

Get ready to meet the other you.

Just upload your photo to get started. Using the latest facial recognition software, plus your votes, MeetYourDouble will find your doppelgänger.

She might be an astronaut or a model. He might live half a world away . . . or a few miles down the road.

You share the same face. Who knows what else you might have in common?

Start now.

DAZZL! Magazine

Double Trouble

Roxanna Norris

MeetYourDouble is the hottest new app, with 200,000 new downloads in the last month alone. You might think you're one in a million – but, with seven billion people in the world, there are a fair few of you out there!

We've all seen the parade of celeb lookalikes. Some may be total pants, but some are uncanny. Wouldn't it be cool, then, to be able to meet your very own lookalike?

Users of MeetYourDouble say: yes! The app's following keeps on growing. It's become a cult phenomenon among the hipsters and shakers of everywhere from Shoreditch to Sandbanks.

All you have to do is upload some photos of yourself and click 'Find my doppelmatch!' A few seconds of digital crunching later and MeetYourDouble presents you with a selection of your closest counterparts. Other app users can then wield their votes to weigh in on which is the most uncanny match.

What if it turns out you share a face with an up-and-coming Hollywood starlet? (Awesome!) What if you share a face with a chavvy bruiser who spends Friday nights getting banned from Wetherspoons? (Criiinge!)

Either way, it's a glimpse into a different life – a life that might have been yours. With that in mind, who wouldn't want to meet their alter ego?

Doppelprofile – MeetYourDouble

Please fill in your details, so that other users can get to know you!

Name: Ella Mosier

Age: 24

Occupation: Still looking for the right thing

Location: Walney Island, Cumbria, UK

Interests: playing guitar, reading, avoiding drama, being ignored by my dog. I'm pretty boring, really.

Hi there, Ella! Based on the results of our doppelmatch software and 1,454 votes from fellow users, your photo has achieved a 98 per cent match with . . .

Name: Jemima Cootes-Mitchell

Age: 25

Occupation: Actress

Location: London, UK

Interests: theatre, singing, dancing till I die, give me adventure in all forms!

*Message **Jemima** now?*

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WEIRD EARS

Ella

When I first met my double, I was disappointed by how little she looked like me.

‘Ellie!’ she called.

The woman waved her arms above her head, like I might miss her. Not likely. An oversize orange beanie bounced against her head and her mouth stretched in a theatrical ‘O’.

‘Ellie!’

It’s Ella, I tried to say, but my lips were stuck together and nothing came out.

Over the course of the day’s long train ride, I’d wondered if our first meeting might have the feel of a long-lost twins scenario. We’d scan the station’s crowds until, miraculously, our eyes locked. Time would slow down, then speed up. We’d rush towards each other and fall into a hug.

No. Stupid.

That was a daydream borrowed from a bad movie.

In the broadest terms, we looked alike: pale skin and elfin features, with a mop of hair that was either dirty-blonde or dishwater-brown, depending on the light. But Jem, with her ugly beanie, wasn’t my twin. She wore a brash smear of orange-red lipstick to match the hat, and her hair looked in dire need of a hairbrush. Her appearance was far removed from the girl in the photo, with her sleek hair and minimal makeup.

I probably didn’t look the same as my picture either.

As Jem’s gaze bored into me, I ran a hand through my unwashed hair. I was all too aware of the dark circles under

my eyes. The version of me on the app was the good Ella, the one I could just barely remember. The real me was much less impressive.

‘Are you Ellie?’ she asked, bounding over to where I stood.

In spike-heeled boots, my double was four or five inches taller than me. Despite the cold October day, she wore an ultra-short leather skirt with artfully-ripped tights. Her beaded top glittered when it caught the light, and was cut low to reveal the ample swell of her breasts. I wished I could be so courageous. In jeans and a faded green jumper, I felt bundled-up and dowdy.

‘It’s Ella,’ I said in an undertone, but the blare of a train announcement swallowed up my voice.

I shifted my tatty backpack from shoulder to shoulder. It was Saturday afternoon and hordes of passengers streamed past us. The bump of a stray elbow buffeted me half a step backwards. I took a shaky breath and righted myself, but when I tried to speak again, I was interrupted.

‘Who else would it be?’ another voice said. ‘Unless this place in swimming in your doppelgängers. Euston’s turned into your own personal lab for Jemima clones.’

I turned to look at the guy who’d spoken. With black hair that fell past his chin, he looked Asian, maybe Chinese or Japanese. (‘Foreign,’ my mum would say with a sniff, triggered into a rant about immigration, even though our town was white-whiter-whitest.)

He was tall and wiry, and there was an eager, forward lean to his posture. Despite my nervousness, my toes curled inside my trainers. He was very good-looking. Jem elbowed him aside and stepped forward.

Without warning, my double hugged me.

In contrast to my daydream, it wasn’t a tearful, thank-God-we-found-each-other hug. I didn’t even have time to react to it. My arms hung limply at my sides, while Jem squeezed me tight for exactly two seconds. She air-kissed both my cheeks –

mwah! mwah! – and then pulled away again. When she spoke, her voice was newsreader-posh and bright with false cheer.

