

OLIVER HEYN

THIRTY YEARS
THAT MEAN
SOMETHING
ARE STILL BETTER
THAN SEVENTY
THAT DON'T

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YOU ARE WEIRD

A TOUCHING STORY BASED ON REAL EVENTS

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Oliver Heyn

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Chapter One

YOU ARE WEIRD

My name is Benedikt Heyn. I was born in Prague in 1990. My identical twin brother Adam saw the light of the world four minutes after me.

Our dad died when we were four years old. He died of a vicious type of cancer.

I have only one memory left of my father; him putting a small model of a bright orange car into the palm of my hand – in a hospital he was dying in.

After dad died, mom shut herself off from the rest of the world and kept living just for the two of us.

My brother and I loved each other very much, but we still kept telling each other: “*You are weird.*” Well...it *is* weird when you have a brother who looks exactly like you.

My brother was always one step ahead of me no matter what. His mind was always the more adult one, the more rational. He was calmer than I was and much more sensitive; you could even say he was overly sensitive. It was me though,

who according to our unwritten rule was the leader of our inner world.

Since we were little, we didn't have many friends. We weren't very popular among our peers and we were often laughed at. They taunted us because we looked the same. Truly, only few people could tell us apart. We were never angry with our classmates for being cruel to us just because we were identical twins. But their taunts bothered us. And so it happened that every day we chose to run away from this not-so-friendly reality to our own little world, full of dreams and wishes.

Both of us were the same dreamers. We dreamt about a vast gorgeous world, filled with success and money. To just settle with the way our reality was or even get used to our poor life filled with taunts, sneers and stupid comments, was unthinkable.

The life of identical twins is really *noteasy* in a lot of ways.

There always was a deep emotional connection between us. We would never admit it to ourselves, but we existed mostly for each other.

We had our disagreements sometimes, but none of us would ever cause a rift between us. The biggest rows actually happened when we started comparing our freckles - who had more of them. It's true that we did have our share of childish arguments like that.

Since we were little we were very interested in why people behaved the way they did; in psychology and interpersonal relationships in particular. I think we were fourteen when pretending to be the judge and the lawyer became our favorite game: the winner was the one, who was able to defeat the other with the most sensible arguments without showing any signs of aggression.

Adam was, among other things, very invested in the way we looked - he took care of that for the both of us. Dirty shoes or crumpled shirts were unacceptable. What would happen if I'd been dressed inappropriately and a girl thought it was him!

We were both slim and tall with light brown eyes... And an awful lot of freckles. We usually had our hair cut the same way and wore identical

outfits on the same day. We liked to confuse and provoke the people around us.

Everywhere we went, we were the center of attention. Usually, it felt very good. Especially girls were really interested in us. Our platonic sweethearts changed maybe once a week. Maybe that was the reason for the almost hateful comments of our classmates..."Damn freckled redheads!" That was the phrase we probably heard most often from our peers.

Our mum, as a single parent, didn't have an overly large monthly budget, which is why we had to live pretty modestly. We tried to make some money doing part time jobs. One time we were checking movie tickets, the other handing out leaflets. We wanted to help mom with every paycheck we got, so we made sure to always give her at least a little bit to help with the household.

Mom gave everything she had towards our upbringing. She always did everything she could. But she also only ever saw us like a single player team. She scarcely called us by our names. Our

whole lives we were just “boys” to her – there was no Ben or Adam.

At the time school was a complete waste of my time. Well, that was the way I saw it; mom had a different opinion of course. My grades at school were not very good, particularly in math. Naturally, I wasn't the only one. Adam's understanding of mathematics was not much different from my own. On the other hand we both adored geography; looking at maps and planning our future adventures was our favorite past time.

Our opinion was that we would count what we needed to count. That's what the calculator is for, right? We would never need equations anyway, we often reassured each other, and if we did, someone would surely solve them for us.

Our perspective made mom a bit frustrated. She arranged tutoring in math for both of us, but it was mainly just a waste of both our time and our money. Effort is what matters though, which is why we both managed to successfully finish our primary school with a D in this wondrous subject. Compulsory education was finally behind us.

Together we decided to attend a four-year apprenticeship in *Culinary arts and hotel management*. Our grades didn't leave us much of a choice and we both found it interesting anyway. We saw ourselves as successful managers of a large hotel chain by the time we were thirty. My brother and I were obsessed with aiming really really high. Our dreams for the future were not modest at all.

We enjoyed learning foreign languages. Our grandma from our mother's side was German, which is why we knew the language perfectly. Since we were little, she only spoke to us in German.

Because we knew another language and also with some understanding from our teachers, we were reluctant to be separated, we both managed to have our work placement at a luxurious restaurant in Old Town, in the center of Prague.

It was the first time in our lives that we saw such a beautiful and sublime interior as we did in that restaurant. For me it was a place that only the successful, rich and famous frequented. I was absolutely fascinated by the luxurious interior, the manner of dining, conduct of staff...

