

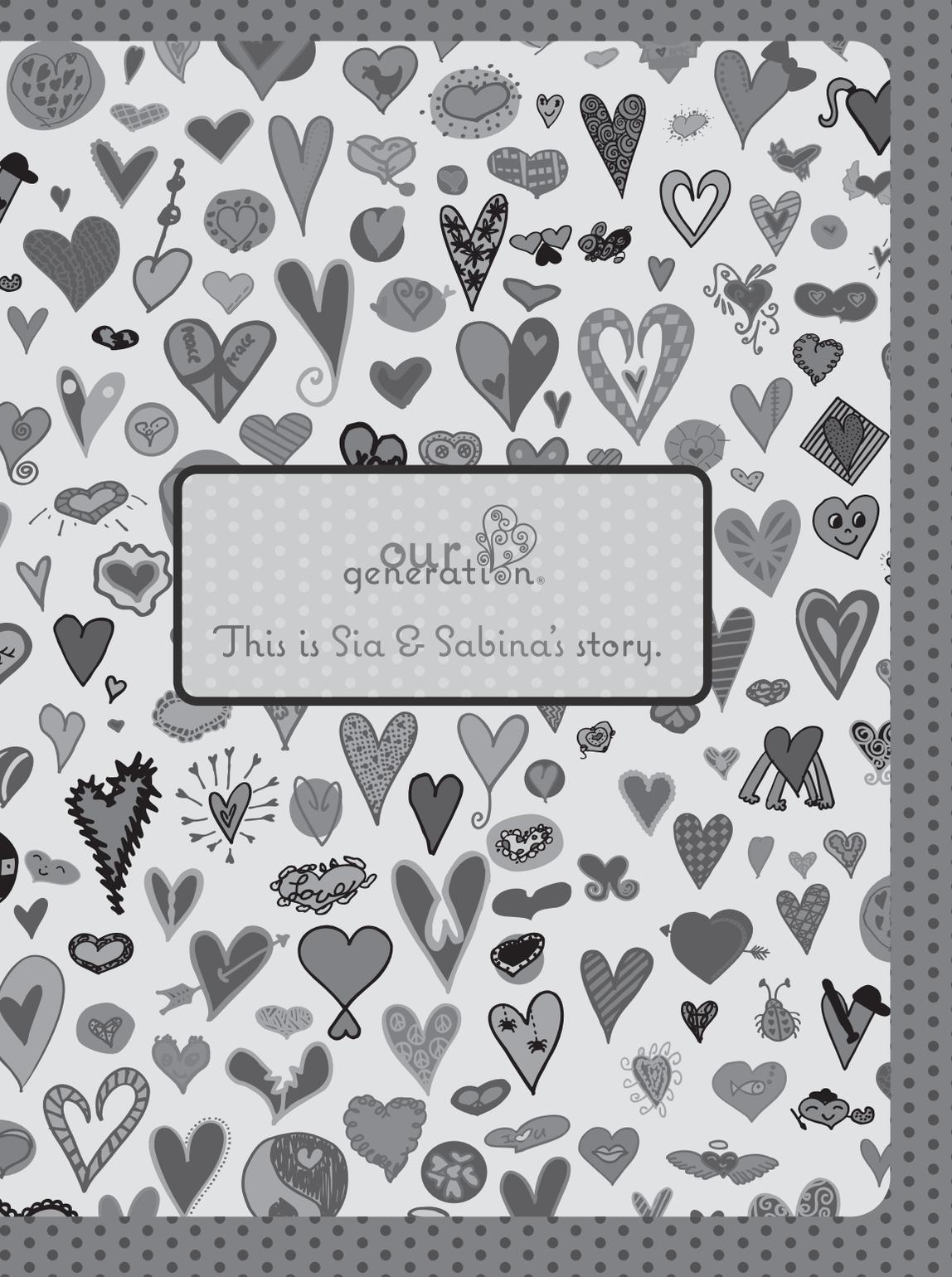


Party Plans Go Pop!

FEATURING SIA & SABINA™

BY SUSAN HUGHES
ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE





our
generation®

This is Sia & Sabina's story.



SIA & SABINA™

PARTY PLANS GO POP!

BY

SUSAN HUGHES

ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE

An Our Generation® book

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EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

*Big words, wacky words, powerful words, funny words...
what do they all mean? They are marked with this symbol *.
Look them up in the Glossary at the end of this book.*





Chapter One

I JUST WANT TO DRAW

I love my twin sister, Sia, more than anything, I thought. I really do, but...

Here I was, in the after-school program of Russell Hill Elementary School. Surrounded by mostly kindergarten and first-grade kids. Feeling like I was in a daycare center!

It was bothering me big-time.

Not because I'm too old for daycare, which I am. I'm in the third grade.

Not that I don't like younger kids. In fact I find them sort of cute. Sometimes I wish Sia and I had a younger sibling—or even a younger set of twin siblings!

And *not* because I was jealous that I was stuck here while Sia was upstairs at her science club with friends her own age.



Nope. Sia loves everything to do with science, and I know how much she loves going to science club every Monday after school. And besides, I have my own art club after school on Tuesdays. So that wasn't it...

Suddenly, two kindergartners, Laura and Simon, tugged at my sleeve. Each of them was waving a paintbrush. Laura's was dripping red paint and Simon's was dripping blue paint.

"Can you help us with our artwork? Please, Sabina?" Laura asked.

"You're so good at painting!" Simon exclaimed.

"Sure," I replied, with a little sigh. And, well, this was exactly it. Exactly why I was so frustrated*.

I put down my pencil, set aside my sketch, and followed them from the desk in the corner of the room to the painting area. I tried not to show *them* that I was frustrated, though. How could I blame them for wanting me to help them make their paintings the best that they



can be? Or to help them cut out figures from construction paper to make dolls? Or to show them new ways to make sculptures with clay? I couldn't.

But me? I just wanted to sit and draw my cartoons, and make them the best that they could be. And I needed to be alone to do that. And I can't be on Mondays. And it's not fair!

Why, why, why do I always have to go to the after-school program on Mondays while I wait for Sia?

"Here, Laura," I said, "try this." I showed her how to wipe some of the paint off her brush so it wouldn't make a big thick line.

Mom and Dad both work during the week, and I know they don't want Sia or me going home alone to an empty house after school. I understand that—even though I'd love to be by myself in the house for once in my life. It would be so quiet!

For a moment I imagined it. I imagined turning off the TV and unplugging the phone.





Sitting and daydreaming and letting my mind wander. And then drawing cartoons, which is my most favorite thing in the world to do. It would be so great. Because I need to draw, draw, draw if I'm going to become an animator* one day. I would love to sit home alone on Monday afternoons and just create...draw new worlds, new characters, new story lines. I'd get so much done.

OK, so that couldn't happen. But still, why did I have to wait for Sabina at the after-school program? It's such a waste of time!

Why couldn't I just wait in the hallway outside the science club? I'd be absolutely safe there. I could make myself comfortable on the floor, with my sketchbook open and a pencil in my hand, and no one to interrupt me. I've begged Mom and Dad over and over, but they keep saying no. They think I need to be supervised by an adult, even in the hallway!

And they won't let me go over to one of our friend's houses after school and wait for



Sabina. Both Montana Faye and Celicia *each* invited me to come over every Monday. But my parents don't want me to impose* on their families. Also, they don't want Sia to walk alone from science club to either of the girls' houses to meet me, even though they live only a few blocks from the school.

It's so not fair, I thought, with a sigh.

Just then I spotted Sia at the door of the classroom. Thank goodness. I said goodbye to Laura and Simon and hurried over to her.

"Here I am, Sabina! Your older sister, come to take you home!" teased Sia.

"Very funny," I replied, frowning. Sia is actually eight minutes older than me, and she likes to rub it in, even though Mom says that eight minutes doesn't make a difference. It annoys me every time my sister says this, but I usually shrug it off*. Not today. I'm just not in the mood* for joking.

