

Miss Annabel and Julia

Chapter 02

“Greenwich, Connecticut”

Fiction by Angela Bauer

It was not yet half-past five A.M. on Tuesday, 23 May 1933, following Julia Scott taking charge of the Barclay's Park Avenue mansion, when her taxi cab pulled into the mansion's front driveway. Using the key her boss, Richard Barclay, had loaned her before she left, Julia let herself in that imposing big front door.

Being uncertain exactly what tasks she might need to perform that day, Julia had packed an overnight bag with both a nice house dress and an office business dress, along with appropriate undergarments, stockings and shoes.

Her first order of business was to double check that enough of the consumable provisions shown on the inventory written by the dishonest and discharged cook and butler wife/husband team were actually on hand so she could prepare breakfast for Annabel, Nanny Persons, Gertrude Barclay and herself.

More food supplies would be needed for the household lunch, but at least the replacement butler and cook should have arrived in time to order and receive a delivery of that.

The previous late afternoon when Richard brought Julia to his mansion was the first time she had been there. She only had seen a few of the over 300 rooms in the mansion she had read about while typing correspondence for Richard and his late father, William Randolph Barclay.

Consequently Julia knew there was a sub-basement devoted to boilers, the laundry room and linen storage.

The upper basement contained: the kitchen, pantry and refrigerated storage; the scullery and clean plate storage; the servants' hall; wine and spirits storage; offices/living quarters for the cook, housekeeper and butler; a garage for several luxury automobiles.

The first floor was a step above the private driveway, which is typical of many residencies in Manhattan. Julia had been brought in through the front door, which was massive. The entrance way was also the reception room, large enough to hold a small ball. The dining room, living room, library, morning room and Richard's study all were on the first floor. Julia had been inside all those rooms. But she had no clue about the layout of the remainder of that floor.

From the entry way the main stairs started upward, but all Julia had seen on the second floor was Annabel's room, first to the left from the stairs on the right side of that hall. Julia was not sure where Richard and Gertrude lived.

William R. Barclay had either told her or dictated something about Richard and Jessica having an apartment on the third floor. Julia assumed that once Richard inherited the mansion he occupied his father's master apartment.

Julia could not remember any conversation or correspondence about Miss Gertrude Barclay's apartment. There was a fourth floor. Maybe it was there?

Julia knew that there were many unoccupied servant bedrooms on the fifth floor, but she presumed Nanny Clara Parsons had a room near Annabel.

With such a scant knowledge of the mansion's layout, Julia was reluctant to start exploring on her own. She made herself comfortable in the living room in a chair next to a telephone. She phoned the switchboard at Barclay's of Fifth Avenue, so her assistant Agnes Mayo could reach her at the mansion if necessary and when the time came. Julia saw no point in phoning Agnes at her home. Agnes routinely was at her desk fielding the early calls for Julia by 8 A.M.

Restless, Julia got up from her comfy chair, went down the service stairs to the kitchen and started a batch of coffee in a modern restaurant-size maker. She made a mental note to have the store send over a really good smaller coffee maker for the serving pantry adjacent to the dining room. When the coffee was ready, Julia filled a silver pot. She put that, some cream and sugar and several cups with saucers on a tray.

That she carried upstairs to Richard's study and put the tray down on his desk. Julia had been doing a lot of thinking about the re-organization

of the mansion staff. Upon discovery of the wide-spread embezzlement, she was sure it very important that there be formal accounting control.

Food would always be a large share of expense in a mansion, with the on-going risk of theft. Still, the fact that the fired husband and wife team of Arnold and Jane Russell as butler and cook did not, in Julia's view, mean all teams of relatives in service were dishonest.

She felt that maybe the Russells had started out as honest servants when hired, but took advantage of Gertrude when she became the *de facto* Lady of the Manor. Or, they just detested Gertrude and stole to get even. Perhaps the same was true of the discharged chauffeur Billy Williams. They all had to go, because once a thief, always a thief in Julia's experience.

Martha Pryor was sending her personal car and chauffeur to take Richard to his store office at 8:30 A.M. She was also supposed to be thinking of replacement servants. Unfortunately 5:45 A.M. was far too early for a coherent conversation with Martha. Noon was by her the normal start of the day.

