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THE SISTER WHO WASN'T THERE

I don't remember how I knew about her, I just did. I knew she had been named Jacqueline so of course that meant she was a girl. No one talked about her or when she was born and of course there was no visual proof she existed. As children, no one paid much attention to the adults' conversations and if they noticed our interest, the topic was quickly turned to other matters. My grandmother had a saying *little pitchers have big ears*. I never knew what it meant back then but as I got older I understood.

In my teens, all I knew was I had a sister that my mother had placed for adoption at birth. I thought she was born after my sister who was three years younger than I and she gently resided in a part of my mind that only surfaced every few years. When I married and had children of my own, I thought of her more often. Perhaps it was the maternal part of me that was more active because I was now a mother. I also found in my thirties, forties and fifties she had become Jacqueline. The use of her name made her a real person and not a figment of my imagination.

As I reached middle age, as society calls it, and my family had married and moved around the country, I found myself fantasizing about how Jacqueline and I would meet. I never thought of when, just how it would happen and I always felt a meeting was inevitable. Our paths were meant to cross and the reality of my growing older never seemed to matter. She would come.

That was another of my fantasies, I was not going to find her; one day there would be a knock at my door and it would be Jacqueline. Living in another province with a different name never deterred my plans for this reunion. I was now in my late fifties and it seemed Jacqueline had taken up residence in my mind on a permanent basis, still I never thought of initiating a search for her.

Then, my husband and I, along with another couple, were traveling to Winnipeg for a military reunion, stopping for a few days in Ontario to visit family. The other couple stayed at their daughter's and we went on to my sister