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Sally, Part 27

Rye Life, November—1965

Fiction by Angela Bauer

Before my mandatory 9:00 P.M. bedtime on Wednesday, November 3, I had diapered myself and put myself to bed. Because Nanny Walsh had administered most firmly the spanking I requested, I was on my tummy trying to fall asleep.

Nanny Walsh knocked on my door and entered before I had a chance to invite her. She asked me to sit up briefly. Mommy had decided that I needed to see my pediatrician, Emma Wiggins, MD, the next afternoon (Thursday, November 4). The only available appointment was at 2 P.M. Mommy would pick me up from Country Day School early, since she needed to talk to Dr. Wiggins.

During those days when I was not visiting Daddy and Megan, the very best thing was my Tuesday sessions with my shrink, Dr. Wendy Keighley. My second best thing was being tutored in French by Mademoiselle Sheryl Holt.

Attending Country Day School was my third most favorite thing. My home room teacher, Mrs. Alice Fletcher, was very interesting. She understood me and was nice to all her students.

This pediatrician visit was most inconvenient. I would miss my regular school French class, meaning I would need to work even harder with Mademoiselle Holt. The other thing is that I had always

perceived Dr. Wiggins was frustrated that Bobby and I still needed diapers for bed.

How ironic that Wednesday night I did not even get up to use the toilet. Fortunately, I woke up early Thursday morning. I had soaked my diaper, which leaked enough my sheets needed to be washed.

Once I removed my diaper and wiped myself, I stripped off my sheets. In my robe I quietly walked to the linen closet where I found a fresh set of sheets. When I had made up my bed neatly, I carried my damp sheets down to the laundry room in the basement. Later, I pretended to be sleeping when Mommy's maid Miss Nancy Oliver knocked on my door to be sure I was awake.

I took a warm shower, put on regulation cotton underpants and finished dressing in my school uniform.

During the drive from Country Day School to the Larchmont medical office of Dr. Wiggins, Mommy was very nice to me. She said she was so pleased I was doing very well learning French. Many times Mommy had told me that she had a modeling career in Italy because she had learned Italian at Bryn Mawr. Of course her parents paid for her semester in Italy where she was introduced to fashion designers.

I politely smiled at Mommy, not daring to mention I would be doing even better in French if she had not yanked me out of school, making me miss my French class, just to see Dr. Wiggins.

Shortly before we parked, Mommy told me the reason for this doctor visit was that Nanny Walsh was so concerned about my wetting and use of diapers.

All right, Nanny Walsh is entitled to her opinion, but only up to a certain point. Only if: she had been a medical school graduate; had completed a residency in pediatrics or urology; held a New York State physician's license; had she been Board Certified, then paying attention to her medical opinions would make sense. As it was, Nanny Walsh was far out of line wasting my time.

All the years I had been under the care of Dr. Wiggins, since we moved to Larchmont in April 1956, I had been challenged by bedwetting and some day wetting. All those years I had worn diapers or

trainers more often than cotton panties. So what was the emergency today?

It was always weird to have Mommy in the room when Dr. Wiggins was examining me. After just a few minutes looking in my mouth, in my eyes and listening to my chest, Dr. Wiggins told Mommy that I was healthy.

When I was at long last allowed to talk, I reminded Dr. Wiggins that while awake I usually had enough warning to use a toilet, so long as I was in a familiar place. If I was in a place strange to me and I felt the need to go, I often panicked. Then I would wet before I could get to a toilet.

The difference between before the move to Rye and after the move was that I needed go to toilets in many more places strange to me. In bed most of the time I would wake up so I could successfully use the toilet, even with the delay of lowering trainers or releasing a pin of my diaper. Then I could fall back to sleep easily.

However, if I had to try going to bed in ordinary panties, even with a good waterproof sheet, I would stay awake in panic that I might not wake up in time to use a toilet. Bottom line was that without a diaper in bed I did not sleep very well.

Dr. Wiggins asked if I was telling the truth about releasing and then re-pinning diapers. I assured her that was true. Mommy backed me up, adding that Carla had also taught me to diaper Gene.

Dr. Wiggins asked why I wore diapers to bed instead of trainers. I answered that since I could release a diaper as fast as I could pull down trainers, I found the diapers were more effective if I did wet while sleeping. Having tried both, I felt gauze diapers were more comfortable than training panties for me in bed.

Bless her heart, Dr. Wiggins told Mommy that everything I told her made sense. "Mrs. Francis, it is true that Sally has not outgrown what I prefer to call *primary diurnal and nocturnal enuresis*. Previously you and I have discussed Sally using a wetting alarm, But as I told you before, none of those alarms have helped any of my patients, or patients of my colleagues.

