

文具盒失踪记

十一月五日 星期四 阴转晴。

我的文具盒不见了。

它是我的蓝色铁皮文具盒，用了两年，盒角磕掉了一块漆，露出银白色的铁皮。早上第二节课间，我还用它砸过核桃。可是下午第一节美术课，我要拿铅笔，手在书包侧袋里摸了个空。侧袋的拉链开着一道缝，缝里什么都没有。

我把书包整个倒过来，课本、水杯、跳绳哗啦落了一桌，没有文具盒。我又钻到课桌底下，把桌肚掏了三遍，只掏出一截粉笔头和上周丢的半块橡皮。美术老师问我找什么，我说找文具盒，她让我先借同学的铅笔用。

课间我沿着走过的路找。楼梯口没有，走廊没有，操场边的长椅下面也没有。我甚至去翻了垃圾桶，被值日生看见了，我脸烫得厉害，假装是在找跳绳。回到教室，我坐在座位上，越想越难受。那个文具盒是爸爸出差时在火车站买的，盒盖里面贴着一小块胶带，胶带上是我用圆珠笔写的名字，三年级写的，字歪歪扭扭。

晚自习前的十分钟，我还在翻桌肚。同桌陈跃从后门进来，手里拿着一个蓝色的东西，走到我桌前放下：下午我在美术教室后面的柜子上看见它，想着你下午一直在用，就先帮你收起来了，对不起，没跟你说一声。

文具盒躺在桌上，盒盖上贴了一张小字条，是陈跃的字：借你保管一下午。我捏着那张字条，心里那块沉了一下午的东西，一下子浮起来了。我问他，下午怎么不去找老师。他说，他看字条上的名字认了半天，认出是我的，想着放学后肯定能碰到我。原来他不是故意瞒着我，他只是想帮一个不用走老师办公室的忙。

晚上我把文具盒放在书桌正中间，盒盖朝上。我在日记里写：丢东西的难受，要丢过才知道。以后离开一个地方，回头看一眼，就一眼。

The Case of the Missing Pencil Case

November 5th, Thursday, cloudy then clear.

My pencil case is gone.

It is my blue tin pencil case, two years old, with a chip of paint knocked off one corner, showing the silver metal underneath. During the break after the second period I had even cracked a walnut with it. But in the first lesson of the afternoon, art class, I reached into the side pocket of my schoolbag for a pencil and found nothing. The zipper of the side pocket was open a crack, and the crack held nothing at all.

I turned my whole schoolbag upside down. Textbooks, water bottle, jump rope crashed onto the desk, and no pencil case. Then I crawled under my desk and rummaged through the desk cubby three times, pulling out only a stub of chalk and the half eraser I lost last week. The art teacher asked what I was looking for. I said my pencil case. She told me to borrow a classmate's pencil for now.

At the break I walked back along the route I had taken. Not at the stairway, not in the corridor, not under the bench by the playground. I even went through a rubbish bin, and a student on duty saw me. My face burned so badly I pretended I was looking for my jump rope. Back in the classroom I sat down and felt worse and worse. That pencil case was bought by my father at a railway station on a business trip. Inside the lid there was a small piece of tape with my name written on it in ballpoint pen, written in Grade Three, the characters all crooked.

Ten minutes before evening study, I was still digging in the desk cubby. My deskmate Chen Yue came in through the back door holding something blue, walked to my desk, and set it down: I saw it this afternoon on the cabinet at the back of the art room, and since you kept using it all afternoon, I put it away for you first. Sorry I did not tell you.

The pencil case lay on my desk. On its lid was a small note in Chen Yue's handwriting: borrowing you for the afternoon. I held that note, and the heavy thing that had sunk in my chest all afternoon floated up at once. I asked him why he had not handed it to the teacher. He said he had spent a long time reading the name on the tape inside, finally recognized it as mine, and figured he would surely run into me before school ended. He had not hidden it from me on purpose. He just wanted to help without making a trip to the teachers' office.

Tonight I put the pencil case in the very middle of my desk, lid facing up. I wrote in my diary: you only know how much losing a thing hurts after you lose it. From now on, when I leave a place, I look back once. Just once.

