

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.