

教室里那只木头文具盒

三年级下学期，我们班转来一个男孩。他坐在我斜后方，开学第一天就把文具盒摆在桌角。那不是铁皮盒子，也不是塑料盒子，是一只木头做的文具盒，颜色是浅浅的黄，四只角磨得圆圆的，盒盖上刻着一朵云，云的尾巴卷卷的，云旁边刻着男孩的名字。名字的字缝里填着清漆，在窗边的光里发亮。

我们的教室里，文具盒是有声音的。铁皮盒子啪地弹开，塑料盒子咔哒咔哒，一节课总有响声此起彼伏。可那只木头盒子几乎不出声。它合上的时候很轻，像轻轻合上一本书。有一次它掉在地上，全班都回头，它只闷闷地响了一下，比谁的落地声都老实。

课间，几个同学围过去看。胆大的伸手摸了摸盒盖上的云，说这云刻得真神气。有人问，哪里买的？男孩想了想说，我爷爷做的。大家都不说话了。有人说起自己家谁谁会做木工，说了半句又停住。那节课间，我们好几个人的眼睛都留在那只盒子上，连平时最爱按铁皮盒子开关的同学，也没去按自己的盒子。

班主任巡课的时候也停在他桌边，低头看了看那只盒子，问他，爷爷做的？男孩点头，说爷爷刨了一下午木头，刨花卷了一地，又拿刻刀一笔一笔刻上他的名字。老师直起身，看了看我们全班，没说什么大道理，只说了一句，好好用，别磕着。男孩把盒子往桌角里挪了挪。

后来那只盒子在我们班待了一整个学期。木头的颜色一天比一天深，刻的名字还是亮的。学期末班里办小小展览，展桌上摆着手工作品，男孩把文具盒也摆了上去，旁边立了张小纸条，是他自己写的：我爷爷做的，他今年七十六岁。来看展览的家长站了一圈。我听见有个阿姨说，这手艺再传下去就好了。男孩站在展桌旁边，腰挺得直直的。

放假那天，男孩把文具盒收进书包最里层。他背起书包走出教室，走到门口又回头看了一眼我们的教室。那只盒子在他书包里，安安静静的，像一小块从院子里带来的木头日子。

The Wooden Pencil Case in Our Classroom

In the second term of Grade Three, a boy transferred into our class. He sat diagonally behind me, and on the first day he set his pencil case on the corner of his desk. It was not tin and not plastic. It was a wooden pencil case, pale yellow, its four corners worn round. On the lid was carved a cloud with a curling tail, and beside the cloud, the boy's name. The grooves of the letters were filled with clear lacquer, and they shone in the light from the window.

Our classroom has its own sounds, made of pencil cases. Tin cases snap open, plastic cases rattle clickety-clack, and all through a lesson the noises rise and fall. But the wooden case was almost silent. When it closed, it closed softly, like a book being shut with care. Once it fell to the floor and the whole class turned around. It gave only one dull knock, the most well-behaved landing sound of them all.

At break, several of us gathered around it. The boldest reached out and touched

the cloud on the lid, and said the cloud was carved magnificently. Someone asked where he got it. The boy thought a moment and said, my grandpa made it. Nobody spoke for a while. One child started to say that someone in his family once did carpentry, and stopped halfway. For that whole break, many of our eyes stayed on the box, and even the classmate who loved clicking his tin case open and shut did not touch his own.

Our homeroom teacher paused at his desk during a walkabout, looked down at the box, and asked, your grandpa made it? The boy nodded and said his grandpa planed wood a whole afternoon, shavings curling all over the ground, then carved his name stroke by stroke with a small knife. The teacher straightened up, looked over our whole class, said no grand lesson, only one line: take good care of it, do not dent it. The boy moved the box a little deeper onto his desk.

The wooden case stayed with our class the whole term. Its color deepened day by day, and the carved name stayed bright. At the end of term we held a small class exhibition, and the boy placed the pencil case on the display table with a little card he wrote himself: made by my grandpa, he is seventy-six this year. Parents stood around the table in a circle. I heard a mother say, what a pity if this craft does not pass on. The boy stood beside the table with his back very straight.

On the last day, the boy tucked the pencil case into the innermost pocket of his bag. He swung the bag up and walked out of the classroom, then turned at the door to look back at our room. The box rode inside his bag, quiet as a small piece of yard-and-wood days carried along.