

**SANDY  
AND THE  
WEIRD SISTERS**

**BY  
J. D. NEWMAN**

**PREVIEW PAGES**



Newport, Maine

© 2015 by J.D. Newman  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher or the author's representative, except for brief passages quoted for review purposes.



First Edition Paperback(CS) – First Printing 2015  
– Leicester Bay Books  
ISBN-13: 978-0692460801  
ISBN-10: 0692460802

Also available:  
Kindle Edition: 2015 – Leicester Bay Books



**Leicester Bay Books**  
P.O. Box 536  
Newport, Maine 04953-0536

**[www.leicesterbaybooks.com](http://www.leicesterbaybooks.com)**

Cover art by Ruth Turner Santos  
Cover Design and Layout by Bowen Design Works, Salt Lake City

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: A TALE OF TWO SISTERS	1
Chapter 2: AUNT MARY	3
Chapter 3: AUNT CLAIR	9
Chapter 4: AUNT LILY	14
Chapter 5: SHOPPING WITH THE BRAT	18
Chapter 6: RED PAINT	23
Chapter 7: READING, WRITING, AND REPRIMAND	29
Chapter 8: VISITING TEACHERS	33
Chapter 9: MORMON SUNDAY SCHOOL	40
Chapter 10: FAST MEETING	45
Chapter 11: RUNNING AWAY	50
Chapter 12: BACK TO REALITY	56
Chapter 13: HIDDEN IN THE ATTIC	61
Chapter 14: THE GUEST ROOM	64
Chapter 15: THE NEW DEAL	68
Chapter 16: COMMUNITY SERVICE	71
Chapter 17: THE TRAGEDY OF MODERN GREASE	76
Chapter 18: MEGAN'S FAMILY	79
Chapter 19: CHAMELEON	84
Chapter 20: RAINY DAY	90
Chapter 21: THE NIGHT SPENT WITH THOREAU	97
Chapter 22: MORNING IN THE CATHEDRAL	101
Chapter 23: ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE	107
Chapter 24: A LINE THROUGH THE OCEAN	111
Chapter 25: PRESENTATION	113
Chapter 26: RE-ENTRY	117
Chapter 27: IN THE STADIUM	122
Chapter 28: MILKSHAKES	126
Chapter 29: UNDER THE LIGHTS	130
Chapter 30: PASSION AND FAITH	133
AUTHOR BIO	136

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to acknowledge Michael C. Perry for believing in this story, and Drew Chappell, Liz Newman, and Rachel Prouty Simpson for reviewing the final drafts.

Special thanks to my wife Jennifer and my four children for their love and support and for giving me the time I needed to share this story.

**To my daughter Melinda:  
continue to find your own way.**



## Chapter 1

# A TALE OF TWO SISTERS

My dad would have known how to parent two sons. Life gave him two daughters instead. He was convinced that he would have a son named Rocky, but his first daughter Roxie was the next best thing. Roxie loved sports almost as much as she loved my father.

When I was born, Dad hedged his bets. He was sure I'd be a boy, but he'd been sure about Roxie too. Mom's pregnancy with Roxie was hard and her pregnancy with me was harder, so my mother was unlikely to have a third child. My dad named me Sandy before I was born and pretended a second daughter wouldn't disappoint him. My mother knew better and willed herself to produce a son.

She never stopped bleeding after I was born, and I held on for dear life. My father told her that I was a girl, and perhaps that was the final blow. I spent all my fight in my first few weeks and had little left for sports.

My father did his best to raise two daughters alone. He cooked and cleaned and provided for us, accepting no help from others. His aunts stood ready to help but he refused, insisting he could handle his family as a single father. His accounting job allowed him to work at home and so he was our sole caregiver. Roxie and I were sometimes tended by teenage girls, until my sister was old enough to tend me herself, but there were no women in my childhood.

This arrangement worked better for Roxie than for me. Dad

said he put a rugby ball in Roxie's crib and she must have imprinted on it, or maybe she imprinted on him. Roxie became the first girl to join Dad's youth rugby team, perhaps the first girl to join any youth rugby team. As the coach's daughter, no one could tell her no. It was the best youth rugby team in the state; one of the few youth rugby teams in the state. They traveled far for someone to play them, even further for someone to beat them, and I always came along for the ride.

Dad hoped I'd follow in Roxie's cleats. When I played soccer, the sport was catching on with American children, though not yet with American adults. There were few girls' soccer teams back then, but Dad didn't mind driving me to practices and games. I played well, if not passionately, and proved a decent goalie; it was more in my nature to defend than to attack. However, my father never convinced me to join his rugby team. He said the scrum caps they wore kept their ears on their heads. I chose to observe from the sidelines.

