

CHRISTA CHAMPION

THE SUN IS THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

1—Little Twins

When I was a little kid, my big sister was my best friend and more—she was my trusty leader, my light in the darkness, my guide to the world. She was the most important person in the world to me. I thought she hung the moon. I couldn't imagine doing anything that didn't include her. From my point of view, we belonged together, like salt-and-pepper shakers, or Batman and Robin. I followed her everywhere; we came as a pair.

How she viewed me at the time, I have no idea. It never occurred to me to think about it from her perspective. When the sun shines on us, do we think about how the sun feels? No. We simply enjoy the light, and the warmth on our skin.

Back then, we spent the entire day together, every day. We woke within minutes of each other. We ate our meals at the same time and at the same table. We played with each other exclusively, shared the same toys, bathed in the same tub of soapy water, and heard our good night stories sitting side-by-side on our father's lap. Our mother dressed us in matching outfits, but crisscrossed colors: if my Keds were blue that year, and my sister's red, Mom would sew my play clothes of red material, and my sister's of blue. That way we knew whose was whose. We were adorable. Everybody said.

Not even school came between us. When my sister started kindergarten a year ahead of me, she came home every day and showed me what she'd learned. Right after lunch, we'd go into the family room and lie down on the floor with scratch paper and crayons. She taught me about numbers, and the alphabet, and how to draw out all the letters of my name. It was the secret code of the world of books, and she shared it with me. For that, and for everything else she taught me about the world around us, I loved her unconditionally.

Although we were nearly eighteen months apart in age, we were the same height growing up, which I always attributed to the difference in our gestation