



Twin Stories: Their Mysterious and Unique Bond

Susan Kohl

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Lori Neiwert lost her twin Mike in a car accident. She was traveling in the middle of Canada and “I felt him die. I didn’t want to know that was what I was feeling but in my heart I knew. I have always said that I had two hearts, his and mine. When mine beat, his answered. That night there was no answer.”

This is but one story the author discovered while doing research on the subject of twins, which has been her fascination ever since she gave birth to her own set of twin boys seven years ago. Her sons were the impetus to search out and discover as much as she could about the experience of “twinning.” Kohl interviewed numerous sets of twins and even traveled to Twinsburg, Ohio’s annual three-day August event, a national convention of sorts for twins. She also talked to twinless twins, those whose “other half” was no longer living.

Kohl begins with some facts—for instance, there are approximately 73 million twin pairs in the world today—and some modern historical context on the matter. In the late nineteenth century, for example, there was “a popular notion that twins are apt to be wanting in physical and mental vigor.” She tells of famous twins—the Fulstone sisters from Smith Valley, Nevada who won a nationwide contest in 1950 and became the “All-American Toni Twins”—and visits with the not-so-famous. Most sets of twins agree they have an almost psychic connection with their sibling and offer testimony to the fact.

Kohl covers several topics: the unspoken competition between twins, how they deal with the outside world (other siblings, parents, and eventually girlfriends, boyfriends, and spouses), the inexplicable, and the void felt by those who have lost their close sibling. Singer Elvis Presley’s loss of his twin Jesse Garon at birth is cited as the motivation for the entertainer’s drive to succeed. The author wonders if “early-loss twins try to replace their twin by their own double efforts.”

The book is an interesting, though simplistic, first-hand account of life with one who shares the same birthdate.

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (November / December 2001)

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