

Mirror Images
Subject By Subject (Separate)

I used to hate going anywhere with my sister. I would cringe when the off passerby would notice our likeness, exclaim with the joy of seeing a two headed snake, and begin to interrogate us about every similar thought my sister and I had ever had. She is my mirror, my sister. Since the moment we were one cell and split into two, to this morning while brushing our teeth, we are carbon copies. Twins are identical, and indeed, my sister and I are, in every sense of the word, identical. We both required glasses and we both needed braces. When I lost my first tooth, she was right beside me, holding a tiny incisor and giving my mother the same pleased grin as I had done. We sleep at the same time, we wake at the same time, we eat at the same time, and we even realize our homework isn't done at the same time. So yes, identical would be a fair adjective, but much as we are the same, we are different. Like a mirror, my sister is everything that I am not. She is responsible while I am lazy. She enjoys company and I only select a few. When I look at her, nothing looks familiar. I see a face that appears wholly different than my own, with different eyes and different hair, and it is only in a mirror that our similarities make themselves known. My sister and I are identical, but we are each a different person.

My sister is not me. In personality, she exceeds me. Ellyn is kind and gentle, with a creative side that puts my mental tinkering to shame. Everything about her is straightforward; even her hair is short and to the point. Ellyn prefers company, noise, and laughter. A quiet day at the house is more likely to kill her than calm her. Even in infancy, she always had to discover what was out there. She was the first wiggling mass from the womb, and she's been pushing for the next new thing for as long as I've known

her. Ellyn is generous. She will give all that she has for you, and if she has a little extra, you can have that too. She is helpful and always has been. She only meant to help my hearing when she gave me a “hearing aid,” which was in actuality a small bead stuck in my ear. She’s the one who gives a few dollars to the collection bin at church, the one who turns my lights off at night, and the one who puts the aluminum cans in the recycling instead of the trash.

I will never be my sister. In personality, I’m the opposite side of the coin. I am sarcastic and short, and could never draw a paper bag, let alone a way out of it. I prefer the scenic route. My indecisive hair is neither long nor short, and I almost always choose two friends over six strangers. Not a lot makes me truly laugh, save for my sister’s jokes, and spending quiet time with a neglected copy of an old videogame will likely keep me satisfied for hours. As an infant, I was fine with letting my sister take the limelight. If she wanted to stand in the toilet, I was content to stand on the floor next to her and watch. It was alright with me that Sis was born first, because all I wanted was another five minutes of sleep anyway. I am the one who keeps her dollars for a rainy day; the one who falls asleep with the light on; and the one who secretly slips the Pepsi can into the trash compactor, turning it on and smashing the renegade can into the old salad and used paper towel at the bottom of the bin.

As twins, the word identical suits my sister and me well. Our genetic code reads the same way and we’ve done things at the same time, in the same way for our entire lives. However, as my mirror image, she isn’t me. She is black to my white, the ketchup to my mustard, and the alpha to my omega. When I look at her, I see Ellyn. When people

see us they say twins. I've been told what is similar all my life, and because of all that, all I ever see is what is different. And I love it.