

爷爷的刨花卷

开学前一周，妈妈要带我去商店买文具盒。爷爷摆摆手说，别买，我给你做一个。我不太相信。商店里的文具盒会发光，还会自动弹开，爷爷做的木头盒子能比得上吗？

第二天一早，爷爷从柴房搬出一块存了多年的柏木板，放在院子里的长凳上。他先蹲下来看木纹，像看一张地图。接着他拉起墨斗，线绳一弹，木板上多了一条笔直的黑线。锯子咔咔响过，木板分成四块。爷爷拿起刨子，身子微微前倾，一推一拉，木屑打着卷儿飞出来，落在他的裤脚上，也落了一地。那些刨花薄薄的、亮亮的，卷起来像一圈圈糖纸。我蹲在旁边看入了迷，一连看了一个下午。

爷爷做盒子做了三次。第一块板刨到一半，他说纹理不对，拆了。第二块板拼到一半，他说接缝太宽，又拆了。第三次，他整整干了一个傍晚，才把四块板拼成一个方方的盒子，安上两只小小的铜合页。盒盖上还刻了一朵云，云的尾巴卷卷的，像他年轻时画过的样子。

最让我难忘的是刻名字那天。爷爷戴上老花镜，用一把小刻刀在盒子正面刻我的名字。他一笔一划刻得很慢，刻完还往刻痕里蘸了一点清漆，名字立刻发亮了。爷爷把盒子举起来，用拇指把四个角又摸了一遍，确认没有毛刺，才放进我的新书包。

第二天到学校，我把木头文具盒摆在桌角。同桌先看见，接着前后桌都围了过来。有人问，这盒子哪里买的？我说，我爷爷做的。有人摸了摸盒盖上的云，说比商店里的还神气。我打开盒子拿铅笔，发现里面多了一块崭新的橡皮，是爷爷悄悄放进去的。

放学回家，我把盒子放在桌上，给爷爷看。爷爷笑了，脸上的皱纹一条条挤在一起。他说，木头盒子用久了颜色会变深，越用越好看。现在我每天用它。盒子的边角真的越来越圆，木头的颜色越来越深，刻上去的名字在灯光下发亮。每次打开盒子，我好像又看见院子里那些打着卷儿的刨花，看见爷爷弯着腰，一推，一拉。

Grandpa's Wood Shavings

A week before school started, Mom wanted to take me to the store for a pencil case. Grandpa waved his hand and said, do not buy one, I will make it for you. I was not sure. Pencil cases in the store glowed and popped open by themselves. How could a wooden box compare with them?

Early the next morning, Grandpa carried out a cypress board he had kept for years and laid it on the long bench in the yard. He squatted down to study the grain, the way one studies a map. Then he stretched the ink line, snapped it, and a straight black line appeared on the board. The saw sang its quick song, and the board became four pieces. Grandpa took the hand plane, leaned slightly forward, and pushed and pulled. Wood shavings curled out, landing on his trousers and covering the ground. They were thin and shiny, curled up like rings of candy wrappers. I squatted beside him, fascinated, and watched the whole afternoon.

Grandpa made the box three times. The first board was half planed when he said the grain was wrong, and he took it apart. The second board was half assembled when he said the joints were too wide, and he took it apart again. The third time, he worked the whole evening before the four boards became a square box with two small brass hinges. On the lid he carved a cloud, its tail curling like the clouds he used to draw when he was young.

What I remember most is the day he carved my name. Grandpa put on his reading glasses and used a small carving knife to cut my name on the front of the box. Stroke by stroke he worked slowly, then brushed clear lacquer into the grooves, and the name began to shine. He lifted the box, ran his thumb over the four corners to make sure there were no splinters, and only then put it into my new schoolbag.

At school the next day, I set the wooden pencil case on the corner of my desk. My deskmate spotted it first, then the rows around us gathered round. Someone asked where I bought it. I said my grandpa made it. Someone else touched the cloud on the lid and said it was grander than any store box. When I opened it to take out my pencils, I found a brand new eraser inside. Grandpa had slipped it in quietly.

After school I placed the box on the table for Grandpa to see. He laughed, and the lines on his face crowded together. He said a wooden box grows darker with use, and the more you use it, the better it looks. I use it every day now. The corners really have grown rounder, the wood has grown deeper in color, and my carved name shines under the lamp. Every time I open the box, I seem to see those curling shavings in the yard again, and Grandpa bent over his work, pushing, pulling.