

掉漆的蓝文具盒

我的文具盒是四年级开学时买的，蓝色的铁盒子，盖子上印着一只白鲸。那时候它蓝得发亮，边角方方正正，我把它摆在笔袋最上层，舍不得用。

三年过去，它早就变了样。右边两个角掉漆掉得最厉害，蓝皮一块一块翘起来，露出底下银白色的铁皮。那是它从桌上摔下来过太多次。三年级下学期它第一次摔，我捡起来手心全是汗；到五年级，它摔下去我自己都不弯腰了，它自己熟悉怎么落地。掉漆的角摸起来糙糙的，可我手指头没事就爱去蹭那两块银白，像摸一个熟了的脸。

上个月收拾书桌，我把文具盒里的东西全倒出来，一张折成小方块的纸条从盒底的缝里滑出来。纸条都软了，边角起了毛，上面是李小冉的字：「我要走了，座位还给你留着，别忘了咱俩说好都考一中。」那是五年级上学期，她转学去外地的前一天塞进我文具盒的。我当时上课没敢看，下课看了三行，眼睛就热了。后来这张纸条一直在文具盒底躺着，我换了笔、换了课程表，没换过它。

纸条的事我没跟妈妈说。可是这周开学，妈妈领着我去了文具店，说要给我上六年级换个新文具盒。货架上一排一排，有带密码锁的，有能翻成笔筒的，蓝的绿的都有。我拿起一个灰色的，又放下；拿起一个带拉链的，摸了摸，还是放下。妈妈问我到底要哪个，我张了张嘴，说：「我那个还能用。」

妈妈不信，回家把旧文具盒拿到水池边，用湿巾擦了一遍。白鲸让擦得更清楚了，就是掉漆的两个角擦不掉，铁皮上还有细细的磕碰印。妈妈擦完递给我，说：「那就它再陪你一年。」

我把白鲸文具盒放进新书包的侧兜，纸条重新折好塞回盒底的缝里。它旧了，可它肚子里装着我三年的东西：摔过的地，写过的字，还有李小冉那句没回的话。换新文具盒的那天我到底没舍得，我想，等毕业那天，我再跟它一起回家。

The Blue Pencil Case with Chipped Paint

My pencil case was bought on the first day of fourth grade, a blue tin box with a white whale printed on the lid. Back then it was shining blue, its corners square and sharp. I set it on the top layer of my pencil pouch and hated to use it.

Three years later it had long changed. The two corners on the right had lost the most paint: chips of blue curled up one by one, exposing the silver-white tin underneath. That was from falling off the desk too many times. The first fall was in the second term of third grade; I picked it up with sweaty palms. By fifth grade, when it fell I did not even bend down - it knew by itself how to land. The chipped corners feel rough, yet my fingers love to rub those two silver patches when I have nothing to do, like touching a familiar face.

Last month while tidying my desk, I poured everything out of the case, and a small note folded into a square slid out from a crack at the bottom. The paper had

gone soft, its edges fuzzy. In Li Xiaoran's handwriting it said: "I am leaving. I am still saving our seat for you. Do not forget we promised to both get into School Number One." That was the day before she moved to another city in the first term of fifth grade. I did not dare read it in class; after class I read three lines and my eyes stung. Ever since, the note lay at the bottom of the case. I changed pens and changed my timetable card, but never it.

I never told Mother about the note. But this week, on the first day of school, she took me to a stationery shop to get me a new case for sixth grade. Shelf after shelf: ones with combination locks, ones that fold into pen holders, blue ones, green ones. I picked up a gray one, put it back; picked up one with a zipper, felt it, and put it back too. Mother asked which one I wanted. I opened my mouth and said: "The one I have still works."

Mother did not believe me. At home she carried the old case to the sink and wiped it once with a wet cloth. The white whale came out clearer, only the two chipped corners could not be wiped away, and the tin still showed fine dents. Mother wiped it, handed it back, and said: "Then let it stay with you one more year."

I put the whale case into the side pocket of my new schoolbag and folded the note back into the crack at the bottom. It is old, but inside it carries three years of my life: the floors it fell on, the characters it wrote, and the words of Li Xiaoran I never answered. On the day of a new case I could not bear to switch. I think on graduation day, it and I will go home together.