

The **PHANTOM
TWIN**
LISA BROWN



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First Second
New York

THANK YOU...

To all my brilliant readers: Nilah Magruder, Kate Maruyama, Shannon May, David Serlin, Laurel Snyder, Mariko Tamaki, and Michelle Tea. To Vera Brosgol and Raina Telgemeier for comics advice and hand-holding. To Laura Park for the pen nibs. To LeUyen Pham for above and beyond technical and stylistic help. To Kori Handwerker for expert flattening. To the fabulous folk of First Second: Andrew Arnold, Mark Siegel, Rachel Stark, and Calista Brill. To Charlotte Sheedy, of course.

And to Daniel Handler, to whom I am completely and utterly attached.



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First Second

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I wake up
afraid to
open my
eyes.





PART ONE



We were conjoined twins.

Also known as...

SIAMESE TWINS

We were joined
at the torso...

...and we shared
an arm...

REAL

ALIVE

...and a leg...

...sort of. My sister, Jane,
had the use of them, mostly.



My name is Isabel.
But everyone called me "Iss."

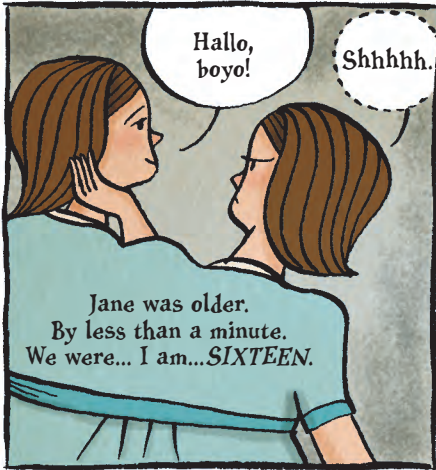


Jan-Iss, honey,
I need a zip.

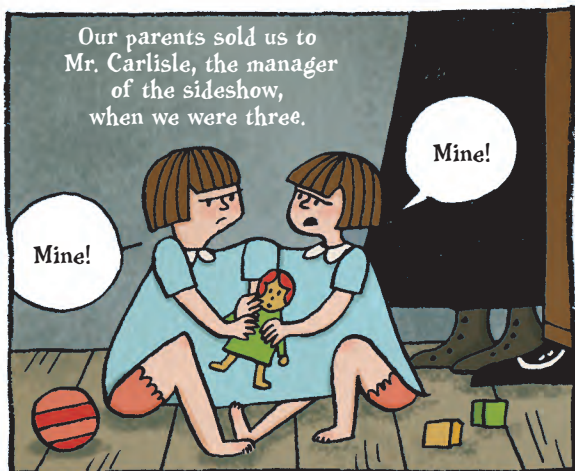


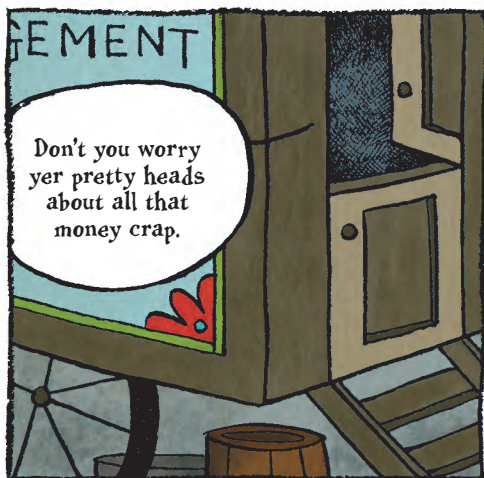
Actually, people
usually referred to
us as one person.
"Jan-Iss."

Of
course.











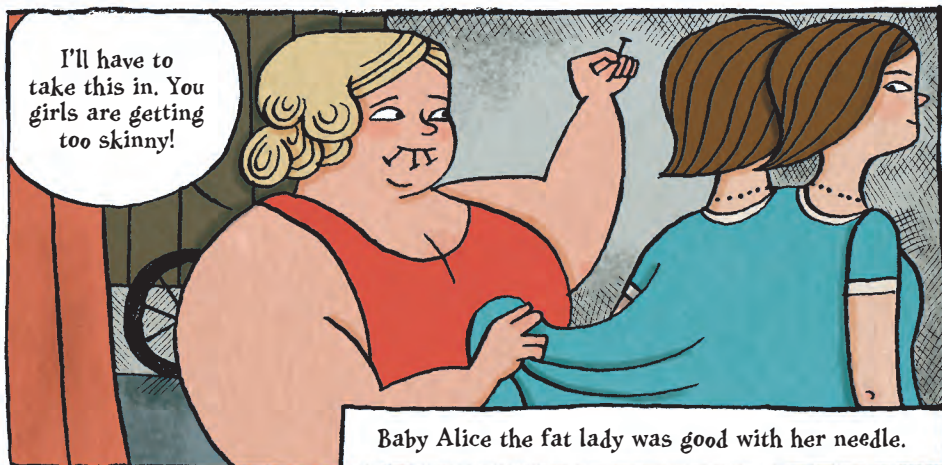








Harold the Wild Boy was a "jungle savage" onstage. Off, he'd help us with our lessons.