Julia took her contacts address book out of her purse and phoned the most highly recommended domestic service employment agency. Even if they were not open they would have an answering service for emergencies. She felt sure once she introduced herself as the General Manager of Barclay's, that agency would jump into action.

As she sipped a cup of straight black coffee, Julia made an organization chart, as she always did for every department of the store and all new systems of operation. One conclusion of Julia's systems analysis was that Gertrude had reduced the mansion staff far below minimum for efficiency.

A prime example was having a cook and a butler, without a housekeeper, a footman and a few maids. Gertrude admitted she had a ladies maid without mentioning her name. Julia only assumed that woman lived in the mansion. Maybe she would turn up soon, looking for her breakfast.

At the top of the chart, Julia left space of the master and mistress of the manor. Below them she wrote her own name, so the entire staff would report to her. Below "Julia", from left to right, she wrote: COOK; NANNY; LADY'S MAID; HOUSEKEEPER; BUTLER; VALET. Each of those would be department heads reporting directly to her. Maybe the valet would only report to Richard and the lady's maid to Gertrude. Or, maybe her maid was paid for from Gertrude's trust fund. Julia made a note to have her own lawyer research William's will.

The cook would need an assistant and a scullery maid at least. Nanny Clara Parsons would need a nursery maid. The housekeeper perhaps could share the scullery maid, but would need at least a parlor maid and an

upstairs maid. The butler would need a footman. The chauffeur would report to the butler. Day-hire cleaners, laundresses and gardeners would report to the housekeeper.

This was a significant enough shopping list to hold the attention of the employment agency.

While in the kitchen, Julia had glanced into the servants' hall, with an old-fashioned bell system on a wall. However, that only signaled when someone pulled the cord in an important room.

Since Nanny Parson was at the moment the only servant on the payroll, Julia figured the easiest way to contact her was to use the bell cord in Annabel's room. Quietly Julia opened Annabel's door.

There was enough light to see the girl was still sleeping on her tummy. Maybe the sting of the spanking still lingered, or maybe it was a coincidence because the girl always slept prone. Annabel did not appear to notice Julia in her room.

Within a minute of Julia pulling the bell cord, Nanny Parsons rushed to the room. Expecting that, Julia was in the hall, with the door closed.

"Nanny Parson, today I am hiring a new and larger service staff" Julia started while talking softly and tugging the nanny away from Annabel's door. "How would you feel about having a nursery maid? Personally I recommend hiring one."

"Well, Miss Scott" Clara Parson shyly answered, "When I was hired while the first Mrs. Barclay was still in the hospital, I had two nursery maids. That was what I was used to in homes of this size.

"No disrespect, but that Miss Gertrude Barclay has worked me to death. Annabel is not an especially messy child, just spoiled.

"However, her sheets need washing every day. Her mattress needs to be turned over every other day. I cannot do that alone.

"Did you feel the rubber sheet when you sat on her bed last evening?"

"Nanny, or would you prefer to be called something else? Now that you mention it I did think something was odd about that bed, but then I was concentrating on safely punishing Annabel without over-doing it" Julia answered.

"Annabel took longer to potty train than any other girl I have raised. She was still in diapers during the day at age three when Mrs. Jessica Barclay left. I only was able to get the child out of day diapers a year later" Clara said with increasing passion. "Annabel never seemed to mind being diapered. She actually cried the first few nights she was not diapered for bed.

“Miss Barclay insisted I never again diaper Annabel. That was when she fired the last nursery maid. It was so silly, with all respect, because it takes more effort to change the bed and wash the sheets. Miss Barclay never would listen.

“Begging your pardon, I have always felt that if Annabel was not wetting her bed and pajamas she might behave better, or at least would not be so unhappy.

“When Annabel is not listening I really would prefer you call me ‘Clara’ Miss Scott.”

“In turn, Clara, please call me ‘Julia’ when you consider doing so to be discreet” Julia said with sincerity. “The two of us will need to be a team looking out for Annabel’s best interest. I will use my authority to keep Gertrude off your back.

“I was not kidding, Clara, about spanking Annabel. I am more than half way convinced she was deliberately egging me on last night. And she might have even wanted a spanking.

