

Almost Sisters by Joshilyn Jackson

THE ALMOST SISTERS

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For me summer began with the taste of catfish rolled in cornmeal and coarse salt, served up crisp and smoking hot on paper plates with sweet tea in Dixie Cups. Iceberg and cherry-tomato salad drenched in homemade ranch dressing. Cheese grits. Fried okra. Huge wedges of icebox pie for after. That meal was still the very taste of freedom to me.

This year it was drizzling outside, a thing Miss Birchie's prayers had not allowed to happen on Fish Fry Sunday for decades. Probably God weighing in on Pastor Rick. But there was no canceling or postponing the Fry. The youth-group boys simply crowded the tables into the fellowship hall. As Miss Birchie and Miss Wattie came in, arm in arm, Pastor Rick was there to greet them.

"Now, there's no need for you ladies to wait in line. Come have a seat. We'll bring you plates."

