

Miss Annabel and Julia

Chapter 16

“Ruth, Ethel, Trudy and George Boldt, Too”

Fiction by Angela Bauer

Annabel Barclay was having an adventure with her friend Susan Manchester on Monday, 26 June 1933, showing her the new Barclay Mansion on Philadelphia's Main Line. That Sunday, she had met her new neighbor Betty Hoffstadt, who had joined in the adventure.

Of course accompanying Annabel and Susan on their adventure was Nanny Hannah Randall and Susan's mother Leticia, as well as large diaper bags for the girls. Betty had her own 'support team'. Her Nanny Violet Jackson was pushing her year-old brother William in a baby carriage with an impressive diaper bag riding on the shelf. Betty hoped outsiders would not realize half of those diapers were hers.

Earlier when Hannah had the chance, she gave Ruth Hoffstadt two dozen pair of Toddler Large PlayTex rubber panties for her daughter Betty and also two dozen Baby PlayTex for William. Everyone, except Violet and William were gathered in the nursery of the new Barclay mansion. Annabel and Susan just had their diapers changed, which included fresh PlayTex for them.

Ruth asked Hannah to put a pair of the new PlayTex panties over Betty's diapers. Then Leticia and Ruth continued the tour. The girls decided to play house, with the help of seventeen-year-old Hannah. They were trying to decide who would be the naughty baby when Ruth's cook announced that luncheon was ready next door at the Hoffstadt Mansion, which had been the family home of Ruth's parents and her mother's father before that.

Luncheon was an outstanding meal. But two hours of intense play outside, combined with the meal, conspired to cause all the girls to droop.

Nanny Violet also sensed that Betty's diaper was wet inside her rubber pants.

She led the little girl up the stairs to one of her rooms. This one had always been the nursery and was where Betty actually usually slept. Her other room, decorated for a girl her real age, was mostly to keep friends of hers from finding out about her constant need for diapers.

The nursery had what appeared to be an antique piece of furniture which could serve as a baby bath on top of a cabinet at convenient height for the nanny. But that shallow bath tub had a large cover to turn it into a changing table far larger than was modern and average in 1933. When Betty was led to it the changing cover was already installed.

Hanging over an end of an antique crib was a long night dress. The drop front of the crib was lowered.

Nanny Violet started undressing Betty while she was standing near the changing table. Betty was lifted to sit on the edge of the table while Nanny Violet removed her shoes and socks. Then Betty reclined on the changing table so her nanny could remove her rubber panties and soaked pinned gauze diapers.

A wash cloth was moistened with water left in the bath under the changing table. Nanny Violet used that to carefully clean Betty hands and face before re-wetting the cloth to wipe the girl's diaper region. A diaper was used to dry Betty before she was powdered and her new diapers pinned snug. Prior to reaching into the diaper bag for another PlayTex, a pacifier was placed in Betty's little pouty mouth.

Her pacifier did comfort Betty. It took Nanny Violet a couple of tries before she had the rubber pants in the best position and all the gauze diapers tucked inside. Finally the night dress was pulled over Betty's head.

The surprise for Annabel and Hannah was that instead of leading Betty to her room next door, Nanny Violet picked her up and deposited her in the crib. Once the front was raised into position and fastened, Betty was told to go to sleep. There was no hint of affection or a kiss.

Leticia and Susan were not shocked about the crib, because a larger version of a crib was Susan's only bed at home.

The diapers of Susan and Annabel were found to be so damp they needed changing. Then they were changed into nighties before being led to Betty's bed in her other 'pretend' bedroom. They were tucked in for their naps, side-by-side.

Earlier Annabel and Susan had seen Nanny Violet diapering William in his nursery, which was on the other side of Betty's nursery from her 'pretend' bedroom.

The difference between the two nurseries was that everything in William's appeared brand-new and up-to-date in 1932. His changing table

was perhaps even larger than Betty's but his baby bath was placed on the changing table only when needed. He was only a one-year-old so he was still sleeping in a bassinet which was near the changing table. There was a new nursing gliding rocking chair on the other side of the changing table.

