

British Twins in Different Colors



Kylie Hodgson with her husband and her twin daughters Kian and Remeë

Beijing, Feb. 23 – When British Kylie Hodgson gave birth to twin daughters by Caesarean section, she was just relieved that they had arrived safely. It was only when the midwife handed them over for her to hold that she noticed the difference between them.

Remeë was blonde and fair-skinned. Her sister, Kian, born a minute later, was dark skinned.

“It was a shock when I realized that my twins were two different colors,” said Kylie, 19. “But it doesn’t matter to us! They are just two gorgeous little girls.”

The amazing conception happened after two eggs were fertilized at the same time in the womb.

Both Kylie and her partner, Remi Horder, 17, are of mixed race. Their mothers are both white and their fathers are black.

According to the Multiple Births Foundation, baby Kian must have inherited the black genes from both sides of the family, while Remeë inherited the white ones.

Kylie, from Nottingham, discovered she was pregnant in the summer of 2004 and a scan at the Queen’s Medical Center revealed that twins were on the way.

“It was a shock at first to discover I was expecting as we hadn’t been trying for a family,” she said. “We couldn’t believe it. Neither of us could take our eyes off the scanner! You could just see two of everything, even the outline of their little noses. We were both overwhelmed.”

The twins were born in April last year because one of the girls was lying in an awkward position in the womb.

“I didn’t see them at first,” added their mother. “They were both whisked away to be checked over and then the midwife came back and placed them both in my arms. It seemed strange, but I was feeling so ill that I didn’t really take it in at that stage.”

The next day she mentioned the color difference to her mother, who told her that Reme’s skin would darken as she grew older. But as the weeks passed, Reme became lighter while Kian became darker. And while Reme’s eyes stayed blue, Kian’s turned brown.

“There are some similarities between them,” said their mother. “They both love apples and grapes. If they haven’t seen each other for a few hours, they are so pleased to see each other and will hold out their arms, wanting to hug each other.”

The odds of a mixed race couple having twins of dramatically different colors are a million to one. Skin color is believed to be determined by up to seven different genes working together.

Similarly, a man of mixed race will have a variety of different genes in his sperm. When these eggs and sperm come together, they will create a baby of mixed race.

But, vary occasionally, the egg or sperm might contain genes coding for one skin color. If both the egg and sperm contain all white genes, the baby will be white. And if both contain just the versions necessary for dark skin, the baby will be dark.

For a mixed-race couple, the odds of either of these scenarios is around 100 to one. But both scenarios can occur at the same time if the woman conceives non-identical twins, another 100 to one chance.

This involves two eggs being fertilized by two sperm at the same time, which also has odds of around 100 to one.

If a sperm containing all-white genes fuses with a similar egg and a sperm coding for purely black skin fuses with a similar egg, two babies of dramatically different colors will be born.

The odds of this happening are 100 x 100 x 100! A million to one!

Name _____

Read the article titled “British Twins in Different Colors” and answer the following questions.

1. How does the formation of identical twins occur?
2. How does the formation of fraternal twins occur?
3. In this article, how did the formation of these twins take place?
4. How were the parents of these twins able to produce two babies of different colors?
5. Do you think this could have occurred if the mother of the twins was black and the father of the twins was white? Why or why not?

