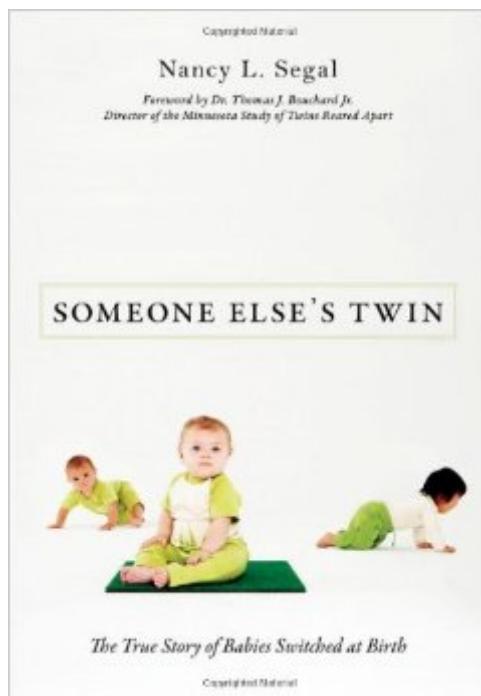


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Someone Else's Twin: The True Story Of Babies Switched At Birth



Synopsis

The combination of a riveting true story and cutting-edge twin research makes this book an irresistible page-turner. Identical twins Begoña and Delia were born thirty-eight years ago in Spain's Canary Islands. Due to chaotic conditions at the hospital or simple human error, the unthinkable happened: Delia was unintentionally switched with another infant in the baby nursery. This fascinating story describes in vivid detail the consequences of this unintentional separation of identical twin sisters. The author considers not only the effects on these particular sisters, but the important implications of this and similar cases for questions concerning identity, familial bonds, nature-nurture, and the law.

Book Information

Hardcover: 301 pages

Publisher: Prometheus Books (August 23, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1616144378

ISBN-13: 978-1616144371

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 0.9 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (20 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,491,702 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #72 in Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Twins & Multiples #428 in Books > Parenting & Relationships > Family Relationships > Siblings #895 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Developmental Psychology

Customer Reviews

As an adopted child, I'm extremely interested in the topic, yet Ms. Segal's dry style and repetitiveness of the information in the book bored me. In the hands of a more creative writer, the stories would've been more suspenseful and enjoyable to read. Ms. Segal spent too much time on the setup, on how she'd gotten to Canary Islands, on how wonderful her translator was, e.t.c. The speech of the family members involved in the switch sounded as if they had a Ph.D. instead of being cooks and dishwashers; it lacked authenticity. If you're not an academic, skip this book. If you are, I can't give you advice.

When I first learned of this book I was very excited to read it. I'm interested in twins, and the bonds

between them, and, in addition to that, I lived in Spain for 18 months. However, the book is so poorly written that it makes a very intriguing story almost tedious to read. She shares way too much information that is unimportant, and give too many of her own opinions which color the way the viewer sees the people involved. Interesting story, terribly written.

I just finished reading Someone Else's Twin - a great title, by the way! Nancy Segal is a truly gifted investigative reporter - her research skills and knowledge add a tremendous sensibility to her lively writing style. It is very evident that this book is a labor of love; it defines Segal's focused dedication to understanding the underpinnings of twinship. Twenty-eight year old female identical twins inadvertently discover that they were switched at birth. The book chronicles how the lives of the twins and their families were impacted by this discovery. Segal discusses in vivid detail the psychological, legal, and sociological ramifications of such an event. Her tale is moving, and Segal does an excellent job describing how such a discovery can have both positive and negative outcomes. She presents the material in an evenhanded manner, bravely examining the joy as well as the sadness and emotional trauma involved in such a discovery in adulthood.

The topic of the book, the stories the author had to tell, and the analysis she had to offer, were great. She can't write worth a damn. Too much attention to irrelevant detail (we needed to know how high the heels were on the shoes exactly why?) and no real organization apparent. This could have been an excellent book with the right editor and the self-discipline not to publish every thought no matter how trivial. Very disappointing; I'm glad I borrowed it from the library and didn't spend my cash on it.

Author Segal, herself a twin and also an expert on twin research, covers the story of twins Begona and Delia. Delia was unintentionally switched with another infant at the hospital, and the error was not realized until 28 years later when one of the twins was confused for the other at a clothing store. This, per the author, is only the seventh time this is known to have happened, and makes for an interesting story and research situation. The 'bad news,' is that author Segal devotes large portions of the book to trivia of interest to no one - amazing since she is a PhD researcher and obviously knows better. Identical twins share 100% of their genes; however, errors in cell divisions make them not totally identical, though as close as possible to human clones. Fraternal twins share half their genes, on average, the equivalent of 'normal' siblings. The Western nation twinning rate is about one in thirty, up from one in sixty in 1980. The increase is mostly due to the advent of artificial

insemination. Studies show that the resemblance between identical twins raised apart (MTA) vs. those raised together (MTT) is quite similar and that twins treated alike are not more behaviorally alike than those treated differently. Segal reports the correlation in IQs for MTA twins is .73, vs. .86 for MTT twins, meaning environmental differences account for just 21% of the IQ variation in MTA pairs. (This is consistent with most other research and a major contradiction to those contending that improving environment/education would substantially improve society's children, while consistent with the failure of No Child Left Behind and countless other remedial education programs.) The bulk of 'Someone Else's Twin' is taken up with anecdotal accounts of various accidental twin separations and reunifications, including that of Begona and Delia, as well as the subsequent legal cases.

Thirty-eight years ago, a set of identical twins was born in the Canary Islands. But through some confusion at the hospital, one of the baby girls the parents brought home wasn't theirs, and the mistake wasn't discovered until well after the girls reached adulthood. The revelation - that one of the "twins" wasn't even biologically related to her sister or parents, and that the real twin had been raised in a different family where she didn't belong - created a firestorm in the media even as it tore apart the lives of those involved. With "Someone Else's Twin," doctor and researcher Nancy Segal examines the circumstances that may have led to the switch, how the discovery affected the three women directly involved and their families, and the court case that followed. She also examines other examples of twins switched at birth, as well as twins reared apart for other reasons. Dr. Segal's writing is a little dry at times, but the information within this book is so fascinating that most readers will hardly notice; it is clear that she is an expert on these kinds of scenarios. This is a true human interest story that will strike a chord with parents everywhere. Originally published for San Francisco/Sacramento Book Reviews.

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