

The Old Hockey Puck

By: Diane Wiens

When people come into my room, they usually notice a scuffed black hockey puck with worn edges and faded scratches sitting on my bookshelf.



It isn't shiny. It isn't signed by a famous player. Most people wouldn't look at it twice. But to me, it tells one of my favourite stories.

When I was nine years old, my grandfather built a backyard rink, a smooth sheet of ice stretching across his lawn, sparkling in the winter sun behind his house. Every December, he would wait for the first cold week, pull on his faded wool coat, tug a knitted toque over his ears, and zip it right up to his chin. Then, he would stand in the freezing darkness for hours, slowly spraying layer after layer of water until the grass disappeared beneath a sheet of glassy ice.

On Saturday mornings, before the neighbourhood had fully woken up, my cousins and I would skate together. Grandpa never cared who scored the most goals. Instead, he always asked us one question after each game.

"What made you smile today?"

Sometimes it was scoring. Sometimes it was falling down. Sometimes it was helping someone else back onto their skates.

One winter, Grandpa became sick. He couldn't skate anymore, but he still sat outside wrapped in blankets, clapping his mittened hands and cheering loud enough for the whole neighbourhood to hear, as if we were playing in the Stanley Cup Finals.

That spring, he gave me one of the old hockey pucks.

"It's just rubber," he said, "but stories stick to things."

Now, whenever I see that old puck, I don't just remember hockey. I remember icy cold mornings, steaming mugs of rich hot chocolate, laughing until my stomach hurt, and the way Grandpa always reminded us that the best hockey games weren't about winning, they were about the people playing beside us.

The Old Hockey Puck – Discussion Questions

1. Why does the puck matter?
2. Could someone else understand its importance just by looking at it? Why or why not?
3. What memories shape the narrator?
4. What lesson did Grandpa teach?
5. Which sentence reveals the narrator's identity the best? Why do you think so?

The Old Hockey Puck – Discussion Questions

1. Why does the puck matter?
2. Could someone else understand its importance just by looking at it? Why or why not?
3. What memories shape the narrator?
4. What lesson did Grandpa teach?
5. Which sentence reveals the narrator's identity the best? Why do you think so?

The Old Hockey Puck – Discussion Questions

1. Why does the puck matter?
2. Could someone else understand its importance just by looking at it? Why or why not?
3. What memories shape the narrator?
4. What lesson did Grandpa teach?
5. Which sentence reveals the narrator's identity the best? Why do you think so?

The Old Hockey Puck – Discussion Questions

1. Why does the puck matter?
2. Could someone else understand its importance just by looking at it? Why or why not?
3. What memories shape the narrator?
4. What lesson did Grandpa teach?
5. Which sentence reveals the narrator's identity the best? Why do you think so?