

A Short Story: True Colours [B1]

Riuscire a capire il livello di bontà delle persone in base al colore che emanano: superpotere o una condanna? Scopriamolo con Melissa, la protagonista di questa storia.

Melissa left the laboratory on the campus, where she was doing a **PhD** in Biology, **blinking** rapidly. "So, how was it?" asked her boyfriend, Ricky, who was waiting for her outside. "It was... indescribable." She had just participated in an experiment conducted by one of her professors, Dr. Peterson. The professor had directed laser pulses into her eyes, causing her to see a new colour. Melissa found herself **struggling** to describe the colour as she could only compare it to other colours. "It was like... a very vibrant blue-**ish**, green-**ish**..." "And you feel okay?" "Sure. I feel fine." Ricky, an assistant professor, had not wanted her to participate in the experiment in case the lasers damaged her vision. And in reality, Melissa wasn't completely fine. She was still **blinking**, trying to adapt to the natural colours of the world. Everything and everyone looked vibrant, too vibrant, as if emitting a **faint** white light. The next morning, Melissa woke up to an even more vibrant world. The **faint** white light she'd seen emitting from everything was now solid and indisputable. And her pet hamster wasn't just emitting white; he was emitting a rainbow of colours. "Morning!" said Ricky, arriving with lattes from the local café. Melissa **stared** at him **in astonishment**. Her boyfriend of three years was emitting an expansive rainbow that was pulsating and alive. "What is it?" asked Ricky. "It's you. I can't..." What she wanted to say was that she couldn't believe what she was seeing. Of course, she knew about the concept of an aura: a visible energy field that radiated from the body of a living creature, reflecting its **inner self**. But she was a scientist; she didn't believe in the existence of auras. It was absurd! Ricky agreed with her. "I knew it was a bad idea, exposing your eyes to lasers." At his insistence, Melissa reported the problem to Dr. Peterson, who told her none of his other students had experienced any vision problems after participating in the experiment. He offered to pay for her to have a vision test, and the optometrist assured her that her eyes were perfectly fine. "It will probably go away in time," said the optometrist, as Melissa tried to

concentrate on her words and not the rainbow radiating from her body. But it didn't go away. Melissa continued to see auras, and this is what she came to believe she was seeing. What else could they be? As a scientist, she knew that everything was made of energy, even objects. She had concluded that by exposing her to a new colour, a colour that humans weren't naturally exposed to, Dr. Peterson's experiment had awakened in her an innate capacity to perceive auras. It was a capacity that his other students, and that most people, did not possess. In time, the auras became less distracting to Melissa, just another aspect of the natural world. Most people had auras similar to Ricky's, the first human aura she'd seen. But some were darker and some were brighter, reflecting their capacity for goodness. People with darker auras weren't necessarily bad, and vice versa, confirming that **nurture** was also an important factor in determining how people functioned in society. However, she did get a sense that those with exceptionally bright auras were invariably good, and those with exceptionally dark auras were invariably evil. The darkest aura she'd ever seen had been that of a right-wing politician with grand ambitions. She'd met him when he'd been campaigning in her district in Dublin and been shocked by not only the blackness of his aura but also the **hatefulness** and intolerance of his rhetoric. Since then, she'd watched, horrified, as he'd become the leader of a new party that was gaining popularity by **feeding** on people's fears. There were **blind spots** to her capacity: she couldn't see auras in photos, in films, or in other media. And she couldn't see her own aura, which she found infinitely frustrating. Also, **contrary to popular belief**, auras didn't change over time or based on what someone was experiencing. Ricky's aura was the same on the day they got married (which he said was the happiest day of his life) as it was on the day his mother died (which he said was the saddest.) And her **niece**'s aura was the same the moment she was born as it was now, six years later. "You're doing great," said Ricky, **squeezing** Melissa's hand, as she tried to push their first baby out of her body and into the world. They'd been married for six years and it was a good marriage, one based on honesty and integrity. Except for one lie: weeks after Melissa had started seeing auras, she had told Ricky and Dr. Peterson that she'd stopped seeing them, and that her vision had returned to normal. She was a qualified scientist, a respected academic. If people knew she could still see auras, or believed she could, it

would destroy her credibility. "One final push!" said the nurse, and Melissa felt her baby leaving her body. She was finally here! "A healthy baby girl!" said the nurse, placing her in her arms. Melissa looked down and gasped. "No, this can't be." She'd seen newborn babies before, when her niece had been born. She knew this wasn't normal. Her baby's aura was even darker than that of the hateful politician. It was the colour she associated with people capable of unimaginable evil, with serial killers and mass murderers. It was the blackest she had ever seen.

Glossary

- **stared** = osservare, guardare
- **nurture** = educazione
- **nurse** = infermiera
- **faint** = lieve, fioca
- **hatefulness** = cattiveria, odio
- **blind spots** = punti ciechi
- **PhD** = Doctor of Philosophy, dottorato
- **struggling** = sforzarsi, fare fatica
- **-ish** = circa, più o meno
- **contrary to popular belief** = contrariamente a quanto si crede
- **niece** = nipote
- **in astonishment** = con stupore
- **inner self** = sé interiore
- **feeding** = alimentare
- **blinking** = sbattere le palpebre
- **squeezing** = stringere
- **gasped** = sussultare