

The Two and Only Kelly Twins



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illustrated by
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Chapter One

Meet Arlene and Ilene

Arlene Kelly and Ilene Kelly were sisters. They were also twins. In fact they were identical twins. That means that they looked just alike. They both had straight brown hair, which they wore in matching short ponytails. They also both had brown eyes and wore the same style glasses. In addition, they had the same shaped noses and chins. They were the same height and the same weight. Hardly anyone, except their parents

and they themselves, could tell them apart. Arlene and Ilene were seven years old on their birthday this year. But there was one difference between the girls. Arlene had been born at 11:55 p.m. on July 17th, and Ilene, who was just eight minutes younger, was born at 12:03 a.m. on July 18th.

“We must be the only identical twins who have different birthdays,” said Arlene. She was proud of being a day older than her sister.

“I doubt it,” said their mom.

“Don’t forget: you’re not really a whole day older than me,” said Ilene. “You are only eight minutes older. That’s hardly any time at all.”

“Eight minutes is long enough to eat a sandwich,” said Arlene.

“No. You would choke if you ate so fast,” insisted Ilene.

“Eight minutes is long enough to make my bed,” said Arlene.

“Eight minutes is not long enough to take a bath,” said Ilene.

“Yes, it is,” said Arlene.

“No, it’s not,” said Ilene. “You’d still be dirty.”

“No, I wouldn’t.”

“Yes, you would.”

“Eight minutes of arguing is enough to drive a mother crazy,” said Mrs. Kelly. “Why don’t you girls go outdoors and roller-skate until supper time?”

So the girls went outdoors, and in less than eight minutes, in fact in less than two minutes, they were laughing and racing each other down the street. They might argue, they might disagree, but mostly they were best friends. They knew they were lucky to always have someone nearby to play with or

do their homework with or help when they were setting the table for a meal.

Of course they knew other kids. In fact, on the street where they lived, there were two other children just their age. Unfortunately they were both boys: Monty and Joey.



Luckily both boys were friendly, and the four often played together. Monty even took

karate lessons with Arlene and Ilene. And Joey and Monty had been in the same first-grade class as Ilene. Still, even with other friends around, Arlene and Irene knew that being a twin was very special, and they considered themselves lucky.

All last year, there were two other sets of twins at their school. One set were sixth-grade sisters who were not identical. No one could guess that those two girls were even related, much less twins. One was tall, and one was short. One had curly hair, and one had straight. But they both had crooked teeth and wore braces. Half the girls in sixth grade wore braces, so that wasn't much of a clue. And since they didn't look alike, people tended to forget they were twins.

The other set of twins were in fifth grade.

They weren't identical, either. One was a boy and the other a girl. People tended to forget they were twins, too.



No one could forget about Arlene and Ilene. When they were born, Mrs. Kelly received dozens and dozens of matching sets of clothing. For their first four years of life, the girls always wore the same outfits. When

they had finally outgrown the last of these gift items, Mrs. Kelly thought the girls would be delighted to pick out their own clothes. When she took them shopping for winter jackets, she was in for a surprise.

“My favorite color is blue,” said Ilene.

“My favorite color is blue,” said Arlene.

“I said it first,” said Ilene. “You could pick green.”

“I hate green,” said Arlene. “Green is for frogs.”

“How about red?” suggested Ilene.

“I hate red. Red is for ketchup. My favorite color is blue.”

“You like ketchup on French fries,” said Ilene.

“I’m not a French fry. I’m a girl. And my favorite color is blue.”

“All right, all right,” said Mrs. Kelly. “We’ll buy two blue jackets.”

“Yippee,” Arlene sang out.

“Yippee Doodle,” Ilene sang out.

“Yippee Doodle? Don’t you mean ‘Yankee Doodle?’” asked Arlene.

“Nope. ‘Yippee Doodle’ means I’m extra happy. I can *wear my* blue jacket, and I can *look at your* blue jacket.”

“Yippee Doodle,” Arlene agreed.

And that’s how it went when the twins selected new pants, sweaters, shirts, caps, and mittens. Of course not everything was blue. They got brown pants and green pants as well as blue ones. And they got red-and-white-striped sweaters and white shirts with blue polka dots. But all of their clothes matched. And they always liked to wear them on the same day.

“How will anyone be able to tell you apart?” asked Mrs. Kelly, looking at her matching children.

“Can you tell us apart?” asked Arlene.

“Well, of course. I’m your mother,” said Mrs. Kelly. “Your father and I have lived with you every day since you were born. I know that your voices are slightly different and your smiles are slightly different. And your father knows it, too.”

“Well, if you can tell us apart, everyone else should be able to do it, too,” said Ilene.

“Wouldn’t it be funny if I woke up one morning and couldn’t remember whether I was Ilene or Arlene?” said Arlene.

Ilene started laughing. “We could pretend to be each other,” she suggested.

“No way,” said Arlene. “I like being me. I like being Arlene.”

“That’s okay,” said Ilene shrugging. “I like being Ilene.”

“Good. That’s settled,” said Mrs. Kelly.

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