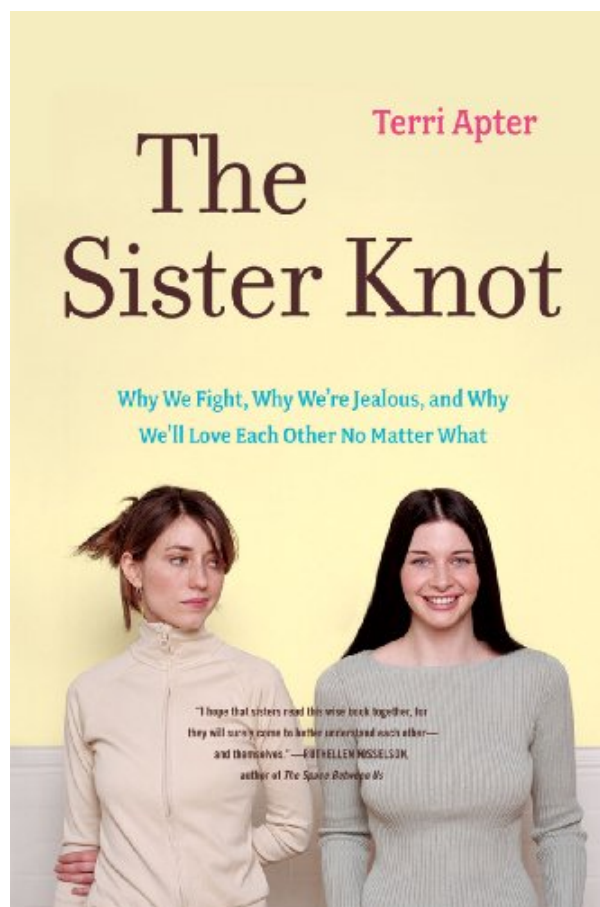


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Terri Apter

# The Sister Knot

Why We Fight, Why We're Jealous, and Why  
We'll Love Each Other No Matter What



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From Publishers Weekly

Sisterly love, Apter (*The Myth of Maturity*) shows, isn't always pure: to differentiate herself from her older sister Sam, teenager Gina manipulated Sam into gaining weight; Kate's three sisters put aside jealousies and power plays to rally around her after she was raped; and Dorri wrongly accused her lesbian sister, Annette, of having an affair with her husband because a teenage Annette used to steal Dorri's boyfriends. This generic study of the complex ties that bind sisters teaches us that a sister's death is one of the most difficult losses to overcome; women's friendships often mirror the sister bond in both pleasure and pain; elderly sisters provide each other with crucial psychological succor; adult women are passionately invested in their own versions of family stories; and female empathy, when viewed through the sister knot, is revealed as a complicated skill "used for control and denigration as often as for care and protection." Throughout, British psychologist Apter's stodgy prose is brightened by excerpts from interviews she conducted with 76 British and American sisters from 37 families; while her analyses are perceptive, she's also treading on familiar territory without the creativity displayed by a Deborah Tannen or Bruno Bettelheim. (Jan. 15)

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"Terri Apter's fascinating study of sisters lays bare particular qualities in the sister relationship which are deftly summed up in the book's subtitle..." *The Times Literary Supplement* "...she is lucid, funny and illuminating on a subject that has been kept in the dark for much too long." *The Sunday Times* "Deftly combining the latest psychological thinking with real-life case studies, she captures both the love and the rivalry that many sisters share, as well as revealing the sister relationship to be far more complex than we might think." *Psychologies*"

About the Author

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“The best book on sisters, very important and beautifully written.”?Carol Gilligan, author of *In a Different Voice*

This “substantial contribution to the literature on sibling relationships” (*Library Journal*) explores the intricacy, friction, and love in bonds between sisters. Relationships between women are often freighted with a rocky mix of emotions?devotion and disregard, affection and loathing, admiration and envy?leading to anguish and confusion on the playground, in the home, and in the boardroom. Negotiating her layered feelings toward a sister shapes a woman’s psychology as forcefully as do her relationships with her parents. Drawing on compelling interviews and new research, Terri Apter considers the many aspects of the sister relationship from birth through adulthood. The need to fight to differentiate oneself from a sister, as well the protectiveness one feels for that same person, is explained by reference to extensive psychological and biological evidence.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

From *Publishers Weekly*

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#### About the Author

Terri Apter is a writer, psychologist, and Fellow of Newnham College, Cambridge University. Her books include *The Sister Knot* and *What Do You Want from Me?* She lives in Cambridge, England.

#### Most helpful customer reviews

20 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

Get this one from the library

By angusmacscottie

As a middle sister, I was excited to hear Apter's discussion about her book on NPR. Unfortunately, the best parts of the book were all covered by Apter in her book tour interviews, the book itself was anticlimactic.

Apter has conducted interviews with a number of sisters at various ages and stages of their lives. In the book she dissects the interviews and features tidbits to illustrate certain sibling theories well-known in the genre of psychological literature. This is all ground that has been explored before by other researchers and writers. I found the writing to be stilted and overly academic for a popular treatment of the subject matter. It would have helped for us to have a more thorough family background for the siblings quoted. As it was, Apter failed to interest me in whatever these people were saying, because I wasn't given much of a context for their comments.

I really cannot recommend this book for purchase. It would be best to get this one from the library, if you are interested in the subject matter.

10 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

complex relationship

By reader from California

A thorough analysis of the complex relationship between sisters. Makes a good case for the differences between sister/sister, brother/sister and brother/brother bonds and conflicts. I especially like how she de-pathologizes the rivalry between siblings. Anyone who wants insight into the sister bond, and especially, I believe, parents of sisters would learn a lot from this book.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

True, but not only of sisters

By Reader1

I read "The Sister Knot" because I found Terri Apter's "What do you want from me?" so helpful in understanding two other women in my family. The attachment and competition between sisters that Apter describes fits the story between me and my brother, too, though I can see that if you felt you shouldn't compete with someone you love, then the inevitable competition between you could make things worse. but what I like about both "This Sister Knot" and Apter's book on in-law relationships is that she conceptualize highly complex relationships and offer a way that the reader can use to think about what's going on in her - or his - life.

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