捡到一个文具盒的我

十一月五日 星期四 多云。

今天我做了一件小事，可是心里七上八下了一整天，先记下来。

下午第二节课是美术，我们做面具，剪刀胶水用了一半，我去美术教室后面的柜子拿硬纸板。柜顶上放着一个蓝色的铁皮文具盒，盒角磕掉了一块漆。我认得它，全班只有这种老式的铁盒，是我同桌林小满的，她的文具盒砸核桃的声音全组都听过。

我本来想直接交给老师。走到讲台边又停住了：老师收走的东西都进讲台下面那个纸箱，上次我的跳绳进去以后，到现在还没出来。我想，林小满下午还要用文具盒，晚自习前给她就行。于是我把它带回教室，放在她桌上，贴了张字条：借你保管一下午。我写得挺得意，觉得这个说法很幽默。

可是晚自习前我进教室的时候，看见林小满正趴在桌上，肩膀一耸一耸的，课桌肚被她翻得乱七八糟，书包倒扣在椅子上。她抬起头看见我，眼睛红红的，什么也没说。那一刻我心里咯噔一下：她不是下午才用的，她找了一整天。我那句借你保管一下午，现在看了一点都不好笑。

她拿起文具盒，捏着那张字条看了两秒，说：谢谢你。就三个字，声音还是哑的。我说对不起，应该第一时间给你，或者交给老师。她摇摇头，把文具盒抱在怀里，像抱一只找回来的猫。

晚上我翻出来我的跳绳，把它从纸箱里领回来的登记本上签了字。原来东西在老师那里等的时候，主人一直在外面找。我在日记里写：以后捡到别人的东西，第一时间还到主人手上，别替别人决定他该等多久。写完我又想起林小满抱文具盒的样子，第二天早上我给她带了一包饼干，放在她桌角，她看了我一眼，笑了。

I Found a Pencil Case

November 5th, Thursday, cloudy.

Today I did a small thing, but my heart was uneasy the whole day, so I write it down first.

The second lesson of the afternoon was art. We were making masks, and halfway through the scissors and glue I went to the cabinet at the back of the art room to get some stiff cardboard. On top of the cabinet sat a blue tin pencil case, a chip of paint knocked off one corner. I recognized it. Only one old-fashioned tin case in the whole class belongs to my deskmate Lin Xiaoman, and the whole group has heard her pencil case crack walnuts.

I almost took it straight to the teacher. I stopped at the edge of the podium: everything the teacher collects goes into the cardboard box under the podium, and my jump rope went in last term and still has not come out. I thought, Lin Xiaoman needs her pencil case this afternoon anyway; giving it to her before evening study is fine. So I carried it back to our classroom, put it on her desk, and stuck on a note: borrowing you for the afternoon. I was rather pleased with myself. I thought that line was funny.

But when I walked into the classroom before evening study, Lin Xiaoman was slumped on her desk, her shoulders shaking, her desk cubby turned inside out, her schoolbag upside down on the chair. She looked up and saw me, her eyes red, and said nothing. My heart dropped: she had not just needed it this afternoon. She had been

looking for it all day. My line about borrowing her for the afternoon was not funny at all now.

She picked up the pencil case, held my note for two seconds, and said, thank you. Just three words, her voice still hoarse. I said sorry, I should have given it to you right away or handed it to the teacher. She shook her head and held the pencil case against her chest, like hugging a cat that had come back.

Tonight I dug out my jump rope and signed the register to take it back from the teacher's box. So while my rope had been waiting inside the box, I had been searching outside for it. I wrote in my diary: from now on, when I find someone's thing, I return it to their hands at the first chance, and I do not decide for them how long they should wait. After writing it, I thought again of Lin Xiaoman hugging her pencil case. The next morning I brought her a packet of biscuits and left it at the corner of her desk. She glanced at me and smiled.

