

MY BROTHER FELIX

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My name is Jessica but my friends all call me Jessie. I'm five years old.

'My, how you've grown - such a big girl!' said Mrs. Borg to me when I carried a big bag full of apples upstairs for her.

A little later, when I wanted to play soccer with the boys, Carlo said:

'Get lost! This is no game for little girls!'

Crazy, isn't it? First I'm a big girl, then I'm little.

But ever since 11 o'clock this morning I really *am* big!

Because that's when I became my little brother Felix's big sister.

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It's exciting to become a sister, but it's not easy. It takes quite a long time. Before Felix was born I often stood in front of the little bed in the nursery where my teddy bear Morris was lying. And I thought about how nice it would be, when there was a real baby in that bed.

Mom and I bought tons of baby clothes, baby bottles and baby oil. Mom's belly got rounder and rounder. But the baby just wouldn't come out.

Finally, the time came. Dad brought Mom to the hospital.

As soon as the baby was born, then Dad came back home to get me.

We bought a huge bouquet of flowers for Mom and the baby.

I could hardly wait to see my brother.

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When we came into Mom's room, I couldn't see Felix right away.

'Where is he?' I asked.

'Over there!' Mom pointed at the little, see-through crib next to her bed.

At first I only saw the baby's head. It was very small and bright red. And he didn't have any hair.

His face was all wrinkly.

Can that be my brother? I thought and I felt a little disappointed.

Without any hair on its head and with such a red face?

He didn't even look at me. All he did was sleep.

Mom was tired, too. 'Having a baby is hard work,' she said.

'I think Mom wants to have a little rest,' Dad whispered in my ear after a while.

So we tiptoed away.

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At home Dad showed me some photos and talked about me as a baby. 'Was I as tiny as Felix?' I wanted to know.

'Yes, but you had black hair, lots of it.'

'Oh, okay then. At least I wasn't bald like Felix,' I muttered.

The next morning I met Mrs. Borg in the hallway. 'Well? What does your brother look like?' she asked.

'He's pretty small,' I said. 'About the size of my Teddy bear. He's got a red face, and he doesn't have any hair.'

'Your brother will grow faster than you think – and so will his hair,' she said with a smile.

And she was right. When Felix and Mom came from the hospital a few days later, my little brother already looked much better. He wasn't as red as before.

He didn't sleep all the time, either. And he looked at me!

That was when I saw that he had blue eyes. Just like mine.

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In the following days almost all of our neighbors, friends and relatives came to visit. They brought flowers for Mom and presents for Felix. Even a few presents for me!

Mrs. Borg for example brought me a soft little hairbrush, so I can brush my baby brother's hair. But there's nothing to brush yet!

Of course, Felix is now the star of the family. Sometimes I get the feeling that no-one notices that I'm still around. It's Felix who gets kissed and pampered and oiled and fed and photographed, not me. He got a brand-new blue baby carriage from Grandma and Granddad. Of course, he can't operate it alone. I get to push it. That's cool.

'Is that your brother?' Carlo asked and leaned down to get a better look into the baby carriage as I passed by.

'Who do you think it is?', I said and shook my head.

'What a puny little guy,' Carlo said.

Carlo is a jerk. He's jealous, if you ask me. 'Cause he hasn't got a brother of his own.

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Felix often cries at night because he's getting his first teeth now. Mom and Dad take turns comforting him. But sometimes he keeps crying all night, and I can't get any sleep, even when I bury my head under my pillow. Felix is overdoing it, if you ask me. I never cry at night.

My front tooth is loose. But that doesn't make me cry. One of these days I'll just push it out. No big deal.

Granddad said when you have a loose tooth it's a sign that you're old enough to go to school.

What a fuss when Felix gets his bath! First, Mom checks the water temperature with a thermometer to make sure the it's is just right. Then she has to hold him tight so his head doesn't go under the water when he starts kicking.

I can take a shower or a bath all by myself. I know how to turn on the faucet and move it to get the right water temperature. And I use the foam to make beautiful landscapes with humungous snow-covered mountains.

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Felix is five months old now. He can roll over from back to front all by himself. Mom has to hold him tight so he doesn't fall off his bassinet.

I can do a handstand all by myself, without any help.

Yesterday I tied some balloons to Felix's crib. He kept looking at them and making happy sounds. That was fun.

Then I sang the song I learned in kindergarten about the little clown. That made him giggle. I think he likes me.

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Felix has really grown! But he's nowhere near as big as I am. He's more than half a year old and he can already sit up in his little baby chair next to me at the table. His voice is even louder now. When he's hungry, he roars like a lion. Then Mom hurries to get him fed.

I don't roar when I'm hungry. After all, I can talk.

I ask Mom if I can have a cookie or an apple. Felix eats everything with his hands and makes a mess. When I eat, I use a knife and fork like a regular grown-up.

Besides that, I can sing really well. Grandma say-so, and she knows what she's talking about. 'Cause when she was my age, she wanted to become a singer.

Felix didn't use to mind when his diaper was full. But now he screams his head off. Mom or Dad come running to change it so he won't smell so bad. Sometimes I get the feeling that he does it in his diaper on purpose, just so everyone will come running and look after him.

When I call, no-one comes. I go to the toilet by myself and I wipe myself, too. I'm almost no trouble to Dad and Mom. I'm really a lot more practical

By the way, Felix has got hair now. You can brush it up high with Mrs. Borg's brush and make him look like a little punk! Of course, I've got a lot more hair than Felix and I use Mom's comb - not a baby hairbrush.

My little brother is a year old now. I gave him my favorite rabbit as a birthday present. Felix can already walk a few steps – if you hold him by the hand.

But you should see *me* run! I'm so fast that Dad can hardly keep up with me when we race.

When Felix sees me, he always laughs. He can already say words like da-da, ma-ma and Jay-jay. That's me: Jay-jay means Jessie.

I can say anything I want!

I play a lot with Felix now. Sometimes I build a big tower for him, because he can't do it himself yet. Felix always knocks it over and says, 'Tow-tow down!' Then he laughs and squeals. That doesn't bother me. I just build the tower back up again because Felix has so much fun knocking it down.

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Felix doesn't wake up at night any more. Mom and Dad are glad they can get some more sleep.

Sometimes, when Felix wakes up early, he sneaks into my bed and we cuddle and look at picture books together.

Today Mom and Dad went to the movies for the first time in a long time. They wrote down Mrs. Borg's telephone number for me. Just in case. They know that I can use the phone by myself.

But hey, what can go wrong? I'm at home, and I take good care of Felix!