Then—oh good!—there was Dad in the hallway, waving. He said hello to Ms.



Pennywhistle and signed me out.

Finally. I was happy to be going home.





Chapter Two

TOO EXCITED ABOUT SCIENCE?

“I had such a good time in science club,” I told Dad, as he, Sabina and I began to walk home.

Our house is only about a 15-minute walk from school. Our neighborhood has pretty brick houses, tall trees and wide front lawns. Kids were playing ball in their yards and riding their bikes up and down the streets. The sun was shining. Some of the neighbors were out raking leaves and getting their gardens ready for winter.

“Tell me about the experiments you did,” Dad suggested with a grin. But then his cell phone rang. He glanced at it. “Sorry, it’s someone from my office that I need to speak with.”



Dad dropped back behind Sabina and me to take the call.

I glanced at my sister. Looking at her, of course, is kind of like looking at myself. We're identical. Both of us have green eyes and wear eyeglasses. We're the same height and weight and we have the same hair color: red.

"Want to hear about the experiments we did today?" I asked hopefully.

She didn't answer. I didn't know what was wrong with my twin today. She seemed so crabby!

Oh well. I love her more than anything, and I'm glad we get to spend so much time together. We're even in the same class at school. How come? Russell Hill is the only elementary school in the part of the city where we live. And it happens to be small, with only one third-grade class. But Sabina and I don't care. In fact, we actually like being in the same class.

Most days anyway.

"Sabina?" I asked again. She didn't really



look interested in hearing about my time at the science club, but oh well!

“We used filter paper* to separate colors in ink,” I said. “The technique* is called chromatography*.” I explained all the details of the cool experiment we’d done.

“I think I have some filter papers as part of my chemistry set* at home,” I said. “I can’t wait to try the experiment tonight with different colors of ink!”

My sister just sort of nodded. Maybe I went on a bit too much. I know I sometimes get too excited about science.

Dad was still on the phone and Sabina was being very quiet. So I just kept on chatting. I always have a gazillion questions swirling around in my brain and it feels good to tell Sabina about them, even when she rolls her eyes at me.

“I’ve been thinking about it being autumn,” I told her, “and I’ve been wondering what happens to insects in the winter.”



We turned the corner and headed up our block.

“And what about these evergreen trees?” I pointed to a row of trees along a neighbor’s front porch. “Why do their needles stay green and why do the leaves on most other trees change color?”

I sighed. “I really wish I had a microscope. Then I could look closely at a leaf and try to see what’s inside it!”

I waited for Sabina to laugh and say, “You ask sooo many questions!” like she normally does. But this time, she didn’t.

Instead she frowned again. “Here’s a question you can try to answer,” she said. “Why do I have to wait for you at the after-school program with all those little kids when I’d rather just wait on my own so I can work on my cartoons?”

I shook my head. It’s sometimes difficult for me to remember that my twin and I aren’t exactly the same. Sure, we look alike and, duh!





of course we're the same age, but we're alike in so many other ways, too. We both like school and we do well in most subjects, although I do a bit better when we're learning about science and Sabina does a bit better when we're working on drawings and sketches.

We both love chocolate brownies, jokes, dancing, our parents—and we both love sharing a room and a bunk bed. We usually know exactly what the other is thinking and we even finish each other's sentences!

“You might love being around people all the time, but we're not absolutely the same, and I like being alone sometimes,” insisted Sabina. Now she was sounding even more crabby.

Dad got off the phone as we reached our street, but almost right away, he stopped to chat with a neighbor, Mrs. Gatis. Sabina kept on walking, and so I did, too, until Mr. Minnow, our almost next-door neighbor, stopped us to say hello.

As usual, he hesitated* before using our



names. I think it's funny that he can't tell us apart. Today, I decided to "help him out" by pointing to my sister and saying she was Sia. I told him I was Sabina.

"Thanks, Sabina," he said.

"You're welcome," I answered, with a giggle, but as we headed into our house, Sabina gave me an unhappy look.

"It isn't nice to tease people so much," she said. "They can't help it that we look so much alike! Although really," she pouted, "can't they see that I have a heart-shaped beauty mark* on the corner of my eye, and you don't?"

I grinned. "Yeah, the one Dad says I put there when I kissed you in Mom's belly before we were born!"

Sabina didn't answer.

"Even our friends have trouble telling us apart sometimes," I reminded my sister. "Remember when we were three and Dad told us he could tell us apart by looking into our eyes, and we thought he meant he could see



straight inside us? We were amazed!”

I paused. “That would be neat, though. I wonder if it’s scientifically possible to look into a person’s head through their eyes. The eye is actually a hole covered by the cornea, which is like a clear lens*...”

“Sia...” said Sabina, rolling her eyes.

“OK, I’ll stop,” I said quickly. “But I like that we look so much the same, don’t you?” I asked. Dad unlocked the front door while we chatted.

Suddenly I remembered. “Hey, Sabina, we need to talk about our birthday party on Saturday! We invited ten friends but we haven’t planned what we’re going to do.”

Sabina smiled. And her face lit up. Finally.

“There’s a new animated film in town!” she said. “Let’s go to that for our birthday. It’ll be awesome!”

For a moment I didn’t answer. Then I said, in a low voice, “I was hoping we could all go to the science discovery museum. You know



it's my most favorite place in the whole world and there's a new exhibit there on chemistry.”

Sabina and I stood looking at each other. Now Sabina wasn't smiling anymore—and neither was I.





Chapter Three

MY IDEA IS BETTER

I wasn't sure what to do. Sia and I were having our birthday party on Saturday and this year we couldn't agree on our birthday plans. This had never happened before. Usually we just found something we both liked to do and... that was it. Simple.

This year though...well, we each had really strong feelings about what we wanted to do, and there didn't seem to be any middle ground*. I wanted to go see the new animated film. And I just knew that all our friends would enjoy it. And Sia wanted to go to the science discovery museum. It's OK there, but everyone in town has done that a million times. I know they'd agree with me that my idea is better.

So, I wondered, *should I just give in to*



what Sia wants?

No, I decided. Not this time. This is my birthday, too. I want to do something that I'll really enjoy. That's fair, right?

By the time we sat down at the dinner table, I guess we both looked a bit grumpy. We weren't used to disagreeing, and honestly, it was making me feel a little unhappy. Neither Sia nor I talked much during the meal.

I guess it must have been obvious to our parents. When we were almost done eating, Mom looked at us both. "What's up?" she asked.

Sia didn't say anything for once. Neither did I.

"Girls?" prompted Dad.

"We can't decide about our birthday plans," I explained, keeping my eyes on my empty plate.

"I want to go see the new exhibit at the museum," said Sia.

"And I want to go see the new animated



movie,” I said.

Dad just raised his eyebrows. “I’m sure you two will work it out,” he said.

But something flared up* inside me.

“Maybe we could have two parties,” I suggested. I didn’t know why, because I knew what he’d say. Sabina just rolled her eyes at me. She knew what he’d say, too.

And sure enough, Dad reminded us that we’ve always done it this way, and that because the two of us share most of the same friends, it made more sense for us to share a party. That way, we could include more people.

I knew all that, but today it was making me upset.

“Just because we’ve always done it this way, that doesn’t mean we have to do it the same way this time, does it?” I asked. “After all, we are turning *nine years old*. We aren’t little kids anymore.” My voice was starting to get louder. “We are two *separate* girls. We *each* have a birthday. Why do Sia and I have to



do *everything* together, *always*, as if we were joined at the hip*?”

Sia giggled, and that was the final straw*. She was supposed to be on my side about this! After all, I'm not the only one who wants my own way with the birthday plans.

I threw her an angry look. I told my parents thanks for dinner and asked to be excused, and, when they agreed, I put my dishes in the dishwasher and stomped up to our room.

I just really wanted to be alone.

But it's hard to get privacy when you share a room! So I climbed up onto the top bunk and pinned up my “privacy” bed sheet that hides me from the rest of the world.