‘It’s so great to meet you!’

‘It’s great . . . to meet you . . . too . . .’ I said.

Another person shouldered past us, shoving me aside. Jem seemed unaffected by the crowd, but I was beginning to feel lightheaded.

I glanced over at my train. It was departing again, going back up north. During the four hours I’d spent on the journey to London, my anticipation had crept higher and higher. Now I was on the downward swoop of the rollercoaster.

This stupid plan of mine to travel halfway across the country to ‘meet my double’ wasn’t just a waste of money. I had a strong feeling I was about to make a fool of myself. In our messages through the MeetYourDouble app, I’d already lied to Jem to make myself sound more interesting. *I’m coming to London anyway.* (Lie.) *I’ve got some friends there.* (Lie.) *Might have a lead on a job.* (Lie.)

In truth, I’d come to London because . . .

Because . . .

‘No shit, she really does look like you.’

It was the handsome guy at Jem’s side. Like me and my double, he looked to be in his mid-twenties. When he peered at me, I shrank under his gaze. Jem was eyeing me, as well.

‘Yuh, it’s pretty crazy,’ she said.

‘I mean, she doesn’t have the same mad glint in her eye, Ripper,’ the guy said. ‘But the rest of it . . . is kind of freaky. You’re sure you don’t have some secret sister out there? Maybe your dad played away one weekend in Blackpool?’

‘My dad’s never been north of Watford,’ Jem said with a laugh.

The two of them spoke in a rapid back-and-forth, which – it couldn’t be more obvious – was not meant to include me.

‘Lemme see the ears,’ he said, again examining me. ‘Some

people have weird ears.’ He cut his gaze to Jem. ‘Weird ears. Band name. What d’you think?’

‘Weird ears, weird ears,’ Jem said. Then she shook her head. ‘Nah, it strays. Say it too many times and it sounds like We’re Deers. Or Weird Years.’

‘Well, you say that like it’s a bad thing – ’

‘If you’re looking for a band name, how about Psycho Killer Strangers From the Internet?’ I interrupted, the words slipping out in a rush of anger.

The two of them turned to look at me once more. My face burned, anger turning to embarrassment.

Voice faltering, I said, ‘Sorry . . . but I don’t have weird ears.’

‘Hey, sorry about that.’ The guy’s expression softened. ‘You definitely don’t have weird ears. You have nice ears. Congratulations on your ears.’ He raked his hair out of his face and looked at me intently. ‘I’m Katsuhito. Don’t worry, there won’t be a spelling test. Most people call me Katsu. Like the chicken.’

Like the chicken? I didn’t know what he was talking about, but his gaze was warm. For the first time, I felt like he was seeing me as a person, rather than as a prop.

‘I call him Dicknugget,’ Jem said. ‘Sometimes Nippleface.’

Katsu put his arm around Jem (half loving embrace, half wrestling hold) and, when she tried to break free, he swooped in for a kiss. She leaned in to the kiss – sloppy, TMI – and then swatted him away, laughing. Her laughter came in a quick-fire volley, a fraction too loud.

Like Jem in her fashionably-torn tights, there was a hipster-ish vibe to Katsu. He wore skinny jeans, a yellow T-shirt, and a leather jacket. There was a piercing at his eyebrow and another nestled inside his ear. (Weird ears, indeed.) I didn’t know any blokes in Cumbria who’d wear a T-shirt that read, *I’m just here to establish an alibi*, but that made me like him more, not less.

‘What are we doing?’ Katsu asked.

Jem shrugged and looked around at the station platform, which was beginning to clear. ‘Coffee?’

‘Addict,’ Katsu said.

‘Puritan.’

She stuck her tongue out at him. He laughed and drew her close. Their casual intimacy made my chest ache. Katsu hooked his finger around a strand of Jem’s hair and pulled on it playfully. For a second, I felt a phantom echo of the sensation. Then all I felt was cold; they were indoors, and I was outside, face pressed against the glass. The two of them ambled away, without bothering to ask my opinion. I stood rooted to the spot.

What am I doing? Why am I here?

‘Um,’ I said.

Jem turned back to look at me. ‘Coming?’

‘Um, I’m not so sure . . .’

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the train tracks glitter.

I don’t want to be here anymore.

‘Come on, we’ll go get caffeinated and have some fun,’ Jem said.

She shrugged off Katsu’s embrace and advanced on me. I flinched as she squeezed into my personal space. She slipped an arm through the crook of my elbow. The scent of her perfume – oranges, sunshine – banished the grey day for a second. When her voice dropped to almost a whisper, it was as if her words were for me and me alone.

‘I’ve been so excited to meet you,’ she said. ‘Honestly. It blows my mind how much you look like me. We could be sisters, I swear. We’ll get some coffee, get some food, find something to do. It’ll be marvellous.’

Jem’s rapt gaze, the insistence of her words, disarmed me. Up close, I could see the resemblance clearly. Me and Jem, we dressed differently, we spoke differently, we held ourselves differently.

But . . .

I met Jem's gaze once more.