Since the first day working in that establishment I knew that I would never come to terms with just waiting the tables my whole life.

We were 15 years old. Standing in a spacious, dimly lit office with fine wood paneling, and proudly sitting behind the massive table which dominated the room was the owner of the restaurant.

She was a very handsome woman. On the other side of the room, behind a conference table, her husband was sitting.

Mrs. Schwarz asked us a question: “*Where do you, boys, see yourselves in 5 years?*” the question didn’t catch us by surprise and we both answered without hesitation.

“*In your place, Mrs. Schwarz,*” was my answer. Adam’s was basically the same: “*Behind your table, Mrs. Schwarz.*” Next were the five longest seconds in my life. We were both absolutely serious.

Mrs. Schwarz aimed her narrowed eyed look at Adam. “*How can you talk to me like that Ben?*”

Do you even understand what you are saying?" her voice was quivering with anger.

"Yes, we do Mrs. Schwarz. And I am Ben! You have been looking at Adam the whole time."

Suddenly, male amused laughter rang through the room. *"Boys, get out of here, don't let me see you here again,"* said Mr. Schwarz with the corners of his mouth still twitching with laughter.

It was only later that I realized it was us who left the room victorious. Sure, it was more luck than skill, but I was convinced that we caught Mrs. Schwarz's eye. Maybe the reason was our over confidence, or more likely our similar appearance.

She was a very elegant lady. She had more than enough confidence and a very sharp tongue. What intrigued me the most though, were her dark brown, intelligent eyes. Her observant gaze, the way she confidently walked in her high heeled shoes and her perfume were all like an aphrodisiacs to me.

In my eyes she was a great lady and my admiration towards her grew daily. What a "luxurious

dame” and she owned such a luxurious restaurant!

It was autumn of the year 2005. We were supposed to attend a party for parents of the students working in the restaurant. Including me and my brother, fifteen people came. Our mom didn't want to accept the invitation, saying that it was too “fancy” for her. It would probably be her first time in a restaurant like that. Her excuse was that she didn't have anything appropriate to wear. My brother and I didn't give up though and kept on persuading her. In the end, we managed to persuade her and she decided to go. We were really glad and we hoped she'd have a nice evening.

It was a very pleasant evening. Soft piano sonata was drifting through the restaurant from carefully placed speakers. I felt like a young successful man for the first time in my life. Well, at least for this one evening.

It was 7 p.m. and the restaurant was almost full. Several times we noticed stares from other tables at me and Adam. People never cease to be fascinated by identical siblings. We both loved it.

We were getting much more intense looks from one table though. We both noticed. Two ladies around forty years old were sitting there. They were dressed very elegantly and we kept meeting their eyes.

It was evident we were the main topic of their conversation. Though what we didn't know was that the most crucial moment of our life was about to happen.

"Why are they looking at us like that?" Adam said uneasily. I didn't pay his words much attention; I was carefully watching our hostess, Mrs. Schwarz. She was walking self-assuredly between the tables, asking guests if everything was all right and the food to their liking. She was well aware of her good looks and she knew how to use it to her advantage. Many a guest looked after her as she walked by.

To me, her charisma was magical. I couldn't keep my eyes off her. It didn't even cross my mind that it could never happen. I was oblivious to the fact that I was just a student and she an owner of a luxurious restaurant, or the huge age difference between us. I was more and more aware of the

fact that my thoughts only revolved around the idea of my first sex with her.

My brother was right. I was smitten with her and had “just that one” goal. Well, I was fifteen...

Just as my thoughts took the most naïve turn and my head was filled with all kinds of indecent thoughts, a waiter brought to our table a glass of the same white wine my mom was drinking and Coke for us with the words: *“This is from the ladies at table three.”* Mom didn’t understand what was happening and started asking discreet questions as to where table three was. I pointed out the table where the two ladies were sitting.

“Those are the two ladies who keep staring at us and watching our every move,” I told mom.

“Well, it’s very rude to just gawk at someone so blatantly... If they want to say something to me, they should come over here and say it,” my mom said grumpily.

As if they heard her, in a few moments the ladies from table three were standing at our table. Adam only managed to whisper: *“Look at that, redhead, what babes!”* One was a brunette, short hair, suit, slim and the second blonde, with her

hair in a ponytail and a slim figure. They were both very elegant.

Speaking fluently in English, one of them said, *"Good evening. We are very sorry for disturbing you and we'd also like to apologize for observing those young men here in such a rude manner. Please accept our apologies. I am the chief editor of a fashion magazine, Carol Leavitt."*

The second lady introduced herself as Suzanne Rousseau: *"...and I represent a Paris modeling agency."* Mom gave us a questioning glance; she couldn't speak English. My brother and I smiled in unison and quickly translated the last several sentences. *"Can we go and talk to them for a second mom?"* added Adam.