I have a shelf beside my mattress where I keep lots of paper, pencils and markers—and the newest cartoon strip that I'm working on. I picked up my pencil and began to draw, and as always, when I started sketching, I cheered up.

Drawing cartoons makes me so happy! I



really want to improve, and one day, when I finish school, become a computer animator. It would be amazing to watch my cartoons come alive as moving pictures.

That's why I want to see as many new animated films as I can. Sure, they're entertaining, but I also learn a lot from them.

Like the new one that's coming to town—the one I *have* to see with all my friends on Saturday. It's not just any animated film. It uses some new animation* techniques that I'm sooo excited to see and learn about.

I'd been holding my breath, waiting for it to arrive!

I heard the bedroom door open, but I didn't peek to see who was there.

“Sab? Sabina?” Sia called.

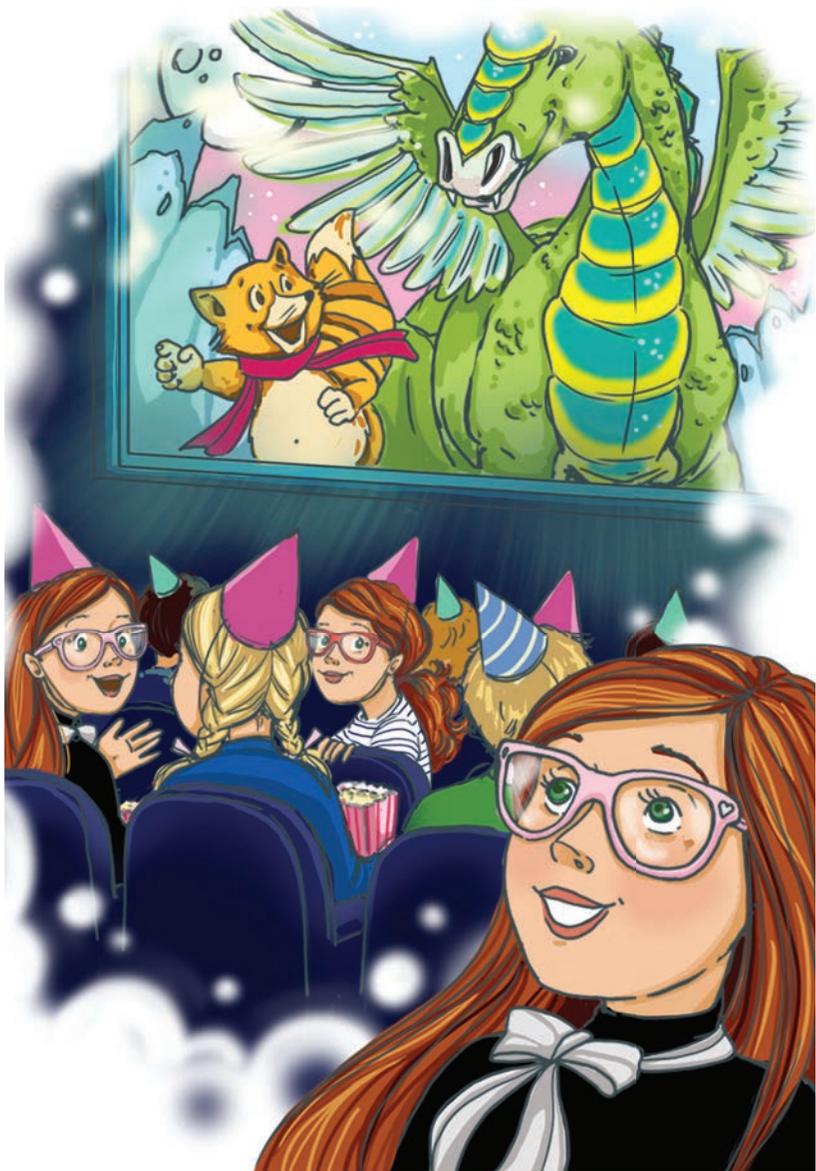
Without lifting my sheet I said, “Yes?”

“I'm sorry for laughing, Sabina,” Sia said, and she actually sounded like she meant it.

“OK. Fine,” I grumbled.

Maybe she sat down at her desk, but I





kept my sheet down and stayed on my bed, drawing. And I felt a little better, but not much.

Because the party activity wasn't sorted out yet.

Because I loved Sia, but I wanted to go to the animated movie and she wanted to do something different. Why? We're *not* the same person. We are twins but *different*.





Chapter Four

FIVE DAYS FROM NOW

I saw Sabina's angry look before she ran upstairs, and I knew right away I shouldn't have giggled. Should I go right up and apologize? I decided not to. I thought it was better to give her time alone first, to calm down a bit.

So instead, I stayed with Mom and Dad, and told them all about doing chromatography at science club. They said they wanted to see how it worked, and it turned out I did have some filter paper with my chemistry set. We put a dot of ink on the filter paper and let the bottom hang in water. The water crept up the paper, and then the ink separated into two colors: blue and yellow. It was so cool!

When we were done, I went upstairs and told Sabina that I was sorry for laughing. She



stayed on her bed behind her sheet, but she seemed to accept my apology. Then I sat down at my desk to write up the chromatography experiment. I wrote all about it in my science notebook and as I did, I began to feel excited about going to the museum on Saturday.

I really hoped we could go. I'd heard that the new chemistry exhibit is very hands-on*. You can even mix some of the chemicals yourself! I know my friends would love that. Who wouldn't?

Plus there's a Van de Graaff generator, which is my very favorite part of the museum. It's a machine that generates static electricity*, and that makes your hair stand out when you touch it!

"Sabina?" I said again after a while. I hoped she'd talk with me about how to sort out our party, but she didn't say anything. Maybe she didn't hear me. She just stayed up in the top bunk, hidden behind her sheet, probably drawing cartoons.





Dad popped his head in to remind us it was time to get ready for bed, and Sabina seemed to hear *him* all right. She climbed down from her bunk and we both quickly changed into our pajamas. I let her have the first turn in the bathroom, but when she came out, she didn't say thanks. She didn't say anything at all.

Oh well, I guess I won't speak to her then! I decided.

We both climbed into bed, silent.

When Mom came in to say goodnight, she was excited.

"I have a great idea!" she said. "Together, you girls have invited ten friends to your party. What about this? What if we divide up at the party? Half the guests can go to the science discovery museum with Sia and me and half the guests can go the movie with Sabina and your dad."

Dad stood in the doorway. "Everyone can meet back at the house for cake. That would work, right?" he asked, smiling.



Mom and Dad both seemed pleased with their idea, but I wasn't sure. I peered up toward the top bunk, cautiously, and Sabina was peering down at me. I was pretty sure my sister would think that idea was a good one and want to do it. After all, she was the one who suggested separate parties.

Hmm...I wasn't sure. It felt wrong to me. Sure, we're separate people but...I couldn't imagine enjoying even part of my birthday party if my twin wasn't there with me.

I wondered what Sabina thought. Up until today, I had always felt pretty certain I knew how Sabina would think or feel about something. But now...

Sabina looked away and she didn't say anything, so neither did I.

"Well," said Mom, brightly, "you need to make up your minds about your party quickly!"

She gave me a kiss, and then Sabina.

"Saturday is only about five days from



now,” added Dad, giving Sabina a kiss, and then me.

I agreed. Absolutely. We did have to make up our minds. But for some reason, we just couldn’t seem to find a way to agree, Sabina and I. And I wasn’t quite sure what to do.





Chapter Five

FRIENDS IN THE MIDDLE

Maybe I want to have my own party after all! I thought, glancing over at Sia as she and I reached the schoolyard with Mom. My sister hadn't said anything about the party last night after Mom and Dad said goodnight, or this morning. She was being extremely frustrating!

"I thought you'd want to chat together about your party plans," Mom said, looking at us both, puzzled. "Is something else troubling you?"

