

The Middle

Being in the middle is like being invisible. Especially when you're the middle sister in a family with three girls.

Think about it. The middle of a story is not the beginning or the end. The middle of a train is not the caboose or the engine.

The middle of a play is intermission. The middle of Monkey in the Middle is a monkey. The middle of Neapolitan ice cream is . . . vanilla.

"I'm vanilla!" I shouted one day to anybody who would listen. Plain old boring vanilla.

Nobody listened.

Alex, my older sister, ignored me. She just kept writing stuff in the margins of her play script (what

else is new!) and muttering the lines under her breath.

Easy for her. She's strawberry.

I was sick of it, so I told my family how I hate being the middle. Middle, middle, middle.

"Hey! The middle of 'Farmer in the Dell' is the cheese!" Joey, my younger sister, reminded me.

"The cheese stands alone," I reminded her back.

Alex looked up. "There's a book about that, you know. *I Am the Cheese*."

Yeah. My autobiography, I thought.

"Wait. You think you're cheese or something?" Joey asked.

I ignored her. They just don't get it. I mean, the middle of a year is, what, Flag Day? The middle of a life is a midlife crisis!

I told my dad I was having a midlife crisis.

"You're going to give *me* a midlife crisis if you don't get over this," Dad said. I asked him to name one middle that is a good thing.

Dad had to think. He thought and thought and didn't say anything. Then finally he told me, "The middle of an apple is the core."

"Um-hmm. The yucky part people throw away," I said.

"How about the middle of the night? That's an interesting time, when people see things differently."

I pointed out that most people sleep through the middle of the night.

Then he shouted like he had a super-brainy Einstein idea. "The middle of an Oreo cookie is the sweet, creamy, best part. You can't argue with that."

He was right. I couldn't argue. If I had to be a middle, that's the best middle to be.

"See? You're the peanut butter in the sandwich," said Dad. "You're the creamy center of the cookie that holds it all together. You're the glue."

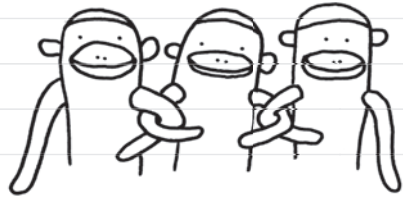
I'm the glue?

Maybe Dad's right. After all, I'm the one who came up with the (brilliant!) idea for the Sisters Club, back when I was Joey's age. Alex gets to be the Boss Queen, of course, so she runs the meetings. Joey (a.k.a. Madam Secretary/Treasurer) takes the notes and collects dues (if we had any money). I keep the peace.

I am the glue!

The Sisters Club Charter

by Joey Reel



CLUBHOUSE: Alex's room

Unless sign on door says
KEEP OUT! Joey + Stevie,
that means you! **A.**

MEMBERS: Reel sisters only

No fair! she gets the cool
room with a window seat. ~S

UNIFORM: Pj's are good. Plaid is bad.

Except when it's pj's. (According to Fashion Queen Alex.) ~S

MASCOT: Alex's sock monkey, named Sock Monkey
(I wish it was Hedgie, my hedgehog.)



LOGO: Three sock monkeys arm in arm

ALTERNATE LOGO: Troll doll with the "no" sign over it

SECRET SIGN OR HANDSHAKE:

Hook pinkies together while saying,
"Sisters, Blisters, and Tongue Twisters."

This is so lame! **A.**

you made it up. ~S

Yeah, when I was like ten. **A.**

Hello! That was only two years ago. My age! ~S

Alex is the sock monkey freak.
Personally I find them a little...
creepy. ~S

SECRET KNOCK: I don't know how to write it!

I just know how to do it. Sounds like:

Da-da-da, da-dee-dee-doh.

PASSWORD: Shakespeare (Shh! Don't tell!)

I take credit
for thinking
of this...
That's why
it's cool! **A.**

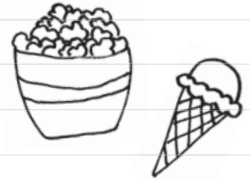
ACTIVITIES: Tell secrets and scary stories,

eat popcorn and ice cream,

stay up late,

have sleepovers in Alex's room

(I mean the clubhouse!).



DUES: Only if we need popcorn or ice cream and

we're out of them. yeah, right! Alex NEVER has money. ~S

RULES: No throwing pillows or other objects,

except in an official pillow fight.

No putting crumbs in Alex's bed on purpose.

No using Alex's brush to brush your hair

No taking stuff from Alex's room

(especially anything with glitter).



Or Hedgie the
Hedgehog's hair. **A.**

Nut Jobs!

“No saying ‘nut job’” is Alex’s latest rule, which Joey has added to the list. Of course Joey had to ask, “What’s a nut job?”

“It’s a peanut who’s looking for work,” Alex said. The two of us cracked up.

“OK, I have a rule,” said Joey. “No doing that.”

“What?”

“That thing where you don’t answer a question right. Then you laugh and act like I’m a nut job.”

“No saying ‘nut job!’” screamed Alex.

All three of us piled on the bed, laughing our heads off.

“But can we at least say ‘nut’ or ‘job,’ even if we don’t say them together?”

“NO!” screamed Alex again. “Because that would make you a nut job.”

We died laughing some more, which Joey says is the best part of the Sisters Club.

For me, the best part has always been the Remembering Game. And Alex is the best at it.