

THE MOMENT

Written by

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Logline: When Penny's pencil breaks in the middle of a lecture, she must overcome her anxiety of disrupting the teacher to sharpen her pencil in front of her classmates.

INT. 7TH GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY

A massive PowerPoint slide in the front reads "The Phases of Matter". It's decorated with pictures of solids, liquids, and gases. MS. HARDY (40s) presents in her lovey pantsuit before the class. Her hair is perfectly tied back in a bun, while her square lenses highlight her cold stare.

In the back of the classroom sits the most anxious student, PENNY (12). Her pencil shakes intensely as she jots down every word on the power point. Her eyes jump between the slides and her own notes.

MS. HARDY

There are four phases of matter.  
Solid, Liquid, Gas, and Plasma.  
Plasma is more complicated, so we  
will focus on Solid, Liquid, and...

Suddenly, SNAP! Penny's pencil breaks. The class erupts in laughter, frightening her. *Are they laughing at her?*

PENNY

Dang it.

Penny lowers her head as if looking at her notes could hide from her peers. Shakenly, Penny shoves the broken pencil in her desk. She takes the last sharpened pencil on her desk and continues writing.

Ms. Hardy changes the PowerPoint to a slide about solids.

MS. HARDY

A solid is a state of matter that  
retains its shape and density in  
any container.

Ms. Hardy changes to a slide about liquids.

MS. HARDY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

A liquid is the state of matter in  
which a substance flows freely in a  
container but is of constant  
volume. Lastly, a gas.

SNAP! Penny's pencil breaks again. She hurries to change it out, but she can't find another sharpened pencil in her desk.

Penny looks up in time to watch the slide change to another slide about gases. The class laughs at her again as Ms. Hardy glares at her.

MS. HARDY (CONT'D)

I expect you to be mature.

Penny sinks into her chair.

PENNY (V.O.)  
I am mature. There the ones  
laughing at me.

The class continues to laugh and Ms. Hardy grows angrier.

PENNY (V.O.)  
Crap, she can read my mind.

Ms. Hardy returns to her lecture.

She's going super fast.

Penny takes the broken pencil and shyly raises her hand.

MS. HARDY  
Please save your questions. Now,  
matter can go from one state to  
another through different  
processes.

Ms. Hardy changes the slide to a graphic that shows how  
matter changes from the different states. She traces and  
focuses on the graphic as she explains.

Penny sweats a little harder as she sneaks her hand back  
down.

PENNY (O.V.)  
Maybe I could...

In the corner of her eye, Penny spots an electric pencil  
sharpener in the front of the classroom and next to the  
slides. It appears to be a million miles away.

PENNY (O.V.) (CONT'D)  
No, not in front of everyone.

Penny looks away from the pencil sharpener, and her eyes fall  
on her desk neighbor, JERALD (12). He aimlessly doodles in  
boredom.

PENNY (O.V.) (CONT'D)  
He's artsy. Maybe he has a  
sharpener.

Penny opens her mouth to speak. Anxiety stops her, and she  
nervously backs off.

PENNY (O.V.) (CONT'D)  
No, bad idea. Ms. Hardy would write  
me up.

Penny looks back at the slide.

PENNY (V.O.)  
Maybe this isn't an important  
lecture?

Ms. Hardy LOUDLY CLEARS HER THROAT. Her icy glare sends  
shivers down Penny's spine.

MS. HARDY  
As a reminder, some of this lecture  
may appear on Friday's quiz.

Penny grows more anxious.

PENNY (V.O.)  
Shoot.

Penny peeks at the pencil sharpener in the front. She  
tightens up.

PENNY (V.O.)  
I already missed too much. I have  
no choice.

Penny takes her broken pencil. She scans the classroom;  
everyone seems focused on the lecture. Ms. Hardy seems  
focused on the other side of the classroom. Penny takes a  
breath and starts to get up.

Penny moves an inch out of her chair; it SQUEAKS. Ms. Hardy  
looks her way. Penny freezes in fear. A beat.

MS. HARDY  
The point matter transforms from  
one state to another is named after  
the process it undergoes. For  
example...

Ms. Hardy looks away.

PENNY (V.O.)  
Standing up was too, uh... con-  
spicuous? Word of the day. I  
need to be, ah, not that.

Penny crawls out of her chair. She army crawls along the wall  
of the classroom. She moves slowly, making sure no one  
notices her.

The slide changes again to bulletin points about temperature.

MS. HARDY

This is most important...

Penny crawls faster.

Finally, she makes it to the front table, where the pencil sharpener rests. Penny takes another look around. Everyone is more focused on Ms. Hardy, who blocks their view of Penny. Still on the ground, Penny reaches up to sharpen her pencil.

PENNY (V.O.)

Please don't be too loud. Please  
don't be too loud.

Penny inserts her pencil. SCREECH! A LOUD ANNOYING SOUND cuts through the classroom. Everyone looks at Penny. Ms. Hardy pauses her lecture to watch Penny slowly stand up.

Penny becomes sick with anxiety. She takes out her pencil and hurries back to her seat.

