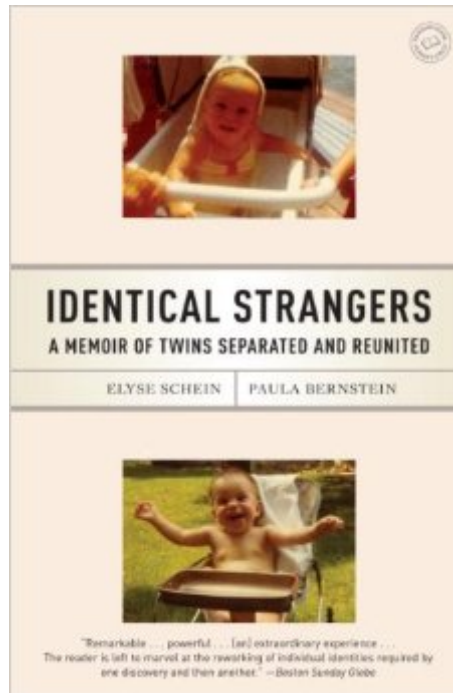


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Identical Strangers: A Memoir Of Twins Separated And Reunited



Synopsis

Elyse Schein had always known she was adopted, but it wasn't until her mid-thirties while living in Paris that she searched for her biological mother. What she found instead was shocking: She had an identical twin sister. What's more, after being separated as infants, she and her sister had been, for a time, part of a secret study on separated twins. Paula Bernstein, a married writer and mother living in New York, also knew she was adopted, but had no inclination to find her birth mother. When she answered a call from her adoption agency one spring afternoon, Paula's life suddenly divided into two starkly different periods: the time before and the time after she learned the truth. As they reunite, taking their tentative first steps from strangers to sisters, Paula and Elyse are left with haunting questions surrounding their origins and their separation. And when they investigate their birth mother's past, the sisters move closer toward solving the puzzle of their lives.

Praise for *Identical Strangers*: Winner of a Books for a Better Life Award • Remarkable . . . powerful . . . [an] extraordinary experience . . . The reader is left to marvel at the reworking of individual identities required by one discovery and then another. • "Boston Sunday Globe" [A] poignant memoir of twin sisters who were split up as infants, became part of a secret scientific study, then found each other as adults. • "Reader's Digest (Editors' Choice)" [A] fascinating memoir . . . Weaving studies about twin science into their personal reflections . . . Schein and Bernstein provide an intelligent exploration of how identity intersects with bloodlines. A must-read for anyone interested in what it means to be a family. • "Bustle" *Identical Strangers* has all the heart-stopping drama you'd expect. But it has so much more • "the authors' emotional honesty and clear-eyed insights turn this unique story into a universal one. As you accompany the twins on their search for the truth of their birth, you witness another kind of birth • "the germination and flowering of sisterly love. • "Deborah Tannen, author of *You're Wearing That?*

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Customer Reviews

In this transfixing memoir, Bernstein, a freelance writer, and Schein, a filmmaker, take turns recounting the story of how each woman, at age 35, discovered she had an identical twin sister, and the reunion that followed. Despite disparate upbringings, education and work experiences, the twins share matching wild hand gestures, allergies, speech patterns and a penchant for the same art movies. Louise Wise Services, the adoption agency, will reveal only that their biological mother was schizophrenic and unaware of who their father was. Records of the study the agency conducted about them are sealed, so the authors spearhead their own research project by poring over birth records, tracking down their birth mother's brother and interviewing researchers, who claim that twins raised apart are more similar than those raised together. Much of the book is devoted to fascinating stories of other twins and triplets who, when reunited as adults, are shocked by how much they have in common with one another. Bernstein and Schein's relationship becomes extremely close and also fraught with expectation. Once you find someone, Bernstein writes, you can't unfind her. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

Elyse Schein is a writer and filmmaker. Her short films *Steal Happiness* and *Private Dick* have been shown at the Telluride Film Festival and at cinemas in Prague and San Francisco. A graduate of Stony Brook University, she studied film at FAMU, Prague's Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts. She has also worked as an English teacher, photographer, and translator. Schein lives in Brooklyn. Paula Bernstein is a freelance writer whose work has been published in *The New York Times*, *New York*, *The Village Voice*, and *Redbook*, among other publications. Formerly a reporter at *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter*, Bernstein has also been a regular contributor to CNN. A graduate of Wellesley College, she has a master's degree in cinema studies from New York University. Bernstein lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two daughters. From the Hardcover edition.

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