"Nope," I said, lightly, hugging Mom. "See you after school."

I looked at Sia. When an expression of sadness crossed her face, my stomach flip-flopped. I hate it when Sia is upset with me.

Maybe I should just give in after all and



agree to go the museum, I thought.

“And you, Sia?” Mom asked. “Anything else bothering you?”

Sia opened her mouth to reply, and I knew it! I knew that’s what she was going to do—give up her choice for me!

But instead she said, “Nope...see you after school, Mom.” I was so disappointed. She doesn’t seem to care about me as much as I care about her. And she copied my happy tone exactly, and that annoyed me so much. Why copy me? Couldn’t Sia stop even *sounding* like me for at least one day—or even one hour?

As I stood there fuming, I saw two of our friends, Montana Faye and Neveah, waving hello to us from across the yard. Of course Montana Faye was wearing her favorite sweater, the one with a pink horse on the front.

“I wonder which activity your three best friends would prefer,” Mom said. “Knowing that might help you decide.”

Mom said goodbye and headed off to



work, and I could tell Sia was considering Mom's words.

"That might be a good idea," Sia said, "to ask our friends?" She said it without really looking at me, and with sort of a question in her voice.

"OK." I shrugged*. "Let's ask all three—Montana Faye, Neveah and Celicia, too. Maybe at lunchtime."

She nodded, looking a bit surprised. Maybe she wasn't expecting me to agree with her. I was about to surprise her even more by asking her what she thought of Mom and Dad's suggestion of separate parties, when I saw Celicia coming toward us.

She waved at me. "Hey, Sia!" she called. "I want to ask you a quick question about science."

Really? She thought I was Sia?

Celicia gets us mixed up lots more times than our other friends do, and usually Sia and I laugh it off. But right now, right this minute,



it didn't seem so funny to me. Maybe because this week, I just can't seem to enjoy being an identical twin, not one bit.



When lunchtime came along, the five of us did what we always do. Sia and I, Celicia, Montana Faye and Neveah grabbed seats at the lunch table three rows from the front in the cafeteria. Everyone knows we sit there. It's "our" place.

As usual, while we unpacked our lunches, Montana Faye asked me to draw a cartoon horse for her. I saw my sister roll her eyes. I'm not sure if it was because Montana Faye talks about horses so much or if it was because my sketching all the time was bugging Sia!

We ate and chatted for a while, and then Neveah asked what we had planned for our party on Saturday. Sia shot me a quick look. Then she turned to our friends and explained that we were having trouble deciding and we



wanted to know what they thought.

“The science discovery museum is my choice,” said Sia, and our friends nodded. Of course that would be Sia's choice. “It’ll be so much fun! I know you’ve all been there before, but there’s a really cool new chemistry exhibit with hands-on activities. And also, there’s the Van de Graaff machine!”

“I think you’re exaggerating a tiny bit,” I interrupted. “It might not be that much fun for guests who aren’t crazy about science the way you are. And everybody might not get a chance to put their hands on the Van de Graaff. There will be ten guests and the two of us, after all.”

Our friends looked a bit uncomfortable. I guess they weren’t used to hearing us disagree. Celicia looked thoughtful, and then she asked, “What’s your idea for the party, Sabina?”

“I’d take you all to see a new animated film. It’s coming to town this weekend!” I said, enthusiastically. “I know you’d love it! It’s supposed to be really funny and exciting. Plus,



it has some amazing technical features that the animators are trying for the first time. For example...”

My sister interrupted. “The last animated movie we saw wasn’t that good,” she said, frowning. “Plus you understand animation*, Sabina, but we don’t. So there’s no way we’d be interested in all the details about what’s new with the film. It just wouldn’t be as much fun as the museum, I’m sure.”

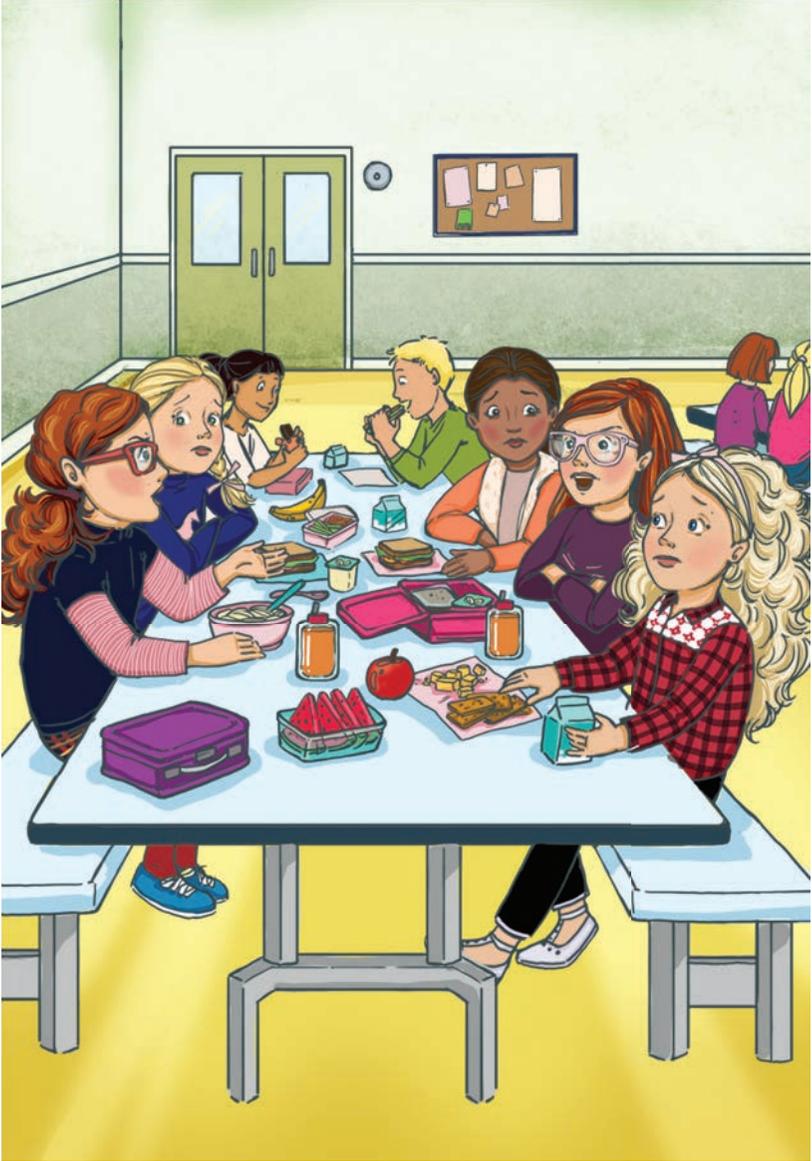
“Well, I disagree,” I replied, hotly. “How can you...?”

Celicia held up her hands. “Hang on you two,” she interrupted. “I’m sure we can find a way to work this out.”

But then Neveah said, “Well, if you’re asking my opinion, I actually think the science museum would be more fun.” Which is what I expected she would say, because she does go to the science club with Sia.

“I think the movie is a cool idea!” Montana Faye said.





Then all of us looked at Celicia. She had become the tiebreaker.

Celicia got all red in the face. “I just don’t know,” she said. “I feel a bit awkward being in the middle like this.”

Then, oh no! She wiped her eyes and I knew she was about to cry. She got up, saying she had to go the bathroom, and then she rushed away. Neveah and Montana Faye jumped up and went after her.

I hoped Sia would go after Celicia, too, and say something. She’s good at things like that, keeping friends and working out problems. But she just sat there, so that’s what I did, too.

But I felt awful. I hate it when things aren’t right between my sister and me. And now things weren’t right with Celicia either! I never meant to make her feel bad.





Chapter Six

WHERE'S CELICIA?

I was about to get up and run after Celicia, but I didn't want Sabina to think I was abandoning* her. So I just sat there, doing nothing. Then I decided I really should go and find Celicia, or at least talk to my sister about what just happened, but the bell rang. Lunch was over.

