

雨天的第二张课表

现在我的书桌玻璃板下面压着一张铅笔写的课表，右上角写着：雨天专用。那是上个月一个星期三排的，那天暴雨，下午的补习班停课，周末的博物馆之行也改期，我一下子从早到晚全空了。

空下来反而慌。我坐在沙发上，把遥控器拿起来又放下，刷了二十分钟电视，心里越来越虚，像偷来的时间不认账。后来我盯着学校课表看了半天，忽然来了主意：既然空了，为什么不照它的样子排一张？我找出一张硬纸片，横着画格子：一点半到两点，预习下周的几何，只看不写，把看不懂的画圈；两点十分到两点四十，跳绳一百五十个，客厅跳，别砸花瓶；两点五十到三点半，整理书架最下面两层，把五年级的旧课本擦出来给楼下弟弟；三点四十到五点，读那本借了半个月只看了三十页的《海底两万里》；五点以后自由，但睡前要把几何里画圈的三个地方写成一页问题，带去问老师。

排完我有点想笑，给自己上课？可铃一响——我自己定的闹钟——我还是坐下了。怪事发生了：预习几何那段，平时老师讲我走神的地方，自己看反而看懂了两处，画圈的三个地方越看越清楚，因为它们是我自己找出来的坑。跳绳跳到一百二十个的时候窗外雷响了，我照样跳完，落地时心口咚咚的，分不清是绳还是雷。整理书架时从旧课本里掉出一张我三年级画的地图，我蹲在地上看了好久。《海底两万里》读到鹦鹉螺号缺氧那段，天正好黑下来，雨打在窗上，我大气不敢出，那三十页的欠账一口气还清了。

晚饭后我照表把三个问题写成一页。第二天去补习班，老师讲到那个定理，我举手把问题问了，老师说我这个问题问得好，全班安静了一下。同桌用胳膊肘捅我：你昨天干嘛了？我说，昨天雨把课冲掉了，我自己补了一张课表。

这张雨天课表让我明白：被动等安排，一天是空的；主动排一张，一天就满了。而且自己排的学习，记得比老师塞的牢，因为坑是自己挖的，也是自己填的。从那以后，只要计划落空，我就给自己排第二张课表。雨天的时间不是被偷走的，是白捡的，白捡的东西，更得记好账。

A Second Timetable for a Rainy Day

Under the glass on my desk there is now a timetable written in pencil, with four characters in the upper right corner: rainy-day edition. I made it on a Wednesday last month. That day the storm poured, my afternoon tutoring class was canceled, and the weekend museum trip was rescheduled, and suddenly my entire day, morning to night, stood empty.

Being empty made me uneasy instead. I sat on the sofa, picked up the remote and put it down, watched television for twenty minutes, and felt more and more hollow, as if stolen time refused to be accounted for. Then I stared at my school timetable for a long while, and an idea struck me: since the day is empty, why not build one just like it? I found a piece of stiff cardboard and drew a grid across it: from one-thirty to two, preview next week's geometry, only look, do not write, circle whatever

I cannot follow; from two-ten to two-forty, one hundred and fifty jump ropes, in the living room, do not knock over the vase; from two-fifty to three-thirty, tidy the bottom two shelves of the bookcase and stack the old Grade Five textbooks to give to the little boy downstairs; from three-forty to five, read that copy of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* I borrowed half a month ago and had reached only page thirty; after five, free time, but before bed, write up the three circled spots in geometry as a page of questions to take to the teacher.

When I finished I almost laughed at myself, taking classes from myself? But when the bell rang, my own alarm, I sat down anyway. And a strange thing happened: while previewing geometry, the very places where I normally space out in class made sense on my own in two spots, and the three I circled grew clearer the more I looked, because they were holes I had dug myself. When I reached jump number one hundred and twenty, thunder cracked outside, and I finished the set anyway; landing, my chest pounded, and I could not tell whether it was the rope or the thunder. While tidying the shelves, a map I had drawn in Grade Three fell out of an old textbook, and I squatted on the floor looking at it for a long time. When I read the part in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* where the *Nautilus* runs out of air, the sky happened to darken, rain hammering the window, and I barely dared breathe; thirty pages of debt were paid off in one breath.

After dinner I wrote the three questions into a page, exactly as scheduled. The next day at tutoring, when the teacher reached that theorem, I raised my hand and asked. The teacher said that was a good question, and the whole class went quiet for a moment. My deskmate nudged me with an elbow: What did you do yesterday? I said: Yesterday the rain washed my classes away, so I drew myself a second timetable.

This rainy-day timetable taught me: wait passively for arrangements and a day is empty; draw up your own and a day is full. And the learning you schedule yourself sticks better than what a teacher packs in, because the holes are ones you dug, and you fill them yourself. Ever since, whenever a plan falls through, I draw myself a second timetable. Time on a rainy day is not stolen; it is picked up for free, and what you pick up for free deserves the tightest accounting.