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TSP's curated space for artistic expressions by, for and about sisters.

# The 'Bite Me' Cookbook Sisters

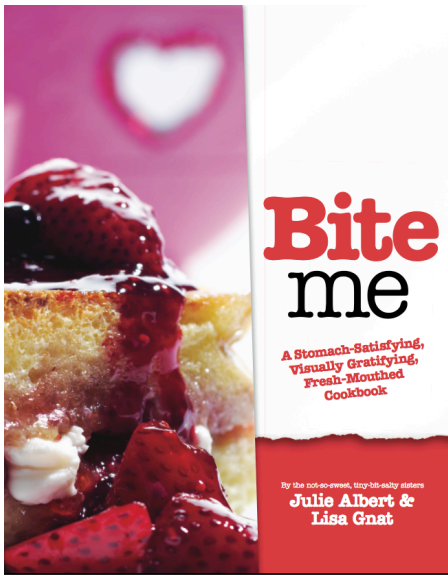
by margaret on November 5, 2009



'Bite Me' cookbook authors, sisters Lisa (left) and Julie

### **By Marion Roach Smith**

THE SISTERS DIDN'T SO MUCH AS DROP THEIR WHISKS when I reached them while they are out on book tour. It seems they can type with kitchen utensils in their mouths, while packing and running off to the next interview, making me adore them even more than I already did after reading about their new cookbook entitled *Bite Me*.



Meet Canadian authors and sisters, Julie Albert and Lisa Gnat, and prepare yourself for a lip-smacking, rib-splitting, sauce-spitting time in your kitchen. Funny? These girls just literally wrote the book on how to cook up some serious fare while being very, very funny in the kitchen. So who does what in the duet?

“Other than my sweet (I’m salty), beautiful, funny, smart and perfect (or so our Grandmother says) partner in crime,” says Julie, Lisa is “a girl born to be in the kitchen—Lisa’s nose is bionic and her palate finely tuned. Not only can she sniff out a missing pinch of salt, but also with a few squirrel-like nibbles, she can pinpoint what type of chocolate has been used. Lisa is a skilled chef, one who has all the answers to the nagging question, ‘What’s for dinner?’”

Apart from being “a skilled eater,” Julie brings other skills to the table.

“I found more success writing and living off noodles and butter,” she says. “That is, until I had a family of my own to feed. My sister taught me how to cook, and I returned the favor by opening her eyes to fonts, sentence structure and the joy of photography.”

From the very inscription in [Bite Me](#)—in which Julie dedicated the book to her sister, writing: “To Lisa. Your food’s mother-forkin’ great. Love you like, a sister,” to which Lisa replies, “To Julie. Nice going, Drama Queen. Love you more than chocolate”—the reader knows that this is no ordinary cookbook.



When I tracked down the writers, I promptly received this email from Julie:

Dearest Marion—

You just made our day! We are in a hotel room in freezing Winnipeg after having done a 6 AM breakfast show (Lisa icing the cake on the bed was comical) and now I'm watching her (and laughing) as she cuts brownies and blondies for our noontime book signing on the desk...so glamorous, I tell you.

Next stop, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver; luggage is rattling with pots and pans.

Thanks for the props.

Yours truly, Julie (and Lisa, as she swipes the crumbs and cleans her knife on a bath towel).

What followed was my request that they fill out our Sister Project interview questions. They did—but they kind of colored outside the lines a little bit first:

### **The TSP Interview with the Bite Me Sisters**

Julie starts our interview by telling a Rodney Dangerfield joke:

“When I was born the doctor took one look at my face, turned me over and said, ‘Look, twins!’”

And then she confesses: “Fine. So, we’re not twins, but we should be...my theory is that our mother just wanted to meet me two years earlier. Whatever the case, though we have one older brother, there’s nothing that comes close to the bond we have always shared as sisters. Saucy sisters. Twisted Sisters. Thick-as-thieves. We’ve heard it all.”

It is hard to pinpoint the moment when the bond formed, she says: Was it that their parents always stressed “family first,” and frowned on rivalries? Maybe.

