

And baby makes FIVE

IT'S ALL CHANGE IN THE HARVEY HOUSEHOLD, AS OUR COLUMNIST, **GILLIAN**, FINALLY GETS TO BRING BABY ROBBIE HOME



I remember when the twins were born, my eldest Lily was understandably jealous. "Put the dolly down!" she told me in hospital, as I clutched Joe in my arms; and (darkly) "I don't like daddy", when he was holding Tim. As an only child, to have both her parents' arms stolen from her at once must have been quite hard to take.

When Evie was born, however, the larger age gap and the fact that Lily was, by then, already used to siblings meant she didn't feel as threatened, and was interested in helping (as much as a 3 year old can).

The boys, who'd had to share me since their conception, also took Evie's birth in their stride, and were only vaguely interested in the pink, wriggling creature I brought back from the hospital.

So I was hopeful, when bringing Robbie home, that he'd also get a good reception. The only little person I was worried about was Evie – would she be jealous that her status as the baby of the family was being stolen from her?

I needn't have worried on her account – Evie throws her arms open whenever

Robbie is about, hoping to be allowed to hold him (with mummy or daddy's help). She kisses him, finds his dummy whenever it goes missing and seems to be head-over-heels in love.

Mind you, Evie's love can be as dangerous as her jealousy might have been; I have to watch like a hawk to check she doesn't try to pick the poor little mite up in her chubby, too-young arms when I nip out of the room; and let's just say some of her kisses have more than their fair share of mucus.

The one change I have noticed is that, in the eyes of her siblings, Evie has been relegated. She's no longer the baby of the family and there has been a noticeable shift in the way she is treated – both for better and for worse. For a start, the other children now think nothing of

snatching a toy from her, or bouncing violently near her on the trampoline. When I admonish them and ask them to be careful as Evie is only little, Timmy will say, "No, Evie not little – Robbie little!"

Evie, as stoical and chunky as ever, takes it all in her stride and is still full of

smiles, despite her diminished status. And when I call her a 'big sister' or say she is a 'big girl now' her face is a picture of delight.

It's a bit ironic, I always think, how much children want to be big and how much we adults would like to be little again. I long to wake up with only a quarter of the energy and enthusiasm of my brood. Maybe one day, with the right amount of caffeine and chocolate, I will...

For now, however, having yet another child in the house has drained every last drop of energy from my body. Particularly since Robbie seems to have decided that 4am is the time he'd like to get up every... single... morning.

As a result, Ray and I are currently taking it in turns to sleep in Robbie's room so that we get a reasonable rest every other night. I feel very lucky to have a hubby who will pitch in and take his share of disturbed nights – although it may just be because he knows how grumpy I'll be if I get too sleep-deprived!

That said, even on the darkest morning, when my eyelids threaten to close despite my fifth cup of café noir, I thank my lucky stars that the rest of my family are sleeping safely, and my new little man is healthy, happy and home.

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