

花的名字

周六早上，公园刚开门，进门口花坛就围了不少人。一丛黄色的花，花瓣薄得像绸子，在雪松绿篱前站成一排。儿子松开我的手，蹲在花坛前，冷不丁地问：妈妈，这朵花叫什么？

我愣了一下。花就在眼前，风一吹一晃，我却说不出一个字。我只记得小时候春天，我妈指过类似的花，说这叫萱草，可眼前这朵有六片花瓣，颜色更亮，多半不是同一种。我蹲下来，老老实实告诉儿子：我也不知道。咱们一起查吧。

他一点也不失望，反而更来劲了，自己站起来催我掏手机。我把那朵花拍了个仔细，花瓣、叶子的形状、整片花丛，都用拍照识别去搜。屏幕转了几秒，结果出来了：鸢尾，鸢尾科，花期四月到五月。儿子把这几个字一个一个念出来，然后跑回花坛边，蹲着数那朵花的花瓣：一、二、三……六。他像报喜一样回头喊我：真的是六片！

回家的路上他一直说个不停：为什么叫鸢尾？为什么叶子像剑？这些问题我答不全，就跟他约好，回家接着查。到家我们翻出去年买的那本《野花野外图鉴》，找到鸢尾那一页，上面有一行字：叶似剑形，故名。他用手指顺着图上的叶子描了一遍，点点头，一副似懂非懂的样子。

睡前，他翻出一张硬卡纸，要我帮他做卡片：正面画一朵黄色的花，背面写鸢尾、六片花瓣、喜欢太阳。他把卡片贴在书桌角上，紧挨着去年做的蒲公英卡片。

看着那张卡片我忽然想：我像他这么大的时候，也蹲在花坛前问过我妈花的名字。我妈答上来一些，答不上来的，就那么糊过去了。几十年过去，那些没名字的花还在路边一年一年地开。现在我儿子蹲在同样的地方，这一次，我们不糊过去。花的名字像一扇小门，推开它，后面是一整个天地，跟着他走进去，什么时候都不晚。

The Name of the Flower

On Saturday morning, the park had just opened, and the flower bed by the entrance was already crowded with people. A cluster of yellow flowers, petals thin as silk, stood in a row in front of the cedar hedge. My son let go of my hand, crouched in front of the flower bed, and asked out of nowhere: Mom, what is this flower called?

I froze. The flower was right in front of me, swaying in the wind, and I could not give it a name. I only remembered that in spring my mother had pointed at a similar flower and said it was a daylily, but this one had six petals and a brighter color, so it was probably not the same. I squatted down and told my son honestly: I do not know either. Let us look it up together.

He was not disappointed at all. On the contrary, he seemed more excited, stood up and urged me to take out the phone. I photographed the flower carefully, the petals, the shape of the leaves, and the whole patch, then used the photo search to identify it. The screen spun for a few seconds, and the result came out: iris, family Iridaceae, blooming from April to May. My son read the words out one by one, then ran

back to the flower bed and crouched down to count the petals: one, two, three... six. He turned and shouted to me like delivering good news: It really is six!

On the way home he kept talking: Why is it called iris? Why are the leaves like swords? I could not answer everything, so I promised him we would keep looking when we got home. As soon as we arrived, we took out the Wild Flowers Field Guide we had bought last year and found the page about iris. One line read: the leaves are shaped like swords, hence the name. He traced the leaf on the picture with his finger and nodded, half understanding, half not.

Before bed, he found a piece of cardboard and asked me to help him make a card: a yellow flower on the front, and on the back the words iris, six petals, loves the sun. He stuck it at the corner of his desk, right next to last year's dandelion card.

Looking at that card, I suddenly thought: at his age, I also crouched in front of flower beds and asked my mother the names of flowers. She answered some, and the ones she could not answer I simply let go. Decades passed, and the flowers without names still bloom by the roadside year after year. Now my son is crouching in the same place, and this time we will not let it go. The name of a flower is like a small door. Push it open, and behind it is a whole world; walking in with him is never too late.