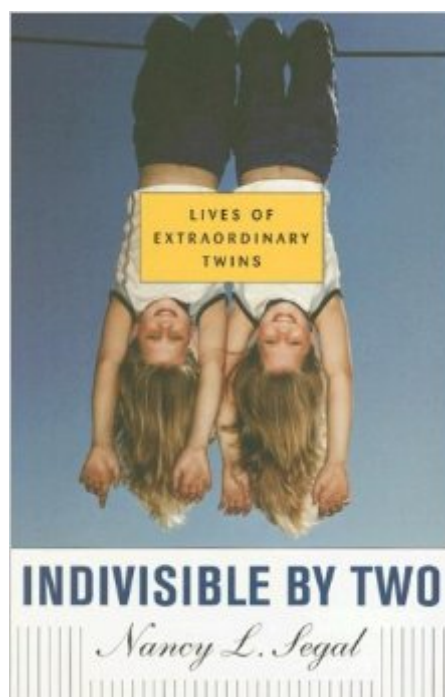


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Indivisible By Two: Lives Of Extraordinary Twins



Synopsis

A leading expert on twins delves into the stories behind her research to reveal the profound joys and real-life traumas of twelve remarkable sets of twins, triplets, and quadruplets. *Indivisible by Two* introduces us to an assortment of memorable characters, from the "Fireman Twins"--brothers who, though reared separately, are astonishingly similar in personality and behavioral traits--to the twin sisters who overcame one twin's infertility by having the other serve as her surrogate mother. We meet one of the few identical brother-sister pairs in the world after one of two sisters was surgically transformed into a man, and identical triplet brothers, only one of whom is gay while the others are straight. We see uniquely blended families--identical twin brothers marrying identical twin sisters, and Chinese twins adopted by different Canadian families yet raised as sisters. Being a twin can also render the experience of historical tragedy uniquely painful. We meet Stepha and Annetta, survivors of Josef Mengele's heinous experiments in Auschwitz, and untangle the troubled lifelong tie between Jack and Oskar, born in the 1930s to a Jewish father and a German Gentile mother, one raised as a Jew in Trinidad and the other as a Catholic and a member of the Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany. Segal unravels these stories and others with an eye for the challenges that life as a twin (or triplet or quadruplet) can pose to parents, friends, and spouses, as well as the twins themselves. These moving stories remind us how incompletely any theory explains real life--twin or not.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Harvard University Press (September 30, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674025709

ISBN-13: 978-0674025707

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.8 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,191,566 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #67 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Twins & Multiples](#) #350 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Siblings](#) #668 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Adolescent Psychology](#)

Customer Reviews

The twins, triplets and quadruplets profiled here are fascinating. There are all kinds of interesting situations written about---twins separated at birth, quadruplets that are actually double sets of identical twins, selectively mute twins, identical twins knowingly adopted by two different families and many more. I wish I could say I loved this book, but as with the author's other book on twins, and even more here, there is a terrible need of better editing! The author has several quirks to her writing. She throws as many details as she can into each paragraph, often with a pretty much unrelated idea at the end of one! She loves to quote people, which is nice, but she quotes them with abandon, whether the quotes really have much to do with what is being written about. She describes people's looks and what they are wearing to an odd extent, and she often analyses people's feelings based on single statements. I think she's a remarkable researcher and that she truly cares about the people she writes about, but she is not a writer at heart, and she needs a little more help making her writing as good as her topics.

Dr. Segal has given us yet another delightful chance to learn more about who we are through the study of twins, this time using their unique stories. This book is a smooth read about different sets of multiples. Each story is compelling in its presentation of a different aspect of twins or other multiples. As an example, the story of triplets, two of which were stricken with multiple sclerosis, tells us so much about how nature (genetics) and nurture (environment) mix their influences on us. Just when you start to think one aspect starts to dominate the other one nudges itself into the human swirl that we are. This book is a superb follow up to her more technical work shown in her first book, *Entwined Lives*. In contrast to that book, which was loaded with scientific facts and academic studies, she continues to tell us of the importance of twin studies through the lives of twins with unusual stories. Found in these stories are many of the conclusions and observations made in the first book. Dr. Segal has a knack of packing a lot into a few words. I stopped marking the important sentences because every paragraph seemed to be a highlight. Also in this effort she reveals more about herself and her own twinship. It is obvious in this book her important research has resulted from both the outside and inside perspectives of twins. This is a must read for any twin or anyone desiring to learn more about how we become who we are. It blasts past the typical twin anecdotes with new meaning as well as depth. Being an identical twin myself, I found both of Dr. Segal's books have helped me immensely in understanding my own twinship, and perhaps more importantly, the loss of my twin some years ago. I have found much comfort in knowing how and why natural clones are not perfect copies of each other.

Twin expert Nancy Segal has managed to track down and interview various sets of interesting twins -- those who survived Mengele's horrific experiments during the Holocaust, "the firemen twins," who were separated at birth and twins who married other twins. I found the resulting book so fascinating, I devoured it in one weekend. Congratulations on a job well done, Nancy.

I found this book very interesting and think I will probably read more books about twins by this author. The sentence structure could have been improved at times to make the information easier to understand, but the book was definitely worth reading. At times I was surprised at things the author revealed about people in the book, but I trust she had their permission and approval. At the end of the book, the author mentions her thoughts on human cloning. I don't think human cloning is a good idea, but I found the author's thoughts on it interesting.

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