

BABY SITTERS
LITTLE SISTER®

Karen's New Year

ANN M. MARTIN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HEATHER BURNS

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a new beginning*

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CHAPTER 1

It was December 26th. It was the day after Christmas. Usually when I wake up on the day after Christmas I feel a little sad. That is because my favorite holiday is over. But then I remember something. I remember the toys and presents I got the day before. That makes me feel better. Sometimes I even feel excited.

My name is Karen Brewer, and I finally turned seven years old. I have blonde hair and some freckles. I wear glasses — all the time. I have a little brother, too. His name is Andrew. He is almost five. Sometimes he is a pain in the neck, but mostly I like him.

My mommy and daddy are divorced.

Here are some of the things I got for

Christmas: lots of books, a doll called Baby Grow-a-Tooth, leg warmers that my Nannie knitted for me, a special art kit, some clothes, and a game called *Sorry!*

Andrew got a hat that Nannie knitted him, these exploding Dyno-cars, an art kit like mine, and some other stuff.

When I thought about my presents, I leaped out of bed. I put on all new clothes: a very short skirt, a big sweater that says BE COOL on it, and a pair of knee socks with snowflakes all over them. (I had not gotten new shoes, so I did not put any shoes on.)

In the morning, Andrew and I sat around the living room. We played with our toys and looked at our books. At eleven o'clock, my friend Nancy Dawes came over. She lives next door. She brought *her* Baby Grow-a-Tooth with her. She had gotten Baby Grow-a-Tooth for Hanukkah.

"Cool," I said. "Our dolls can grow teeth together."



Crash, smash! That was Andrew. He had run a car into the wall and it had exploded. (The car, I mean. Not the wall.) Andrew put the car back together and then crashed it and exploded it again.

Ring, ring! The telephone. "I'll get it!" I cried. I ran into the kitchen and answered the phone.

"Hi, sweetie. It's Daddy," said the voice at the other end of the line.

"Hi, Daddy! Andrew and Nancy and I are playing with our new toys."

“That sounds like fun,” said Daddy. “Listen, is your mom there? I was thinking of having a party on New Year’s Eve. It would be just the family — Nannie and Kristy and your step-brothers and everyone. Do you think you and Andrew could come?”

I paused. I was not sure. Sometimes Mommy and Daddy fight over who Andrew and I spend holidays with. “Let me get Mommy,” I said.

So I did. And I got prepared for an argument. But there was no argument. You know what Mommy said? She said, “That would be fine. Seth” (he’s my stepfather) “and I have been wanting to go skiing. Do you think you could take Karen and Andrew for several days? That way, they could go to the party, and Seth and I could go skiing.”

Of course Daddy said yes.

“Hurray!” I shouted.

“Indoor voice, Karen,” Mommy reminded me. (She was still talking on the phone.)

“Sorry,” I said. Then I ran into the living

room. "Guess what! Guess what!" I said, but not too loudly. "Daddy is having a New Year's Eve party at the big house, and we get to go, Andrew."

"Goody!" he said. He exploded a car.

Oh, boy. Now I had another holiday to look forward to.