“Or, was it that we have spent a lifetime together playing? Likely,” says Julie. “We cheer for each other, we laugh with (and at) each other, and we’re each others’ favorite sister.”

The sisters credit their mother, “a woman who always had a full plate (and no sister to help her) and yet

somehow managed to turn out delicious nightly feasts for her family,” Julie recalls.

After years of talking about it, the two self-published their first cookbook, in September. Says Julie:

“The experience has surpassed any dream we could have envisioned for ourselves (and believe me, since childhood, we’ve played the “dream game”...you know, the one where we live close to each other, we marry men who like each other, we have kids at the same time, and so on).”

*Bite Me*, she says, “is us, two saucy sisters who took a chance. Oh, and did I mention that we’re both lefties?”



**Q: Fill in the blank: You know you’re a sister when...**”

**A: Julie:** “Lisa feels nauseous and I need to take a Gravol (reader, please note: This is a Canadian anti-nausea medicine).”

**Lisa:** You can talk with your eyes.

**Q: What does the word “sister” mean to you?**

**A: Julie:** “It means never feeling alone. Lisa holds my secrets (and my hand on airplanes), waves her pompoms when I need cheering and calls me at 8:33 every morning.”

**Lisa:** “A person I love speaking to 20 times/day and always feeling as if I have new and urgent things to say. We’re like magnets—we stick to each other like glue and always have each other’s back.”

**Q: Are there any pop culture or cultural references that make you think of your sister?**

**A: Julie:** “We definitely were influenced by the late 1970s cartoon superheroes the Wonder Twins. Not only did they have telepathy, but also when they touched, they had the power to transform into something that would get them out of a bind. You can’t imagine how many times I’ve started conversations with Lisa by uttering ‘Form of...an iceberg.’”

**Lisa:** “We’re stuck in the late ‘70s. We were/are Laverne and Shirley (me, being Shirley, the sweeter, quieter one). The start of the theme song, the ‘1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Schlemiel! Schlimazel! Hasenpfeffer

Incorporated!’ is something we still chant to this day (and continues to drive our brother nuts)—though we never saw ourselves working in a Milwaukee brewery, we loved the idea of ‘Making Our Dreams Come True.’”

**Q: Are there any worst-of/best-of sister tales you want to share?**

**A: Julie & Lisa:** “We find it near impossible to bring a lifetime of being best friends down to a single moment. We’d definitely say that writing our cookbook *Bite Me* has been a highlight but, really, it’s the day-to-day moments that are the very best – we share the same sense of humor.”

**Q: What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from your “sister” experience?**

**Julie:** “Unless your sister says the jeans look good, don’t believe the salesperson.”

**Lisa:** “We are so lucky to have this relationship. Friends are icing on the cake, but my sister is everything to me (she made me write that last part)...we hope that our daughters learn from us that there is nothing like sisterhood.”

**More about Bite Me, the cookbook:** Besides being written by sisters, *Bite Me* is graphically illustrated with hilarious, provocative photographs. My favorite visual may be the luscious photo accompanying the recipe for roasted carrot soup topped with candied pistachios, in which those aforementioned nuts spell out “EAT ME,” though a fine runner-up is simply the Table of Contents, revealing the book’s 10 chapter titles, including “Respect Me” (vegetables), and, of course, “Marry Me” (dishes that go together). The book provides a smorgasbord for every tactile part of you, including that funny bone that all-too-often gets left out of the cooking experience. [Their cookbook’s website](#) tells it all. [The book is for sale here \(Indigo.ca\)](#). Enjoy!

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- **Welcome to TSP's New Galleries**

No surprise, really, that sisterhood, often life's longest relationship and always one of its most important, has been the Muse for so much creative self-expression by women, and also by men. TSP's Galleries were created to show off that outpouring of art and craft, poetry and prose. Come [see another show or two](#)—no ticket required, no lines to get in—and suggest others whose work we ought to showcase. Enjoy.

