

Children who share only one parent are half siblings. Children who have been bisected **via** a tragic logging accident are also half siblings, but **in** a different way.

A great-aunt is someone **with** whom you communicate exclusively **via** Facebook. A great aunt is someone who catches you blazing that sticky icky **after** Thanksgiving dinner and doesn't tell your parents.

Your extended family includes grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. It also includes Enzo, your cousin's cousin's cousin, who owns the Italian place **down** the street and proudly displays a signed photo **of** Bernadette Peters **above** the cash register. Every time you walk **by with** your dog, he gives you a wink and screams, "Proud home **of** preferred manicotti **of** Bernadette Peters!" Enzo, too, is family.

Sometimes your aunt is your mom's childhood best friend, who often reflects **upon** that one unforgettable summer—the year she and your mom turned thirteen and learned **to** kiss, **to** cuss, and **to** appreciate the true meaning **of** friendship, sharing existential musings **on** the boardwalk and savoring each precious day **before** the humid nights turned chill and culminated **in** a crushing loss **of** innocence. Other **times**, your aunt is your mom's sister.

Cousins are people who share a grandparent, biologically. Cannibals are people who share a grandparent, *al dente*.

Your great-grandniece will almost certainly perish **in** some sort **of** climate disaster, so you probably don't need **to** budget **for** her sweet sixteen.

The term "blood brother" can refer **to** either your biological sibling or someone **with** whom you've exchanged biohazards **at** Boy Scout camp. **In** a way, it might also refer **to** Enzo, who suffered a catastrophic nosebleed **after** walking **into** a telephone pole last week chasing **after** someone he thought was Bernadette Peters.

To be a monkey's uncle, figuratively, is **to** express surprise, disbelief, or amazement. **To** be a monkey's uncle, literally, involves an offense punishable **by up to** twenty years **in** prison.

To be "removed" **from** a cousin means you are separated **by** one generation. **For** example, your cousin's daughter is your first cousin once removed. Your cousin's daughter's son is your first cousin twice removed. Bernadette Peters's cousin's daughter's daughter's son is named Peter, which is kind **of** fun.

When your parent remarries, the new spouse becomes your stepparent. Example: Your mother leaves your father **for** Peter Peters, Bernadette Peters's cousin's daughter's daughter's son. You do not have **to** call him Dad.

At some point, you'll find **out about** Enzo's abhorrent political beliefs. You'll consume one too many scampi shooters **in** the back **of** his restaurant and get **into** a huge shouting match, **after** which you'll delete his number **from** your phone. You'll see him **from** time **to** time, and you'll force a tight smile and try **to** explain why you haven't called. This is what it means **to** be **in** a family.