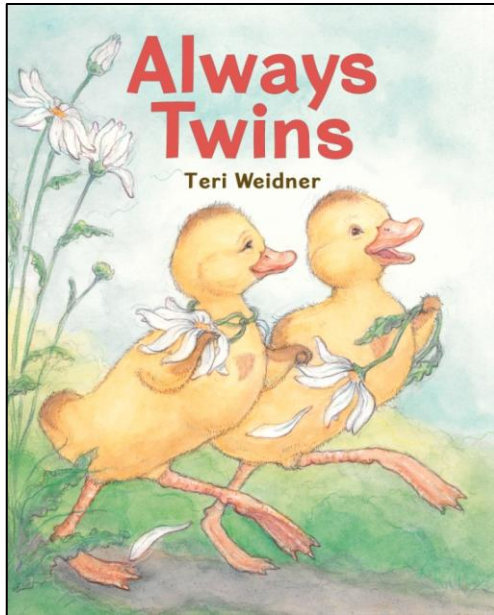


# Always Twins



Ages 2-5 • \$16.95 • 978-0-8234-3159-5 • E-book available

## *A conversation with creator Teri Weidner*

*"You two are just alike!" everyone tells duckling twins, Olivia and Lily. But while Olivia likes to "jump in the mud," run around, and quack so everyone can hear, Lily prefers studying and daydreaming. When Lily comes looking for Olivia and finds her stuck in a tree, an adventure ensues, ending in a frightening tumble. Finally safe, the twins realize that while sometimes they are the same and sometimes they are different, one thing is certain: they are "always twins."*

**Teri, please tell us about your new book, ALWAYS TWINS.**

ALWAYS TWINS is a picture book about a pair of ducklings who hatch from the same egg. Everyone says they're "just alike," but the two soon discover that although they may look the same, their interests are quite different. This leads to a big disagreement, but in the end, the pair realize that although they're not always identical, they're still always twins.

**Where did you get your inspiration for this story?**

The book was inspired by my identical twin nieces, who are also named Lily and Olivia. Like the ducklings, they're identical in appearance but unlike in many other ways. It's fascinating how their contrasting personalities animate their features. ALWAYS TWINS was also inspired by the twins' love for each other as they really are wonderful friends, and it's heartwarming to see their affection for each other.

**You've illustrated many award-winning books over the years, but this is your first picture book as both author and illustrator. How was your process different for this book?**

It sounds ridiculous to say about a little book about ducklings, but it was actually scary at the start! Twenty-five years of drawing have left me pretty comfortable with illustration,

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but I've always been in awe of good writing, so I was intimidated to try it. But as the book began to develop, I tried to be less self-critical. I let the words be imperfect in the same way I let my drawings start out badly drawn. I realized that over time I could rework the writing, and I trusted my editor, Grace Maccarone, to point out any glaring problems.

In the end, I loved the process. I've always held picture book manuscripts carefully crafted by other authors in such high regard. With my own words, it's so much less precious. I can change my own words without repercussions. Now I'm eager to work on writing more stories.

**Whether multiples or siblings, children can always learn from books that focus on familial relationships. What do you hope readers learn from this story?**

For the youngest readers, I hope this book introduces them to the basic idea that although twins may appear the same, they are often very different. On a family level, I hope ALWAYS TWINS helps readers realize that even though our siblings can exasperate or upset us, we still love them. They may make us a little crazy sometimes, but we'd miss them terribly if they weren't around!

**What made you decide to become an author and illustrator?**

Becoming an illustrator was never really a decision—I've just always drawn! I've always loved animals as well, and for a while I considered becoming a veterinarian. But then I realized I'd rather draw animals than operate on them. As far as being an author, well, my nieces just forced this story out of me. I *had* to write it for them.

**What advice would you give to young authors/illustrators?**

For illustrators, I just tell them to draw, draw, draw! The more you do it, the more fun it becomes. At first it's a struggle to draw a chicken, and then one day you find yourself able to draw a chicken doing a cartwheel in a crowded barnyard. It becomes exciting when you can create whole worlds. For beginning authors it's a little more tricky, because I still feel like a beginning author. I guess I'd say read like mad and look at what inspires you. Find what you love and follow it!



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**TERI WEIDNER** began working for *CRICKET* magazine in 1989 and since then has illustrated more than twenty children's books. She lives in New Hampshire.

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