When the team qualified for a rugby tournament in London, Dad and Roxie left me behind. I had tagged along to every match and almost every practice. Had I shown any interest in the game, they might have taken me with them. As a reluctant girl athlete, I wasn't worth a plane ticket. That's why I spent the end of my twelfth summer with the Weird Sisters.



## Chapter 2

# AUNT MARY

Will Rogers used to say that he never met man he didn't like. Likewise, there are few people I've met that I haven't liked, but I've disliked many who I haven't met. Reputation can be worse than reality, and that's how it was with my three great aunts.

The main problem with their reputation was that they came from the wrong side of the family. My Grandpa Hunter, who was my aunts' brother and my Dad's father, always claimed that his sisters had cheated him out of his inheritance. Just as Shakespeare twisted Richard III into a hunchback, Dad warped the Weird Sisters into something between the Addams Family and the Twilight Zone.

Dad first told me their names were Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather, until I saw *Sleeping Beauty* and realized he'd been putting me on. When I was little, I trusted him when he told me they shared one eyeball between them, but I never believed they were named Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail. Every time I asked him, he gave me a different trio of names, so when I arrived on their doorstep, I wasn't even sure what to call them.

Dad and Roxie didn't go to the door with me. My father thought their flight left at 2:13, but checking their tickets that morning, he discovered the departure time was actually 12:13. I had procrastinated packing, as I was none too eager to meet my aunts. In the panic of getting me to my aunts' house and my father and sister to the airport, I stuffed my few clean clothes into a suitcase and ran for the Jeep. It was laundry day and I had to

pull dirty clothes from the bathroom hamper. Dad shouted that if I forgot anything, I could take the bus back and let myself in with my house-key. As we passed the Weird Sisters' tall wooden house, Roxie tossed my suitcase onto the curb. Dad came to a rolling stop, I jumped out, and the Jeep screeched off to the airport.

I hoped Dad had gotten the address right. I walked onto the wooden porch. There was a small doorbell button that looked like a piece of black licorice. It didn't fire, so I opened the wooden screen and walked inside. I hoped that Dad had called them to let them know I'd be early, but I wasn't sure they owned a telephone.

I wouldn't have been surprised if I'd found them stirring a steaming pot in the dining room, like the hags who told MacBeth his fate. "Double, double toil and trouble; fire burn, and cauldron bubble..."

Aunt Mary was the first to encounter me. When she came out of the kitchen, she looked like she'd seen a ghost. She wore her graying hair in a tight bun and her face in a tight scowl. The cameo pin on her collar came from an earlier era and she carried an ancient satchel.

"You must be Sandy," she pronounced, looking at me over her narrow glasses. Thinking back, she probably wasn't angry, just startled, but the tone of her voice didn't make me feel welcome.

"Yes," I said timidly. "I must be."

"When your father called last night, he said you'd be here at noon." So at least they had a telephone and were connected to the Bell System.

"He mis-read his tickets. They're speeding toward the airport."

"Well," she said with irritation, "Make yourself at home. Clair is sleeping. She's working nights at the hospital this month. Lily was supposed to meet you, but she just started another job... well, a volunteer position... she's writing a grant that's due next week."

So Dad was serious when he said their names were Mary, Clair, and Liliana. That sounded too poetic, and he'd fooled me before. He sometimes referred to them as Mary, Clairie, and Airy-Fairy, and that wasn't too far off.

"So you're my Aunt Mary," I said.

"I should have met you before now. I'm your godmother."

"Godmother?" I questioned. "Like Cinderella's?"

She sighed. "When you were christened, I was designated as your godmother, to look after your religious instruction. Your father did the ceremony at the church, to satisfy certain members of the family. He knew you'd never return to church before your funeral."

That was a little morbid, I thought.

"He's kept me at arm's length. He only sent you to us because he couldn't find anyone else."

That was pretty much true. Some of my friends' families would've taken me for one week, but not for three. The Weird Sisters only took me in because I was family, however distant.

She stared at me in my shorts and t-shirt. "I hope you're not planning on dressing like that all summer."

As a matter of fact, I was. All I'd packed were jeans and shorts.

"I only had five minutes to pack - do you have a washing-machine?"

"In the basement, down the stairs in the kitchen. I assume you have a dress for Sunday?"

I stared at her. "I haven't worn a dress since I was christened. Roxie only wanted one for award ceremonies, and Dad thinks I'm like her."

"Are you?" she questioned, looking at me over her glasses. It's strange that I'd never considered that before.

"No!" I said defiantly and louder than I'd intended. "She loves playing sports. I play because Dad wants me to."

"And what do you want to do?"

Again, I wondered why I had never asked myself that question. I knew I didn't want to play soccer, or rugby, or softball, or basketball, but what *did* I want to do?

