

A Babysitting Adventure

MISSY & ME

JAMES CRAVENS

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by

James Cravens

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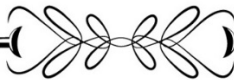
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For Miss, the love of my life

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CHAPTER ONE: A GIRL LIKE HER



In the late 1960s, there must have been a girl like Melissa Diffie in every subdivision in America. Melissa was the quintessential ‘go-to’ girl for our neighborhood’s childcare needs. If you needed a babysitter for an unexpected night out, you’d call Melissa. If you were going to be gone for a weekend and didn’t want to take the children along, you’d ask Melissa to come and stay. Or if you just needed a Mother’s Helper, Melissa was always happy to help you find a few hours of peace and quiet.

Melissa was my next-door neighbor. “If I close my eyes,” she once told me, “I can still remember my mom taking me to stay at my grandmother’s house so she could go be with your mom at the hospital.” Barely three years older than me, Melissa could recall the day I’d been born. For whatever reason, that always impressed me.

Melissa was a petite brunette. She was not particularly tall, but she was particularly striking. Unlike many bespectacled girls, glasses didn’t detract from her appearance. As she blossomed into a full-fledged teenager, I remember thinking that Melissa had a nice figure. With her long, dark hair and vivacious smile, she looked vaguely like Ali McGraw in *Love Story*. Melissa had an appealing quality about her that could only be ascribed to the girl next door. I now realize that she was *competent*... and that competency was the unique sort of feminine magic that parents like mine seemed to genuinely appreciate.

Melissa’s little brother, Craig, was my best friend growing up. Craig and I did everything together, whether that was playing

Green Hornet and Kato on the front lawn or nailing together bits of discarded wood in the hope of creating something recognizable. Once we could be trusted to walk to and from the nearby lake by ourselves, we often went fishing together. We never caught much to speak of, but we enjoyed the opportunity to be off by ourselves and feel a little more grown-up.

Craig fancied himself something of a wit and obviously thought his older sister was a pain. “Everything is beautiful,” he would sing, imitating Ray Stevens, “except Melissa Diffie. She looks like a stormy night...” I won’t subject you to the rest of the song, but I imagine you get the idea.

I didn’t realize then that Craig’s mom and Melissa kept him on a tight leash. Craig chafed under their constant scrutiny and often told me that he longed for the day when he could be out on his own.

Craig and Melissa’s dad was George Diffie, who had a used car dealership out on the highway. My dad and the other fathers in the neighborhood used to look forward to seeing what used car George would be driving each week. The little boys were almost always disappointed – if George was driving something like a Corvette, it was only for a few days – but there was the appealing Mustang or Camaro every now and then. We didn’t see much of George, because he worked long hours five and six days a week. He was a smaller guy with prematurely grey hair, and he always wore a perky bow tie. He always reminded me of the pictures I’d seen of Harry Truman.

My dad, in sharp contrast, was a commercial artist. I never really understood what my dad did until I was much older. Dad was a genuine talent, which I did not appreciate at the time. He left the house at the same hour each morning and returned at the same time every afternoon. He was home on weekends. Compared to George, I thought my dad was a little... well, staid and boring. Even the odor-filled mysteries of the printing plant where my dad

worked were nothing compared to the allure of a used-car dealership.

Dad was James, and I was named after him. As I grew up, everyone called me Jamie. My dad was an ardent amateur radio operator, and he spent most evenings out in the 'ham shack' he'd built in our garage. I spent a lot of time with dad, listening to the eerie shortwave sounds and radio signals from faraway lands. I learned the radiotelegraph code while I was still in grade school. I imagine dad's passion for radio motivated him to allow me to become a broadcaster while I was still in my early teens, which is how I worked my way through college. Being on the radio also helped impress Melissa to no end, for which I was grateful.

If Craig and I were best friends, we had nothing like the track record that our mothers shared. My mom and Nancy had been good friends since junior high. That Melissa, Craig, and their parents had wound up next door to us was nothing short of blind luck... my mom and dad had told George and Nancy about the new subdivision, and George and Nancy wound up buying the house on the corner. Ours was the next house down.

