

(I tried to replicate how Shaun Tan writes.)

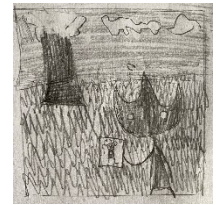
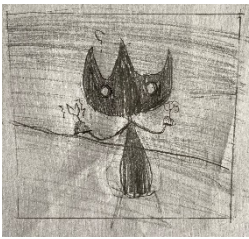
Eric 2

I don't remember anyone telling me about it. I don't remember getting an email or phone call. Eric just reappeared after three years. Just standing there.

I don't remember why he came back and I'm not even sure he told us. He just came back one day and continued studying. Similar to when he left, it took us a while to realize he was staying, but when we realized, we tried our best to make his time here better than last time. We set up a miniature room in the pantry and put a large bowl of doughnut and Oreo chunks for him to eat.

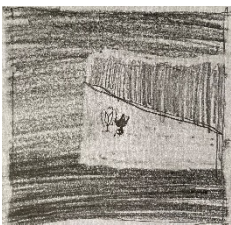


Eric also seems more active than last time he was here. He would occasionally leave the pantry to explore the house. He also seemed interested in gardening to the point where I would literally run the risk of stepping on him when I went outside. I once mistook him for a leaf. I thought I could finally answer his questions and give him information, like I attempted to last time. I mean, how strange can questions about plants be? Well it turned out I was horribly wrong. I guess it's just something cultural.



As active as he was, there would occasionally be days where he would lock himself in the pantry, for no apparent reason. Sometimes I could even hear him cry. Maybe he was just bad at gardening. (I still don't understand his sudden obsession.) Or maybe he was just confused but I still avoided the kitchen during these days...

He also became more enthusiastic about trips. Sometimes he even gave us ideas where to go. They were usually nature reserves. (I still don't understand why.) But we actually had a lot of fun and he really looked forward to the next one. Or at least I think so... it was hard to tell.



After a few months, he began fusing his gardening obsession with his plants. He started trying to plant some of the plants he left behind. It was a bit annoying to me, but they were his plants. I guess it's just something cultural. He also started treating the plants as if they were people. He would sit close to them and whisper to them



as if telling them secrets...

But this didn't last forever...

I wish I knew what was wrong. I wish he'd told me. I wish I could have helped him but I guess I can't change what happened. It was just so sudden. He locked himself in the pantry. I thought it was like last time, that he would eventually come out... but no. He stayed there and again, I could hear him crying.

I guess it was just too confusing, so we stopped caring about him. He would come out once... Right? And if he didn't, why care about him. So we just went on with our lives and forgot about him.

I can't even remember what happened after this. All I remember is the image of him leaving and the empty pantry.

