

Prologue

My name is Calvinia Jean Prather and I can tell you right now, I've got a gift. But before you think I'm talking about myself too fancy and proud, this gift was something I didn't conjure up or beckon to myself. So, I am not claiming this in a bragging, smart-alecky way. It was a secret at first, even to me.

The gift hid itself, maybe waiting until I cleared my mind of things that don't really matter. Setting up housekeeping in the back of my head, it came out from time to time in little pieces. I couldn't always put my finger on it. But I knew it wasn't right to be in a hallway all by myself, and then feel somebody brush me from behind. To top it off, it didn't scare me when it happened. It was lightly peculiar in the beginning, so I didn't even give it the time of day.

When I went into a spell from my gift, I was transported to the depths of my soul, during sacred moments when I could commit my mind fully. I was usually dizzy-headed and felt like I was dreaming, or watching a movie of myself. Sometimes I walked into a room and knew for sure somebody was there by the feeling in my bones, or I thought maybe somebody behind me was reaching through the window. Each time I looked for them, I felt a heavy stillness so quiet, I could hear my shoes crease as I stepped. When I checked the windows and doors they were latched shut.

Sometimes I pitched back, caught with a glare that blinded both eyes so bad that I thought my number was up. But no, it was not my time.

In my younger days, I was accused of putting bobby pins in electric sockets. And I have to say, guilty as charged. There always followed, a long pantomimed scolding about what it would be like to get electrocuted. But when I did it, I never felt anything but the swirl of a cool flying breeze. Many are the folks who have felt the passing draft. Few are those who can see the angels who created the cool gust. But I can see, because that is my gift.