

BABY SITTERS
LITTLE SISTER®

Karen's Surprise

ANN M. MARTIN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HEATHER BURNS

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*For Susan and Ashley,
who keep my life from being too surprising.
Thank you.*

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CHAPTER 1

Hmm, hmm-hmm, hmm, hmmm-hmmm. The pumpkin ran away, before Thanksgiving Day. Said he, 'They'll make a pie of me if I should stay.' Hmm, hmm-hmm."

"What's that song?" asked Andrew. Andrew is my little brother. He is four, going on five; I just turned seven.

"It's a Thanksgiving song," I told him. "We're learning about Thanksgiving in school."

"So are we," said Andrew. "Thanksgiving is when you eat a lot."

Oh, Andrew, I thought. That's just what you learn in preschool. There is so much more to Thanksgiving than eating. We had been

learning lots of things about the holidays in my school. I was glad. I just love holidays.

My name is Karen Brewer. I have blonde hair and freckles. I wear glasses. I even have two pairs. One pair is for reading and the other pair is for the rest of the time (except when I am asleep). I am in second grade at Stoneybrook Academy. My teacher's name is Ms. Colman. She is gigundo nice. She never yells. And she likes holidays as much as I do. First we celebrated Halloween. We made black cats and pumpkins and ghosts and put them up in our classroom. Yesterday we took them down. Now we are making Thanksgiving decorations.

"Andrew," I said, "let me tell you what Thanksgiving is *really* about."

"Not food?" asked Andrew. He and I were in the playroom at Mommy's house. We were on the floor, making a town out of blocks. Andrew was in charge of driving toy cars through the town, and sometimes crashing them.



“Yes, it’s about food,” I answered my little brother. “But it’s about other things, too. When we celebrate Thanksgiving, we are remembering the Native Americans who were here for thousands of years before our country existed, and the Pilgrims who came here from Europe.”

“What are Pilgerms?” interrupted Andrew.

“Pilgrims,” I corrected him. “They were some

of the first people who moved here from Europe. They came from England to find a new home. They had to sail all the way across the ocean. And when they got to American they had to build houses and grow food. But the winter was very, very cold and snowy. At school Ms. Colman told us that the people from the Wampanoag tribe helped the Pilgrims during that winter, even though the European settlers had not been good to Native Americans.”

Andrew and I played with our town. I built three new houses. “I wonder,” I said, looking at the houses, “where we will go for Thanksgiving this year. Mommy’s house or Daddy’s house.”

“Mommy’s,” said Andrew. “We had Thanksgiving with Daddy last year.”

“I know, but then remember Daddy was upset after Christmas? He said that you and I spent Easter *and* Christmas with Mommy last year. Plus we live here most of the time. He said that wasn’t fair. He said he wanted the holidays to be different this year. Especially Thanksgiving

and Christmas. And Mommy said, 'Okay, we will work something out.' Remember?"

Andrew nodded, but he looked worried.

I tried to cheer him up. "Maybe," I said, "we will have *two* Thanksgivings and *two* Christmases!"

"Yeah!" cried Andrew.