Less than ten minutes after Hannah had put Annabel down for her nap, she got out of bed and walked down the stairs, holding her 'Girls' Spanker' and looking for her nanny.

Violet and Hannah were sitting together in the kitchen sipping iced tea. "Nanny, I tried but cannot go to sleep. I deserve a spanking for getting out of bed."

Not wanting to get into a lengthy debate with Violet about indulging Annabel's spanking cravings, Hannah pretended to be angry. "Young Lady, your mother and I have scolded and punished you before for getting up without permission. If you cannot sleep during a nap then you must stay in bed quietly.

"If you woke up Susan, then I will have to spank you even harder.

"Nanny Jackson, is there another room I may use to punish this naughty young lady without disturbing any of the nice children who actually are obediently sleeping during their naps?"

"Sure, Nanny Randall, the bedrooms beyond Betty's bedroom are all unoccupied. I am so sure Mrs. Hoffstadt will give permission to use one of those rooms that there is no reason to ask her."

Hannah took the leather paddle in her right hand and Annabel's right hand in her left. As soon as they felt Violet could not hear them, they started to giggle as if they were both children. "Do you want a real paddy-whacking or a serious walloping?" Hannah asked as one conspirator to another.

"Nanny, Mommy promised to spank me before bed tonight. So this time could it be just a paddy-whacking, please?"

It had taken Annabel several minutes to find Hannah. Apparently seconds after she got out of bed, so did Susan. Leticia had seen her daughter skulking down the hall. She immediately dragged Susan back to Betty's room, retrieved the hairbrush from the diaper bag and was not kidding when she used it on Susan's upper thighs just below her rubber panties.

As Annabel and Hannah passed the closed door they could hear the spansks as well as Susan's reaction.

Although Hannah was not using soft spansks, she was spanking almost full-force, Annabel did not struggle or squirm. She sobbed, but otherwise was as quiet as possible. Hannah thought to herself the girl was taking her spanking better than she had when caned by Clara Parsons or lashed with the Mother Superior's strap.

When Annabel's spanking was over, they cautiously walked back to Betty's bedroom. It was quiet. On the bed Susan was quiet on her tummy, perhaps even asleep. Annabel climbed into her side of the bed as quietly as possible, on her tummy and turned away from Susan. Soon she actually was sound asleep.

When Leticia returned to her chair near Ruth, her hostess had many questions and comments: "When I was a child, my mother never once spanked me. If I annoyed her, she would tell either Nanny Violet or my governess to spank me. I have followed the same tradition. In our family Nanny Violet does the spanking when Betty is home. Her teachers and head mistress spank her when she is naughty at school.

"Leticia, do you always spank Susan?"

"Yes I do, Ruth. During the terms at Bryn Mawr when I am teaching, Susan has an after school program those days when I am not there as her classes end. My husband and I have given the school full permission to punish Susan, but they tell us they need to spank her very rarely. Her school has a reputation for being strict and not shy about using corporal punishment. In the classroom the teachers all have a hairbrush. The head mistress uses a wooden paddle with a rubber pad on one side, I am told. But so far Susan has not experienced that.

"My husband travels on business frequently. In theory he believes in spanking, but he does not believe it proper for a father to spank a daughter. So far, when he spansks he has not gotten around to Susan," Leticia said while blushing.

Ruth also blushed: "When I was growing up my mother told me that after I married I needed to obey my husband and that it would be his duty to punish me if I displeased him or violated his rules.

"My husband Gene is seven years older than me. He loves me, but he is strict. That strictness is a quality my mother admired about Gene when we started dating.

"Gene has never asked a servant or anyone else to punish me when I need it. He does not use a hairbrush on me, but he does have a strap I have felt once or twice a month since we married, even on our honeymoon.

