Being an eldest daughter means frequently feeling like you’re not doing enough, like you’re struggling to maintain a veneer of control, like the entire household relies on your diligence.

To be clear, birth order doesn’t influence personality itself—but it can influence how your family sees you, Brent Roberts, a psychology professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, told me. Eldest kids, for example, aren’t necessarily more responsible than their siblings; instead, they tend to be given more responsibilities because they are older. That role can affect how you understand yourself. Corinna Tucker, a professor emerita at the University of New Hampshire who studies sibling relationships, told me that parents frequently compare their children—‘This is my athlete’; ‘this is my bookworm’; … ‘so-and-so is going to take care of me when I’m old’”—and kids internalize those statements. But your assigned part might not align with your disposition, Roberts said. People can grow frustrated with the traits expected of them—or of their siblings. When Roberts asks his students what qualities they associate with firstborns, students who are themselves firstborns tend to list off positives like “responsible” and “leadership”; those who aren’t firstborns, he told me, call out “bossy” and “overcontrolling.”