***Breaking Stalin’s Nose*** by Eugene Yelchin, A Newbery Honor book

**Lesson 7 (chapters 22-25)**: Sasha slowly begins to question his devotion to the Communist system. Nina Petrovna confesses “four eyes” is not the only enemy of the state. Sasha is scared, thinking he is next, but Vovka Sobakin is blamed instead. Vovka attacks Nina Petrovna after she tells the class his father was killed. Vovka and Sasha sit outside the principal’s office and Sasha begins to question why both his and Vovka’s dad were arrested, thinking about how good of a Communist Vovka’s dad was. The principal, Sergei Ivanych, yells at the boys, especially Sasha for not denouncing his own father to purify himself from his “rotten influence.”

Sasha now feels detached from the Communist party. Sasha listens to Luzhko, a Russian literature teacher, talk about a famous story called “The Nose.” He feels suspicious as the teacher explains the danger of blindly believing in someone else’s idea of what is right. Sasha, not wanting to be sent to the orphanage, tries to run away. He ends up in the Biology lab where he imagines a nose dressed like Stalin. The nose yells at Sasha to renounce his father, saying everyone in Lubyanka confesses.

**Vocabulary**

Wrecker- A person who damages state property, neglects or carelessly does one’s duties, or general negative acts against Stalin’s ideas.

The Nose- A Russian story by Nikolai Gogol about an official whose nose leaves his face and has a life of its own.

**Interesting Idea**: Would you like to read Gogol’s “The Nose” yourself? Go to the table of contents and click “The Nose” (pg. 67-106) to read the story Sasha is referencing.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/36238/36238-h/36238-h.htm#Page_67>

**Imagine Activity:** Pretend you are a student in Sasha’s class. Your friend is called an enemy of the state because their parents were arrested. You know the student’s parents and they are good people who are loyal citizens. Would you stand up for your friend? Why or why not? How would you feel if you saw this happen to someone you know?

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