"I consider myself lucky that Gene loves me enough to spank me personally. Once when I was ten I saw our housekeeper with my mother over her lap with her bottom very red from a hairbrush similar to the one used on me. My mother was sobbing and begging for mercy."

Leticia was shocked: "My God, Ruth, I never knew a husband would order a servant to punish his wife! I vowed to obey my husband Steven when we married. Like you, I was brought up with my mother Eleanor saying that my future husband would have the right to use corporal punishment on me, so I should be careful to not annoy him.

“The last time my mother spanked me was when I returned home after my first year at Bryn Mawr. I was sure I knew everything, because I had made good grades. I had also learned to enjoy drinking since I had left home. I was modern enough to call my mother by her first name in front of several of her friends and at least one servant while asking for a drink. That was a few weeks before I turned eighteen.

“Mother took hold of my ear with her left hand and smacked the seat of my dress with her right hand. She dragged me to her morning room adjacent to the living room where the incident started. Mom did not let go of my ear as she ordered a maid to run upstairs to ask her lady’s maid for a hairbrush.

“While waiting Mom pulled up the skirt of my dress far enough she could loosen my corset to slide it out of the way. She sat in an armless chair before lowering my bloomers and pulling me over her lap as if I was a child.

“As soon as the maid returned with the hairbrush, Mom set me on fire with it. I yelped loudly enough I am sure all her friends and the servants could hear. She did not entirely straighten out my bloomers, corset or dress before marching me back to the living room. She was holding the hairbrush and made me apologize to the room, going so far as to tell them she had spanked me. After I apologized I was told to sit quietly in the corner until her guests had departed two hours later. Then I was sent to my room for the rest of the day, with only a carafe of water and a half-loaf of bread to last me until breakfast.

“After that, when I returned home the rest of my Bryn Mawr years, I was careful to respect Mom. Still the year after I graduated and fell in love with the man I married, I felt certain he would never humiliate me when I needed punishment as my Mom had done. Honestly, most of the time when he spansks me, it is for stimulation, not punishment.”

There was a pause in the conversation while Leticia and Ruth tried to understand what the other had admitted.

Earlier, seconds after being introduced to Leticia by Hannah, Ruth had reached into a pocket of her dress to bring out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. That hardly surprised Hannah, who had seen Ruth smoking almost continuously during Sunday brunch. Virtually ignoring Hannah, who Ruth considered a servant, she turned and proffered the cigarettes to Leticia. She simply responded, “No thank you, Mrs. Hoffstadt.”

To which Ruth said in a friendly way, “Oh, please call me ‘Ruth’.”

And Leticia responded equally friendly, “By all means please call me ‘Leticia’.”

Much later, during the increasingly awkward lull in their conversation, Ruth snuffed out the butt of a cigarette. She brought out a

pack with her lighter and again proffered the cigarettes to Leticia. Again she replied, “No thank you, Ruth.”

Rudely Ruth asked, as she lit her own cigarette and took a long drag on it, “I am curious, Leticia. Do you ever smoke?”

“Honestly, Ruth, the fact is I tried smoking a few times as a girl, as a teenager and at Bryn Mawr. I was nearly cast out of my father’s family once they realized I was the only one at gatherings who did not smoke, especially after Prohibition. They are relatives of the North Carolina Dukes, so have profited from tobacco since colonial days. ‘Buck’ Duke is my mother’s first cousin, so Doris Duke is a first-cousin once removed.”

“Leticia, I was introduced to Richard and Julia Barclay by Leonard Rogers. When I was younger, I had my first serious crush on Lenny, the handsome older son of our neighbors. Probably Lenny always will consider me a pesky child. Yesterday, after the Barclay’s left brunch early, Lenny told me Julia is Richard’s very new wife and just adopted Annabel.

“How did you happen to meet them?”

“That is a long story, Ruth. A couple of weeks ago I took Susan to a park close to our home in Philadelphia. As we were walking to our usual entrance we saw a Rolls Royce parked all by its self. About an hour later, Susan approached a woman who was changing the diaper of a girl out in the open.