盒盖上的新贴纸

十一月七日 星期六 晴。

我的文具盒今天回到了我的书桌上，盒盖上多了一张新贴纸，一只橘色的小猫，贴得有点歪，歪在磕掉漆的那个角上，刚好把那块银色盖住了。

贴纸是生活委员周雨桐贴的。她说，贴住伤口，以后它就是一只受过伤的小猫文具盒。我笑了一下，笑完鼻子有点酸。因为前天，我以为再也见不到它了。

前天下午最后一节是体育课，我们把书包留在教室里。回到教室，我装好水杯，拉侧袋拉链，咔哒，拉上了。可那个墨绿色的布文具盒不在侧袋里。它是我自己缝的，两块旧帆布，中间缝了一条松紧带，铅笔插在松紧带里，一根一根露出头。它跟了我三年，松紧带都松了，铅笔常常滑出来，我反而觉得这样才像我的。

我先把教室找了一遍，每张课桌肚都拉开看过，同学帮我一起看。没有。我又跑去操场，围着跑道走了一圈，眼睛贴着地面。体育老师问我是不是丢了东西，我说嗯，声音小得自己都听不见。我坐在操场边的台阶上想：它那么旧，会不会被人当破布扔了？会不会已经被扫进垃圾车？越想越怕，怕得中午吃的饺子都要翻上来。

放学我在楼梯口撞见周雨桐，她背着失物招领的小筐子，里面插着五把伞、三只水杯。她问我丢什么样子，我比划了一下：旧帆布，缝的，铅笔露头。她眼睛一亮，把筐子整个倒过来翻，从筐底捏出我那盒文具，松紧带里还插着三支铅笔。

她说，昨天体育课后有同学捡到交上来的，在筐底压了一天，对不起呀。我接过来的时候，文具盒上还沾着筐底的一点饼干渣。我一点都不嫌脏，把它按在胸口。

这两天的日记我写得很慢。我在里面写：旧的东西不值钱，可是它替我记着三年的铅笔。还写：以后上体育课之前，先把文具盒收进主袋，拉链拉到底。这条我做到了，今天放学我又检查了一遍。

A New Sticker on the Lid

November 7th, Saturday, sunny.

Today my pencil case is back on my desk, and its lid has a new sticker on it: an orange kitten, stuck on a little crooked, right over the corner where the paint chipped off, covering the silver mark completely.

The sticker was put there by Zhou Yutong, our class life monitor. She said, cover the wound, and from now on it is a little cat pencil case that has been through something. I laughed, and right after laughing my nose stung. Because the day before yesterday, I thought I would never see it again.

The last lesson that afternoon was PE, and we left our schoolbags in the classroom. When we came back, I packed my water bottle, pulled the side pocket zipper, click, it shut. But my dark green cloth pencil case was not in the side pocket. I sewed it myself, two pieces of old canvas with an elastic band stitched between them; the pencils slide into the elastic, their tips poking out one by one. It had been with me for three years. The elastic had gone loose and pencils kept sliding out, and I liked that. It felt like mine.

First I searched the classroom, pulling open every desk cubby, my classmates helping. Nothing. Then I ran to the playground and walked a full circle around the track, my eyes glued to the ground. The PE teacher asked if I had lost something. I said yes, so quietly I could barely hear myself. I sat on the steps by the playground and thought: it is so old, maybe someone threw it away as a rag? Maybe it is already on the rubbish truck? The more I thought, the more scared I got, scared until the dumplings I ate at lunch wanted to come back up.

At dismissal I bumped into Zhou Yutong at the stairway. She was carrying the little lost-and-found basket, with five umbrellas and three water bottles sticking out of it. She asked what it looked like. I described it: old canvas, handmade, pencils poking their heads out. Her eyes lit up, and she turned the whole basket upside down and fished out my pencil case from the bottom, three pencils still in its elastic.

She said a student found it after PE yesterday and handed it in, and it had been pressed at the bottom of the basket all day, sorry about that. When I took it back,

there were a few biscuit crumbs from the bottom of the basket on it. I did not mind the dirt at all. I pressed it to my chest.

I wrote these two days' diary entries very slowly. I wrote: old things are worth little, but this one kept three years of pencils for me. And I wrote: before PE class, put the pencil case into the main pocket and pull the zipper all the way. I have done this one. Today after school I checked again.