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Things with Marcus and I had been bad ever since Mum had pushed me out of her belly and he had been confronted with the reality of no longer being the special baby in the house. And what was worse, I was a girl. Unfathomable. To be ousted by a stupid little screaming, red-faced, strawberry-marked girl.

Mum told me sometimes she'd find him staring with grim determination at me in the cot, with clenched fists and a concrete jaw, as if just by willing it hard enough he could make me disappear. He sawed through a few of the bars of the cot one day, when Mum and I were doing baby swimming down at the pool. He was at home with Gran, and she wasn't quite so vigilant. Much later that night everyone heard an enormous crack coming from my room and then a wail as I ended up head first on the floor. Fortunately, not too much harm was done.

As he got older and wiser, he grew smarter and smarter, making attacks only sporadically; but they were more deadly. Like the time he 'borrowed' the pet carpet snake from school and stowed it in my bed, cunningly hidden in my pyjamas. I only narrowly escaped a nasty bite that time. I learnt to avoid books dropping from door-frames above me, stink bombs in the shower, explosive packets in my sock drawer.

But things changed in grade five, and they changed because of my teacher, the glorious Patricia Patil. Not only was she intensely beautiful and exotic, she was feisty. She taught us so much. Not for her the opening up of some worthy kid's book about experimenting with drugs, Mrs Patil told us endless stories about India, about the caste system, what happened when the French came, the English, what happened when they left, what happens when people don't have enough to eat. Mrs Patil was certain and clear about the need for people to fight, to stand up for their rights, to take a position in the world. When she had earned enough money teaching she was going to go back to India and start a massive project to clean up the water in the Ganges.

As the months went by in the sunlight of Mrs. Patil, I started to expand. I realised that I wanted to put an end to Marcus's jokes, his tricks, his obsession with hurting me. I had had enough.

And so I plotted. And at last, on Thursday the 6th of May, 1998, I was able to carry out my plan. I knew by the time breakfast was over that it was the day, everyone was going to be out. Everyone. Until 6pm. Maxine was at swimming, Merophie was at Margaret's house, Marcus was playing footy, Michael was hanging out with friends, and Mum was taking an old friend a casserole. As soon as she said that I knew I was blessed. The hours flew at school and then I was running all the way home, and starting construction.

Dad's big ladder was the basis of my creation, the strong A-frame that nearly reached the ceiling of my room. I dragged it in and set it up at the foot of my bed, facing the door, its two legs ready for action. I took gumboots, some blankets, a dressing gown, a bucket, a broom, a beach ball, an inner tube, some hay, a basin and the hatchet. And I made my protector. I made my liberator.

I knew all I had to do was to seem upset at dinner and Marcus would be on to me in a flash, planning an attack.

Sure enough, at 11.46 p.m. I heard my bedroom door softly open. I was in bed. Marcus crept in. I could see something glinting in his hand; scissors. The old midnight haircut treatment. He paused, sensing the shape at the bottom of my bed, but then I heard him sigh and chuckle, some little unusual thing was not going to get in the way of his grand pleasure. I was devastated, all that work and planning, and that was it?

But suddenly, as Marcus continued towards my bed, there was a creaking sound, of metal against rubber, against wood; of metal legs waking up, starting to move. And move it did, a huge, powerful conglomeration. My protector took one step towards Marcus, and then another. Marcus looked at me uncertainly, he held the scissors up. For one second I thought he was going to plunge them into my heart, but then my protector creaked and stretched. I could see him behind Marcus's head, coming down closer and closer. Marcus slowly turned to look. 'What's this?' he said, trying to sound scornful. I managed to say, 'My protector'. Marcus turned to face him, summoning up the courage to fight, to deny, but I could see him trembling as my protector took another sure, clanking step. He bent even further towards Marcus, and gently placed the hatchet on Marcus's neck. He said 'Kneel' and Marcus kneeled. He kept the hatchet pressed against Marcus's neck, and slowly, on Marcus's forehead, as if they were being pressed into his skin, the letters S, T, O, P appeared, one by one. Marcus was whimpering. Trying not to cry. But he was. I could see tears; the first time ever. Once the P was done, Marcus crumpled. He knelt at the foot of the ladder. 'Yes,' he said 'yes.' And then, very softly, haltingly 'Sorry.' And then he upped and ran out and I heard him tearing down the hall to his room.

In the morning I had to scramble to get everything back in its place by the time everyone was up, and I was last to the table. Marcus had his Bombers cap on, and didn't look at me.

I didn't really understand it all, but I did know, and I was right, that he would never, ever, try to hurt me again.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Caroline Lee.