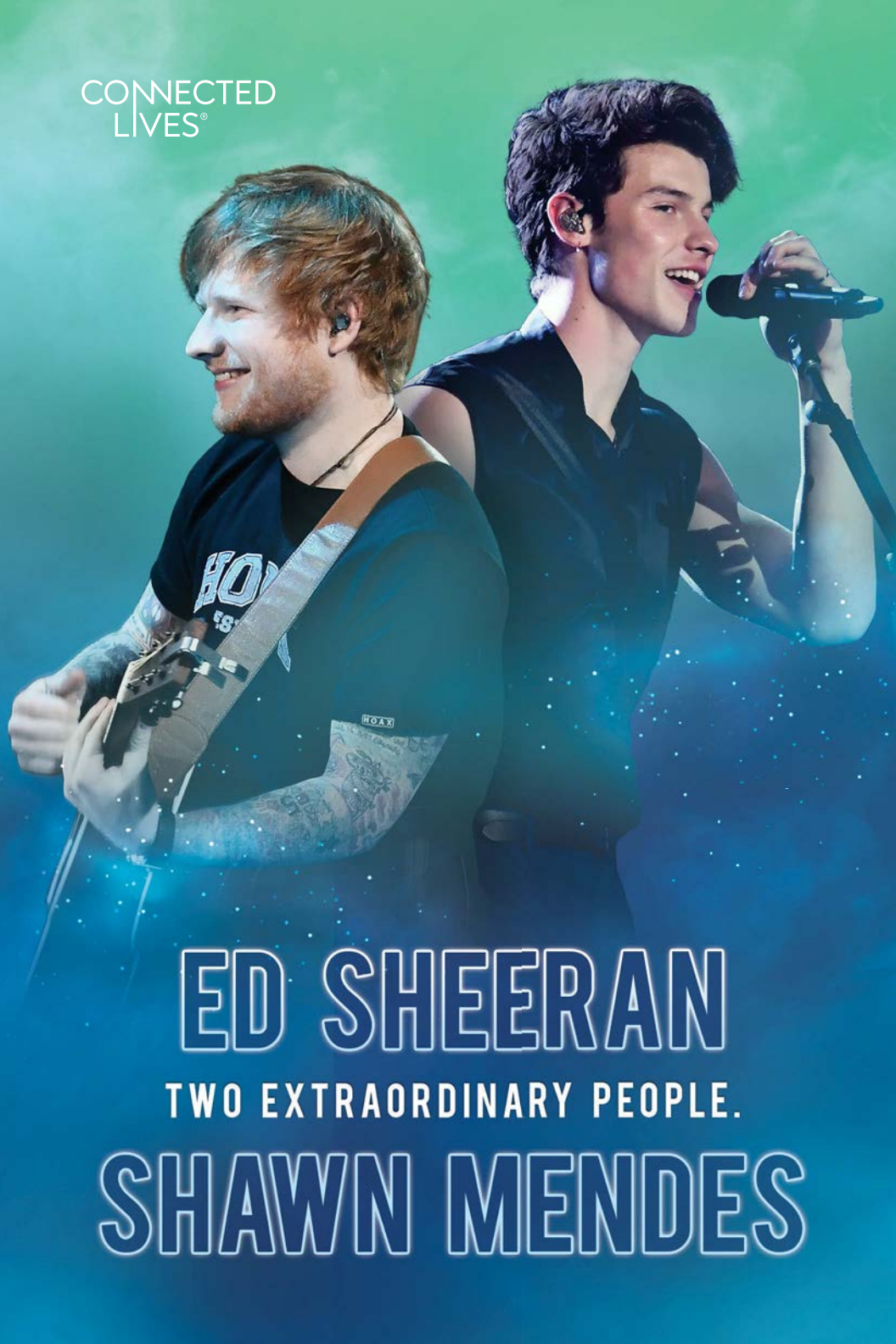

CONNECTED LIVES®
ED SHEERAN
TWO EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE.
SHAWN MENDES

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EARLY LIFE

WHO IS ED SHEERAN?

Ed Sheeran is an English singer-songwriter. He performs with an acoustic guitar and no band. The singer was born in February 1991. Ed grew up in Framlingham, Suffolk. This is a small town in eastern England. Fewer than 4,000 people live there.



