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Category: Short Story

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## **The Freaks**

When the alarm went off at 6:30 in the morning, Victor decided he and the world should sleep for another twenty minutes.

He finally went downstairs at 6:35, not without a lot of yawns and eye-rubbing. "Staying up late again?" asked Mom as he walked into the kitchen. "I'm surprised that you can still get up so early."

, thought Victor. "Unlike Oscar, I have a body clock."

Usually, his brother would rush down the stairs ten minutes before the bus arrived. His parents would bring Oscar's backpack to the door as he hurried off his breakfast. There would be hugs and nagging, and Oscar would wave back at them as he got on the bus.

Then he would turn around and ask Victor where to sit for today.

Although Victor and Oscar were only one year apart, their parents favored the younger sibling in every aspect. Victor couldn't count the times he'd stayed at school till eight o'clock, just because both of his parents were at Oscar's away game. They still cared about him, but whenever Oscar was around, Victor was entirely forgotten.

After lunch, Victor went to the library and settled down at the farthest table from the door, half-hidden behind bookshelves, his favorite spot. He was pondering over a math problem when someone drew out the chair opposite him.

"You're late, Beatrice."

"Only later than you, who never finishes his lunch." The girl chuckled as she threw her bag on the chair.

Victor smiled. Him being antisocial, Beatrice was one of the few students who ever talked to Victor. Victor never knew why a friendly, caring, and smart girl like her would choose to become his friend, but there was nothing more precious than her presence.

A burst of rapid footsteps interrupted him. Oscar scurried into the library, slapped a stack of paper on the table, and babbled at Beatrice, "My essay! Office, locked, deadline by noon! Please!"

Beatrice let out a long sigh. She scooted her chair closer to the bookshelves and, making sure the library was empty, placed her hand above the stack of papers.

A second later, the papers were gone.

"Done." Beatrice dusted off her hands, "Your essay is now lying right on top of the homework stack, and please don't ask me to get them back if you forget anything." And Oscar, who thanked her as if he might swear allegiance, ran off happily.

Victor frowned at where the papers vanished. “

“I’m so sorry. I should have asked them to leave earlier.”

Victor slowly threw his arms over the sobbing boy and patted him softly on the back. It took him a long time to control his own impulse to cry.

Gradually, the brothers quieted down.

“The driver escaped,” said Victor. “Our parents were lucky to be sitting on the left side. The right side of the car was...pulverized.” He fell silent. The police said no one on the right side could have survived that extent of damage.

“When will our parents heal?”

“Their cor