Sabina and I got up, but she still didn't say anything to me. Did she understand how upset Celicia was? Or was she still just thinking about going to the new animated film? Usually I knew what Sabina was thinking. Usually I could even finish her sentences. Not this time, though.

When we got back to class, I saw Celicia was already there. I knew I had to speak to her



right away. Mom and Dad always tell us not to wait to work out hurt feelings. But our teacher, Ms. Rainbow, stood at the front of the class and instructed us to do silent reading, sitting no closer than an arm's-length to other classmates.

When that was over, I was about to jump up and go over to Celicia, but Ms. Rainbow said, "Stay where you are please."

She assigned a creative writing project for us to do in pairs, and she said we had to choose the person sitting closest to us.

I looked over at Celicia. She was still looking upset and I wanted to ask her to be my partner. I waited until the teacher looked away, and I began slip-sliding my way closer to Celicia. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Sabina doing the same thing.

But then, Ms. Rainbow said, "OK, have you all buddied up?"

She looked right at me. So I had to be Neveah's partner, because I was closest to her, and that was fine. But what about Celicia?



Celicia was now with Ms. Rainbow and Robert, and I realized that Ms. Rainbow had made them partners.

Oh, no. Celicia wouldn't be very happy about that. Where was Sabina?

She was standing near Montana Faye. And my sister was frowning at me! What? *She thinks this is my fault?*

Is it? I wondered.

But what mattered most was the bad feeling I had that Celicia would think Sabina and I didn't pick her to be our partner on purpose. She might think we were mad at her because she didn't choose one of our party ideas.

Ms. Rainbow suggested to Celicia and Robert and a few other pairs that they work in the hallway where it was quieter. So now I couldn't speak to Celicia and apologize for another chunk of time! Everything just seemed to be getting worse and worse.

The afternoon went on, and Sabina seemed



to be having fun with Montana Faye, as usual. When I went to sharpen my pencil, I heard Montana Faye ask Sabina if they could work horses into their story. Sabina said, “Sure, as long as I can draw cartoon illustrations for the story!”

And actually I began to have fun with Neveah. We decided to have the characters in our story do a science experiment, and we made up all kinds of ways they could mix chemicals and maybe even have an explosion!

But suddenly Celicia hurried into the classroom. She went to her hook at the side of the room and grabbed her backpack. She hurried past me, looking like she was going to burst into tears.

Oh no! This must be because of Sabina and me!

“Celicia, wait!” I said. But she wouldn’t even look at me. She rushed up to Ms. Rainbow and whispered something to her urgently.

Looking concerned, Ms. Rainbow nodded





and walked into the hallway with Celicia. Soon our teacher returned alone.

“Celicia needed to go home,” she told us all. “Now please put away your stories. It’s time to gather for some end-of-day activities.”

I could hardly focus on what she was saying, and Sabina looked worried, too.

As soon as the bell rang and school was over, Ms. Rainbow took Sabina and me aside.

“Celicia asked me to give you a message,” she said. “She’s sorry that she won’t be able to come to your party.”

“But what happened?” The words burst out of me. “Is she OK?”

Ms. Rainbow said gently, “I’m sorry, but I can’t say, Sia.”

As Ms. Rainbow turned to speak to some other students, I turned to Sabina.

“I think we’ve really upset our friend,” I said, my voice shaking.





Chapter Seven

SO COMPLICATED!

I felt horrible. This was supposed to be a fun week leading up to our birthday, but it was turning out to be so complicated! Celicia had left school early because she was upset with us.

Usually I love Tuesdays because it's the day I have art club after school, but not today. Sia headed over to the after-school program to hang out and wait for me, and I went to my club. But I didn't enjoy it much.

As soon as art club was over, I hurried to meet Sia in the after-school program room. We stood there waiting for Mom without saying much to each other. After she arrived and signed us out, we jumped in the car without speaking.

When Mom asked if everything was OK,



I didn't want to tell her what was wrong. I felt guilty about pressuring Celicia to agree that my party idea was best. Maybe Sia felt guilty, too, because after I told Mom that everything was fine, so did she.

At dinnertime, our parents asked us again if we'd decided anything about our party.

But by now, you know what? I hardly even cared. I had a bad feeling that Sia wanted a separate party, but now I just wished she'd come out and say so if she did. I felt everything would be OK if we could talk to each other like we used to. If I knew what she was thinking without her saying anything. If I could finish her sentences and she could finish mine.

I felt a lump in my throat.

But instead, Sia said she hadn't decided yet about the party. So I swallowed hard and managed to squeak out, "Me neither."

That night, when I got into bed, I thought more about it. *This is crazy. I'm miserable. And so is Celicia. And maybe Sia is, too. What*



should we do?

Well, Mom and Dad always say it helps to get your priorities* straight. That means sifting through everything and deciding what's most important.

I decided to try it. I thought about all the things that seemed so important, like our birthday party and going to the new animated film. Then suddenly I realized what was at the top of my list...*of course!*

Not the film. Nope. Staying best friends with my sister was at the top of my list. And right up there next to it? Staying friends with Celicia.

Celicia had been so upset today. Making her choose which of our ideas she liked best wasn't a fair thing to do to a friend. It was like we were making her choose between us. And that's almost what Sia and I were doing to each other. Forcing each other to choose whether to put our favorite party activity first, ahead of doing something together.





So I knew what my two top priorities were and then...BAM! Just like that I had a brainstorm*. I knew exactly what to do about the party and Celicia.

“Sia!” I whispered, urgently. But when I peered down over the side of the bunk, I saw she was asleep.

That was OK. I smiled with relief. I knew just what I’d tell her in the morning.





Chapter Eight

WE NEED TO TALK

“Sabina,” I said, breathlessly.

It was Wednesday morning and Dad had just dropped us at school. We’d all gotten up late. Sabina and I barely had time to dress and eat breakfast before it was time to jump in the car. As soon as Dad stopped the car at the curb in front of school, we jumped out.

The bell was ringing and I knew Sabina and I should rush inside, but I couldn’t bear it anymore. I just had to talk to my twin sister. Now. About Celia and about our birthday party. The birthday party problem was making me so upset. How could it be that the very thing we were supposed to be celebrating was driving us apart?

Sabina stopped, just inside the schoolyard.



I tried to continue, “We need to talk about Celicia.”

But Sabina started talking at the same time as me. And she said the exact same thing. This time, though, it made me feel good.

We both stopped talking, and then we both started talking again at the exact same time, saying, “I feel guilty about making her so unhappy.” We both stopped again. I laughed, and while I did, Sabina spoke.

“We really should’ve phoned Celicia yesterday...”

“Right after we got home from school...”
I continued.

“And apologized...” she said.

“But I was feeling so guilty and now we’ve waited...”

“*Such* a long time to talk to her...”

“*Too* long, so we should go right away and talk to her...”

“*Right now*...”

“And *apologize!*”



It felt so good to be talking together again! Sabina said, “We’ve been ridiculous, fighting over our birthday, and the most important thing is...”

“That we celebrate it...”

“*Together!*” we both said.

“And I have an idea,” said Sabina. “We’ll have one birthday party at our house, and...”

“We’ll divide it up, half for you and half for me!”

We had the same idea, that each of us would choose and prepare the activity for our half of the party, with the help of our parents, of course. We’d finish the party with cake and ice cream, as always.

We stood there grinning at each other. “Great minds think alike!” I said.

“I’m not going to argue with you about that!” said Sabina.

We were really late now, so we ran to catch the end of our line just as it was going into the school. Luckily, Celia was second



from the end.

“Celicia, we need to talk to you,” I said.

“Please,” added Sia.

Celicia stepped out of line. “Sure,” she agreed, even though one of the teachers was frowning at us.

“Just really quick,” I said. “Listen, we are both really, really sorry about making you choose between our two party activities yesterday. And we’re sorry neither of us asked you to be our writing partner.”

