

Unlike most of my future peers in college, I've had a roommate since I was a zygote. Yes, we have our inevitable interior decor disagreements, but we also squabble over the most inconsequential particularities--how many times we can hit the snooze button, whether the fan speed should be set to 6 or 7. But despite this incessant bickering, and unlike the normal dormroom relationship, we can't switch roommates. I am stuck with my twin.

From elementary school, I hewed an inseparable bond with Jordan. Whether within the confines of the school bus or the expanse of the playground, we stayed close. In class, that adjacency only intensified: seating charts were arranged alphabetically by last name. Teachers referred to us as "the Llorins" or "the twins", promoting the sameness we expressed in outfits--GAP jeans, soccer jerseys, scarlet JanSport backpacks--and overflowing bowl-cuts. Our intimacy conditioned us to work together, whether in art class crafts or playdate competitions. It was not uncommon for us, having conspired to defeat mutual opponents first, to be the last two contenders remaining in King of the Hill tournaments--much to the whines of those eliminated.

As the years ambled on, our inseparableness became less and less feasible. Class schedules diversified, forcing us to expand social boundaries and tolerate occasional independence. Puberty arrived, and we adapted accordingly. How could we hope to win over Amanda if she couldn't even tell us apart? Subsequently, our friends began to observe individualities ranging from the timbre of our laughs to the style of our outfits--my color coordination trumped Jordan's, of course.

Jordan, once my collaborator, became my rival. While we still cooperated over inconsequential Pre-Calculus homework, we competed for minutes on the varsity soccer team and class rank on a transcript. Structured AP coursework having taught the importance of independence, we reveled where self-motivation (and bragging rights) mattered. But just as hostile as academics was social life. I noticed everytime Jordan's witticisms prompted laughter in Engineering, the one class we shared Junior year. I noticed when classmates lauded his uninhibited nature, one contrasting with my serious demeanor. Comparisons deprived my ego and fed my resentment.

As my distress peaked, I gradually realized the fallaciousness of my misgivings. Who said that my personality or my GPA had to best Jordan's? I realized the bitter envy plaguing my own self-image; I yearned to be content. Alongside my peers, I forced myself to chuckle at his sprightly humour rather than shake my head in shame. Instead of undercutting his achievements with "that's it?", I offered congratulations for his ACT score and even--ironically--a "Happy Birthday" in late January.

Today, I appreciate Jordan more than ever. From offering morning rides to Paul, an eccentric introvert, to chirping "Good luck Fhockey!" to players walking by, he teaches me the importance

of compassion. His sparkling reputation speaks to doors held open, self-deprecating jokes, and a bona fide smile. Yes, Jordan is my identical twin, my roommate; I know I will emulate his qualities upon meeting my real one.