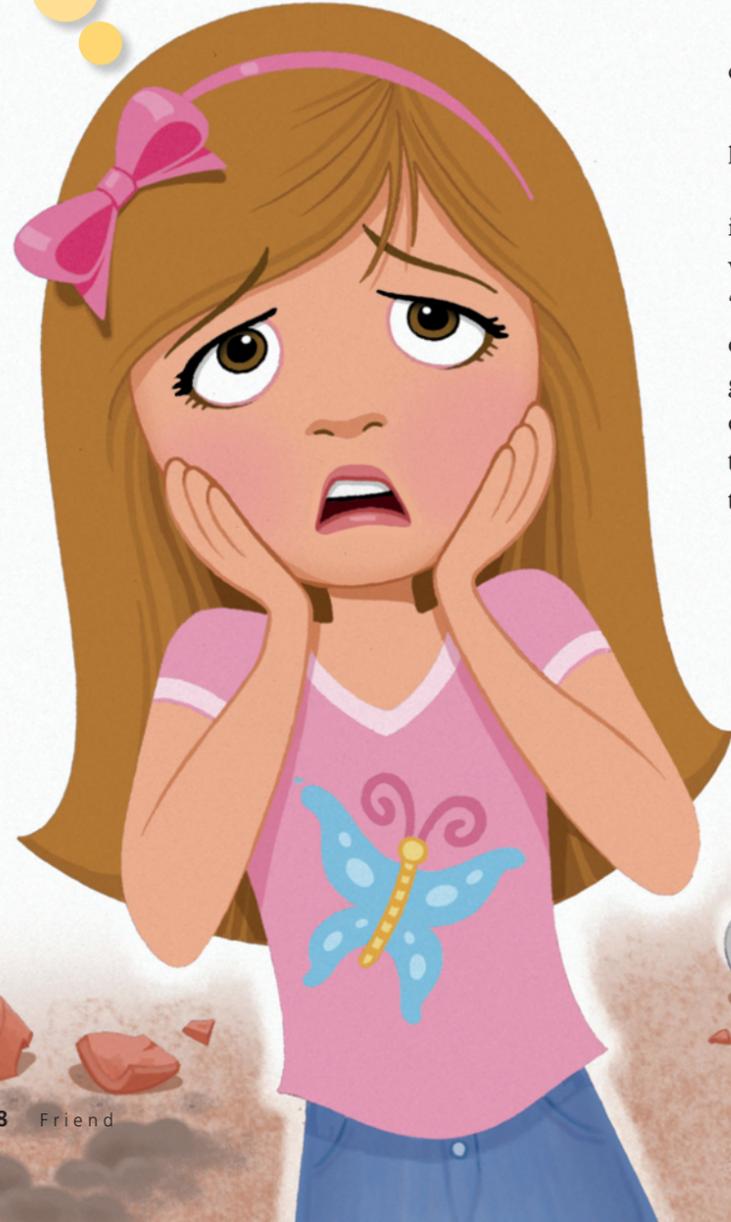


What Was I Thinking?

My little brother Patrick is a pain!



By Renee Riede
(Based on a true story)

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Patrick is a pest. At least, that’s what I used to think. This morning I found Patrick sitting on my bedroom floor surrounded by lots and lots of potting soil, lots and lots of flowerpot pieces, and three messed-up marigolds.

Just a few minutes earlier, that potting soil, those pieces of flowerpot, and the three marigolds all added up to one wonderful Mother’s Day gift. But not anymore.

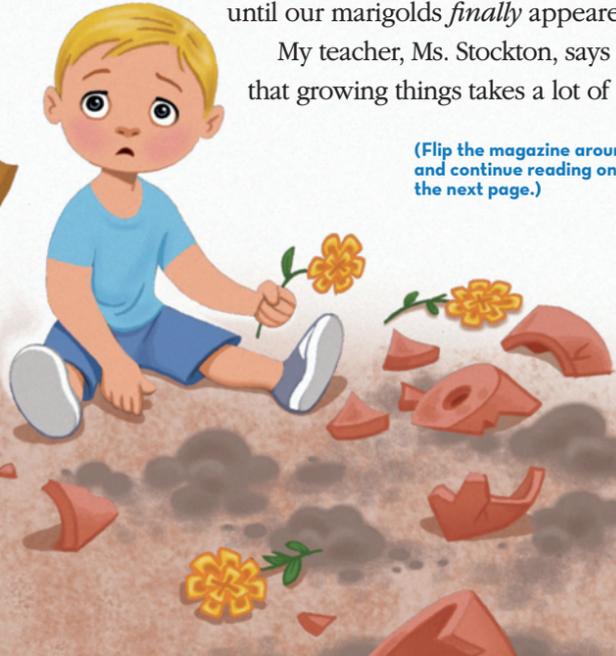
The moment Patrick saw me, all he could say was, “Uh-oh, Kwissie. Uh-oh.”

Patrick is almost three, and he still can’t say his Rs. I can sure say mine, and boy did I ever say them to Patrick.

I said, “Patrick! You just *ruined* my Mother’s Day present. You are in *really, really* big trouble!”

Mother’s Day is tomorrow, and I had been all ready for it. My class had made Mother’s Day gifts at school. First we decorated flowerpots. Mine was beautiful. It said, “To the very best mom in the world,” and it had bunches of bright blue butterflies fluttering all over it. (I’m really good at drawing butterflies.) Next we filled our flowerpots with potting soil. Then we poked three holes in the soil, put a marigold seed into each hole, and filled the holes up again. We watered our plants every other school day, and we waited and watched until our marigolds *finally* appeared.

My teacher, Ms. Stockton, says that growing things takes a lot of



(Flip the magazine around and continue reading on the next page.)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARED BECKSTRAND



The author lives in Virginia, USA.

What Was I Thinking? I love my little brother!

I grinned. “Me too.”
“Me, Me,” Patrick added.
I used to think my little brother was a pest.
But then I realized . . .

patience, and she is right. Everyone in my class cheered when our marigolds began to bloom. My marigolds were bright yellow and made me think of sunshine. But now my perfect present was ruined!

“Uh-oh, Kwissie,” Patrick said again. “Sorry, sorry!”
“Well, you should be,” I said, glaring at him.
That’s when Patrick started to howl. Mom came racing into my bedroom.

“What’s going on, Kwissie? What’s this mess?” she demanded.
“This m-m-mess,” I said, trying to swallow the lump in my throat, “this m-m-mess is your M-m-mother’s Day present. Happy M-m-mother’s Day, M-m-mom.” Then I started howling right along with Patrick.

It took Mom a while to calm us down. When she finally did, I told her all about her Mother’s Day present and how it took lots and lots of patience and lots and lots of work to get those marigolds to grow. “Now look at them,” I sobbed. “Hmmm,” Mom said, giving me a hug. “Marigolds sound a lot like little brothers.”

“What?” I whimpered.
“Little brothers,” Mom said, “need lots of patience and lots of care to help them grow up too.”

“But, Mom—” I said. And before I could say another word, Patrick crawled onto my lap, wrapped his chubby arms around my neck, and said, “Don’t cwy, Kwissie. I grow up.”

Well, that did it. Mom and I started to giggle, and then Patrick joined in. Before we knew it, all three of us were laughing and hugging right in the middle of that big Mother’s Day mess, and it felt great!

“This feeling is the best Mother’s Day present ever,” Mom said. “I love it.”



I love my baby brother, Maddux, and always want him to be safe. It is my special job to put on and buckle his seatbelt. I am thankful Jesus loves everyone, but especially little children. So I am trying to follow His example by taking good care of Maddux.
Dane H., age 5, Connecticut, USA