"I don't know," I said, looking down at the dark wooden floor.

"Well perhaps you'll find out while you're here."

Nothing sounded more unlikely. I knew I didn't want to be a sharp-nosed lady like Aunt Mary. Lily the Airy Fairy sounded like an interesting role model, but I wasn't much interested in Clair the Sleeping Nurse.

"I'm off to school," she said, with a hint of an apology.

"School?" I questioned. "In August?"

"Summer term. British Literature. Most students in private schools try to get ahead. Well, there are books on the shelves. We don't own a television."

I was an avid reader, but television was my escape: not sit coms or game shows but PBS. I'd lose myself in opera, ballet, Shakespeare, and Broadway shows, till Dad and Roxie switched to the game.

"No problem," I said, trying to sound casual.

"I'm afraid you'll be sleeping on the sofa in the parlor..."

Parlor, I thought? What century were they living in?

"I cleared out a bottom drawer so you can keep your things in there. We each have a bedroom. I'm afraid we're pretty set in our ways, and we're all light sleepers."

"I don't snore."

"It's cozy by the fireplace. I sometimes sleep there myself in the winter."

Sleeping by the fireplace? I'd read the tales of the Brothers Grimm, all two hundred of them, and I knew a Cinderella story when I heard one.

"There's a fourth bedroom upstairs, but it's locked."

A locked room? Now I wanted to stay. In one Grimm tale, the Virgin Mary's adopted child unlocked a forbidden chamber

and saw the glory of God, but in another story, when Bluebeard's bride opened the locked door, she found... dead women.

"Right. The locked bedroom is forbidden."

"Not forbidden," she said uneasily. "We use it for... storage. There's hardly enough room for my sewing machine."

My image of a treadmill sewing machine melded with a picture I'd seen in my sixth grade reader of three old crones spinning, weaving, and cutting the threads of life. Definitely going in.

"I'll stay out," I said.

Aunt Mary sighed again. "I'm afraid I'm not making you feel very welcome. I'd take you with me... they don't require uniforms in the summer, but..."

"Shorts and t-shirt are too casual?"

"Did you bring anything nicer?"

"No, but I could take the bus back home and get something..." I reached into my pocket. "if I'd remembered to grab my house-key. I brought my bus pass and library card..."

"Any spending money?"

"I've never had any money. Dad just sort of pays for everything."

"Well, a woman should keep her own money. Otherwise she's a slave to men."

That sounded severe. However, the weirdness of the first sister was still falling short of my expectations.

Aunt Mary walked through the kitchen to the screened-in porch and came back wheeling an old single-speed bicycle across the floor. She strapped her satchel to the bookrack over the rear fender and walked it to the front door. "I'm running late," she snapped. When she put on her hat, I had to bite my tongue to keep from whistling Miss Gulch's theme from *The Wizard of Oz*. "Make yourself at home."

Right, I thought, except in the locked bedroom. I'd just curl up by the fire and pick the lentils out of the ashes.

## J.D. NEWMAN • PREVIEW PAGES

I watched Aunt Mary as she pedaled down the street. I'd never seen an old woman riding a bicycle, though young women on ten-speeds were becoming more common. However, few things in the Weird Sisters' world seemed to belong in 1978.



28 other chapters on 128 further pages finish the story of  
**Sandy and the Weird Sisters**



**Dr. J.D. Newman** is a professor of theatre at Utah Valley University and the director of the Noorda Theatre Center for Children and Youth. He lives with his family in Sandy City, Utah. Dr. Newman became the first recipient of the Reba R. Robertson Award from the Children's Theatre Foundation of America. At UVU, Dr. Newman has directed *The Secret Garden*, *Princess Academy*, and *Androcles and the Lion* in

the Noorda Theatre. He has also served as the director of the Noorda Theatre Summer Camp and has produced or co-produced touring productions including *A Village Fable*, *The Princess and the Goblin*, *Honk!*, and *Pedro's Magic Shoes*. As a playwright, he has adapted scripts for Newbery medalists including Avi, Paul Fleischman, and Richard Peck. Newman taught and directed at Highland High School for eighteen years, from 1991 to 2010 with a sabbatical to Texas in 1998-99. He served as Artistic Director of the Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts during the 2009-2010 school year. Newman earned his B.F.A. and M.Ed. from the University of Utah, his M.A. from the University of Texas, and his Ph.D. from New York University. With Judy Matetzsch-Campbell, he co-authored *Tell Your Story: The Plays and Playwriting of Sandra Fenichel Asher*. Dr. Newman chairs the Playwrights In Our Schools Project and served three years on the board of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education. *Sandy and the Weird Sisters* is his first novel.

