nancy Mann. I am Dorothy LaFarge, the administrator. Please come in to my office.”

We followed her into her office.

She walked around her desk and sat down as we seated ourselves in the two chairs in front of her. I even remembered to smooth my skirt as I sat down.

“Your records are all in order and the tuition has been paid. I just need to go over a few things with you. Here is a class schedule and a curriculum guide for our school. We will be starting Tuesday after the long weekend. In addition to the three R’s, we also emphasize conduct. All our students must behave in a ladylike and orderly manner. We do not tolerate rude or insubordinate behavior of any kind. We want to be certain that our girls are not only well educated here but that they be properly instructed in etiquette, manners and social conduct. We place a high priority on turning out not only educated but refined young girls so they may go out and take their place in the world with grace and dignity with an academic background that any institution of higher learning would be proud to have.

“Nancy, I know you will enjoy being here as we have high standards and great expectations of all our students. Your outstanding academic background and commitment to good health is a perfect example of the kind of student we wish to have here at Lafarge. Do either of you have any questions?”

I shook my head, as mom answered, “No, I think we are all set for Tuesday.”

“Wonderful. Nancy, all materials are included in the tuition. When you come in Tuesday, just go straight to the first classroom for orientation. You needn’t bring anything. Now, come with me to the basement and we will get you measured and issue you your uniforms.”

We followed her out of the office and down the stairs to a storage room. Dorothy measured my waist and chest. From the storage room, she handed me two pink miniskirts, one pink petticoat, and six pink, short-sleeved satin blouses on hangers. She picked up a small box from the top shelf and counted out six white ovals with a pink border. Inside the oval in pink script was the name “Nancy”.

“These are iron-on patches. Put them on the left side of the blouse, please. We prefer to have our girls in a school uniform rather than let them wear just anything. We feel it instills pride, not only in the school but in themselves as well.”

“I agree,” said my mom as we turned to leave.

“See you Tuesday at eight then,” said Ms. LaFarge.