

文具盒里的小战场

期中考试数学卷发下来之前，我的文具盒像个真正的小战场。铅笔躺在桌子上，橡皮不知道滚到哪儿去了，尺子在书包最底层，彩笔早就不知道丢了帽。那天我要画一条长直线，别的同学刷刷刷用尺子画好了，我只能用手掌按着桌子比划出一条歪歪扭扭的线，像一条喝醉了的毛毛虫。

更糟的是应用题算错，我想找橡皮，把文具盒整个倒过来抖，只抖出几粒铅笔屑和一个卷笔刀的小零件。最后我用手指头把错答案抹了一片，卷面像被炸弹炸过，老师圈出来一个大大的问号。那次考试，我因为找文具白白浪费了好几分钟，最后一道大题差点没写完。

晚上妈妈帮我收拾书桌，从书包里掏出一大堆东西：没帽的铅笔、磨成黑炭的橡皮、皱成一团的练习纸、半盒缺帽的彩笔。我居然不知道自己丢了这么多东西。妈妈说，东西不是你弄丢的，是你不送它们回家。这句话像一根小刺，扎了我一下。

第二天放学，我决定来一次大整理。我把文具盒全部倒出来，擦干净里面的铅笔灰，把铅笔一支一支削尖，给彩笔一顶一顶找回帽子，尺子放进盒盖里的小夹袋，橡皮固定在右下角的位置。我把所有文具分成四类：写字的、画画的、测量的、修改的，像给每个同学分好各自的小组，谁也不串门。

整理一次容易，坚持才难。我和自己约定：坚持一周，每次用完都送它们回原位。前两天新鲜，我每次都归位；第三天急着去找同学玩，铅笔忘在桌子最边上，我跑到半路又折回来，把它送回了文具盒；第四天我差点放弃，可打开盒子看见大家整整齐齐地待着，我怎么好意思再弄乱呢。

一周期满，奇怪的事情发生了：我闭着眼睛都能摸到东西。要尺子，手自动伸向盒盖夹袋；要橡皮，手指自己找到右下角。后来的周测，我再也没有为了一支笔、一块橡皮耽误过一分钟，卷子上的字也写得比从前干净。

现在我慢慢明白，整理文具盒不只是讲卫生。能把每一样东西放回原位的人，也能把每一件事放回原位。我还只是个小学生，可是连一个小小的文具盒都能管好，也许就能慢慢管好自己的作业、自己的时间、自己。文具盒里的那个小战场，我不想再打第二次了。

The Little Battlefield in My Pencil Case

Before the midterm math paper came out, my pencil case was a real little battlefield. Pencils lay on the desk, the eraser had rolled somewhere unknown, the ruler sat at the bottom of my schoolbag, and the cap of one marker had long since vanished. That day I needed a long straight line. Other students drew theirs with rulers, swish-swish, while I pressed my palm on the desk and produced a crooked line like a drunk caterpillar.

Worse came later. I got a word problem wrong and hunted for the eraser, turning the whole case upside down and shaking out only pencil dust and a tiny part of the sharpener. In the end I rubbed the wrong answer with my finger, and the page looked

bombed, with a big question mark circled by the teacher. That exam, I wasted minutes just hunting for stationery and almost failed to finish the last big problem.

That evening Mom helped me clear my desk and pulled a mountain out of my bag: capless pencils, an eraser worn black, crumpled practice paper, half a box of markers missing caps. I had no idea I lost so many things. Mom said, you did not lose your things, you simply never walk them home. That sentence pricked me like a small thorn.

After school the next day I decided on a big cleanup. I emptied the whole pencil case and wiped away the pencil gray, sharpened every pencil one by one, found caps for every marker, put the ruler into the slim pocket inside the lid, and fixed the eraser in its corner at the lower right. I sorted all stationery into four groups: writing, drawing, measuring, correcting, like assigning every classmate to a team of their own, with nobody wandering between teams.

Cleaning once is easy; keeping it up is hard. I made a pact with myself: hold it for one week, and walk everything back to its place after every use. The first two days felt fresh and I did it every time. On day three I rushed off to see a classmate and left a pencil at the far edge of the desk, so I ran halfway back to walk it home. On day four I nearly gave up, but opening the case and finding everyone standing neat, how could I have the heart to mess them up again.

When the week was up, something strange happened: I could find things with my eyes closed. Needing the ruler, my hand went to the lid pocket by itself; needing the eraser, my fingers found the lower right corner by themselves. In the weekly quiz after that, I never lost a single minute to a pen or an eraser, and my handwriting came out cleaner than before.

Now I am slowly understanding that tidying a pencil case is not only about cleanliness. A person who can put every thing back in place can also put every task back in place. I am still only a primary school student, but if I can manage even a small pencil case, maybe I can slowly manage my homework, my time, and myself. That little battlefield inside the pencil case, I do not want to fight on it a second time.