

I Lost My Class Ring at Walmart... and several other places

I was going to make him eat this fucking snowball. He'd be spitting out his chiclets in no time. Or he was going to have a welt on his forehead from it. No way was I about to miss him with this majestic, perfectly formed and compacted pack of atmospheric ice crystals. He would rue the day. Rue, I tell you!

But let me back up a minute...

In high school, getting a class ring was a badge of honor. It was like a varsity jacket. I was excited to get my ring. Maybe I had been swept away in the moment with everyone else. We ordered and received our rings and wore them with pride.

The point of having a fancy jacket or a ring has faded with time. It's not the status symbol it once was, and sometimes it's good that times change. If your high school years are the best years of your life, you've done something wrong.

My memories of letter jackets always bring me back to the cliques and bullies of the 80s and 90s, where being a smart nerd would get you a wedgie and being an asshole somehow raised your social status.

The ring, however, was for everyone.

I was dating a girl who had gone through early puberty. Her brain was full of goofy-juice, and she was lots of fun but kind of a mess. She asked to wear my class ring, and like a true idiot, I let her. It was far too big



by Christopher Robin

for her finger, so she wrapped some yarn around the bottom to snug it up. At a party one night, she got blue paint down into the crevices, and I got mad and took it from her. Plus I didn't want her getting her bad mojo all over it.

I think she got mad and cast a spell on me because I wrecked my car a few weeks later. I always suspected she was into the dark arts.

In early winter that year, my friends and I were on a journey to buy party supplies at a local Walmart. It had snowed, so small mountains of snow were everywhere. As we came out with our wares, a few of us started throwing snowballs around.

Though I'd never been invited to the National Throwing Things Championship, I grew up playing baseball and figured I could make a case for myself. To demonstrate my skill, I packed an amazing snowball, appropriately sized and compacted perfectly, and fired it at my friend's melon.

My form was sublime as I turned to the side and performed my leg lift, imagining myself as Nolan Ryan. I drove forward and planted my front foot, and released the snowball. The only sound was the 'whoosh' of the snowball through the air.

Also, do you know what happens to your hands when they get cold and wet? I'll help you out here: they shrink and get slippery. As the snowball left my hand, so did my ring.

The snowball missed its target as he ducked out of the way, but the ring kept traveling into the great gig in the sky. Moments later it made several distinct clinks across the pavement in a decrescendo of shame, and then fell silent.

As I think about it, it's kind of a shame the ring didn't hit him in the face. It would have been neat to have our high school mascot tattooed on his forehead the next day, and I wouldn't have had to look for it.

Though we all heard the clinking across the pavement, the sound was abstract and void of direction. We searched the parking lot in assorted snowbanks for an hour, becoming more defeated by the minute. I was terrified to tell my parents, so I didn't. It was only a few hundred dollars, but it was a lot of money for my folks. I still don't know how I slept that night.

A few days later, after some considerable snow melt, I was called to the principal's office — which was not unusual. A good Samaritan had brought my ring to the school, and order was restored.

In the spring of that school year I was at an outdoor party at someone's house. They had an above-ground pool that sat down a hill in their back yard. Again, fornicating about and throwing things, my ring slipped off my finger and flew down behind the pool in the dead of night.

We grabbed flashlights and looked for an hour to no avail. Once again, I went home and left it to the universe to decide my fate. As luck would have it, it would turn up again a couple of weeks later. A local dad had found it while mowing the lawn.

By then it was just in time to give it to my real high school sweetheart. It was far too big for her little finger, so she wore it on a chain around her neck.

Eventually I would graduate high school and leave for the army, and it stayed with her. With our futures both uncertain, it didn't make sense to stay together when I



left, so we broke up. But love had other plans, and we remained close for years after that.

She held onto my class ring for several years, only giving it back to me when I met my would-be wife. Maybe leaving it with her all those years was my way of keeping myself in her thoughts and her in mine. Part of me always hoped we'd meet again someday. For years I thought she was the one that got away, but things work out the way they're supposed to.

As I think about it now, I don't care about high school much at all. I don't think I did while I was in it, to be honest. I've gotten rid of most keepsakes from my school days. I'm still friends with my two real friends from school, and they're all I need to remember.

"If your high school years are the best years of your life, you've done something wrong."

Time washes it all away anyway, and it turns out I instinctively knew those were not my best years. I threw my jacket, my pictures, and yearbooks away a few years ago, but I still have that fucking ring.

It's busy telling its own story.***
