He Ain't Heavy

My mother was a private person, never talking about her early life. I always assumed there might be some mystery about her birth as I never met her parents or indeed my own father. Was she the illegitimate offspring of someone famous or was I?

Now, I can finally discover her secrets. She passed away last month and I must sort through her things. She hardly recognised me in her final days, often calling me Michael not David, my name.

And she puzzled me towards the end by often moaning, " Find Him", but not responding when I asked who.

I find her private papers in a tin box under her bed. Just a few documents, but I gasp when I read one. There are three birth certificates: hers, and her parents aren't famous, mine with no father listed and the third for a boy with the same birth day as mine. I check the dates again; they are definitely the same. So, I had or still have a brother and maybe a twin and maybe even an identical twin. How sad we never grew up together or even met. I have to sit and take deep breaths, feeling a disappointment for the life we missed. Now, my mother's last words mean something especially important to me.

I show Lucy, my wife, the birth certificate as we have coffee. She sees the sadness in my face and reaches out to take my hand.

"You're upset aren't you," she says, "but be positive. Today you've gained a brother and you could still share a few years with him."

"But we are sixty, what are the chances my brother is still alive?".

"Stay positive. I'm sure he is," Lucy says, "and I think he is an identical twin."

"How do you jump to that conclusion?"

"Think how many times new people we meet say they think they've seen you before. You are a lookalike for someone who's probably well-known, maybe in the media."

"I guess he was adopted and doesn't have my surname, So, how do we find him, watch endless tv shows?"

"Remember last year when we were walking the promenade in Brighton, several passerbys nodded at you. And I think one called you Michael."

Lucy's right, I do get recognised often for no apparent reason. How exciting to have a famous brother.

"So, are you suggesting we have another trip to Brighton and ask around?"

"I am already on Booking.com, checking hotels for next weekend." Lucy says, smiling, " and I notice there's a sale on at my favourite dress shop."

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Our Brighton visit has instant success. Lucy gets a new dress and an older barman, in the first pub we visit, knows Michael well.

"You're almost a dead ringer," he says loudly, " though Michael carrys less pounds." A man along the bar overhears the conversation and turns to towards us. I am face to face with my double!

"Wow," Lucy declares, "He ain't heavy, he's your brother."