

The Loss

A loss is the hard way of learning

Sometimes the smallest of things is enough to wreak havoc on a person's life. It happens to everyone, and, lamentably, I must be included in the long list as well. I was hopeless, dreary, and in despair. It had been gone for over a week and I was left, lonely and desperate, in a dark and desolate veld without its blessing comforts. I besought after it, seeking the culprit. Who could have taken such a crucial thing in our modern world, where the written works were our sole means of conveying our expressions to the outside?

You have a pencil. I have a pencil. He has a pencil. She has a pencil. Everyone has a pencil. It is a writing instrument respected by writers all over the world as the best method for expressing oneself. A pencil, to me, is the only way that I can divulge my experiences and feelings, my opinions and secrets, almost my whole life, to everyone I am acquainted to. I, Shaiming Tseng, am the one that this parable is centered around. At the time, I was in seventh grade, twelve years of age. Always, I was an avid student, intelligent and ambitious. Because of this, my parents had decided to invest in my future. How they did this, I cannot say, but now I realize that it may just be by the pencil they bought. My laudable parents gave to me this amazing pencil, though it was undeniably no ordinary pencil. 'Twas a Pentel GraphGear 1000. One of the best mechanical pencils of all time, and it was my tool of choice, until it vanished, without a trace.

The day itself was not noteworthy, only clouds and a slight drizzle here and there, but it's not the day that matters, it is the irrefutable act of misconduct that is the dilemma. I started off in the morning, arriving to school in the usual timely manner that I follow: early. Then, I was sent off to my mathematics class, and there, not surprisingly, I procured a refreshing "four" on the unit test. Soon, mathematics class was complete, and we all left for Allied Arts. On my way, I met up with my longtime friend Oliver Pokrovskii. We engaged in a discussion about many topics, and I bragged to him of my new pencil, which, I had gotten the previous day (a Sunday). I showed it to him and while he basked in its glory, I walked along. Soon, we arrived to our destination, and at that time I quickly put the pencil away as not to be seen by the prying eyes of my fellow students. I entered the warm classroom, bare of any windows. Time passed quickly during Allied Arts, and we were all soon on our way back to team. Quietly, I sauntered along to gather my personal belongings. I glanced up at the board, wishing to know what was planned for the dreaded "test block" (although it was not really dreaded by me (in fact, I looked forward to it)).

Fortuitously, that day, we did indeed have an essay to compose. Similar to this one, it was for English class. As I read over the prompt, I thought to myself of the thoughts I would convey to

Mr. Reiber, the teacher who would evidently evaluate my work. He was a strict ELA teacher, and I always wanted to do my best for him (especially for him, as I always wanted to do the best possible for every teacher that I had). I reached for my brand new pencil, my hand grasping for its heavy, metallic feel, that I so craved in a pencil. I pushed the spring loaded mechanism that extended the head four millimeters. The graphite tip slowly emerged from its protective covering, allowing me to press it to the paper and compose a paper of squiggly and straight lines that make up the modern English language. Furiously, I scribbled my thoughts down onto the blank lines, giving me electrifying rush of watching blank paper reiterate itself into a subtle composition. Halfway through, we took a break. I rested my tired neurons, synapses, and nerve fibers and walked about the classroom for a minute or two. I then sat down, and once again reached for my pencil, yet it was no longer in its position. It had vanished.

For the first time in my life, I was dumbfounded. I did not know what to do. I could scarcely breathe. What had happened? Quietly, so as to not disturb the class, I asked my neighbor, John Smith for a pencil. He agreed. I wrote the rest of the Open Response Question, definitely not nearly as good as before. I quickly scrutinized my work, and then passed it in. I commenced my quest to find the perpetrator who had stolen my pencil.

As I searched for my pencil, I conceived a dark and desolate landscape, the sky an enthralling and consuming shade of black. Boulders strewn across the endless sea of red sand, I could see no end of this miserable place. To me, each boulder was a stumbling block that leads to new evidence of who had taken my pencil.

Finally, I stumbled upon the biggest boulder, and found a piece of broken graphite under the chair of my enemy, George Hunkins. I confronted him with this evidence, yet he still denied the act of theft. I contemplated what to do with this simpleton of a person. How can he deny such a thing with a straight face? The evidence was in right in front of him! I realized how cunning and sly he was. I realized that the only thing would be to report this to an administrator, which of course I did. The principal, Mr. Boehm snatched the overhead and shouted into it "George Hunkins to the office. Immediately!" A minute later, George materialized into the room. Mr. Boehm told him to give me the pencil, which of course, in the presence of the principal, George obediently gave it up. I then thanked Mr. Boehm greatly, got up, and receded back out the door, leaving the principal to yell further at George. I never saw George again...

Although not as profound as in my case, the loss of a pencil, especially my favorite mechanical pencil, is a tough occasion. I still do not know why George Hunkins stole my pencil, maybe he envied it, or maybe he just wanted to hurt me in a personal way. I still do not know. Now, every time I use this pencil, I remember the time when it was gone. I also remember the time when I left my ruler on my desk. Because of these two experiences, I always remember to keep an eye on my belongings. Everyone should.