"Both of you stay where you are. Surely I won't be in a way of your conversation. You'll translate for me so I'll understand." We introduced our mom and then ourselves.

"Please sit down and tell me, why are you so interested in my boys...?" mom asked in a suspicious tone. We translated everything that was being said to English. It was difficult to remem-

ber a specific word sometimes so we had to do a bit of improvisation.

"Thank you for your time Mrs. Heyn," Madam Leavitt started.

Mrs. Rousseau smoothly continued. *"Mrs. Heyn, this is my first time in this kind of situation. I never approach potential models on the street or in restaurants. Your boys are unique. I am absolutely positive about that. The boys have a great chance... their unbelievably similar appearance, the same expressions, gorgeous smiles... They radiate confidence, trust me, they are very interesting. I am blown away by them, you must be proud of your sons."*

Mom started out awkwardly. *"Well, you know, I try to raise my boys as well as I can, but it's not easy with them. They have their own head and they react badly to being separated."*

I made a mistake somewhere. The boys are not able to function independently. I tried to instill solid morals in them. Of course I am proud of them, but I don't think I'd be happy with this. I've read enough about models and I'm not so sure this kind of world would be good for my boys..."

“Mrs. Heyn,” Mrs. Rousseau replied immediately, “I am so sorry to hear that. I presume the boys are not of legal age yet? I would like to talk to you about a potential business offer for your sons. I would like you to promise me that you will at least consider it. It would be an amazing opportunity for them both. I would personally arrange for the boys to have a few days off from school. In Paris, I would personally look after their accommodation, their safety and all other affairs. You could count on me.

Here is my business card, if you'd be interested in talking to me again. Please call me any time and we will arrange a meeting. I will be in Prague till Monday.”

“Mrs. Heyn,” Madam Leavitt added, “once again, please accept our apology for disturbing your evening, but this is without a doubt an exceptional circumstance. Never in my life have I met such handsome and visually interesting twins.”

Mom hesitantly took the card from Mrs. Rousseau.

“Thank you. I will think about it and discuss it with the boys,” she answered.

The whole time my brother and I almost didn't dare to breathe. We focused on every Mrs. Rousseau's word with rapt attention. When she mentioned Paris we simply looked at each other. We both realized what an enormous opportunity that was.

Obviously, mom didn't like it very much. I prayed that she wouldn't dismiss the whole thing immediately.

Mom didn't say much for the rest of the evening. We could see that the encounter wasn't too pleasant for her. Maybe she was feeling awkward that she couldn't talk to them herself – because of the language barrier.

Oddly enough the whole incident left me feeling so agitated, that I completely forgot to watch the evening's hostess, Mrs. Schwarz.

“Adam, this is such a great opportunity. Do you understand? This is our ticket out, to the world where we might actually mean something one day! To the big world! Modeling is a huge deal!”
I said excitedly.

“What about mom? We can’t just leave her here on her own. She’d be sad. She’ll worry about us,” said Adam.

“Redhead, think about it! Do you understand how much we could help mom? We could give her some of the money we’ll make. It would help her. She’ll take a break from us and we won’t have to go to school!” was my answer.

“Don’t call me redhead. You are weird. We have to talk to mom when we get home, discuss everything. This is important to me!” said Adam decisively.

Chapter Two

LITTLE STARS

Our plane to Paris was leaving from the Prague airport at 11:30 a.m. We couldn't sleep the whole night. Until 10 p.m. the previous night we had to listen to mom's preaching about good manners. For the rest of the night we imagined together what could await us in Paris.

We were filled with expectations. It would be our first time on a plane. New, unknown city, new faces...

In the morning mom accompanied us to the airport. She wasn't able to say goodbye without crying though. Again she urged us to behave, not to embarrass her anywhere and most importantly to safely come back to her.

Adam was a bit afraid to fly. During the takeoff he grabbed my hand: *"Tell me nothing is going to happen to us."* I looked into his eyes: *"It won't Adam. I'm sure nothing is going to happen to us."* I will never forget that moment. The look in his eyes. He wasn't just afraid of the flight. There was something more. In that moment I realized how

much I loved my brother and how much I depended on him.

We spent the whole flight talking about mom and about how much effort it took to convince her to send us to Paris alone. It wasn't easy to persuade her to call the lady who gave her a business card in the restaurant. Luckily for us, the meeting took place and Mrs. Rousseau described everything to our mom as a completely normal short trip to Paris.

"Welcome to the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris," a voice rang throughout the plane cabin.

A driver was waiting for us in the arrivals hall, holding a sign over his head "HEYN BROTHERS".

"Look, there he is," said Adam excitedly when he noticed the driver with our name.

The journey from the airport took about an hour. The whole ride was an emotional experience for us, we kept pointing out things through the windows during the ride. The whole experience was astonishing. The driver was a very likeable Hispanic man. He kept watching us in