“And our birthday won’t really be fun without you,” said Sabina. “So you have to come.”

“You *have* to,” I repeated, and added, “Please.”

Celicia actually smiled at us. I was so relieved.

“It’s not that I didn’t want to come to your party,” she said.

“But yesterday afternoon,” interrupted Sabina, “you told Ms. Rainbow to tell us you





couldn't come, and you were so upset with us, and at lunch that day you were planning to come..."

"Sure, I was a bit upset about what happened at lunch," agreed Celicia, "but it didn't change my mind about your party. And I know we can't always be pairs when there are five of us."

She went on, "When I was in the hallway with Robert, the principal came by and told me that my granny had been taken to the hospital."

"Oh, no!" I said.

"I'm so sorry," said Sia.

Just then the teacher called out to us, "Come along right now, girls!"

The three of us headed up the steps into the school and down the hallway together, still talking.

"Gran's actually going to be OK," Celicia said, smiling. "But I didn't know that yesterday. I had to hurry to the office because my mother was picking me up right then. I didn't think I'd



be back at school for a while or be able to come to the party. I thought you might want to invite someone else to take my spot. So I asked Ms. Rainbow to give you the message.”

I could hardly believe it. That was so like Celicia. She was such a nice, thoughtful friend.

“That’s such good news about your granny,” I said.

“Yes, and guess what?” finished Celicia. “I can come to your party after all!”

“Fantastic!” Sabina and I exclaimed, and the three of us burst out laughing.





Chapter Nine

BUTTERFLIES INSPIRE!

As soon as Mom picked us up after school, Sia and I told her everything that had happened with Celicia—*everything!* We also told her about our great idea for our birthday party and we told Dad about it, too, at dinner. Both Mom and Dad approved.

We decided that we'd all go and get party supplies on Friday after school. Which meant I had only two days to think of what I wanted to do for my party activities. But at least this kind of thinking and planning was fun!

For the first time all week, I was actually starting to get excited about my birthday... about *our* birthday!



Thursday was our class field trip. Good thing Ms. Rainbow had reminded us about it at the end of school yesterday afternoon. In all the kerfuffle*, I'd almost completely forgotten about our trip to an indoor butterfly garden!

Sia and I sat together on the school bus on the way there.

"I love butterflies," Sia told me. "They are scientific marvels*! How do caterpillars make cocoons*? What goes on inside there? How do caterpillars turn into butterflies?" She sighed happily. "And how do butterflies eat?"

I smiled. My sister was full of questions, as always!

In the meantime, I glanced through one of our classroom books that's full of photos of the most beautiful butterflies. I loved seeing their different colors and shapes!

When we walked into the indoor garden it was like being in an animated movie. The butterflies flitted and fluttered here and there. They landed and waved their delicate wings, as



if they were putting on a show just for me.

Sia and I had brought our family's camera. I took photo after photo, trying to show a butterfly on a leaf, and then in flight with the wings at different angles, and then landing on another leaf.

Then it was Sia's turn to use the camera. So I pulled out my sketchbook and began drawing the butterflies. First on a leaf, and then in flight, and then landing again. It was so much fun trying to capture the different "poses."

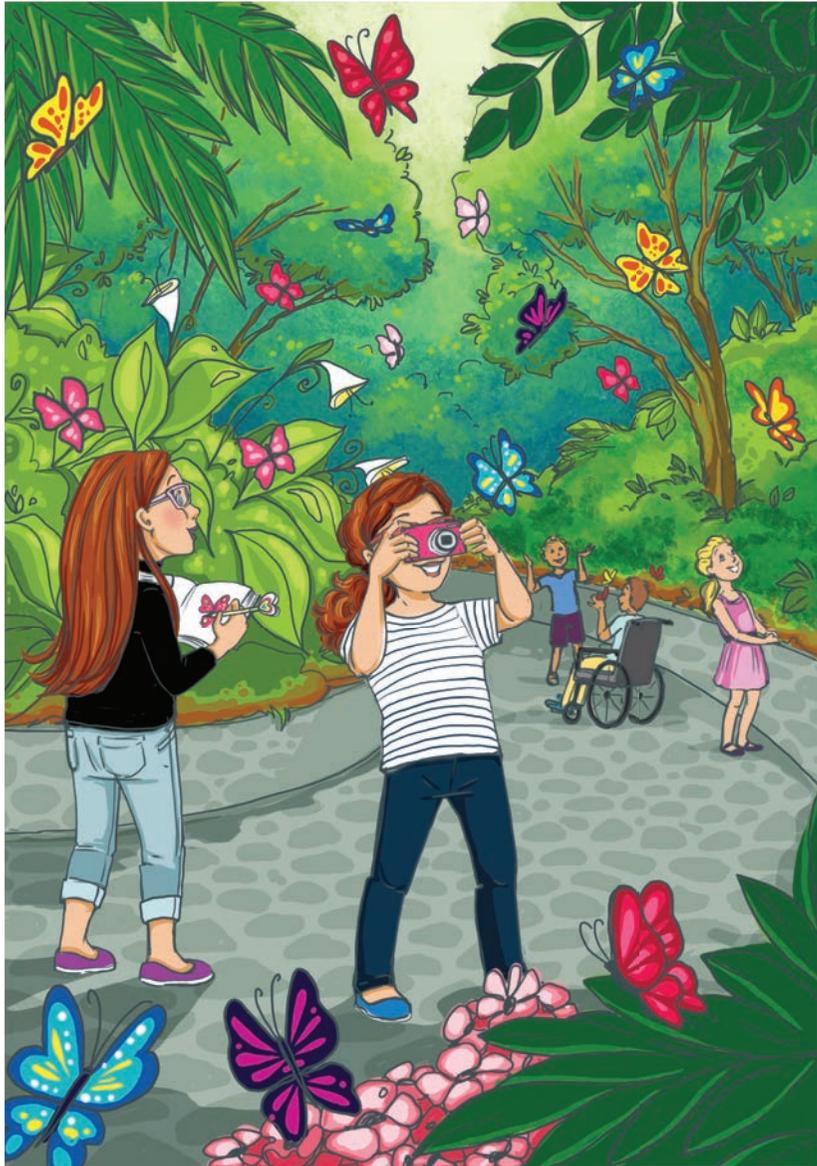
If only I had a way to combine all those drawings into something that would show the movement.

I couldn't stop talking about butterflies on the way home, and neither could Sabina. I admired the way they moved. Sia had spent her whole time watching different butterflies use their proboscis* to eat.

"We love them for different reasons..." began Sia.

"...but the way we feel about them is the





same,” I said, finishing her thought.

Suddenly we both looked at each other. We knew we’d had the same idea!

Sure enough, at dinner, when our parents asked us if we’d decided on a theme for our party decorations, Sia and I said we had. We wanted a butterfly theme.

Right after dinner, I wanted to get started on planning the activities for my half of the party. “Is it OK if I do my planning in the living room?” I asked.

“And I’ll use our bedroom?” asked Sia.

“So you’re going to keep your party activities a surprise for each other?” Mom asked. “More fun that way?”

Sia and I both nodded. Exactly!



On Friday, both Mom and Dad arrived at school to pick up Sia and me and whisk us away to the shops. In a short time we found the perfect decorations: butterfly paper plates,



cups and napkins, butterfly party hats, and even balloons with butterflies on them.

Sia spied some colorful streamers*. “We can make some paper butterflies ourselves and they can hang from these!” she suggested.

Then we broke into pairs, Sia with Dad and me with Mom. Off we went to find the materials we each needed for our half of the party.

Loaded down with bags, we met back at the car. I hid my bags from my sister. I didn’t want her to be able to tell from the writing on the bag what stores Dad and I had been in. It might have been too much of a clue.

Next we went to get groceries for the party food. Then we headed back home and Dad whipped up his “quick and easy” pasta dish for dinner. After Sabina and I helped tidy up, Mom called us into the living room.

