

"Things Disappear"

They say losing things is a distinguishing characteristic of people who are pathologically disorganized. I figure that if I tallied all the time I've wasted frantically searching for something I just had in my hand, it would equal the entire period of my life from the 3rd through the 5th grade, although this may not be the most accurate example, since I remember spending most of the 4th grade looking for my boots.

By their basic design, certain items are difficult to misplace. You just don't ever hear, "Honey, did you happen to see where I left the furnace?"

On the other hand, smaller objects observe one inescapable law governing the universe, specifically that: Things Disappear. Not one of us escapes this certainty.

It's just that the more compulsive among us are less likely to misplace their possessions, since they tend to put things back in their proper places immediately. But what's really unfair is that these people are also better at finding lost belongings, because of their more thorough, systematic and unruffled search protocol, compared to the frantic and disjointed hunts conducted by those of us who almost always come up empty handed. In our frenzy, we recklessly move everything in our path, hoping that the item we are looking for is hiding behind it. Later, we will spend part of a day trying to relocate one of the objects we just moved out of the way.

Our possessions seem to disappear and appear at will, evidenced by the nearly universal experience of searching every inch of closet over and over for, let's say, certain jacket, concluding it's not there, and finding it a week later, hanging there innocently while you are frantically looking for something else. This phenomenon has been shown to cause madness in laboratory rats.

A number of hypotheses attempt to explain these mysterious disappearances.

One theory says for a brief moment, objects become microscopically small, perhaps only a few atoms wide, still perfectly formed, but invisible to the unaided eye, residing there until they are good and ready to reemerge full size. Physicists speculate that at any given moment, there are billions of tiny socks and gloves occupying our universe. They are just too small to wear.

Another theory says that objects actually disappear for a while, an experience something akin to the one described by those who say they were abducted by aliens, but are still a little fuzzy about the details.

"We were on the mountain skiing, " is often the story, " and we reached down to tighten our bindings, and the next thing we knew, we were walking into the lodge, and it was July." These people are more comfortable accepting intergalactic kidnapping as an explanation for their missing moments than the more disturbing conclusion that they are just very slow skiers

Others hypothesize that our items may actually be abducted by aliens, who are too shy to abduct us personally and who can wear our size. The Army has known about this since 1945. Somewhere in remote New Mexico there is secret airplane hangar filled with mittens.

Finally, some speculate that a lost item travels to a parallel universe, showing up in an identical closet belonging to someone else, who will rediscover the object and call out. "Oh look, it must've been here all the time."

But the good news is, we'll get it back when they lose it again.

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