Baby Alice the fat lady was good with her needle.

Nora the tattooed snake charmer let us experiment with her makeup...



Jennie the bearded lady did our hair. She was married to the alligator-skinned man.



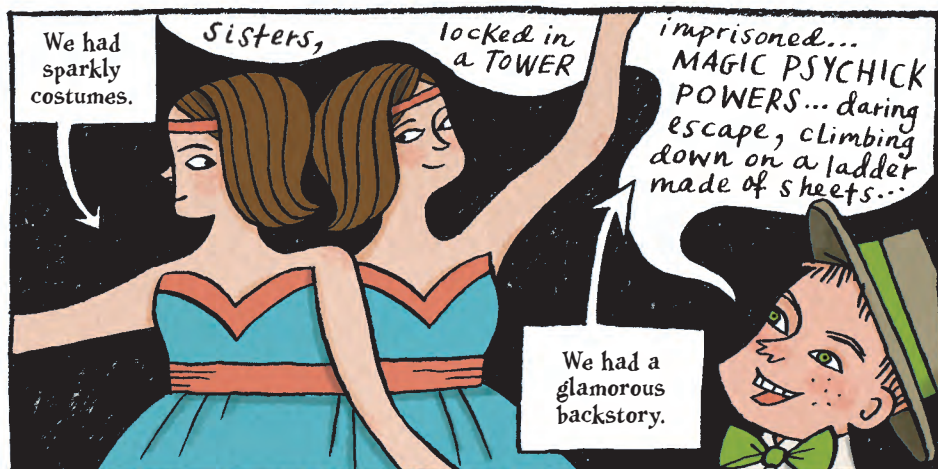


But we could always count on them when we were in a pickle.





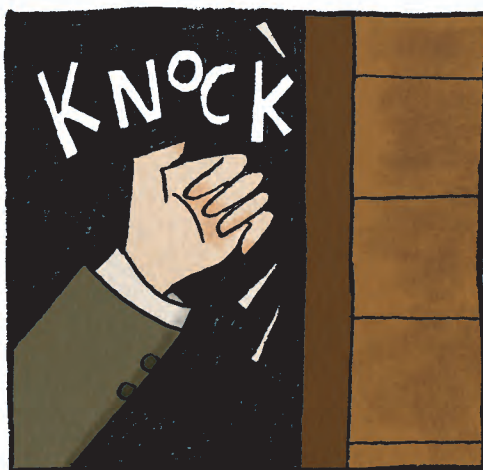
On the midway, we weren't disgusting. We were The Talent.