Penny sits down in embarrassment. She tears up as she rushes to take notes.

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MS. HARDY

There are four phases of matter.  
Solid, Liquid, Gas, and Plasma.  
Plasma is more complicated, so we  
will focus on Solid, Liquid, and  
Gas...

Ms. Hardy changes the slide to another slide with bulletin points about solids.

MS. HARDY (CONT'D)

A solid is a state of matter that  
retains its shape and density in  
any container.

Ms. Hardy watches the rows of desks where her students sit. It's hard to tell if they are in high school or elementary, given they look both ages. Some guys have facial hair, and some girls have boobs, but they all have baby faces.

At first glance, it seems like the class is paying attention. It's enough to convince Ms. Hardy. Ms. Hardy turns away for a moment.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)

They have more energy than me today.

Ms. Hardy changes the PowerPoint to a slide about liquids.

MS. HARDY

A liquid is the state of matter in which a substance flows freely in a container but is of constant volume. Lastly, a gas.

Ms. Hardy changes the PowerPoint to a slide about gases.

MS. HARDY (CONT'D)

Gas is the state of matter in which a substance fills the entire space of a container.

Penny shyly raises her hand.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)

I told her she didn't need to ask to use the restroom as long as no one else is using the pass.

Ms. Hardy eyes the bathroom pass and sign-in sheet on her desk.

MS. HARDY

Please save your questions. Now, matter can go from one state to another through different processes.

Ms. Hardy changes the slide to a graph that shows how matter changes from the different states. She traces and focuses on the drawing as she explains.

MS. HARDY (CONT'D)

A solid becomes a liquid by melting, a liquid becomes a solid by freezing, a liquid becomes a gas by boiling, a gas becomes a liquid by condensation, a gas can become a solid by deposition, and a solid can become a gas by sublimation.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)

I hope that wasn't too complicated.

Ms. Hardy looks at the class. She's disappointed to find them not paying attention. Students pass notes, others scribble drawings, and she can hear a few students snoring.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)

Their attention spans are getting shorter and shorter. Unfortunately, my bonus is determined by their educational growth.

Ms. Hardy LOUDLY CLEARS HER THROAT.

MS. HARDY

As a reminder, some of this lecture may appear on Friday's quiz.

The class is suddenly paying attention now. There's shuffling as students pull out their notebooks. The shuffling settles. Ms. Hardy smiles.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)

I hate playing the quiz card. If only the school let me pass out candy again.

MS. HARDY

These processes occur based on temperature. The temperature must increase or decrease for matter to transform from one state to another...

Ms. Hardy casually looks toward Penny's side of the classroom.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)

Look over here to make it seem like I'm watching them. It's a nice day out.

MS. HARDY

...The point matter transforms from one state to another is named after the process it undergoes. For example...

Ms. Hardy looks to the other side of the classroom, away from Penny.

MS. HARDY (CONT'D)

...the temperature it takes for that particular matter to melt is called the melting point...

MS. HARDY (V.O.)  
That seems easy enough for the  
quiz, but I need something little  
more difficult.

Ms. Hardy changes the slide to a slide about temperature.

MS. HARDY  
This is most important. Temperature  
measures the average kinetic energy  
between molecules. When the kinetic  
energy is high, the molecules  
vibrate more. At a certain point,  
the molecules run out of space to  
vibrate, and they-

SCREECH! A LOUD ANNOYING SOUND cuts through the classroom.  
Ms. Hardy pauses her lecture to notice Penny on the ground  
and reaching up to sharpen her pencil.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)  
Is she okay?

Penny stands up, takes out her pencil, and hurries back to  
her seat.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)  
She barely had it in there.

MS. HARDY  
Are you sure it's sharpened?

Penny sits down in embarrassment. She tears up as she rushes  
to take notes. Ms. Hardy watches her in confusion.

MS. HARDY (V.O.)  
What was that about? I should check  
afterward.

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gases. Ms. Hardy presents before the class.

MS. HARDY  
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Plasma is more complicated, so we  
will focus on Solid, Liquid, and  
Gas...

Ms. Hardy continues speaking on and on and on and... well on.



At first glance, it seems like the class is paying attention. It's enough to convince Ms. Hardy. Ms. Hardy turns away for a moment, and in that time, students pass notes. Some students scribble drawings, pretending to take notes. The few students focused on the slides silently snore. Meanwhile, the daydreamers find their eyes drawn to the window.

Jerald sighs in boredom. He takes to aimlessly doodling in his notebook.

Ms. Hardy LOUDLY CLEARS HER THROAT. Jerald looks up at Ms. Hardy's disappointment.

MS. HARDY (CONT'D)

As a reminder, some of this lecture may appear on Friday's quiz.

Jerald rolls his eyes.

JERALD (V.O.)

Why can't she teach something more interesting, like anime?

Jerald returns to drawing in his notes.

SCREECH! A LOUD ANNOYING SOUND cuts through the classroom. Jerald watches Penny slowly stand up. Jerald continues drawing.

JERALD (V.O.)

Dang. I thought it was the bell.