Nancy was an interesting woman. She had been raised in Pennsylvania Dutch farming country, and she was very industrious. I never really saw her sitting around and doing nothing. She seldom came over for coffee with my mom, because sitting for an hour didn't appeal to her working-class nature. A redhead with a medium build, she had a bit of a temper. Growing up, I spent about as much time in Craig's house as I did in my own. Nancy was an extraordinarily zealous housekeeper, and her living room looked like a museum. I distinctly recall the plastic covers on the furniture, and food and drinks were forbidden in the living room. My mom, on the other hand, had sewing projects and a few other activities she enjoyed more than cleaning or doing laundry. As a result, my parents' house had the relaxed, lived-in feeling that Craig's home lacked. There was an endless supply of drawing paper, markers,

and pens – fringe benefits of my dad’s art job – and all the art detritus often found a way out of my room.

For whatever reason, I found that I enjoyed spending time in George and Nancy’s house. Craig and I would play *Camp Granada* on the living room floor, set up his expansive electric train in his bedroom, and build models on the little desk at the back of his garage. Melissa would often play board games with us, but for the most part, she seemed to prefer to be on her own, tending to her dolls. When she was a pre-teenager, Melissa’s room was full of dolls... baby dolls, mostly, along with the attendant highchair, crib, and other care necessities. Most of her baby dolls were quite large, like real babies, and Melissa even had Craig’s disused cloth diapers in a diaper stacker hanging from the side of the small crib.

Diapers were very utilitarian things in both our households. Melissa’s mom kept a cloth diaper looped through the refrigerator door handle, and when Melissa grew up and had an apartment and then a house of her own, she did the same thing. My mom kept my discarded diapers in a hall closet and used them for dust cloths. By age 4, I knew where the diapers were, and I would occasionally take one from the closet and spread it out on my bed. I didn’t really know what to *do* with the diaper beyond that, but I enjoyed playing with it.

One time, when I forgot to put the diaper back, my mother asked me why I had a diaper on my bed. I told Mom I didn’t know. The diaper went back onto the stack in the hall closet, and nothing more was said. Looking back, I would have been hard-pressed to explain my behavior, since I had no real idea what compelled me to play with my old diapers in the first place. I didn’t realize that diapers were *arousing* to me, because, at that point, I didn’t know what arousal was. All I knew, at that early age, was that playing with diapers somehow made me feel more vital, more *alive*.

By the time I was in kindergarten and first grade, my diaper curiosity extended to Melissa and her baby dolls. During the

summer months, she'd often bring her dolls out onto the sidewalk that ran beside her house. I'd sit and talk with Melissa, watching her care for her very compliant babies. I paid particularly close attention to the diaper changes, which seemed to be frequent. Melissa would feed the doll a bottle, then put a finger or two inside the doll's plastic pants and discover that the contents of the bottle had made their way into the diaper. These were the last few years before Pampers and other disposable diapers were popular, so Melissa, like our mothers, used cloth diapers with pins and plastic pants. I watched Melissa lay the doll down, pull off the plastic pants, unpin the wet diaper, and carefully wipe the doll's bottom with a washcloth. She'd fold a fresh diaper and pin it on the doll, then replace the plastic pants.

Because the diaper was only wet with water, Melissa would often hang it on her mother's clothesline to dry. I watched all this transpire again and again, spellbound. I'd never actually seen a baby being changed, so the process of changing a doll fascinated me.

Of course, Melissa noticed. "You like to watch me change diapers," she said matter-of-factly one day. "Do you want to try?"

I politely declined, and I imagine I turned two or three shades of red. As a young grade schooler, I couldn't quite bring myself to admit my diaper fascination to the girl next door. At that point in my life, I imagined the consequences of such a disclosure might be too traumatic to contemplate.

This was the beginning of the Barbie era, and every other girl Melissa's age probably wanted a fashion doll. Not Melissa! She wanted baby dolls that she could care for rather than dolls to dress or accessorize. Her indulgent mother provided the baby dolls and even helped her care for them from time to time. I remember when I walked into their kitchen one time and found Nancy patting the Cheerful Tearful doll over her shoulder while Melissa put another doll to bed in the crib in her bedroom. Melissa was still playing with

the baby dolls halfway through elementary school. Her birthday present when she was eight was yet another doll. I remember being astonished when George told my mother that the present had cost every bit of \$20. \$20 was a lot of money in the mid-1960s.

All the hours of playtime with baby dolls helped to mold Melissa into a very competent young babysitter. The year Melissa turned 12, her mother started caring for the infant son of a church friend. The friend would drop the little boy off in the early mornings and pick him up in the late afternoons.

