

Excerpt from *The Boy with the Longest Shadow*, written by Finegan Kruckemeyer. Not to be presented without official licensing. To enquire, please go to: finegankruckemeyer.com

Available for reading in English and German.

Scene One

ATTICUS: On the 31st of December 1999, on the *last* day of the *old* millennium, at one minute *before* midnight, Adam Brown was born.

ADAM: And on the 1st of January 2000, on the *first* day of the *new* millennium, at one minute *after* midnight, Atticus Brown was born.

ATTICUS: So even though Adam Brown was born only two minutes before his twin brother, he was actually born on a different day, and a different month, and year, and decade, and century, and millennium!

ADAM: Not that it really mattered.

ATTICUS: And it mattered a lot.

ADAM: I'm Adam Brown. My nose is this nose. My eyes are this colour. My lips do this when I smile, and this when I frown. I can jump this high in the air. And three girls at school want to kiss me.

ATTICUS: I'm Atticus Brown. My nose is this nose. My eyes are this colour. My lips do this and this too – because Adam and me are what people say is identical. But the identical stops when I can only jump this high in the air. And the girls who want to kiss me at school, are zero.

ADAM: Less than zero. I make Lego battle-ships with my best friend Tristan. And we hang around the basketball courts at lunch and listen to music with the cool Year Sevens – they're in a gang called *The Scorpions*.

ATTICUS: I make Origami animals by myself mostly. And I hang around the library at lunch and discuss interesting recipes with Mrs O'Keefe – she's in a union called *The Professional Librarians' Association*.

ADAM: And this one time, this tough guy Mike Tanner set up a ramp, and we took turns on a BMX doing jumps over the prep kids! It was wicked.

ATTICUS: And this one time, Mrs O'Keefe got a bunch of books, and we arranged them not in the Dewey Decimal System, but in the alternative Library of Congress Classification System... It was wicked.

Awkward pause.

ADAM: ...I don't really hang out with Atticus.

ATTICUS: ...I don't really hang out with anyone.

Beat.

ATTICUS: Before we were born, when we were just sitting together in our Mum's belly and growing arms and faces and stuff like that, we got along pretty well. But then Adam arrived first, and suddenly we were born in different years. Suddenly we were born different people.

ADAM: And everyone used to say to me – when we were babies, and toddlers, and bigger toddlers, and kids, and now:

*That two minutes has made a big difference, hey, Adam.
You're a real big boy aren't you?*

ATTICUS: But they didn't say that to me. Instead they said:

*You can... read really big books, can't you Atticus?
And don't worry about all the other stuff,
about all the things your brother can do better.
You'll catch up later.*

But the thing is... I wasn't worried – about *all the other stuff*, or about any stuff. I wasn't at all worried... until everyone told me to be. The moment they said to me: *Don't worry...* that's when the worrying kicked in. I started biting my nails and frowning a lot. And then people said:

You're becoming a right worrywart, Atticus.

And that was really worrying! What's a worrywart? I hate warts! I worry *about* warts! I had one when I was seven. On my shoulder. Mum put Savlon on it. And I was really worried about it!

And the whole 'catching up' thing, catching up with Adam, it's hard to catch up two minutes! It's actually scientifically impossible to catch up two minutes! That's a worry isn't it – to be asked to defy the laws of science! At eleven! Why do I worry? That's why! Honestly!

Beat.

ADAM: You see how he gets. And so while Atticus was getting worried about worrying, I was doing stuff. And I'm not really sure why, but... it just seems like I do most stuff... well. And the stuff I can't do well (like homework or cooking or working out which way to turn the clock after daylight savings) I just ask Atticus. And no matter what he's doing, he always helps. And he's always patient, and he never gives me a hard time. So that's good.

And at lunchtime I play footy or cricket or ride my skateboard or talk to girls.

ATTICUS: And sometimes I wish I was actually doing that stuff – cricket and stuff – with Adam, brothers, hanging out together.

ADAM: And sometimes I wish Atticus was doing that stuff with me, cricket and stuff, brothers, hanging out together. Instead of always being... different, and knowing how to spell big words, and doing presentations at assembly about chemical compounds, and teaching our principal Mahjong after school – I don't even know what that is.

ATTICUS: But Adam never invites me to join in.

ADAM: But... I never invite him to join in.

ATTICUS: Because he thinks I'm stupid. And he doesn't want to be seen with me.

ADAM: Because I think he's... amazing, and the most brilliant person I know. *[Beat]* And I don't want him to get paid out.

Silence.

ATTICUS: And whenever we stand in the sun together – even though we're exactly the same height, even though we have been for every day of our lives – Adam casts the longest shadow. For some reason, even though it's not on the outside, I can see he's taller than me – on the inside. And our shadows show that. It makes no sense – it's just the way it is.