

一位“红笔判官”的三件小事：从讨厌到理解的自述

先说外号。五年级分班，新班主任第一节课只说三句话：名字、教数学、作业重做规矩。我们叫他陈老师，私下叫“红笔判官”。外号来自他的批改：我的数学作业本发下来，应用题只写对答案，过程跳了两步，红字写着“过程比答案重要，重做”；语文预习本上他写“预习不是抄课文，写出你不懂的那一句”。那学期我重做过七次作业，每次都在心里记一笔账。

账是在操场还清的。六年级运动会前一周，我报了四百米，怕输，放学后绕到操场最里面练。跑到第三圈，听见有人喊“摆臂，别插兜”。是陈老师，坐在看台第一排，膝盖上放着秒表，手里还捏着半截粉笔，像是从办公室直接下来的。他冲我抬抬下巴：“再来一组。”我跑完，他报了个数字，比体育老师给的及格线快两秒。第二天他把我叫到走廊，只说了一句：“昨天那圈不错，比赛就按那个节奏。”没有表扬，没有摸头，外号却在那一刻变了味道。

最后一件事在毕业前。散学典礼后我去办公室交钥匙，陈老师抽屉开着，里面立着一摞旧本子，最上面那本是我的，封面写着“重做7次”。他说：“留着，提醒你过程有用。”然后把本子给了我。我翻开来，最后一页有一行新的红字，是这学期写的：“今年一次都没重做。”

故事到这里结束，我没有说“我理解了老师的苦心”这类话，因为不需要。三件事自己会说话：满页红字是一件事，看台上的秒表是一件事，抽屉里立着的旧本子是一件事。写老师的时候，与其找形容词，不如攒这样的三件事。攒齐了，把外号放在开头，把外号的变化放在中间，把外号的真相放在结尾，文章自己就走完了从讨厌到理解的路。

Three Small Things About the Red-Pen Judge: A First-Person Account from Annoyance to Understanding

Start with the nickname. In fifth grade we got a new homeroom teacher who said only three things in the first class: his name, that he taught math, and the rule about redoing homework. We called him Mr. Chen; privately we called him the Red-Pen Judge. The nickname came from his corrections: my math notebook came back with word problems whose answers were right but whose steps were skipped, and in red ink it read, "the process matters more than the answer; redo it"; in my preview notebook he wrote, "previewing is not copying the text; write the one sentence you do not understand." That term I redid homework seven times, and each time I kept a mental tab.

The tab was settled on the field. A week before the sixth-grade sports day, I signed up for the 400 meters and, afraid of losing, went to the far side of the playground after school to practice. On the third lap I heard someone shout, "swing your arms, hands out of your pockets." It was Mr. Chen, sitting in the front row of the stands, a stopwatch on his knee, still holding a stub of chalk as if he had come straight from the office. He jerked his chin at me: one more set. When I finished, he called out a time two seconds faster than the PE teacher's passing mark. The next day

he stopped me in the corridor and said one line: "that lap yesterday was good; race at that pace." No praise, no pat on the head, yet the nickname changed flavor at that moment.

The last thing happened before graduation. After the closing ceremony I went to the office to return the keys. Mr. Chen's drawer was open, and inside stood a stack of old notebooks, the top one mine, its cover marked "redone 7 times". He said: "I kept it, to remind you that the process works." Then he gave it to me. I opened it, and on the last page was a new line in red, written this term: "this year, not once redone."

The story ends there. I never say "I finally understood the teacher's good intentions", because it is not needed. The three events speak for themselves: pages full of red ink is one, the stopwatch in the stands is one, the old notebook standing in the drawer is one. When writing about a teacher, gather three such events instead of hunting for adjectives. Line them up, put the nickname at the start, the nickname's change in the middle, and the nickname's truth at the end, and the essay walks the whole road from annoyance to understanding on its own.