

By Cynthia L. Pearson

(Based on a true story)

"Ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves"
(*Helaman 14:30*).

Lacey was busy making things for her miniature dollhouse. She'd already made button plates, a yogurt-lid table, and a popcorn bowl out of a bottle cap and Styrofoam. She was just starting on the paper-clip hangers when her little brother, Zach, burst through the door with a bath towel around his neck like a cape.

"Zach!" Lacey cried as he bumped into her desk, sending the button plates flying.

"I'm not Zach. I'm Awesome Boy!" Zach shouted. He stomped around her room and knocked into the walls, pretending to fly. "And you're a giant mutant monster that's attacking the city!"

"I am not a mutant monster!" Lacey shouted back. As she looked at the buttons scattered all over the floor, she felt a hot, angry feeling rising in her stomach. She felt like yelling.

Instead she stomped out of the room. "Mom!" she called. "Zach's bugging me again!"

Mom was on the phone in the kitchen and held up her hand. "One minute," she mouthed. Mom walked into the other room to finish her phone call.

Lacey sighed and flopped into a kitchen chair. *Why is Zach so annoying?* Lacey fumed. She was ten, and Zach

in a silly voice, and searched through her drawers. Each thing made her madder and madder. She didn't like feeling that way.

Lacey looked down at the paper-clip hanger she was still holding. Kylee, Lacey's older sister, had showed her how to make miniature things. Kylee was away at college now, and Lacey missed her. Why couldn't Kylee still be around instead of Zach?

Lacey thought back to a time just before Kylee had

left for school. They were having fun on the front porch eating ice cream and talking, but Lacey couldn't stop scratching a mosquito bite on her arm. It itched so much!

"Don't scratch it," Kylee warned. "The more you scratch it, the worse it gets."

"But I *have* to scratch it!" Lacey

complained. "It itches too much. It's driving me crazy!"

"You don't *have* to scratch it," Kylee said. She licked her ice cream cone and smiled. "You may not be able to control whether or not you have a mosquito bite, but you *can* control how much you scratch it."

Lacey looked down at her arm where the mosquito bite had been, and suddenly she understood something. She *could* control her own actions.

She couldn't stop Zach from doing what he wanted, but she could choose not to be *bothered* by it anymore! And Heavenly Father could help her.

Heavenly Father, she prayed silently, *please help me not to get mad when Zach teases me. Please help me to just love him.*

As she prayed, she felt the hot anger in her stomach start to go away. A warm feeling filled its place.

"Never mind," she mouthed to Mom as she walked back to find Zach. Maybe her miniature dollhouse would make the perfect city to defend from a giant mutant monster. And maybe Awesome Boy could use a superhero friend—Awesome Girl! ♦

The author lives in Utah, USA.

BUGS

AND BROTHERS

was only seven. He thought it was funny to see her mad.

Worse, it seemed like Zach *looked* for ways to bother her. He grabbed her dolls, copied everything she said

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK ROBINSON

Can you find another story about getting along with siblings?