“We have a birthday gift for each of you, and we’d like to give them to you tonight...” Mom explained.



“...even though your birthday isn’t until tomorrow,” Dad said.

Sia and I smiled at each other. Lots of times Mom and Dad finished each other’s sentences. It gave us a good feeling because we knew it meant that they were good friends, close enough to know what each other was going to say next!

Sia opened her gift first. When she saw the gift was a bright blue microscope, her eyes opened wide. She just stared at it. And for a moment, yes...my sister was actually speechless!

She ran to Mom and Dad and threw her arms around them. “This is amazing!” she cried.

And me? I held my breath when I saw the wrapped box that was for me. Slowly and carefully, I peeled away the paper.

Oh my gosh! Just what I was hoping for: an animation software* program just for kids.

“Now I’ll be able to make my cartoons move!” I shrieked, clutching it close. “This is



fantastic!”

I ran to Mom and Dad and tried to hug them, too, and the box was in the way, but I didn't even want to set it down.

“Happy birthday, girls,” said Mom and Dad.

“Thank you soooo much,” I told them. Sia still hadn't stopped smiling, and I couldn't stop either.





Chapter Ten

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

“Happy birthday, Sabina!” I called, as soon as I opened my eyes. “It’s Saturday morning. Today’s our birthday!”

“Finally,” said Sabina. I looked up and saw her peering down at me from her bed above. “I’ve been waiting forever for you to wake up, sleepyhead!”

It’s our tradition to get up at the same time on our birthday—but not to wake each other up. I’m always the one who wakes up last.

Soon we were both hurrying down the stairs to see what our special birthday breakfast would be. Mom and Dad greeted us with more birthday kisses and hugs, and then—ta-dah! Mom put plates full of butterfly-shaped pancakes in front of Sia and me.



“I thought this might be a nice way to get into the butterfly spirit!” Mom said, grinning.

We gobbled them up. Then, right away, the four of us began to decorate the living room and the TV room. Mom and Sia strung the streamers, Dad blew up balloons, and I hung them from the streamers. Then Mom and Sia set the table for our birthday party lunch, with the party plates, cups and napkins. Dad and I cut short stacks of bread slices into butterfly shapes and made sandwiches with them. We washed some grapes, peeled carrots and made lemonade.

Sabina went to get her shopping bags of materials, and asked me not to come into the TV room.

“Can you give me a hand, Mom?” she called.

At the same time, I went and got my materials. Dad began helping me to set out my activities in the living room.

Before I knew it, it was noon. We all got



together back in the kitchen.

“Nice going, team,” said Mom, high-fiving me, and then Sabina, and then Dad.

“Guess we’re just about ready for the guests,” I said.

Dad raised his eyebrows. He stared pointedly at me and then Sabina.

“What?” I asked him, confused.

Mom began giggling.

“What?” Sabina asked.

Suddenly Sabina and I both realized at the same time: We were still in our pajamas!

We burst out laughing and rushed back upstairs to change.



“That was a yummy lunch,” said Celicia.

“Great party hats,” said Brian, with a straight face.

“Love them,” added Robert. The boys were actually wearing two party hats each!

Sabina gave me a nudge. “OK, time for





you to do your thing!” she told me.

I stood up and explained our plan to our friends. I told them that Sabina and I had agreed that I’d share my activities first, and I asked everyone to come into the living room.

“It’s going to be a science experiment,” I heard Peter say to Reena. “I just know it.”

“Well, obviously,” Reena said. “Everyone knows Sia is science crazy!”

I grinned to myself, and when everyone was quiet, I announced, “You all know how much my sister loves animation. So because it’s her birthday, we’re going to do some animation activities that she’ll enjoy!”

Sabina’s mouth dropped open. I love it when that happens!

I kept on going. “We’re going to make stained-glass butterfly mobiles that really move,” I said, showing them the many colors of tissue paper, cardboard and paper. I showed them an example of a butterfly that I’d already made, and then I showed them how they could tie one,



and then more, to a hanger.

“You can take it home and hang it up where there’s a breeze,” I suggested.

Sabina clapped her hands together. “The butterflies will flit and float just like they did in the butterfly garden!”

Everyone got busy, and everyone liked the activity, but I think Sabina enjoyed it the most.

“And now, one more activity,” I announced. “We’re going to make flipbooks. That way, we can all find out how much fun it is to animate a cartoon!”

“Yes!” cried Sabina, punching her fist into the air, and all our friends laughed.

I showed everyone the sample I’d made. I explained how I’d cut out strips of paper and stapled them together on one side to make a booklet. Then I’d drawn a simple cartoon on each strip. For one, I’d drawn a pig, over and over again, one on each strip. But on each strip, I had changed the cartoon a little bit. The pig opened his mouth and his eyes got wider and



wider. On the final strips, I had drawn a speech balloon with the word “Oink!” and then one with “Oink! Oink!”

When I held the booklet and flipped the pages quickly, it looked like the cartoon was moving. It looked like the pig was oinking.

“Cool!” said Robert, nodding. “I want to make one!”

I handed out all the booklets, some scrap paper, and pencils with erasers. I suggested that everyone concentrate* on coming up with an idea for a cartoon first, and then transfer it into the booklet.

Of course, eight of the ten guests instantly had questions. I looked at Sabina, helplessly.

“Um, sis?” I asked. “If I help Brian, Veong, Montana Faye, Robert and Neveah, would you be able to help Reena, Sam, Peter, Celicia and Julia?”

“Sure,” she agreed, happily.





Chapter Eleven

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

I loved helping make flipbooks and I even had time to make one of my own. I showed it to Sia, flipping the pages quickly to make the cartoon move. It was me, dressed like a butterfly, letting go of a balloon which floated to the sky. I was saying, “Thank you for the fun activities, twin!”

“You’re welcome,” said Sia. “I’m glad you liked them.”

“And now,” I announced, “we’re moving into the TV room. It’s time for the second half of the party activities!”

I overheard Reena say to Peter, “It’s going to be more animation activities. I just know it.”

“Well, obviously,” Peter said. “Everyone knows Sabina is crazy about animation!”



I grinned to myself and hurried ahead to the TV room. Before opening the door, I announced, “You all know how much my sister loves science. So because it’s her birthday, we’re going to do some science activities that she’ll enjoy!”

When I opened the door and said, “Welcome to the lab!” Sia’s mouth dropped open, just like mine had earlier. I love it when that happens!

Dad and I had prepared the table with several activities. I asked everyone to take a seat. In front of each seat was an aluminum tray with a small amount of vinegar in a container, a deflated balloon with a small amount of baking soda in it, an empty water bottle and plastic safety glasses. After Mom and Dad gave us our gifts last night, Dad and I had gathered empty bottles from our recycling bins.

“Here’s our first science experiment!” I announced. I instructed everyone to pour the vinegar into their bottle. Then I showed them



how to stretch the mouth of the balloon over the top of the bottle. Everyone followed along.

“Sia will count to three,” I explained next. “When she says ‘three,’ lift your balloons up so that the baking soda drops into your bottle.”

All the guests agreed.

“OK, Sia, go!”

“One...two...three!” cried Sia.

“Wow!” everyone gasped, because when the baking soda dropped into the vinegar, it caused a chemical reaction*. The balloons began to fill with air. Not only that, but they were inflating into the shape of butterflies.

“Butterfly balloons!” Sia shrieked in delight. She grinned at me and I grinned back.

“Now, the fingerprint activity,” I announced. I reminded our friends that even though Sia and I were twins, we each had unique fingerprints. “Each person in the world has fingerprints unlike anyone else’s.”

“Sia, will you help me? We’re going to help everyone make a set of their fingerprints,”



I said.

“Sure thing,” Sia said happily.

We gave each guest a piece of white paper, and we went from guest to guest with an ink pad. We helped our friends press their fingers on the ink pad, one by one, and then gently roll each fingertip, one by one, onto their paper. Everyone ended up with a piece of paper with their ten fingerprints on it.