WHO IS SHAWN MENDES?

Shawn Mendes is a Canadian singer. Like Ed Sheeran, he writes his own songs. The singer was born in Toronto, Ontario, in August 1998. His parents raised him in Pickering, a suburb of Toronto. He told *Rolling Stone* that it is "the most comforting place in the world." Even after becoming a star, Shawn lived at home.



Ross Castle, Ireland

THE SHEERAN FAMILY



Ed's father, John Sheeran, is the son of Irish immigrants. The family visited Ireland often when the star was young. Irish culture, art, and music are important to the Sheerans. While Ed was growing up, his parents ran an art business.

THE MENDES FAMILY



Shawn's family has immigrant roots too. His father's grandparents came from Portugal. The Mendes family still visits Portugal to see relatives. In Toronto, Shawn's father sells restaurant supplies. Mrs. Mendes works as a real estate agent. She was born in England. "They are both entrepreneurs, which is awesome, and now I am one too," Shawn told the *Telegraph*.



Porto, Portugal

CANADIAN MUSICIANS

Many Canadian musicians make it big in the United States and around the world. Drake and Justin Bieber are both from Canada. So is R&B star The Weeknd. Canadian indie band Arcade Fire won a Grammy for Album of the Year in 2011. Megastar Celine Dion continues to entertain fans around the world.



Celine Dion

THE YOUNGER BROTHER

Ed has an older brother named Matthew. He is a composer. Matthew also plays violin and viola. Their grandmother's final wish was for the two boys to work together. In 2017, Matthew planned the music for one of Ed's songs. "It's quite a cool thing to work with your sibling," Ed said in an interview with Steve Wazz at Duke University.





AN OLDER BROTHER

Shawn has a sibling too. His sister, Aaliyah, is five years younger. The two were very close growing up. Aaliyah recorded many of Shawn's early videos. The siblings have also recorded themselves singing together. "We have a really awesome connection," Shawn told KISS-FM radio. He even has a tattoo inspired by her. His sister and parents were recorded saying "I love you." This was turned into a drawing of a sound wave. Then Shawn got a tattoo of it.



SCHOOL STRUGGLES



Ed grew up in a middle-class family. They sent him to a private school called Rishworth School. Teachers have described Ed as shy and quiet. His stutter and thick glasses made him a target of bullying. The singer talked about this in an interview with British rapper Dave and DJ Nihal. He said he "would cry every single day."

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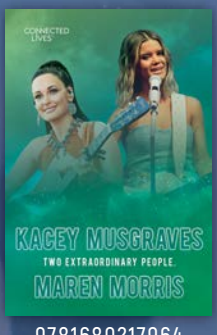
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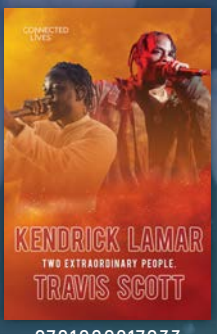
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CHAPTER 1

EARLY LIFE

WHO IS HALSEY?

Halsey is a singer and songwriter. Her given name is Ashley Nicolette Frangipane. She was born on September 29, 1994, in Clark, New Jersey. The star still visits her home state. New Jersey is "like a little sister or a little brother that's annoying . . . but I love you still," the singer told Business Insider.



WHO IS BILLIE EILISH?

Singer and songwriter Billie Eilish was born on December 18, 2001. Her parents named her Billie Eilish Pirate Baird O'Connell. The singer was named after her grandfather Bill. "Pirate was going to be my middle name," she told the BBC in 2017. "But then my uncle had a problem with it because pirates are bad. Then Baird is my mother's name." Billie was born in Los Angeles, California.





THE FRANGIPANE FAMILY

Halsey's parents are Nicole and Chris. They had her very young. Both dropped out of college to raise their child. Nicole worked security at a hospital. Chris managed a car dealership. Halsey's mother is Italian and Hungarian. Her father is African American and Irish.

