

Pencils - Not Pointless

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Crack!

Abigail grimaced as yet another one of her pencils splintered. She needed to complete her homework, and broken pencils just weren't going to cut it. She stood up and marched to the front of the class to throw what was left of her pencil into the garbage.

"Ugh, pencils are useless," she remarked as she tossed the pencil into the trash can. However, just before it could enter the garbage, it froze.

"What?!" she exclaimed. Abigail looked up to see that the entire classroom was frozen.

"What's going on?" she yelled in fear.

"It's simple. You disrespected pencils, so I have come here to teach you a lesson!" came a voice from behind her. "A lesson about how important pencils and their materials truly are."

Abigail looked around to discover a short, humanoid creature hovering in front of her, wearing a strange pencil costume.

She shrieked. "Who are you!?" she asked.

"I am the pencil fairy, a celestial being that travels the universe teaching about the importance of pencils. A peaceful environment is necessary, so I have arranged it." it replied.

Abigail wasn't having it. "No! Let me go!" she screamed.

"Very well, but time will not resume until you listen to what I have to say." the fairy said.

"Fine, but make it quick! The bell rings in half an hour," Abigail replied.

The fairy stared in disbelief for a moment before replying. "Let me begin. All of your life, you've been *LEAD* to believe that pencils are useless writing tools that are easily replaceable. However, they are not as utterly *POINTLESS* as you suppose.

Abigail replied "Please don't tell me you're going to make puns the whole time. Ugh!"

"Yes. Yes I will!"

"No!"

"You don't have a choice."

"Fine. You're so annoying."

The fairy began . . . "First, I will *SHARPEN* your knowledge regarding the components of the literary device."

"This such a *DULL* topic." Abigail responded.

"That's the spirit!" the fairy said. "A pencil is made of 4 parts: the lead, the eraser, the ferrule, and the wood casing. Out of those, the lead and the ferrule are non-renewable"

Abigail was confused "Ferr-Ferral-Ferr—"

"Ferrule." the fairy corrected. "It is that metal component that holds the eraser in place. They are generally made of aluminum. Did you know that the aluminum in your pencil comes from right here in Canada!"

"Really?"

"Yes. Canada is the third-largest producer of aluminum, as it is incredibly important to our lives. We actually create nearly three million tonnes of aluminum annually! Aluminum is used to make many objects such as aluminum foil, cars and planes. Without aluminum, you wouldn't be able to go anywhere. Also, how would you keep your food from going stale without aluminum foil?"

"Hmph. I guess you do have a *POINT*." Abigail began to be persuaded. "What about the lead?"

"Lead? Oh, you mean the graphite. It's a common misconception that there is lead inside of pencils, but this is false. Pencil *lead* is actually made from a mineral called graphite. This very graphite is produced in Canada as well! We are the 7th largest producer of graphite!"

Abigail was becoming more and more interested "Wow!"

"In fact, most of our graphite is mined in Kearney Mine right here in Ontario! We made twenty-one million tonnes last year!" the fairy continued.

"That sure is a lot!" responded Abigail.

"Graphite is a very useful mineral which is used for many purposes due to its many amazing qualities. For example, graphite is used to make the batteries that we use in all our portable electronics."

You mean the batteries in my phone?" Abigail asked.

"Yes." the fairy responded. "Almost all the electronics that we use need graphite to function, since graphite is used in all of their batteries. Without graphite, you wouldn't be able to use cell phones, laptops, portable game systems and other handheld electronics." The fairy wrapped up her lesson.

"Wow. I never knew pencils were so amazing. I can't believe how important they really are to our lives. Without these non-renewable resources used in pencils, my life would be *POINTLESS*."

So all of you kids at home, take what you learned today, and apply it to your life. Don't be wasteful with the earth's resources. They are far too important to waste. Without the materials used in pencils, we wouldn't have planes, cars, aluminum foil, portable

electronics, or countless other important objects. So from now on, don't think of pencils as disposable writing utensils. Instead, think of them as a stick full of importance.

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