“What I remember was how I struggled when I got spanked. You have more experience spanking children. But Annabel only sobbed and protested, she never even squirmed or kicked. Is that as strange as I suspect?”

“Julia, every child over the age of three I have spanked has kicked and complained. Even girls try to get away,” Clara stated with authority. “Yes, I agree, Annabel must be smart enough to know in some way she needs discipline.”

“Clara, I am not sure my authority extends to letting Annabel wear diapers to bed. But, that is a very good reason you need a nursery maid. I promise that Gertrude will not be part of that decision. I will discuss it with Mr. Barclay.

“We sell several kinds of diapers at the store. I just signed the purchase order of a new kind of rubber pants. But, I also read an advertisement for a company called ‘DyDee’ which delivers laundered diapers to homes. If we can get permission to let Annabel try diapers again, how would you feel about using that diaper service?”

“Personally I would rather wash diapers than sheets, but if possible I like the idea of the diaper service. I should read the newspapers more often. It’s not like when Annabel was a baby when I could talk to other nannies in the park. What will they think of next?” Clara said with enthusiasm.

“Before I ask the employment agency to send some nursery maids for you to select, do you have someone in mind?” Julia asked.

“If it is my place, yes I do,” Clara responded. “The daughter of a good friend who was a fine nanny twenty years ago just graduated high school. That would be Hannah Randall. Her parents are Irish, but Hannah was born here. Her father is a cop, so they have a phone. Would it be all right for me to use the phone to call them?”

“Oh, Clara, that would be a great help” Julia said. “You and Hannah decide if she should live here. I believe there is more than enough room. I’m not sure the usual pay for nursery maids, so just tell Hannah that we will be generous.

“Now, please tell me about Annabel’s education.”

“Miss Gertrude has never let Annabel go to school. The girl is nine and can read, but I have no way of knowing if she reads as well as other girls her age” Clara explained. “My feeling is even a new-fangled ‘progressive’ school would have given Annabel better discipline. Maybe the child is as smart as she claims, but until she is polite, who can tell?”

“Who indeed, Clara, who indeed?” Julia responded. “The next school term will not start until September, so I have time to make those arrangements, but as soon as I can I will discuss that with Mr. Barclay. Now if you will be so kind as to call Miss Randall, I’ll return to the study to talk to the employment agency.

“Just one last question: How does the laundry get done here? Does someone come in during the day?”

“Julia, the laundry room is in the bottom basement. That cook you fired was a lazy, nasty piece of business. I have washed all of Annabel’s and my things. I don’t mind saying I am fed up about it, but despite Miss Gertrude Barclay, her brother Richard is a fine employer. And I love Annabel as if she was my very own daughter, so I shut up and washed our laundry” Clara answered honestly.

“Thank you, Clara. I’ll add a part-time laundress to the list with the agency” Julia promised.

That was when they could hear Annabel cry out, even through her door, “Oh, No!”

Clara rushed to open the door, gesturing Julia to keep quiet. So Julia stayed in the hall. Clara was speaking softly, calmly and using childish expressions of comfort. “Lambie Pie, Nanny is right here. Did you have an accident during the night? May I open the drapes so I can see better?”

Annabel was sobbing quietly. Even from the hall, as soon as Clara opened the drapes, Julia could see a wet stain on the sheets. She just assumed her nightie, panties and the bedding were soaked. As Julia slipped away, she hoped the rubber sheet was effective.

Back in the study, Julia left another message for Martha Pryor. Then she phoned the employment agency. The answering service acted impressed and promised to have the call returned. That happened within a few minutes, although it was still early.

As luck would have it, the previous day one of the most respected butlers registered for new employment only because of the sudden death of his previous employer. His wife was the housekeeper working in the same mansion. That cook and chauffeur also had registered.

Julia responded, “Since I fired my boss’ butler, cook and chauffeur last night, I need to replace all of them, as well as fill several other positions. Consider I am installing a whole new staff at the Barclay mansion, except for Nanny Parsons, who has the daughter of a friend in mind as nursery maid.

“I believe the cook will need an assistant and a scullery. The housekeeper will need at least a parlor and an upstairs maid. We will need a part-time laundress. The butler will need a footman. We will need to replace the chauffeur.

“I am not sure who does the gardening. Does your agency handle that job?

