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## The Boy Who Couldn't See

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## THE BOY WHO COULDN'T SEE

By Ronnie M. Lane

He was only thirteen and very conscious of his thick glasses. The rest of his appearance was quite normal. He was about the right height for his age, a little skinny perhaps, but not too much. But he always worried what people would say about his glasses. He was very nearsighted so there was no chance of his going without them; he would have been blind. In brighter moments his parents talked about getting him contact lenses, but he knew their financial condition and it might be years before they could manage so expensive an undertaking.

It was nine o'clock and the bell rang ending science class. He pushed his way through the crowd of giggling voices to the staircase and quickly descended them. It was Thursday and on Tuesdays and Thursdays he had art class on the first floor. This was his favorite class. He loved to spend hours and hours rubbing pastels with the side of his hand, getting exactly the right shade and texture for the drawing. The art teacher liked him and told him that he was one of her most promising pupils.

Once inside of the door he went to one of the tables in the far corner and took a seat. Two of the girls in his grade sat at the other end on the opposite side. After roll was taken he went to the storage closet and took out a small box of pastels and the drawing he was working on, a simple sea shore scene. He was proud to be able to work on subjects of his choice while the others were content to copy the stick figures that the teacher drew for them. In a way this set him off from the rest and he felt that it more than made up for his glasses. After a while he was lost in the whirl of soft blues and greens. He was startled by the voice from the other table corner. It was the girl with short brown hair.

"Can I see what you're drawing?" He smiled and pushed the paper across the table.

"That's pretty good, don't you think so, Glenda?" The girl with long blond hair did not lift her head but mumbled yes. The brown haired girl pushed the paper back to him, and he continued polishing with the side of his hand.

"Did anyone ever tell you your eyes are the prettiest shade of blue?"

This time he was genuinely startled.

"You mean you can see them through this plate glass?"

He anticipated this old remark and countered by mentioning it first.

"They're not so thick, I've seen worse."

"They must have been binoculars then."

They both laughed. She turned and poked the blond girl.

"Don't you think he has pretty eyes, Glenda? And such long lashes."

The blond girl finally lifted her head and stared at him. He smiled.

"Yeah, but he's got yellow teeth."

He flushed and lowered his head to his drawing and rubbed a small cove into a soft brown. The shade seemed wrong and before the hour ended he had rubbed a small hole in the paper. On the way out of the room he crumpled the drawing and dropped it into the waste basket.