



Through a Blue Cat's Eye Darrell Petska

“Badly’s coming!” sparked a chorus of groans from the players circling us in the marble ring. Any chance at joy sailed wide.

It was Bradley, or “Badly” to us, because bullying proved his only skill.

There I lay in the dirt—vulnerable outside my customary summer home, Spencer’s jeans pocket. My brilliant blue cat’s eye sparkled. Bradley arrived, pushed into our circle, and insisted we play for keepsies. The game ended just minutes later when Bradley cried “cheater!”—creating disarray while he scooped up scattered mibs.

He targeted me, shoving Spencer aside as he stormed off, later to deposit me in a marble jar on his dresser. Would I ever see Spencer’s jeans pocket again?

Except for a jasper aggie and me, which he sometimes held up to the light, Bradley paid little attention to his marble collection. He appeared to have few interests and looked alone and small in his large bedroom.

I sorely missed the click-clacking of marbles skipping and streaking across the dirt, hurried on by our shooters! But Spencer hadn’t forgotten me. Not long after our separation, I heard him talking to Bradley’s mom, who shortly accompanied him into Bradley’s room.

“Do you see it in his marble jar over there?”

Spencer spotted me immediately.

“I’m so sorry Brad took your marble. He’ll get a good talking-to when he gets back, and I’ll be sure he apologizes.”

So back to Spencer I went, comfortable once more in his

jeans pocket.

No apology followed. Spencer avoided Bradley, and except for the bad luck of being grouped in the same swim class, all might have been forgotten.

While Spencer showered off after class one morning, Bradley patted down Spencer’s jeans, discovering me—and back to Bradley’s house I went, this time confined to Bradley’s locked treasure box containing a few ball cards, a silver dollar, a Lego figure, and matches.

I seldom glimpsed daylight. Bradley never reached in for me. As seasons crawled by, he no longer turned to his treasure box. When finally he did, I couldn’t believe how much he’d grown! His long fingers rummaged through the contents of the box, threw away several items, then rolled me about his fingers.

“My bad. Forgot about you!”

Had he grown a conscience? With me in his pocket, he biked over to Spencer’s house, furtively flipped me onto the front porch, and hurried off.

Badly played! Spencer no longer lived there. No one did. Soon after, the city leveled the house and paved the lot—burying me eight inches below daylight.

The end of me? I play the long game. They don’t make concrete like they used to. Already a crack has formed overhead—my voice, freed! A glass marble like me can survive several hundred thousand years. Though, by then, will people still be playing marbles? Will there even be people?

Certainly it’ll be a brave new world. Who better suited to see it than a blue cat’s eye?