"If you insist, I could refer Sally to a urologist. There are not many here in Westchester

County. None of these have experience treating incontinent pre-pubescent girls. I have read the case reports from several urologists at Columbia Medical School who have studied urinary disease in children. While that is medically fascinating, I do not recommend subjecting Sally to urological testing at this time.

"Over the years I have given Sally many complete exams with appropriate blood tests. Never have those indicated any abnormal condition, such as juvenile diabetes, that would cause bladder control problems.

"When I started medical school in 1942, sensible people actually believed that when a girl older than 3 wet her bed, it was because the girl was lazy or craved attention.

"By the time I did my first rotation in pediatrics at Columbia Medical School, Dr. Benjamin Spock was one of my professors. The first edition of his book *Baby and Child Care* had become a best-seller.

"Dr. Spock taught us that a child needed to be physically ready to control her wetting. Some girls are ready very early, but healthy and intelligent girls can and do wet late into childhood, even well-past puberty. Trying to toilet train such children is not only pointless—in my opinion it is cruel. My years of experience prove making a huge issue about wet pants and beds only makes the wetting worse.

"From what you and Sally tell me, all of you have done the best things. You use a good diaper service, so washing diapers is not a major chore for you. Sally has taken responsibility changing her diapers and sheets. She has tried training pants and then made the informed decision that pinned diapers work better for her.

"Most important, wearing training pants and even diaper at her age does not embarrass Sally. In my opinion it would be cruel and not productive to try shaming Sally over her wetting and its management. Would you like me to so inform Nanny Walsh? She has listened to me with other children she has looked after. I like to think she respects my opinion.

"One last question, Sally? Have you had any skin rashes or problems recently?"

I blurted out, "Dr. Wiggins, do you mean like diaper rash? That has not been a problem for me. I remember when Bobby had that. I have sometimes changed Gene and he has not had diaper rash. I read that changing diapers and trainers soon enough prevents diaper rash. To prevent rash, I change my diaper as often as necessary."

Dr. Wiggins said: "Sally, you are remarkable! Since you know so much about preventing diaper rash, I think you have a real future in pediatrics. Mrs. Francis, I appreciate you bringing Sally to see me. I hope I have set your mind at ease."

Mommy mumbled a thank you to Dr. Wiggins. Mommy remained silent the entire drive home.

My opinion of Dr. Wiggins improved a lot that afternoon. For me the appointment turned out to be far from a waste of my time. If it helped relax Mommy and Nanny Walsh, that was good news. If the fact Dr. Wiggins endorsed my use of diapers annoyed Nanny Walsh, then so much the better.

Fortunately the appointment was so early that Mommy and I got home well ahead of when the school bus would have done. I had time to: remove and hang my school uniform; put my socks and regulation cotton underpants in the hamper; take a quick bath; diaper myself; and put on a house dress ahead of Mademoiselle Holt's arrival.

In my bedroom I had time to finish all my homework and even do extra French reading before I needed to meet Mademoiselle Holt in the library for my tutoring. That went even better than I had hoped.

Mademoiselle Holt told me she was so proud of my progress. "If you keep up this pace, when you meet the parents of your father's fiancée they should be impressed that you have so much French. I am confident they will appreciate your fine efforts as a sign of your respect for them as well as Miss Calvert.

"You know I have spoken to her about your French. I appreciate that she is also tutoring you. She is very well educated and has lived in Montreal more recently than I have. She also talks to her relatives there often. She knows that I have lived in Paris much of my life and travel to France once a year. So she will concentrate on your Canadian French and I will concentrate on your Parisian French."

After the lesson I hugged and kissed Mademoiselle Holt. When she left me alone, there was just time to call Daddy at his office.

As I hoped, Megan answered. I rushed to tell her about what Mademoiselle Holt said and also how Dr. Wiggins was so supportive of my diaper use. Daddy spoke to me long enough to say he missed me.

Our phone conversation was interrupted by our housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, informing me that our cook, Mrs. Croft, was about to serve Bobby and me our dinner. I literally skipped to my place at the dining table.

Since I had finished all my homework and was ahead on my reading list, after dinner I sat with Bobby watching TV until his bedtime. Once Nanny Walsh led him upstairs to bathe him and get him ready for bed, I went up to my own room.

Taking a bath before bed was part of my routine. Once dry I pinned on a double diaper, pulled on my plastic pants and put on my pajamas. I was sound asleep before anyone came to say good night or tuck me in.

From then until we were ready to leave for Montreal, I did not come close to getting in any trouble. I was very nice to Mommy. Lucky for me, Nanny Walsh no longer communicated with me directly. Sometimes Mrs. Danvers or Miss Oliver would ask me a question I felt sure was written by Nanny Walsh. Maybe Dr. Wiggins had spoken sharply to Nanny Walsh. If so, I was glad!

When I was awake I did my best to only wear thin cotton or regulation panties. I hoped to increase my bladder capacity for the trip. I wanted Daddy and Megan to be proud of me.