In defence of my annoying behaviour, I should mention I was the youngest child. Mom and Dad didn't expect Julie and Harry to do difficult things at a young age. My siblings had a different idea. Why should I get away with playing or going outside when they had to work?

Julie was four years older. When she was thirteen, Mom gave her the chore of washing clothes downstairs with the electric washing machine. I was seven and tried to help her pull the clothes from the wringer and hang up the clothes. I thought I was helping at the clothesline because I handed her the clothes, but she often felt that I was just in the way.

On the other hand, when Julie felt she had too much to do in the house, usually when she had to make supper, she asked me to help.

"Nancy, could you set the table?" Julie often said.

Setting the table seemed like a task far beyond my capability.

How can I reach the dishes and get the cutlery from the drawer?

I didn't know the little rhyme Mom and Julie said when remembering what to put on the table. "Bread, butter, pepper, salt, sugar, cream," I heard Julie say many times, but I couldn't remember.

One day, Julie decided she would make me set the table. Mom was expected home from school soon and Dad and Harry were just about finished with chores in the barn. Julie was running out of time.

"Nancy set the table," she demanded.

I did my usual avoidance behaviour. I was just about to run out the front door when Julie caught me.

"Oh, no you don't," she said.

I struggled, but she held on.

She put the plates and cutlery on the table, expecting me to oblige and set it for her, but I rebelled.

"You can't tell me what to do," I said.

She ran around the table, trying to catch me again, but I got away.

I heard Mom drive into the yard.

Julie realized it was easier to set the table herself than to get me to do it.

When Mom entered the house, the table was set and dinner was nearly ready. Julie acted as if nothing had happened.

I welcomed Mom home with the usual hugs.

Phew, got away with it again.