THE BAIRD O'CONNELL FAMILY

Billie's parents are Maggie Baird and Patrick O'Connell. They are both of Irish and Scottish descent. While working as actors in a play, the two met and fell in love. Maggie was in a famous comedy group called the Groundlings. Billie's parents were older than Halsey's parents when they had children. At that point, they stopped focusing on acting. Both did voice-over work, and Maggie taught trapeze classes. Patrick also worked at Mattel. He built displays for selling Barbie dolls.

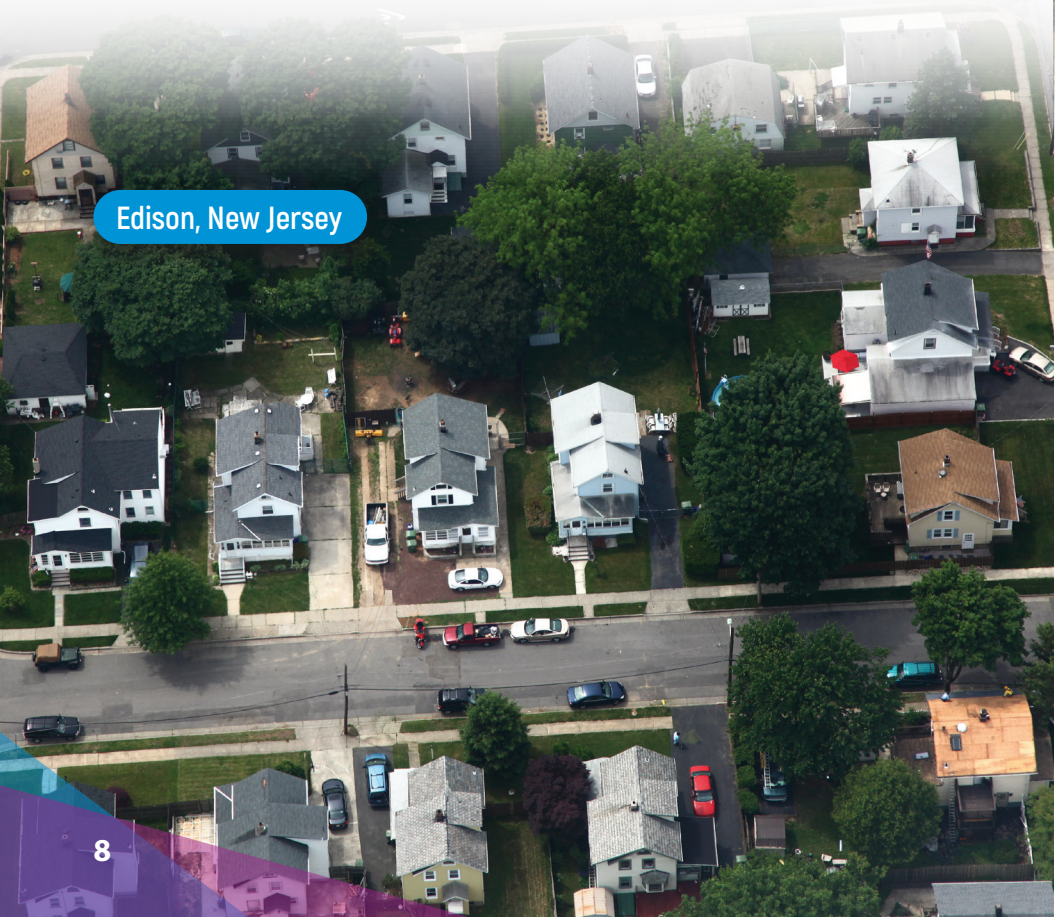


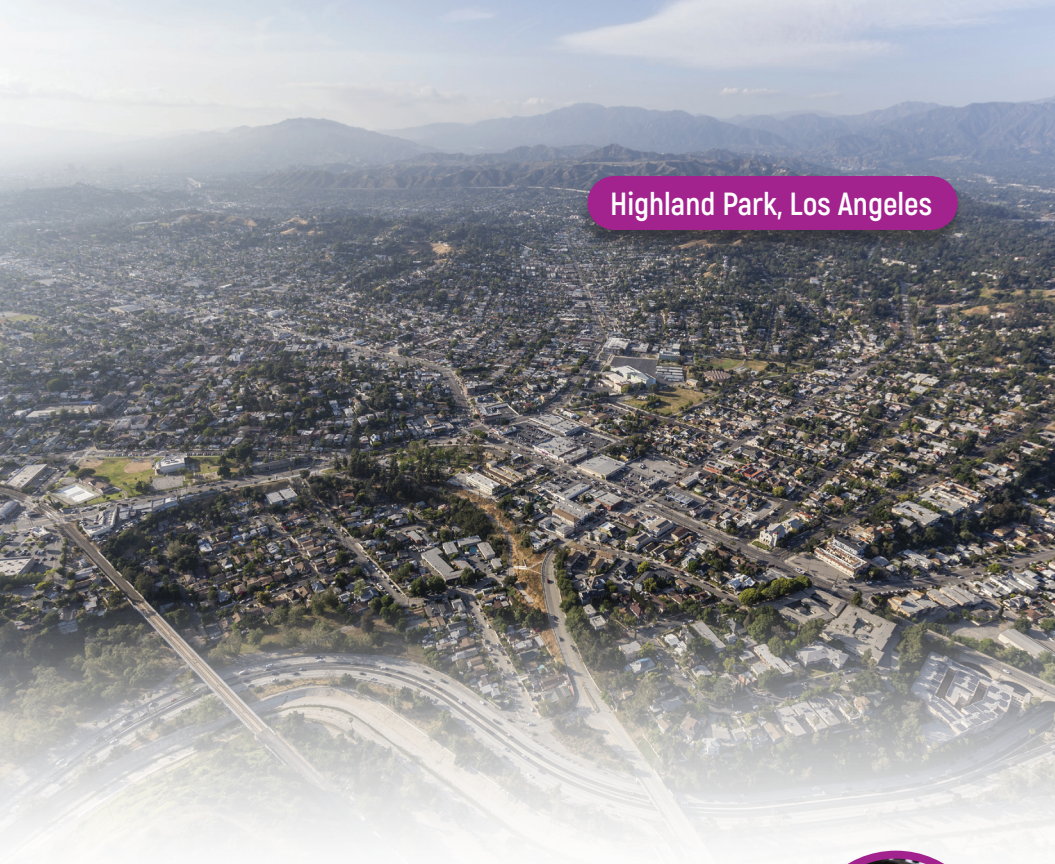
Maggie Baird

WORKING-CLASS NEW JERSEY GIRL



Nicole and Chris changed jobs often when Halsey was a child. They sometimes had to work two jobs each. The family moved from town to town for work. "I grew up in a really chaotic household," Halsey told *Rolling Stone*. She changed schools nearly every year until the age of 13.





A BOHEMIAN FAMILY



Billie is from an artistic family. Like Halsey, her childhood was not privileged. She was raised in Highland Park, Los Angeles. The singer says it was too dangerous to go outside after dark. "Automatically, people think you're from Beverly Hills. . . . Not at all. I grew up with no money at all. . . . I had one pair of shoes and a shirt," the star told the *Guardian*. Her parents still sleep in the living room of their two-bedroom bungalow.



SCHOOL DAYS

Halsey went to Warren Hills Regional High School. This is in Washington, New Jersey. It is a small town. The teenager took advanced placement (AP) classes and was a good student. However, she did not fit in. Halsey was more artistic than many of her classmates. Painting was a hobby. She designed the school yearbook too. At 14, Halsey was posting her paintings and other work on MySpace. The teen also worked at a music venue. There, she helped to book bands. In 2012, the future star graduated high school.

HOMESCHOOL



While Halsey went to many different schools, the Baird O'Connell children were homeschooled. Creativity and self-expression were important. Maggie explained to *Vogue*, "We homeschooled in a way that was interest-led and experiential. Nothing had a higher value than the other." Billie and her brother took art classes. They also went to museums. Her parents taught them math through cooking. Billie earned her GED when she was 15.

HOMESCHOOLED STARS

Homeschooled students are often academic high achievers. Many stars have been homeschooled. Some began homeschooling after they became stars, and others long before. Stars who were homeschooled include Justin Bieber, Emma Watson, Venus and Serena Williams, the Jonas Brothers, Christina Aguilera, and Ryan Gosling. Demi Lovato and Selena Gomez were even homeschooled together.

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