Melissa was entranced. The challenge of caring for a ‘real’ baby didn’t seem particularly daunting to her, and she quickly learned to feed, dress, bathe, and change the little boy. While Nancy admitted that Melissa was a bit surprised by the sheer *messiness* of a real baby, her mother watched with some degree of satisfaction as Melissa blossomed in the role of caregiver.

George took to calling Melissa a “little mother.”

“Little mother Melissa,” George would tease, reaching to pull the ribbon in Melissa’s hair askew as he watched his daughter caring for the baby or carrying the little boy from room to room.

“I am not,” Melissa would protest. “I’m just helping Mom.”

The little boy she cared for had an unusual nickname: Bear. We all thought it obvious that Melissa loved thinking of herself in a maternal role. Whenever she was not in school, Melissa seemed thrilled to help her mother babysit.

Craig and I watched rather dispassionately as Bear grew into toddlerhood. Melissa helped him take his first steps, and she was sitting across the room when Bear said his first words. Those two events had a profound effect on the young woman. Melissa told my mom that she wanted to care for babies like Bear when she grew up.

I remember my mother reminding Melissa that, at some point, she might want her *own* babies. Meanwhile, as Mom noted, there were plenty of opportunities to care for the babies and children in our neighborhood. She mentioned the same thing to Nancy, which prompted the idea that Melissa could begin providing her own little babysitting service in our subdivision. I began to look *forward* to being one of those children for whom Melissa would provide care and attention.

The reason for this rather accepting attitude was my recurring nighttime ‘diaper dream.’ Once a month or so, I dreamed that I was lying in a crib or a playpen, and Melissa was changing my diaper. Even in the dream, Melissa offered skilled caregiving.

“I’m the fastest diaper changer in the West,” Melissa once told me. “Unless it’s more than wet,” she quickly added, “and then you’ve got a dirty diaper.”

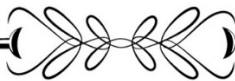
I imagine that one sentence planted a seed in my mind. Sometimes, in succeeding ‘diaper dreams’, I was lying in a dirty diaper, and Melissa was lavish with her attention as she cleaned me. At other times, I was a toddler again, being loved and cared for. The ‘diaper dream’ remained a vivid and frequent event for several years to come.

As I made my way through third grade, I was beginning to realize how badly I wanted my ‘diaper dream’ to become a reality. By then, I already knew that I was just another “little twerp” to Melissa. The fact that I was Melissa’s brother’s best friend, or her next-door neighbor counted for very little. Of course, I can see now that I was wanting some sort of ‘special’ relationship between Melissa and me. Back then, there was none. Such was the challenge of being enamored of an older ‘woman’.

I wasn’t exactly heartbroken. Instead, I focused on ways to make the most of the situation. I guess I was a conniving little boy. I decided that I could be content about being cared for by someone I

adored... someone sweet and competent like Melissa. All I lacked was an opportunity to make the most of Melissa's expertise.

CHAPTER TWO: 1969



I was born on February 12, which was Abraham Lincoln's birthday. From the time I was very young, I enjoyed reading about Lincoln. One day, while I was in third grade, I stumbled across a version of this famous Lincoln quote:

*I will study and prepare myself, and someday, my
chance will come.*

Nothing helped me crystallize my mind about Melissa Diffie more than that little quote. For the next several months, I thought about my 'diaper dream' and the fact that, at some point, Melissa would likely be babysitting me. And I began to think about how I could persuade Melissa to put a diaper on me.

'Persuade' is a little bit of an overstatement. I felt certain that all I had to do was *ask*, but of course, asking for such a thing doesn't come easily to an eight- or nine-year-old boy. Within the limitations of my young mind, I began to think about how I'd ask... how I'd phrase my request, when I'd make it, and so on. As I said, I was a conniving little boy.

I was so conniving that I took a page out of my penmanship practice book and started writing down phrases I could use. That helped more than you might imagine. After some deliberation, I decided not to ask Melissa to 'diaper' me, even though 'diaper' is often used as a verb. I thought "Would you diaper me?" sounded too practiced. Nor, I decided, would I ask Melissa to 'baby' me, since

'babying' had several connotations and not all were associated with diapers.

I'd have to be straightforward and to the point, and – perhaps most difficult of all – I had to take advantage of the opportunity whenever it presented itself. I knew I would probably only get one chance to make that first request. My best option, I finally decided, was to seize the moment – when it finally arrived – and just *ask* Melissa if she'd put a diaper on me.

