

## MIRACLES NEVER CEASE

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It was just an ordinary autumn school night: my sister Darcy discussing her math with a friend over the phone as I did my homework at our desk, my brother Jim pretending to study with the Doobie Brothers blaring from his stereo, my younger brother Casey reading *Sporting News Magazine* in bed, and my parents relaxing either in front of the television or behind *Time Magazine* in the family room. Suddenly our concentration was shattered by the sound of Mom's voice hollering: "Darcy, Mindy, Jim, Casey—come down here—I want to have a few words with you!"

These words were familiar to all of us, and in the past had always indicated trouble. As we congregated in the hall outside our bedrooms, we all stared accusingly at one another, wondering whose mischief or bad behavior called for this meeting. With strong apprehension, the four of us marched downstairs like a mob of bandits about to face trial and sentence.

Mom spoke calmly: "You all know I'm leaving tomorrow morning to go shopping in Chicago. Now I'm giving each of you two tries to guess the things I'm looking for to buy."

An enormous sigh of relief poured from each of us, knowing that we weren't going to be scolded or punished for anything. Eagerly we started shouting out a flurry of items Mom might buy: blue jeans, overalls, hot pants, mini skirts, mink stoles, tennis dress, golf shoes,—giggling more and more the longer we continued. In the middle of our suggestions, Jim cackled: "maternity dress" which nearly fractured each of us until a subtle hush fell throughout the room, centering our attention on Mom. She sort of nodded her head, yes, tears filled her eyes, and the happiest, most joyous smile swept across her face. Momentarily stunned, we turned to Dad looking for his reaction—only to find his gleaming smile twice the size of Mom's. It took a few minutes but she finally convinced us that she was expecting a baby in five months. It seemed like too much of a blessing to be true a new baby in our home. The excitement impacted in this single evening was enough to shake the stars and rattle the earth.