

## **Entry Title:** Smile

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## **Entry:**

I sat staring at my homework, not knowing what to write. It was an easy question, but my brain seemed to scramble the numbers to make it impossible. Sighing, I stood up and tried rubbing out my messy scribbles. I was about to give up when a sudden draft came through the open window and the thin paper slipped from my fingers like it was made of butter. I ran to my window looking everywhere for it. There it was, whirling around high above the treetops, being tossed by the wind and heading towards a distant hill. I sprinted out the front door. I didn't have a choice; my teacher would fail me if I didn't return it. I ran after it.

I followed my homework for hours, making sure never to lose sight of it. Now I was well and truly out of the village and was approaching the forest, considering the many risks, I thought about giving up and returning empty-handed. It was getting dark now and I had a billion other things to do. I tried to shake my head free of these thoughts and though they kept piling up and weighing me down; like heavy iron chains, I kept running. I wouldn't give up; I couldn't give up.

I was approaching the top of the hill. I slowed to a walk. I could no longer see my homework. Telling myself that if it had been caught in one of the many trees on the top of the hill, I would grab it and leave. If not... then I would be forced to give up. Maybe tomorrow when I was telling my teacher, she might sympathise. I soon found myself stressing yet again about the many things I had to do at home - more homework, dancing practice and chores, so many chores. As the apex of the hill came in to view, I gasped in wonderment and awe.

The whole grassy hilltop was, well, blank! It was the strangest thing I had ever seen. The trees, grass, even the birds were completely devoid of colour with only a thick black outline. Sitting in the centre of this curious scene was a small black pencil case. I strode over and opened it. Several colourful pencils tumbled out, a joy to see in this barren wasteland of black and white. I smiled despite the situation, because for once this evening I knew precisely what to do.

I picked up the green pencil and walked over to a blank, empty tree and began to colour. Colouring and colouring and colouring. Hours passed. I found as I coloured, I wasn't worried about the many things that had been troubling me in the past few hours. I was relaxed. I coloured as the sun, still as reassuringly bright yellow as ever, went down, through the crisp, cool night and when golden light filled the glade once more, I was finished.

Suddenly, there was a bright white glow in the centre of the hilltop. I shielded my eyes from the blinding light. In a few seconds it had faded. I cautiously approached. Lying there, was my homework with my angry scribbles, and attempted rubbings out still on it. I laughed and smiled.

## **Afterword**

Children's mental health matters to me. This story highlights mental health for this girl who goes on a journey to find her lost homework and gets forced to relax along the way. Taking time out to de-stress is something not enough children do, and I think it is very important for mental health and wellbeing.

## **References**

# Whitlam Institute

WITHIN WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Australia's children, Children with mental illness - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
([aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au))

Kids and mental health

healthdirect

Kids Helpline

Phone Counselling Service

1800 55 1800

Mental health conditions in children ([beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au))