

# THE BINOCULARS

A Short Story

by

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I had gotten a pair of binoculars for Christmas that year. I told my mother I wanted to look at the stars. That launched one of those silent duels between my parents that always ended with a verbal coup de grace from my mother.

“Maybe he’ll finally start taking an interest in science. It’s about time he buckled down.”

My father grunted surrender at that point. Probably didn’t want the tedium of having to form complete sentences, or maybe he just wanted to get back to his evening paper.

Of course, I had no intention of looking at the stars, though I might have if there’d been any to look at. We lived in an inner city apartment where even in the shadows of the rooftop, all you could see was the glow off the haze from the street lights below. Not even the full moon could form a clear image through that haze. I have a theory that inner city haze is painted on. Maybe I’d be able to see the workmen high above on scaffolds, slathering haze-paint across the sky. Sort of like bridge maintenance: start on one end, paint til the end, repeat.

But I had bigger plans, bigger than the moon and all the stars I couldn’t see, bigger than the workmen on their scaffolds high above.

Our apartment faced an alley. There were river-view apartments on the other side of the building, but my father was cheap and too self-absorbed to look out the window anyway.