“I noticed that something fascinated Susan, so I followed her stare. That turned out to be young Nanny Randall changing Annabel. I had never thought about rubber panties until I saw Annabel was wearing them.

“The next thing I knew was that Annabel had almost run to where Susan was playing and introduced herself. While I was watching Susan talking to Annabel, Hannah Randall walked over to me with as large a diaper bag as I had ever seen. She introduced herself to me, and said she was nanny to Annabel.

“I asked if they had taken the bus, because I had not seen them before and I did not recognize them from my neighborhood, where nobody I know has a nanny. Hannah said that her boss had told her chauffeur to drive them, pointing toward the Rolls Royce. No last names were mentioned, but I had read that ‘Julia Scott Barclay’ was in charge of the transition of Rogers’ department store in the ‘Barclay’s of Fifth Avenue’ business.

“We met Annabel on a Monday morning. Hannah and Annabel took us to the Zoo that Wednesday, where Julia joined us. We kept talking at the Zoo while Hannah took the girls. I was impressed by Julia. She graduated from Barnard in 1920 while I was graduating from Bryn Mawr, where I am now a professor.”

Leticia decided to see how Susan was doing taking a nap upstairs. She wanted to coordinate with Hannah in case she woke Annabel. Hannah was still in the kitchen talking to Violet. She decided she might as well check on Betty and William. Hannah explained that while Annabel was a guest in Ruth Hoffstadt's home, she was considered a visiting servant who needed to only use the service stairs, unless she was escorting Annabel. That was the tradition ruling Violet's care of Betty.

While Violet and Hannah climbed the service stairs, Leticia took the longer route up the main stairs to Betty's 'pretend' bedroom.

In their respective cribs, William and Betty were still asleep. Both of their diapers were quite wet, and both of their PlayTex rubber pants had nevertheless kept their bedding dry.

Hannah was surprised that Violet decided to change Betty's diaper first and asked why, to which Violet responded: "Betty has only been back in diapers all day since her school went on summer vacation. She has much more trouble with prickly heat and diaper rash than does William. So, I change her more frequently, but I am deliberately increasing the time she is wearing a wet diaper so her skin will resist rash better."

Hannah thought that made excellent sense: "I have so much to learn from you, Nanny Jackson, and from my supervisor Nanny Parsons. Annabel has music lessons tomorrow morning, but she can practice on the piano at the new Barclay home in the afternoon. I would like to introduce you to Nanny Parsons. Would that be convenient?"

"Sure thing, Nanny Randall," Violet Jackson answered as she finished diapering Betty without waking her. "I really appreciate these new rubber panties. I will ask Mrs. Hoffstadt to buy more of them."

"Last week we needed more for Annabel, as well as Susan. I am sure they are in-stock at Rogers' Department Store, which has the exclusive franchise to sell them in Eastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey, according to my boss."

When Violet left to check on William, Leticia and Hannah did check on their girls. The two were following the letter of the rule, in that they were still in bed. However, they were wide awake and chatting.

Not looking even slightly embarrassed or contrite, Annabel asked, "Nanny Randall, are you going to spank me again for talking to Susan?"

"Were you told that if the two of you woke up you were prohibited from talking? I never told you that. Mrs. Manchester, did you prohibit Susan and Annabel from talking to each other?"

"Nanny Randall, expecting that would be as silly as standing on the shore and ordering the tide to hold still. No, I did not make such an order, and I do not intend to spank Susan for doing the natural thing by talking to her friend."

“Well then, Annabel, I spanked you earlier for getting out of bed without permission. Only if you insist or make a fuss, will I spank you again. Does that seem fair?”

“Right now, Betty had her diaper changed and did not wake up. Mrs. Manchester and I need to drive home. We want good cooperation from both of you. We will dress you for travel in your current diapers. Then we will walk next door to the new house. There both of you will be re-diapered and cleaned for the drive back to Philadelphia.”