“Mr. Barclay has never used a valet since I started as his executive secretary years ago. Now that I am in charge, I want him to have an experience, but very tactful, man’s man.

“The sooner I can interview the butler, housekeeper, cook and chauffeur, the better. If any of them know people they trust for the other positions, ask them to invite those folks for interviews.

“Please do not worry. I will be sure you receive your fees for all the servants we hire, even the girl the nanny knows. Just please ask them to get here as soon as possible.

“By the way, just for my information, how much should I offer the nursery maid?”

The agency manager quoted the going rate for nursery maids. He then promised to get in touch with the butler and his wife right away, since they were still living in the mansion of their late employer, as was the cook.

Julia left another message for Martha saying it looked like the employment agency had everyone she needed. They would be appearing for interviews shortly.

Next Julia phoned the store switchboard, and was delighted to learn Miss Mayo was already at her desk. Julia was connected.

“Agnes, Mr. Barclay put me in charge of re-organizing his household staff. The last staff was a bunch of crooks. I fired them last night, so I need

to stay here to make breakfast for the daughter and sister. The chauffeur of my friend, Martha Pryor, will be driving Mr. Barclay today.

“Oh, by the way, I also spanked the living daylights out of that bratty daughter Annabel, on her bare fanny with her hairbrush. Her nanny and father approved. Mr. Barclay’s nasty sister Gertrude was horrified.

“My plan is to get to my office as soon as possible, but don’t count on me before lunch. If anything is truly vital, put the call through to the phone in Mr. Barclay’s study. That number is in the book on my desk.

“Agnes, I have faith in you. Have a marvelous day. Thanks for arriving so early.”

Still unsure how to find Richard, Julia finished her coffee. Then she climbed the stairs and entered Annabel’s room. The girl was being given a bath down the hall in a bathroom.

Walking to that door, Julia asked Clara to come into the hall. Annabel protested.

“Young Lady,” Julia said walking into the bathroom “Your father has left me in charge of this home. You do not have a vote. Nanny, will this child drown if you do me a favor? I can serve as a lifeguard.”

Out in the hall, Julia asked Clara to find and wake Richard. She was to tell him Julia needed to see him in his study as soon as possible.

Meanwhile Annabel glared at Julia and splashed about like she was having those “Terrible Twos”!

“Young Lady, if I had a spare few minutes I would give you another spanking for being such a brat. Lucky for you I do not have the time.

“I will leave it up to Nanny Parsons if she wants to spank you. She has full authority to do so when she wants. Your Aunt Gertrude no longer will be protecting you. So pretend to be well-behaved, Young Lady, and maybe Nanny will not spank you this morning.

“Several highly recommended people will be coming to this house for consideration as replacement for the servants I fired last evening. As soon as Nanny Parsons comes here to keep you from drowning, I will return to the study. I will have a discussion with your father before he is driven to our office.

“After that conversation I will prepare breakfast for you, Aunt Gertrude, Nanny Parsons and me. At that time I will need to have a talk with you and your nanny,” Julia explained as if talking to an adult.

Clara returned and said Richard received the message, would dress and meet Julia in his study as soon as practical.

Julia walked downstairs, and took the nearly empty coffee pot to the kitchen. There she rinsed it and refilled it so she could serve Richard coffee when she saw him.

He was neatly dressed as always for the office when he appeared a few minutes later. He was surprised to have Julia serve him coffee.

“Mr. Barclay, last evening was a good start on the re-organization of your household. This morning a whole new staff is appearing to be interviewed. I have a couple of clothing changes in a suitcase. I plan to get to my office after lunch.

“Right now I need to be sure I have your approval to institute some major changes. Overnight I have had studied the situation and drawn an organization chart with a system of operations.

“The biggest problem is that the previous ‘manager’ of the servants is totally shockingly incompetent. We would replace her instantly at the store. I cannot fire Gertrude, but I recommend transferring her to some other assignment, perhaps in Alaska!

“While you think about that, the other important thing is to help Annabel get on the right track. Somehow long ago you had the good sense to hire Cora Parsons as Nanny. She has raised many children, some in families far wealthier than yours. Her instincts are sound.

“But, for reasons I will never understand, Gertrude has made parenting decisions far beyond her expertise. It is vital that she have absolutely no influence on decisions about Annabel.