“Now Sia is going to help you look at your fingerprints using her new microscope. You can compare them to one another’s and see how they are different!”

Robert went first. “Very cool!” he exclaimed. “I can see the swirls and whirls on each of my fingerprints.” He asked Montana Faye if he could look at hers and compare them to his.

“It’s really true. Each one is different!” he announced.

Everyone laughed.

“My turn next,” said Sam, eagerly.





“Then me. OK, Sia?” said Julia.

Before I knew it, my part of the party was done. Mom called us back into the dining room, and then she and Dad came out of the kitchen, each holding a birthday cake. Each cake was shaped like a butterfly but was in different colors.

“Each cake is the same but different. Each cake is special, just like our two wonderful daughters,” said Mom.

All our friends clapped, and then they burst out singing the “Happy Birthday” song, one song for both of us. I looked at Sia and I knew she felt the same way: We didn’t mind at all.

While Sia and I blew out the candles on our cakes, I made a secret birthday wish. “I hope Sia and I are always the best of friends.”

I was wondering what Sia had wished, when she looked at me and winked. And then I was pretty sure I knew. After all, twins do very often think alike, you know!





Chapter Twelve

TWINS FOREVER

As I blew out my birthday candles, I made a wish that Sabina and I will always be best friends.

I looked at Sabina and winked. I was pretty sure that she was wishing the same thing. After all, twins do very often think alike, you know!



“What a great party!” I said, after the last party guest had left.

“The best one ever,” agreed Sabina.

Mom and Dad came over and hugged us. “We’re so proud of how you worked out your differences about your party,” Dad said.

“Very proud,” echoed Mom.



“And now, we have a special gift for you,” said Dad.

“But you already gave us our gifts...” I protested.

“...and we love them!” said Sabina.

Mom pulled out two little bags from behind her back. She gave one to me and one to Sabina.

“For two very special daughters,” said Dad.

“Let’s open them together, at the same time,” suggested Sabina. “After all, we are twins.”

I looked at her and smiled.

“OK!” I agreed. “On the count of three. One...two...three!”

We both opened our gifts.

I couldn’t believe it! In my bag was a shining, silvery necklace with a pendant*. It was half a heart, and on it was the word “Twins.”

Sabina showed me her gift, a matching





chain with a pendant. It was the other half of the heart! It also had the word “Twins” on it.

We placed them together. They fit perfectly, the two of them making one complete heart, just like the two of us making one perfectly wonderful friendship!



Glossary

*Many words have more than one meaning. Here are the definitions of words marked with this symbol * (an asterisk) as they are used in this story.*

abandoning: *leaving and never returning*

animation: *a process that makes drawings look like they are moving*

animator: *a person who creates animated movies or TV shows*

beauty mark: *a small, dark mark on someone's face*

brainstorm: *a sudden bright idea*

chemical reaction: *a process that changes one or more substances into other substances*

chemistry set: *a box with simple equipment to do chemistry experiments at home*

chromatography: *a process that separates a mixture into parts by moving them through something non-moving, such as paper*

cocoon: *a covering that a caterpillar makes around itself to protect it while it changes into a butterfly*



concentrate: *to think very hard about something*

filter paper: *paper that easily absorbs and separates liquids, often used in chemistry experiments*

final straw: *the last in a series of bad things, that causes someone to take action*

flared up: *caused a sudden feeling of anger*

frustrated: *feeling irritated and helpless*

hands-on: *encourages active participation in an activity instead of just watching*

hesitated: *paused*

impose: *cause an inconvenience*

“joined at the hip”: *an expression meaning that two people are always together*

kerfuffle: *commotion or fuss*

lens: *clear, curved piece of glass used in a microscope to make something appear bigger*

marvels: *things that are wonderful and amazing*

middle ground: *something that two people with different ideas can both agree on; a compromise*

mood: *the way a person feels*



pendant: *a piece of jewelry that hangs on a chain*

priorities: *things that are more important than other things*

proboscis: *a long thin tube that forms part of a butterfly's mouth*

shrugged: *raised and lowered shoulders to show you don't know or care*

shrug it off: *forget about something that you've decided not to worry about*

software: *programs and information used by a computer system*

static electricity: *electricity that collects on an object's surface and can cause a mild shock when you touch it*

streamers: *long narrow pieces of colored paper or plastic used as decorations*

technique: *a way of doing something by using a special skill*





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Dusting for Fingerprints

Sia and Sabina showed their party guests how to make fingerprints with ink and compare them.

They explained that each person has unique fingerprints. That's why detectives look for fingerprints at a crime scene. If they find fingerprints and can match them to their owner, that can help them identify who was at the scene!

How can we find and identify fingerprints? Our skin produces natural oils. When we touch objects, some of this oil is left behind. It shows up as fingerprints. That's why we can find fingerprints by "dusting" for them.

Try this fingerprint dusting activity on your own or with your friends!

Supplies You Will Need:

Hand lotion (optional)
Cornstarch
Small paintbrush
Cellophane tape
Black construction paper

1. Rub some hand lotion into your fingers. You can skip this step if you want, because you have natural oil in your skin and can leave fingerprints without the lotion—but using lotion will make it easier to find your prints!
2. To leave fingerprints, touch a flat surface, such as a table, with your fingertips.
3. Sprinkle a bit of cornstarch onto the prints. You should be able to see them.
4. With a small paintbrush, gently brush away the extra starch, leaving only the starch that is sticking to your fingerprints.
5. Carefully place a small amount of tape on top of one fingerprint. Use it to lift the starchy print off the table.
6. Place the tape on a piece of black construction paper so you can see the fingerprint clearly. Repeat for all the fingerprints!

Fact: Even identical twins do not share the same fingerprints!





About the Author

Susan Hughes is an award-winning writer of more than 30 children's books, including picture books, chapter books, young adult novels, non-fiction for all ages, and even a graphic non-fiction book. Susan is also a freelance editor who works with educational publishers to develop student books and teacher materials for a variety of grade levels. In addition, she helps coach and guide other writers in revising and polishing their own manuscripts.

About the Illustrator

Passionate about drawing from an early age, Géraldine Charette decided to pursue her studies in computer multimedia in order to further develop her style and technique. Her favorite themes to explore in her illustrations are fashion and urban life. In her free time, Géraldine loves to paint and travel. She is passionate about horses and loves spending time at the stable. It's where she feels most at peace and gives her time to think and fuel her creativity.



Party Plans Go Pop became the book that you are holding in your hands with the assistance of the talented people at Maison Battat Inc., including Joe Battat, Dany Battat, Loredana Ramacieri, Sandy Jacinto, Véronique Casavant, Véronique Chartrand, Jenny Gambino, Arlee Stewart, Natalie Cohen, Karen Woods, and Pam Shrimpton.





this is OUR story®

Party Plans Go Pop!

Sia™ and Sabina™ are twin sisters. Besides being identical, they like many of the same things, such as chocolate brownies, jokes and dancing.

They love being in the same class at school, plus sharing a room and a bunk bed at home.

But when it's time to decide how to celebrate their birthday, the trouble starts. For the first time ever, the sisters disagree.

They each want to do something different.

Maybe they won't even share the same party this year....

When they ask their best friends for their opinions on the birthday plans, Celicia becomes upset. Later she says she can't come to the party at all!

Will the twins find a way to become friends with each other again? How will they convince Celicia to join them on their special day? And can they agree on just one birthday activity? If not, it looks like Sia and Sabina's birthday party plans are about to go pop!

It's impossible to separate **Our Generation**® characters from the generation of girls who read about and play with them, for they are one and the same.

They're changing the world by making their households greener. They're baking cupcakes to help charities. They're writing in their journals, practicing for recitals, doing cartwheels down the block and giggling with their friends until they can hardly breathe. **Our Generation** is about girls growing up together. "This is our story" reflects the community of these amazing girls as they laugh, learn and create the narrative of their own generation.

Ages 7 and up

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