

The One who was Different

By Becca Sharman

My name is Ashley Fields. I look normal enough, I guess. I have long chestnut brown hair, and a smattering of freckles across my nose. I usually wear plain shirts and shorts, maybe jeans if I'm so inclined. Or if it's snowing.

The only thing remotely strange about my appearance is my eyes. They are pale pink, closer to white. I was born with them, and I don't know why; my mom has deep blue eyes, and my dad has light green. His are pale-ish too. Not as pale as mine, but it could help to explain them. It didn't explain my unusual eye color though. I wore contacts from a young age to hide them. They made my eyes look light blue, which made sense, genetically. I hated being the center of attention. Having pink eyes would make me just that. With the contacts on, I could pretend there was nothing unusual about me at all. Like I was a normal teenage girl, living in my normal teenage world. However, that all changed last winter.

It was my 14th birthday, and I was looking forward to some cake and presents. But first, school. Ugh. At least it was Friday. I managed to get through math, science, P.E., elective, and English, but in my last class of the day, history, I cracked. My mind drifted, thinking of my birthday and possible gifts. I hoped I was getting the set of color pencils I had my eye on since October. That's really all I wanted.

My mind went to the bookstore, where they had the next book in the Twin Blades series. Okay, maybe two things. I chewed my lip, lost in thought, thinking of the bookstore, and suddenly, I was *there*. I don't know what happened. One second, I was in class, daydreaming of my birthday presents, and the next, I was in the bookstore. I started panicking. Had I been drugged? And awakened here? Stomach churning at the thought, I raced to the window. It *looked* like it was still the same day. I checked my watch. It was 2:45pm. On December 15th. Same day, basically same time. So what had happened? Was I dreaming? I pinched myself. Hard. Ow. Definitely not dreaming. Rubbing my arm, I simultaneously wondered why on *Earth* I had pinched myself so hard, and how I was here. The answer hit me like a bolt of lightning. Teleportation. I had read enough to know that was probably what had happened. On one hand, I was super happy. I had always dreamed of being special, important, having some sort of superpower or ability like Harry Potter, or Piper McCloud. A story of my own, like Scarlett Dragna, or America Singer. Not *exactly* like theirs, but you get the idea. On the other hand, in all those stories, there is someone evil trying to kill them. And besides, it was a little scary, being able to move to any place you wish with a single thought. What if it

happened when I was asleep? I could be killed if I went to the wrong place at the wrong time. And if word got out, this would place me in the exact place I avoided for as long as I could remember: the center of attention.

Wait... I looked at my reflection in the mirror, making sure my contacts were still in. They were. Breathing a sigh of relief, I then focused on how I was supposed to get *back*. I couldn't teleport into my seat. People would notice. After a few careful minutes of consideration, I decided to teleport outside the classroom and pretend I came from the bathroom. Would it work? What if I ended up in Alaska or something? What if it was just a fluke? What if it wasn't actually teleportation?

I shoved my doubts away. They wouldn't help. I imagined the hallway, just outside my class. "*Room 121.*" I added silently, in case that helped. I remembered the gray color of the rows of lockers lining the sides of the hallway. I thought of the cheesy posters that advertised dances, clubs, and teams. I thought of the miniature banners boasting various colleges. I remembered the beige color of the paint, the little windows showing into the classrooms. "*Please, please, please.*" I silently prayed, eyes screwed up tight.

"What are you doing?" A voice asked. My eyes flew open. I was here. At school. I never thought I would be so happy to be here. A boy stood in front of me, his head tilted in confusion. He had dark brown hair, and blue eyes that reminded me of my mom's. I knew him, vaguely, by sight only. He looked at me expectantly, waiting for an answer. *Uh-oh*. My mind scrambled to reply. "Just warding off a headache." I heard the words come out of my mouth before I could think them. I couldn't believe how easily the lie slid off my tongue. I smiled, trying to be convincing. He nodded slowly, like he didn't really believe me.

"Uh, I got to get to class. Bye!" I said lamely, ducking past him. It didn't matter if he bought it or not. At least he didn't stop me as I walked down the hallway as quickly as possible, not looking back. I came to my classroom, feeling relieved. Checking my watch, I saw it was only 2:53. Perfect.

The teacher barely looked up as I entered quietly. I slipped into my chair. Everyone was focused on their worksheets, the one I had already finished. I double-checked my answers, then thought of what had happened. I had just *teleported*. To a *different place*. Suddenly, I didn't feel like a birthday party. I just wanted to sit and think, and maybe test this teleportation thing out more. The bell rang, startling me from my thoughts. I packed my bag up more slowly than usual, deciding whether or not to try and teleport home. It wasn't that far, and our street was quiet. No cars, no people. Why not? I knew this was a reckless decision on my part, but was too excited to be rational. I had always dreamed of an ability, and now I had one. And in the words of Conrad Harrington III, use it or lose it.

I swung my bag around my shoulder and stepped outside the classroom, taking my sweet time. The hallways were mostly clear as everyone didn't want to spend a moment more in school than they had to. Plus, it was Friday. Double incentive to get out as fast as possible. I found an empty classroom, settled myself in a chair after memorizing my surroundings in case I had to come back. I thought of my street, the trees lining the sidewalk, the black asphalt of the street, and the nice, neat houses. I pictured the spot where I wanted to be, right at the corner.

This time it was easier. The second I focused on the corner, I felt the now-familiar tug in my stomach and when I opened my eyes, I was standing on the corner. I looked around. Nobody screaming, nobody staring. I let out a breath. My backpack had stayed on, and for that I was greatly relieved. After three teleportation's, I felt drained. I plastered a smile on my face and walked into the house.

"SURPRISE!!" My parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents beamed at me, all wearing party hats and throwing fistfuls of confetti into the air. I remembered to squeal in happiness. For the next two hours, I ate cake, talked, and opened presents all with a giant smile on my face. I honestly didn't mind it, but I really wanted to be alone, which made the whole experience a lot more tiring. Finally, *finally*, they let me go upstairs where I promptly crashed on my bed.



When I woke, darkness was falling. I looked at my watch. It was 8:30. I sighed. Missed dinner. Oh well. I then noticed a note taped to my nightstand:

Honey-
We decided to let you sleep in. If you're hungry when you wake up, there will be
leftovers in the kitchen. Love you!
Mom
P.S. No soda!!
P.P.S. Only *one* slice of cake, capiche? ;)

I smiled. My stomach rumbled, so I changed into my pajamas, and walked downstairs. True to their word, steak and leftover cake was sitting on a plate on the counter. I poured myself a glass of water, grabbed some silverware, and sat down at the table. I decided to test my ability out tomorrow. It was the weekend after all. I finished my food, cleared my plate, placing it in the dishwasher, then trudged back up the stairs. A feeling of warm satisfaction filled me. I could help people. Like if they were trapped in a burning building, I could rescue them with my new abilities. I could change the world.