“While there is still time we need to enroll Annabel in an appropriate school. I will do the necessary research, but Clara Parsons knows where generations of other young ladies have been educated. We can deal with that after the Rogers take-over is a success.

“The big surprise to me was not that Annabel needs firm supervision, but rather that she still wets her bed. I am not sure taking her to a doctor would accomplish anything, but I have read that across the park at Columbia Medical School they are teaching specialists in the medicine of children, calling those ‘pediatricians’.

“What Clara Parsons told me was that Annabel started acting badly only after Gertrude ordered that the child be taken out of diapers. The result has been all the bedding and her bed clothing needs to be washed daily. Hardly any girls her age admit to being diapered for bed. All I know is that your store sells a lot of diapers and the new PlayTex rubber pants are selling even better.

“Most of those are the larger sizes, for children bigger than infants. Somebody is diapering older kids. The customers of our store are upper class, so their children are not so very different from Annabel.

“What I propose is that with your permission, Nanny Parsons will tell your daughter that if she wants to be diapered for bed, you have given permission. Of course it will not help if Annabel feels compelled to be diapered. Clara will make it clear it is her choice.

“If you agree, I will have the store send over a supply of new diapers, pins and these revolutionary PlayTex rubber pants.

“As for the staff, my analysis is that reducing the staff actually cost you money. This home will function much better with a housekeeper in charge, reporting to me. I will have the financial records constantly audited. The best servant employment agency is already sending applicants for me to interview.

“Just remember, especially when the Philadelphia store is up to our standards, the household cost will be of no concern. At the moment everything I have recommended is well within your capacity to afford.

“Just tell me to go ahead. You only have time for another cup of coffee. Eat at the store. I need to fix breakfast for Annabel and Gertrude right now. Sorry, I do not remember the name of Martha’s chauffeur but he is a good driver and is quiet.”

“Julia, I knew you could handle all this. I approve everything you suggest. Gertrude already hates you, but then she hates everyone!” Richard chortled. “You are right; she is the one most needing spanking, like she frequently used to get from her governesses.

“I wish I could give you a big kiss. The thing is you will have to be the one who tells Gertrude. I am not that brave!

“I’ll see you at the office when you can be there.” On his way out, Richard turned and blew Julia a kiss. He had not even glanced at her organization chart.

Long story short, Annabel hugged Clara when she learned she could wear diapers as often as she wanted. She was not upset when Julia instructed Nanny Parson to give Annabel a spanking for being such a brat in her bath.

All of the servants sent by the agency were better than advertised. The cook turned out to be the younger sister of the housekeeper who is the wife of the butler. The chauffeur for their late employer came with them, wearing his own uniform. He was ideal. Virtually all the needed additional servants are available as a result of the other house being closed.

The new housekeeper is named Mrs. Rose Marsh Franklyn. Her husband is Raymond Franklyn. Her sister is Mrs. Jane Marsh Wilson. Julia instructed them to burn up the phone lines, or take taxies, to round up the needed staff.

Jane Wilson said, “Miss Scott, for three years Miss Daisy Robinson has been my very talented assistant. I would like for her to be considered. My former scullery, Sarah Collins, had only been with us less than a year, but she is reliable, hard working and soon will be a fine cook.

“May I offer them positions here?”

“Please do so, Mrs. Wilson. I will prefer that all of you hire those people you are comfortable supervising. Just please let us have a service team installed and functioning here immediately” Julia urged them.

They do not know Richard Barclay, of course, but they think he will like the late gentleman’s valet, Arthur Swift. They will contact him immediately.

Julia considered that she had done a great day’s work!

Nanny Parsons and Annabel offered to show the new staff around the mansion. Julia could not be sure if the girl had been spanked. If so she was not upset. And, if Clara did not feel a spanking was necessary, that was fine as well.

Julia gave Annabel a tender kiss as she said good bye. She used an empty bedroom to change into a dress appropriate for the office.

The new chauffeur, Buddy Edwards, had found his way to the basement garage. There found a note saying the keys to both of the Rolls Royces were in the custody of Special Agent Ronald Butterfield, Head of Security for Barclay’s store.

