

错题本是我的紧箍咒

11月6日 星期三 阴

复习进入第二周，我开始专门对付难题。读《西游记》时我发现，孙悟空打妖怪从来不是抡起棒子就打：他会先摸清妖怪的来历，再找对应的办法。打白骨精变的那三个样子，他是一次一次识破的。难题也一样，得允许自己错几次。

昨天那道行程题就是只白骨精。甲乙两人相距两千四百米，同时出发相向而行，甲每分钟走六十米，乙每分钟走四十米，带狗来回跑的那种变式我全会，可题目把“相向”改成“同向追及”，我就乱了。第一遍列式，把时间算成了负数；第二遍画图，画到一半发现两条线段长短画反了。我想起孙悟空请观音之前先查妖怪住哪个洞，于是回去把“相遇”和“追及”两个公式各抄了三遍，又画了一张标准线段图贴在墙上。第四遍重做那道题，对了。四十分钟错三次才对，要是在以前我早就跳过去了，现在我觉得值——打死的妖怪不会复活，打死的难题也不会。

粗心是另一只妖怪，像猪八戒，力气不大但天天捣乱。我的办法是给它念紧箍咒：错题本。每道错题一页，左边抄错误做法，右边写正确做法，最下面用红笔写一句“错在哪”。“把65写成56”“忘记写单位”“答句没写”，都算。这个本子我起名叫紧箍咒，因为一到考试前，我就只翻它，它一翻开，我的粗心就抱头蹲下。上周单元测验前我只翻了四页紧箍咒，卷子上一个数字都没抄错，这种安静连我自己都意外。

第三场劫是作文，我把它留到最后打，因为它最费时间，像狮驼岭，得挑精神最好的一天打。这周我打算写两篇，写完拿给老师改，老师改过的地方就是我下一棒的落点。八十一难没有一难是躺着过的，我也不躺着。

My Mistake Notebook Is the Golden Fillet

Wednesday, November 6. Cloudy.

Review week two: I started going after hard problems on purpose. Reading Journey to the West, I noticed Sun Wukong never just swings his staff. He first finds out where the demon came from, then matches it with the right remedy. The three disguises of the White Bone Demon—he saw through them one at a time. Hard problems are the same: you have to allow yourself to be wrong a few times.

Yesterday's travel problem was a White Bone Demon. Two people 2,400 meters apart set off at the same time walking toward each other; one walks 60 meters a minute, the other 40. I could do every variation with a dog running back and forth, but the moment the question changed "toward each other" to "same direction, catching up," I got tangled. First attempt: my time came out negative. Second attempt: halfway through my diagram I realized I had drawn the two line segments the wrong lengths. I remembered that before fetching Guanyin, Sun Wukong first checked which cave the demon lived in. So I went back and copied the meeting formula and the catch-up

formula three times each, then taped a standard line-segment diagram to the wall. On the fourth try, I solved the problem. Forty minutes, three wrong attempts, then right. The old me would have skipped it long ago. Now I think it was worth it—a slain demon doesn't come back, and neither does a slain hard problem.

Carelessness is another demon, more like Zhu Bajie: not strong, but always causing trouble. My remedy is the Golden Fillet—a mistake notebook. One page per mistake: the wrong method on the left, the right method on the right, and one red line at the bottom saying what went wrong. "Wrote 65 as 56," "forgot the unit," "no answer sentence"—all count. I named the notebook the Golden Fillet, because before every exam I only flip through it, and the moment it opens, my carelessness crouches down holding its head. Before last week's unit test I flipped through only four pages of the Fillet, and I copied not a single number wrong on the paper. The quietness surprised even me.

The third tribulation is essay writing. I'm saving it for last because it takes the longest—like Lion Camel Ridge, it needs the day when I'm freshest. This week I plan to write two essays and hand them to my teacher for corrections; every mark she makes is where my next swing lands. Not one of the eighty-one trials was passed lying down, so I won't lie down either.