But that was far more easily thought about than done. A couple of years before, when I'd had a stomach virus, my mother had offered to diaper me as a way of limiting damage to my bed. "No," I replied, "That's okay." I wanted to be diapered quite badly, but I just couldn't bring myself to admit that to my mother!

That little incident drove me to ensure that I could do more than *accept* being diapered... I could *request* it. As you might imagine, all this took a lot of practice and forethought, especially for a grade-schooler.

Anyway, my opportunity finally arrived about a month after I'd finished third grade. Melissa had just finished sixth grade and was about to make the transition to junior high. My parents wanted to go to Dallas for the weekend – my dad had some sort of work banquet on Friday evening, and mom wanted to shop and have dinner with her aunt and uncle. I might easily have stayed with Craig and his family, but the dates for the Dallas trip coincided with Craig's annual fishing trip with his grandfather.

My mom suggested to Nancy that this might be a good opportunity for Melissa to spend the weekend babysitting at someone else's house. Of course, Nancy would be right next door. If her twelve-year-old daughter couldn't manage something or got into difficulty, at least her mom would be close at hand.

Dallas was a five-hour drive away, so Mom and Dad left that Friday morning. Melissa and I waved goodbye as they pulled away

from the driveway. We walked back into my house. Melissa looked like a young version of the typical 1960s flower child. She wore a white blouse adorned with a good deal of smocking and a string of burnt umber love beads, which made a nice contrast to her tan skirt. She'd brought with her a little overnight bag, which she put on the bed in my parents' bedroom.

Melissa walked back into the living room as I was sitting down on the sofa. I knew she would ask an innocuous question, and I knew how I wanted to respond. What I had not counted on was how nervous I felt. My heart was beating so hard that I thought it would jump out of my chest.

"Jamie," Melissa said as she smoothed her skirt and sat down beside me, "what would you like to do this weekend?" Then, in true babysitter form, she added, "I'm happy to do whatever you want." She sounded like a serious young woman trying to proactively manage a weekend to be spent babysitting a little boy, which was precisely what was happening.

I stared at the dark television for a long moment, then turned to face her. I'd rehearsed this moment hundreds of times in my mind. I opened my mouth to speak, but the words would not come out. Each of the passing seconds became a small eternity.

I finally decided to go cap in hand and see if that produced any result. "Do you think you could put a diaper on me?"

I knew Melissa *could*, of course, but this was the best I could manage. Melissa's expression didn't change. "Do you *need* a diaper, Sweetie?" she asked. This was a perfectly legitimate question; I seemed in fine fettle otherwise.

"No," I finally admitted. "I just want to see what it's like to wear a diaper and be changed when I'm wet."

“Oh,” Melissa said at length, “I see.” She didn’t see at all, but she apparently saw no harm in the request. “Well,” Melissa finally said, “I think I can do that for you. Do you have some diapers?”

“Mom has a stack in the hall closet,” I said. I got up, led the way to the closet, and opened the door. Melissa picked up several of the old Curity prefold diapers from the top of the stack. There were probably about a dozen diapers there.

“What about baby pins and some lotion?” Melissa asked. “I wouldn’t want you to get a rash.” We walked into the bathroom, and I opened the cabinet. There was a small container of Vaseline.

“Will that work?” I asked. “And diaper pins are in the drawer.”

Melissa snatched up the Vaseline, then opened the vanity drawer and found two diaper pins. Mom sometimes used them to cope with clothing disasters.

“And we’ll need plastic pants,” Melissa said as she closed the drawer. Well, that brought me up short. I hadn’t really thought about plastic pants, and if my mother had some on hand, I didn’t know where they were.

I finally told Melissa that we had none. “Well,” Melissa said as she walked me into my bedroom, “let’s get you into a diaper and see how that goes.” She sat the diapers, pins, and Vaseline on my bed.

Melissa stared at me as if I were the acme of foolishness. “You need to take off your jeans, Jamie,” she finally said.

I unbuttoned my jeans and slid them down. My legs suddenly felt made of lead. I pulled the jeans from my feet and stood there in my underwear. Melissa patted the bedspread. “Hop up,” she said.

I climbed onto the bed, sat there for a moment, then lay down with my feet hanging off the side of the mattress. Melissa reached for the waistband of my underwear and whisked them off. My little penis was standing at attention... for what reason, I did not know. I still do not know.

“Oh, how cute,” was all Melissa said.

Melissa busied herself opening the Vaseline. She put a little on her forefinger and spent a long moment coating the tip of my penis. She slid her fingers down me. The feeling of an erect penis was obviously quite new to her. I closed my eyes, enjoying the sensations. My babysitter’s ministrations ceased, whereupon I opened my eyes.

