Mrs. Weaver

Language Arts Core 1

September 24, 2014

The Gingerbread Sham

The only thing that dwarfed my love for class pets and show-and-tell was the opportunity to tell my family *about* my class pets and show-and-tell. Kindergarten had officially visited the Guroff family home. As the older sibling and the first to enter school, I was eager to tell my parents and brother everything that happened in the magical world of Mrs. Frye’s class, and I became addicted to the fervent, but jealous eyes of Eric, who was almost two years my junior. I finally had something that was all my own.

As Christmas approached, Mrs. Frye read “The Gingerbread Man” to the class, and alongside, we created gingerbread men out of brown construction paper and cheap plastic buttons. When she introduced the project, Mrs. Frye said, “You can go home and tell your parents that you’re making gingerbread cookies in school! They’ll be so excited to taste them!” I’m sure now that she had said it in jest, but my 5-year-old self took her words quite literally.

Monday, I ran home from school, this time with a more exciting story than usual.

We worked on our masterpieces a little each day, fine-tuning their shape and the details of their faces. Mine was particularly colorful, and despite its crooked nose, I was convinced of its perfection. Each day, I ran home and told my family about our progress on the gingerbread cookies. I wasn’t very specific, and I evaded their questions as to not arouse any suspicion. Each day, Eric got more and more eager to taste the cookies.

“Mom, Dad, Eric! I made a gingerbread cookie for you!” I shrieked as I swung open the front door on Friday after school with my paper gingerbread man hidden carefully behind my back.

“You did? I can’t wait! Eric didn’t have his snack because he wanted to save room!” my mom said excitedly.

The set-up was perfect! It had turned out better than I had even planned. I pulled out the art project slowly and carefully from behind my back as I beamed with anticipation. I couldn’t wait to see the reaction.

I expected laughter. *Oh, Hannah, you got us*, they would say. *That art project is so good that it looks like a real gingerbread cookie,* they would say.

My expectations were shattered with a single utterance from Eric. “…but, I wanted to eat it,” he said with disappointment. He ran upstairs and slammed the door, and we could hear his quiet sobs through the floorboards.

The lecture from my dad that followed was unnecessary; I knew what I had done. I played someone younger and more naïve than I as a fool, and I meant to take pleasure from seeing Eric believe me. I realized then, and I know now, that what I had done to Eric was cruel; what I had thought was all in good fun wasn’t fun for the others involved.