- **WELL SAID**  
'It's a great comfort to have an artistic sister.'  
—Louisa May Alcott, 'Little Women' (1868)

- **You Know You're a Sister When...?**

The assignment is easy—or is it? Fill in the blank: You know you're a sister when \_\_\_\_\_. [Wait till you hear](#) what the other sisters are saying.

- **Musical Sister Acts**



- **Oh, Brother.**

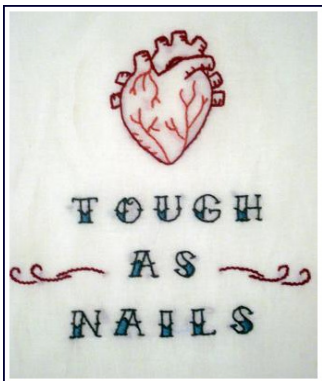
Her torturer, her most authentic form of entertainment, her competition, her headache, her history... that would be [Anastasia's brother](#).

- **Welcome to Our New Blog Network**



**First time here?** Here's the idea: [The Sister Project](#) is a network of blogs about the many facets of the word sister, and the concept of sisterhood. A sisterhood of sister blogs, you could say. Whatever sister means to you, from identical twin to sister-in-law (or in friendship or in feminism), we'll make room to listen in about it or express it on TSP. Like the slogan up top on [our homepage](#) says, "Don't you have something to say to your sister?" We've got galleries of art and literature by and about sisters, and a Sisterpedia of sisterly trivia...but now we're getting ahead of ourselves. The quick study: [Learn more about TSP](#), and how to find your way around. And oh—a giant, sisterly [welcome](#).

- **Crewel Words**



- **Astrologer Sheila Hite's Forecasts**



- **100 Things About Us**



- **An Anthem for Sisterhood**

Shall we all sing along with Antony and Boy George? Yes! [An anthem for sisterhood](#) (bring your Kleenex).

- **Read, It Will Make You a Better Sister**

One thing that TSPs original sisters have in common: We all love to read. And we think reading will make you a better sister. Marion Roach Smith of 'She Said, She Said' [has this to say on the subject](#) of reading.

- **Sisterpedia: Meet Our Infant Wikipedia**



As the suffix of its name suggests, [TSP's Sisterpedia](#) is the reference section, one we're hoping you'll help us grow to maturity by adding your knowledge in the comments. Turn us on to new facts and figures, whether for the branch of our 'library' called Sistory (history from a sister point of view, from the Muses of ancient Greece to 60s Girl Groups and beyond) or the one called Sibling Science (what makes sisters tick, genetically and behaviorally). Or just click around and have a good read. See you [there](#).

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- **A Tight "Knit" Sisterhood**

We're a family of knitters on TSP (well most of us), and we've rounded up our favorite knitting posts, knitting tips and gallery shows [right here for easy navigation](#). So get out your needles and yarn, and

enjoy!

- **Geisha Sisterhood**



- **Join the TSP Cooking Sisterhood**

At TSP, we love cooking up sisterly comfort in the kitchen. From recipes to chef interviews to kitchen humor, [some of our favorite posts are here.](#)

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- **Bra Rant, Anyone?**



- **When a Sister is Lost**

A sister-friend from our extended network, baker and blogger Marilyn Pollack Naron, shared with us a piece writing about losing her sister to cancer when Marilyn was 30 and Iris was 26. [Read Marilyn's poignant story in her own words.](#)

- **Lend Her a Poem?**



- **Got a Sister Story or Image to Share?**

Yes, we admit it: We started TSP with [a very small family](#). But this is meant to grow into a site of many voices and experiences with your input. Help us connect the sisters of America (and beyond?) to one another, to illustrate the high emotional watermarks that word holds for you or someone close to you. Add your suggestions in any comment space, or email us at [thesisterproject@gmail.com](mailto:thesisterproject@gmail.com). Bring on the sisters!

- **Sloane Tanen**



- **Erica Berger**



- **Camilla Engman**



- **Allison Michael Orenstein**



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