Watching and listening to Hannah combine affection to both girls with gentle authoritative control; Leticia still could not believe that beautiful tall woman was actually a seventeen-year-old girl.

Affectionate good-byes were exchanged downstairs, with Ruth Hoffstadt. Violet, the cook Elinor Glyn, Betty and William were not present. “Mrs. Hoffstadt, I thank you for such a marvelous meal and all your hospitality,” Annabel said while dropping a courtesy.

Good use was made of the large changing table in the Barclay South Nursery. Clean and wearing dry diapers and PlayTex panties, Susan, Annabel, Leticia and Hannah carried the diaper bags down to the waiting Rolls Royce. John Merriman stowed them in the trunk and held the rear door until all his passengers were seated.

He headed to the Manchester residence first. A couple of blocks away, Leticia asked him to stop so they could get out to walk the rest of the way. Hannah made note that on that corner there was a small grocery store with a large sign promoting Lucky Strikes cigarettes.

The rest of the way back to the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, Annabel talked about how much fun she had with Susan and Betty. Still, she wanted to have another piano practice session if the room was available.

From the chauffeur concierge desk, Annabel phoned Assistant Manager David Ramsey. He told her someone else was practicing and that the room would be available from 3:15 P.M. until 4:15 P.M. She asked that it be reserved for her and thanked him very much.

There was more than enough time to take the elevator to their floor. Annabel was hoping the photos had been delivered. Hannah wanted to put all the wet diapers in the DyDee Service pail, wash and hang to dry (on soft wooden hangers) the used PlayTex panties and re-stock the diaper bag.

Annabel suggested that on their way to the Academy of Music Tuesday morning they stop at Rogers’ Department Store to buy a second and smaller diaper bag for such short outings as her music lessons. Hannah thought that a good idea. She wanted to buy another dozen pair of the PlayTex pants, as well as a couple of containers of zinc-oxide rash prevention ointment.

Hannah left messages for both Julia and Richard at the store and also with Trudy Josse in the secret hotel office that Annabel would be in the practice room until 4:15 P.M. What should she do about dinner?

Trudy told Hannah that an hour before another trusted secretary from Manhattan, Ethel Jones, had arrived and would be on Richard's secret desk within a few minutes. She also told Hannah that another two-bedroom suite on their floor became available, so Edna Lyall would move to one of those bedrooms while Ethel slept in the other one.

Hannah was so happy to no longer need to deal with Edna. To put it mildly, Edna was not into sharing and was an inconsiderate roommate!

Before Annabel and Hannah needed to ride down to the practice room, Trudy called back to say that since Annabel had a nap during the adventure, her parents wanted her, Hannah and Clara Parsons to join them, Ethel Jones and themselves in the Grand Restaurant at 7:00 P.M.

This would require a change of dresses for Hannah and Annabel. Hannah decided to take Annabel for a light snack at the less formal restaurant as soon as she finished practicing.

David Ramsey not only stopped by Annabel's rehearsal, he brought with him George C. Boldt, Jr. who was not just the son of the hotel's founder, he was President of all the Boldt properties, including the Bellevue-Stratford and the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel which they managed.

Mr. Boldt was thrilled to hear Annabel play. As soon as she finished he introduced himself and praised her skills. When Hannah mentioned they needed to clear the room for the next user and that they were going to eat a pre-dinner snack, Mr. Boldt asked if he could eat with them.

The upshot was that there was no longer any restriction as to how long Annabel could practice in a session and also retroactively to the start of her using the practice room there was to be no charge. If charges had been billed already, they would be reversed. Annabel thanked him profusely on behalf of her parents. Hannah discreetly used the house phone to suggest to Trudy that Mr. Boldt and a guest be included in the dinner that evening. Within a minute Julia reached George Boldt on another house phone to formally extend that invitation, which Mr. Boldt accepted. He did explain that his wife was in their Manhattan home. Julia asked if it were possible that David Ramsey could join them. David accepted that invitation.

