

The One of Us

John Needham

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Jim and Maureen Harrison ache to have a child. Glyn and Sioned Rees want a brother or sister for their daughter Lowri. But for both couples, further pregnancy is impossible. So what to do? The answers to both their dreams are sucking their thumbs in the Strawberry Field children's home in Liverpool: foundlings, twin baby boys. Glyn and Sioned adopt one, whom they bring up in Wales. Jim and Maureen adopt the other, rearing him in north Yorkshire.

And so the boys are brought up in very different social and family environments, developing markedly different personalities and aspirations. But are they entirely different? After all, they are monozygotic: identical. Does their genetic commonality confer similar character traits deep down? John Needham's third novel explores nature/nurture theory, weaving it into an absorbing, at times exquisitely moving tale of brothers.

Readers of his previous book, Forebears, will be re-acquainted with warm-hearted, bluff, call-a-spade-a-bloody-shovel Yorkshire lass Helen, now taking a larger role, telling her story too, from an earlier time.

This gentle, compelling, sometimes poignant novel tells the boys' stories in parallel as they grow to manhood, converging to a dramatic, heart-wrenching reunion that will wring your emotions dry.



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