. . . the eyes. They were the same. Same shape, same shade: blue shifting into green shifting into grey; the colour of the Irish Sea on a cloudy day. The pointy nose was alike, too. We had the same wide mouth, the same angular face.

Looking at her was like passing an unexpected mirror and not knowing if it was your reflection you were seeing or another person.

Despite the cold day, despite my jangling nerves, I felt a rush of unexpected warmth. I'd experienced the same feeling when Jem's profile had loaded on the app. The fact that we looked alike, perhaps it was a fluke, a coincidence, an uncanny roll of the genetic dice. Yet I'd felt an instant connection with the stranger on the screen and I felt it in person, too.

Jem squeezed me into another quick hug and then released me. 'Come on,' she said again.

I nodded. In that moment, I recognised how cults recruited people on the basis of one charismatic leader. Katsu was a follower of the Cult of Jem, too. I saw that now. He gave as good as he got from her, but his soft-eyed looks betrayed him. As the three of us walked through the station, Jem was in the lead, hips swaying, and Katsu walked with a hand at her waist. I picked up the rear.

I took a deep breath and fluffed up my hair, trying to make it look less unwashed-dirty and more fashionably-dirty. Lifting my chin, I made an effort to walk tall, pushing through the crowds confidently. This was why I'd come to London: for the noise, the bustle, the sense of life in full colour.

I can do this, I can be this person.

Breaking into a slight trot, I jostled forward until I was level with Jem, not lagging behind. On the way out of Euston, we passed at least three coffee places in the space of 200 metres. There was a coffee cart, a name-brand coffee chain, an arty

café with a chalkboard sign outside. We didn't stop at any of them. Apparently they didn't sell the right kind of coffee.

'I want Marco's dark roast . . .' Jem confided in me.

Katsu gave a sigh. 'The one in Chelsea?' He twisted his neck, also throwing a glance at me. 'You don't want to trek all the way to Chelsea, do you?'

I had no idea. Neither of them waited for a response from me, though.

'Can't help my cravings,' Jem said.

'You're a brat,' Katsu said.

'It's why you love me.'

Jem took a turn and Katsu followed. The world rotated according to her whims. I hesitated and then I followed too, down a set of steps and into an Underground station.

Chelsea. We were going to Chelsea. I only had the haziest sense of what might lie in this posh part of London. Money, tiny dogs, designer lives. Back on Walney Island, I knew someone named Chelsea. She was a bright, plainspoken girl who stacked shelves at Tesco, but maybe her parents had once dreamed of bigger things for her. You could give your child the name, but you couldn't give her the money, not if you were a nobody from a small town.

Inside the Tube station, a mangy-dog smell filled the air. Flickering fluorescents replaced the natural light. Someone pushed past me and their shoulder hit mine hard enough that my bones jumped in their sockets.

I fluffed up my hair again, straightened my spine.

I can do this, I am this person.

It was no good; the panic was creeping back in, prickling across my skin. A tide of people pushed me in the direction of the metal barriers. But I didn't have a ticket. Where could I buy a ticket? Craning my neck, I tried to locate the machines, but the crowd pushed me mercilessly onward in the opposite direction.

Jem and Katsu pulled ahead of me and passed smoothly through the barriers. I had no way to get through. The metal bar, slick and cold against my palms, stuck firm. A throng of people swelled behind me, impatient at the bottleneck I was causing. There were *tuts* and sighs.

I'd never felt more like a dumb hick from the country.

Beyond the barriers, my double's orange beanie disappeared from view. I had no choice but to turn around and fight my way back through the crowd. Scanning the sea of unfamiliar faces, it hit me in the stomach: I was alone.

Around me, strange accents and foreign languages blended together. Announcements blared over the loudspeaker. The rattle of trains arriving and departing sent shivers down my spine. Back home, I was used to life in miniature. Bus drivers who knew my name. Church services where fifty people was a big crowd. Towns where there were more seagulls than people.

Someone grabbed my arm. I flinched away, thinking: *Pickpockets! Muggers! Thugs!*

Again, I felt a hand reach for my arm. My vision cleared and I realised it was Katsu. He'd doubled back through the barriers.

'Come on, Weird Ears,' he said. 'Let's get you an Oyster card.'

Relief flooded my body, followed quickly by embarrassment. Of course. An Oyster card. I fumbled with the ticket machine's buttons, feeding coins down its metal throat. There were so many stages to the process, so many buttons to press. When I got confused, Katsu had to take over for me, selecting options on the screen with practised ease. It was several minutes before I got my card. Afterwards, my purse felt light – too light – but I pushed the worry aside.

'I guess the world is yours now,' Katsu said, as I swiped through the barrier.

I nodded. He'd meant it as a joke, but, plastic card clamped in my fist, I felt the truth of it all the same. For other people, for Jem, the world was a bright shiny pearl. Why not for me, too?

This was why I'd come to meet my double, after all: to see how a different version of my life might look.

I didn't want to be on the other side of the glass, peering in, anymore. I didn't want to live inside the last few years of regret. I didn't want to scroll blankly through other people's excitement on Facebook.

I wanted to be right there in the excitement. I wanted to become someone new; become the person I'd always imagined I could be.