Hannah not only dressed and styled the hair of Annabel; she did the same for Clara. While Clara watched Annabel, Hannah changed her dress, put on some subtle makeup and styled her hair. She reached into the diaper bag for the tube of pink lipstick and applied some to Annabel. Clara was already wearing a more vivid red lipstick.

Edna and Arthur Swift managed to redress Julia and Richard so quickly that they rode the same elevator to the Restaurant Floor with

Annabel and her nannies. Trudy and Ethel were already re-dressed, made-up and styled, waiting outside the restaurant.

That meal started a long-term friendship and business relationship between George C. Boldt, Jr. with Richard and Julia Barclay. They continued seeing each other socially until George died in 1958.

Although George had signed the check for the snack, he graciously allowed Richard to pay for the dinner. Of course George did make a mental note to have accounting find discreet ways to discount enough other charges to the Barclay account to off-set the cost of dinner and tips.

When it came to making a profit offering gracious service to the wealthy and entitled, George, Julia and Richard thought alike.

After all, it was George's late mother who many credited with turning the original small Boldt hotel in Philadelphia into the destination of the rich and famous. It was to secure her services that George C. Boldt had been given the contract to manage all the Waldorf and Astor Manhattan hotels circa 1900. George, Jr. correctly guessed that Julia was as vital a partner to Richard as his mother had been to his father.

Clara remembered how kind Ethel Jones had been when she was waiting in the office of Agnes Mayo for the sample PlayTex pants for the Warbucks family. Neither Annabel nor Hannah had met Ethel before. They mutually liked her as much as Trudy.

For the next 20 years, Trudy was Julia's traveling secretary, while Ethel did the same for Richard. Both of them could turn a hotel or other rented room into a fully functioning secure and secret office in record time.

Annabel only needed a single diaper change after she was re-dressed before dinner. Her snack did not interfere with her politely sampling with enthusiasm everything she was served. Julia had discreetly made sure Hannah was not served any alcohol, but her ginger ale was a very close match for the Champaign cocktails most of the other adults were drinking. Of course Richard stood by his usual tippie, club soda on ice!

After the meal and extensive good-byes, Julia led Annabel to her own bedroom, where Edna removed Julia's evening makeup and replaced it with her softer hint of rose lipstick. She gave Annabel an adult makeup removal and cleaning. Then while her daughter watched, Julia was changed into her 'mommy' house dress with her hair released to cascade around her beautiful face.

Finally Julia, covered with a robe, led Annabel to her bedroom. There she undressed her daughter, who responsibly hung up her clothing while Julia took her seat on the bed. Annabel had seen in the mirror that her derriere was not marked, so she handed her Mommy the hairbrush. "May I have a good paddy-whacking? Please, Mommy, just like the first time you had to spank me!"

Annabel was sobbing with joy and contentment during that paddy-whacking, because Julia took her daughter at her word. As best she could remember, she applied the hairbrush as she had that first time. She counted to herself and stopped at fifty-five smacks, over half full-force.

Annabel hugged and kissed her Mommy, who returned hug for hug and kiss for kiss. Annabel drew her own bath and bathed herself. Julia helped her towel dry off.

As they were getting ready for the actual diapering, Annabel asked if she could have a changing table like the one in Susan's room. "But Mommy, may we skip her crib? Just because I need diapers does not mean I am a bigger baby. Did you know that Betty Hoffstadt sleeps in an ordinary toddler crib? Her room does not have a bed, although she does have next door what she calls "my 'pretend' room with a normal bed". Betty admitted she only slept there to fool her friends from school. Betty really preferred to scrunch up and sleep in the crib.

Julia eventually tucked her daughter into bed with a kiss. A few minutes later Julia led Richard for another 'tucking-in' ceremony.

All things considered, for everyone Monday, 26 June 1933 had been a magnificent day!