Melissa was holding a diaper in one hand and trying to lift my legs with the other. I decided to help and watched as she slid the diaper beneath me with an expert motion. She brought the front of the diaper up between my legs, then picked up the diaper pins and put both in her mouth. She pulled the right front wing of the diaper across and pinned the back of the diaper over it with a single smooth motion.

That’s where the fairytale stopped. While Melissa could wrap the diaper around my waist, she couldn’t get it over my *hips*. Tugging mightily at the sides didn’t seem to accomplish anything.

“What am I doing wrong?” Melissa finally asked herself. She unpinned the side of the diaper. I was as mystified as Melissa was because I knew that the diapers were about 14 inches wide. I had a 25-inch waist. I still wore size 8 boys’ clothes. My third-grade logic dictated that the diapers should fit me perfectly. I felt a vague sense of disappointment in myself. I hadn’t thought about the plastic pants, and now this new problem was something else I had not anticipated.

After a moment or two, Melissa looked down at me. “I was babysitting one of your friends a few months ago,” she said quietly,

“and he’s a bedwetter, so I had to diaper him for bed. But the diapers his mom uses are bigger. They’re flat, like the ones my mom has for Bear. I think that’s the difference.”

I felt almost certain that Melissa was talking about Buddy Nauyokas, who lived behind us. I’d heard his sister refer to Buddy as a ‘diaper baby,’ but I didn’t know why.

“What do we do?” I asked. Mom had left me some money, but I didn’t know how I’d explain that Melissa used it to buy *diapers* for me.

Melissa helped me sit up, then sat down beside me. I was sitting on the little prefold diaper, and my continued arousal must have been quite evident. Melissa could have taken the easy way out and told me that baby diapers just wouldn’t fit me, but I think she could tell how much I wanted this to happen.

Melissa looked down at me and smiled. “Let’s wait until my mom takes lunch to my dad,” she suggested, “and then I’ll go over and get some diapers and Bear’s big plastic pants.” She told me that Bear was already wearing ‘toddler two’ plastic pants, which meant nothing to me at the time. The older girl handed me my underwear, and I slid my briefs back on.

We sat in my bedroom and played Mousetrap for about 30 minutes. Then the doorbell rang, and Melissa ran to answer it. Nancy wanted to check on us before taking lunch to George. George typically worked by himself all day on Fridays and often couldn’t leave the car lot.

At length, Melissa walked back into my bedroom. “Will you be okay for a few minutes?” she asked, and I nodded. We listened as her mother loaded Bear into the car, then we heard the car leaving the driveway. Melissa walked to her house and returned about five minutes later, carrying a brown paper grocery bag. She sat the bag on my bed and pulled out a stack of flat diapers and a pair of

plastic pants. Unlike the plastic pants I remembered, however, these were covered in cloth.

"These are training pants for toddlers who are learning to use the potty," Melissa explained, "but I think they'll work for you." She folded a couple of diapers this way and that. I stood up and Melissa pulled down my underwear. I wasn't as hard at that point, but I wasn't completely flaccid either.

I hopped back onto the bed and lay across the mattress. "Let's try this again," Melissa said, lifting my ankles. I felt the folded diapers slide beneath me. I guess Melissa must have been satisfied with the quantity of Vaseline remaining because she didn't add more. Instead, she put the diaper pins in her mouth, then brought the front of the diaper up between my legs, tugged it a bit to adjust the fit, and pinned the sides. I could tell that this diaper had recently been in the dryer because it was still warm. Melissa ran her finger around the waist to check. "This should be a little tight," she said.

Melissa turned Bear's training pants inside out and tugged them up past my feet and ankles. She encased the diaper in vinyl, then checked to make sure the entire diaper was tucked inside the training pants. "I don't want you to leak," she told me.

Melissa hauled me back up, and I sat on the edge of the bed. My t-shirt matched the white terrycloth cover of the training pants, and my ankle socks were babyish enough. I looked for all the world like an overgrown two-year-old.

I stood up and hugged Melissa. I cannot remember ever hugging her before that day. My chin rested on her shoulder as she patted my back. I think she was trying to reassure me.

"You certainly don't *smell* like a baby," she whispered. "You smell like a boy. Didn't you take a bath last night?"

"No," I told her honestly. At that point, my mother only gave me a bath every other night, and during the summer, she tended to