Mr. Edwards was experienced driving vehicles such as vintage Rolls Royce limousines in Manhattan traffic. He came back to the study to say he was all prepared to drive Julia to her office when she was ready, as soon as he had the necessary car keys.

Julia told Mr. Edwards that she would instruct Ron Butterfield to have the keys to both of the Rolls sent to the mansion by trusted messenger. Time being of the essence for her to be at her office, if it would save time she would be driven back there by the messenger. Ultimately, it was Mr. Edwards who drove Julia in a Rolls Royce.

At the store executive offices, Julia was shocked to find her best friend, Martha Pryor, alone with Richard in his private office. Agnes told Julia that all calls were being handled by staffers and that Richard wanted to see her right away.

While Julia had been riding the elevator to her office, Agnes had phoned down to the store garage with instructions that Buddy Edwards wait there for further instructions.

Before Julia could scold Martha, Richard stopped her, saying: “Miss Julia Scott, only after Miss Pryor talked to me like a wise young aunt, did I realize I have been an idiot since I divorced Jessica.

“If I were less of a fool I would have known I have adored you for a long time. Maybe I should even have fired you so I could have professed my affection for you sooner. You have always been so proper I never dared hope you would consider marrying a dull fellow like me.

“This might seem sudden, but Julia Scott, if you will consent to be my wife, Martha knows a judge in Greenwich, Connecticut who will marry us this afternoon.

“When she drove with me to the store this morning, she told me how you had turned down a fabulous offer to work in Paris for a man who has proposed to you several times. Last evening you took charge, proving you are truly the ‘Mistress of the Manor House’.

“On the off chance you say you will marry me, the head of the jewelry department is outside with a selection of rings.”

Richard got down on his knee before asking the traditional question, “Julia Scott, will you marry me?”

Julia reached down to help Richard stand up; she gave him a tender kiss for the very first time. Then she answered: “Richard Walburn Barclay, of course I will marry you.

“If we hurry we could be back here and still do some work on the Rogers deal before the day is over. Is there time to swing by my apartment so I can put on a nicer dress for my wedding?”

Martha and Richard burst out laughing. He said, “Miss Julia Scott, you are the General Manager of this store. You should know we have a fine bridal gown department. How about you and Martha make a selection there? While the gown is being altered we can select your wedding and engagement rings. I know it will be a very short engagement, but I promise it will be a long and happy marriage.”

He used the intercom to have Agnes cancel all of the remaining Tuesday appointments for Julia and himself. He also told her to phone down to the garage to have his new chauffeur Mr. Edwards fill the tank of his Rolls Royce. Also Martha’s chauffeur was to fill her car’s tank.

In less than a half hour, Julia had chosen her wedding gown and rings. Richard had placed the engagement ring on the fourth finger of her left hand. He gave Martha the actual wedding ring for safekeeping. Julia tried on the altered gown. Martha agreed it seemed it had been custom made just for the occasion. Julia had changed back into her office dress for the drive to Greenwich.

As they walked through the main office on the way to a waiting elevator, they saw Lenny Rogers casually hanging around. Richard pulled Lenny aside so he could whisper, “Will you be my best man?”

Leonard Rogers whispered back, "I always was the better man. Who is the lucky bride?"

Martha pulled all of them toward the elevator, saying in her normal voice, "Lenny, in a few minutes all will become clear. You are going to take a long ride with me in my car. If you live up to your reputation, both of us will have an outstanding afternoon."

Just before they all stepped into the elevator, Richard said, "Will someone ask Miss Mayo to inform my home not to hold dinner for me. I will let them know when to expect me."

From the garage, Julia phoned Agnes, saying: "Today I will be a bride. Would you have someone pack me some clothing and things from my apartment? Have them delivered to the Barclay mansion on Park Avenue at East Seventy-Third Street.

"Please be discreet. I am marrying Richard Barclay as soon as we can drive to Greenwich, Connecticut.

"Oh, Agnes, Lenny Rogers asked if you could call his home to say he will miss dinner. He is about to be Mr. Barclay's best man!"

The scream of joy given out by Agnes was not discreet. Before the two Rolls Royces left the store's garage, fully filled with gas, the entire office staff knew all about the marriage. At least no cans had been tied to the rear bumper of Richard's Rolls Royce!