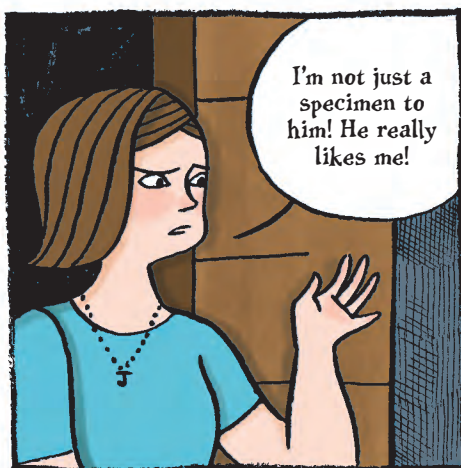








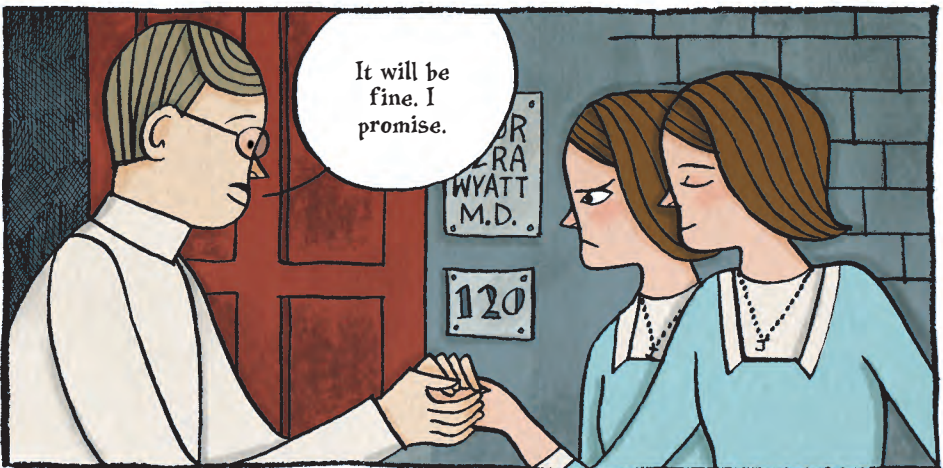






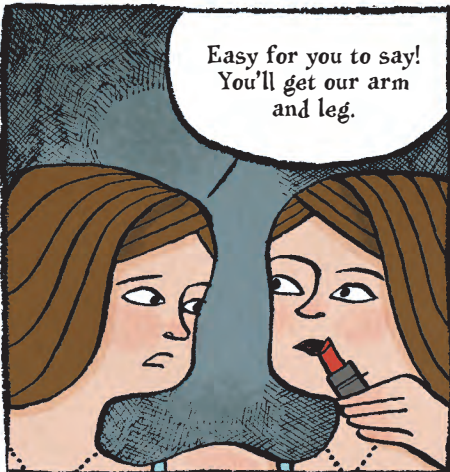
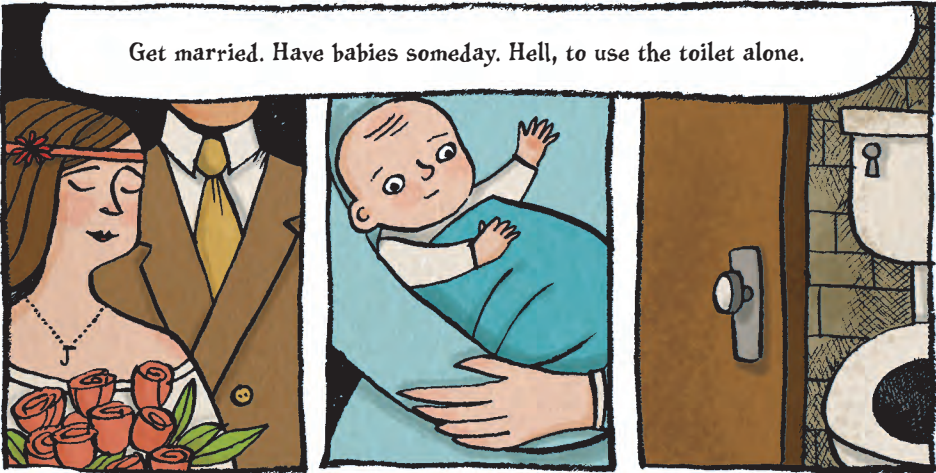


















I wake up afraid to open my eyes.



Will she
be there?



You're
awake.



Or will I be alone...



Isabel,
you need
to listen
to me.



...for the first time in my life?



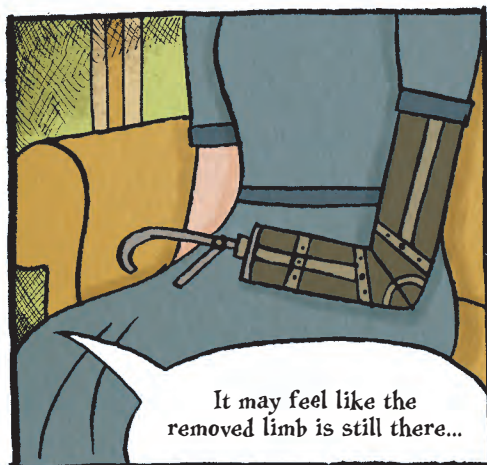






Don't worry. With a little practice, you will become quite adept.

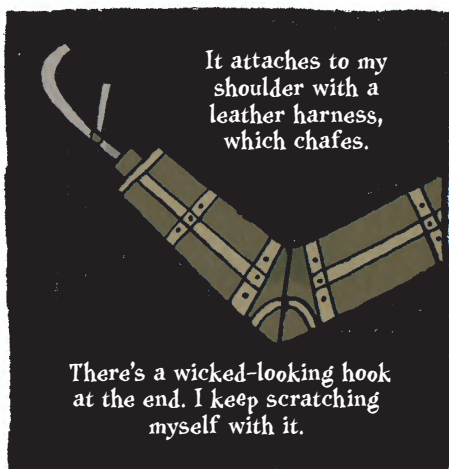








This is my
left arm now.
It is made of
hard leather,
rubber, and tin.



It attaches to my
shoulder with a
leather harness,
which chafes.

There's a wicked-looking hook
at the end. I keep scratching
myself with it.



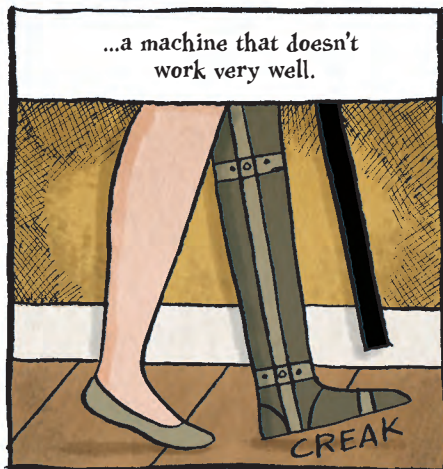
This is my left leg. It's also made
of leather and rubber and tin.



I used to have too many legs.
Now I have too few.
It would be easier to
just go without it.



And I feel like I'm part machine...



...a machine that doesn't
work very well.

I don't care if I can use my new limbs—I'm not a goddamn pirate.



I need to get out of here.
There's too much pity in this house.



It should have worked.



It...should...
have...worked.

