

Jealousy

By Jeanette Rhyan

Today is my brother's birthday. Happy birthday, big brother!

His birthday reminds me of events that happened many, many years ago.

Growing up ten years younger than my brothers, I was always a bit jealous of everything they did. There was one event I am still jealous over...the celebration of their 18th birthdays.

When my oldest brother, Sonny, turned 18 on December 16, my parents threw a wonderful 18th birthday party for him. It included 17 classmates (he made 18), a sit-down dinner, presents, games, dancing, and, of course, a fabulous rectangular birthday cake decorated like a football field. Being the pesky little sister, I was constantly interrupting the festivities. When the night was over, I started planning my own 18th birthday party.

A year and a half later, my brother Dennis turned 18 on March 15. Again, my parents threw him an awesome 18th birthday party. Like the previous party, it included 17 classmates, a sit-down dinner, games, presents, dancing, and of course, a rectangular birthday cake decorated like a football field. I was still the pesky little sister interrupting the festivities.

I had nine years to plan my 18th birthday party. On scraps of paper, I planned my party, which would include 17 classmates, a sit-down dinner, presents, games, dancing, and a spectacular birthday cake. I couldn't decide on the shape or the cake or the decorations. Maybe the cake could be in the shape of a saxophone or a basketball court or a 4-H, four-leaf clover. The notes were kept safe in my diary.

The years passed, and soon my 18th birthday, June 26, would be here. The subject of my birthday party had not been discussed. My family and I were busy with end-of-the-year activities, plus my high school graduation.

Over dinner I brought up the subject of my 18th birthday party and showed Mom all the scraps of paper with plans for the party. You could have heard a pin drop. No one said a word. Dad broke the silence, informing me that there would not be an 18th birthday party this year. Mom added that after graduation, most of my classmates would be off on vacation or moving to college. There would be no party. Tears rolled down my cheeks.

On the morning of my 18th birthday, I should have felt happy. Instead, I had feelings of jealousy over my brothers and their amazing 18th birthday parties. I was holding onto a slim chance that maybe there would be a surprise party for me. No such luck.

During dinner, my parents gave me a present. Opening the box, I found a brand-new iron! Mom said I would need it at college this fall. My heart was breaking. I tried not to cry but was unsuccessful.

A few months later, my iron and I moved into a college dorm. I found a good use for my iron. It made great grilled cheese sandwiches.