

## SHORT MODEL

Things were going along pretty great. I had my mom and dad to myself, and a great big bedroom with plenty of room for my toys and books. Kindergarten was still a couple of years away, so my days were full of games, playing with friends at playschool and with mom and dad at night. All of that changed on August 14, 1983.

On that night my little brother, Jerry Gordon, was born. According to mom, he wasn't really a little brother. Weighing in at 12 pounds and 3 ounces, it was an experience my mom, who worked at the hospital, will never forget.

My dad was the manager of a farm implement store, and things were a little rough financially for my family during Jerry's first year of life. Farm prices were down and interest rates were high. In addition, that fall the stock market took a dive. Since Dad's business depended on a strong farm economy, we started pinching pennies. That is probably why they didn't get me one of the new Cabbage Patch dolls that had just gone on sale. Mom was disappointed that she couldn't get one of the new camcorders. She wanted to record Jerry's first year of life.

While Mom hummed along with Sting and "Every Breath You Take," I tried to introduce Jerry to the Saturday morning delight of "The Littles," "Smurfs," and "Shirttales," at least when we could get Dad away from "The Dukes of Hazzard." Jerry was more interested in chewing on all of my dolls and books. Mom didn't even do anything to him. She said he was "teething" as though that made it all right when he destroyed my favorite Barbie.

On a night we could afford to go out to the movies and get a babysitter, Mom and Dad took me to see *The Return of the Jedi*. I felt really big, going out to a movie while Jerry had to stay home with the baby sitter. Dad thought it was ironic that the release of the second *Star Wars* movie came the same year as President Ronald Reagan introduced his "Star Wars" defense plan.

As Jerry moved from the bottle to baby food, Baltimore beat Philadelphia in a 4-1 World Series. I started to listen to Duran Duran because the "big girl" who baby-sat for us liked them. I even named our cat Sebastian after John's cat.

In the world sad and happy things happened in the year Jerry was born. The USSR shot down a South Korean plane, Flight 007. The United States invaded Grenada after a coup on the island. Karen Carpenter died at the age of 32, a few months before Jerry was born. M\*A\*S\*H aired its final episode to a huge audience. Jerry fell down the front steps in his walker and had to have seven stitches.

On the happier side, Sally Ride became the first American woman in space. CDs were first released, and Vanessa Williams became the first African American Miss America.

I got to play an angel in our church's Christmas play. Mom missed my entrance because Jerry was crying so hard she had to take him out into the lobby. I got the white kitten and the Cabbage Patch Kid that I wanted for Christmas, and Jerry just got clothes and baby junk. Then, in January, Jerry said his first word—"Kaki." My name is Kathy. I started to look at him differently.

Jerry and I got off to a rocky start. I even asked Mom and Dad to take him back to the hospital, but they refused. I had to share my great bedroom with this little pest, and he kept me awake at night with his crying. The room always smelled like baby. Often Mom and Dad seemed too busy with the baby to do anything with me. Even Grandma and Grandpa seemed to pay more attention to him when he came to visit. But then, toward the end of his first year, I held his hand while he took his first steps, and I decided having a little brother wasn't so bad after all.