**Gemstone Mining with Dad**

One crisp, cool fall weekend, my father and I went to the Appalachian Mountains to have a father- daughter weekend. Of all the places we visited, the Foscoe Mining Company was my favorite. When we arrived at the mine, we were given a gigantic bucket of dirt. We were hoping to find gemstones buried in the dirt. We were looking for diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and maybe even some gold. It was a real mystery and I couldn’t wait to discover what was buried beneath the dirt.

We were given sifters made of a wooden frame with steel mesh stretched across the middle and two shovels. We dug large scoops of dirt and dumped it into the sifters. Next, we placed the sifters into a trough filled with water. My dad and I worked together to shake the dirt back and forth in the water. The water rinsed away the dirt and mud so we could see if there were any gems left.

At first, I only discovered small sapphires and citrines. Then on the last scoop of dirt, I felt something heavy in my sifter. I lifted it up and saw a giant smokey quartz. It was black and shiny. It was almost see-through when I held it up to the light. I thought it was the most beautiful gem I had ever seen.

When our bucket was empty, we took the gems to the manager of the mine. She helped us label our discoveries. It was very exciting to know that I had discovered such a beautiful collection of gems. Maybe one day I can take them and have some jewelry made. Until then, I will just enjoy looking at them and remembering all of the fun and adventure I had gemstone mining with my dad.

***(Can you think of synonyms for 2 or 3 adjectives in this piece that might make it more engaging? For example rather than discovering “small” sapphires and citrines, they could be “miniscule sapphires and citrines.”)***