

First

by Matt Potter

"I grew tired of waiting," she said.

White-knuckled, she gripped the clacking needles so ferociously she could have knitted the booties in gale force winds and they still would have turned out ankle-stranglers.

"You were always too busy building your train set."

She smoothed her new pink-and-white-vertically-striped way-too-roomy smock over her stomach. Then counting stitches under her breath, she cast off.

She was right. Building the train took over a year. I gutted the second bedroom, turning the bay window into storage for spare rolling stock. Then I built a mezzanine for a replica of the Berlin U-Bahn, the grungy flower kiosks and bored commuters painstakingly realistic.

Now the thought of pulling it all down to make room for a baby zapped my strength.

"I can't believe you went ahead and got pregnant without me," I said.

"Well, you have a whole six months to get used to the idea," she answered, knotting baby-blue yarn on the end of the row. She resumed her clacking, loudly. My lack of energy was fuelling hers.

"Don't worry," she added. "You'll get a crack at the next one."

"I could have downed tools for — what, two minutes? — to impregnate you myself."

She threw her knitting in her lap. "Stop it, Brian! Just be thankful it'll have red hair like you and no one will notice."

That was true too. My identical twin brother had stepped into the breach and defended the family honour. Born five minutes before me he was still coming first.

