# 皮影师傅的那盏灯

学校组织我们看了一场电影，讲的是一个老皮影师傅守着一盏灯、一块幕布，演了一辈子戏。有一场戏我到现在都记得：幕布后面的师傅把灯芯挑亮，对小徒弟说，皮子不骗人，糊弄皮子的人，是自己糊弄自己。灯一亮，幕布上每一个刀口、每一根线条，台下的看客都看得清清楚楚。那天放学回家的路上，我满脑子都是那盏灯。

我练了三年书法，是从三年级暑假开始练的。起初我写得挺起劲，后来越写越烦：一个横要写几十遍，一个捺要改来改去，字帖上的字像排着队跟我作对。有一回我图快，把一页作业糊弄完，毛笔在纸上甩，笔画甩得毛毛糙糙。第二天书法课，老师把那张纸贴在展示板上，什么也没说，只在旁边写了四个字：笔骗不了人。当时我脸特别红，回家躲在房间里生闷气，觉得老师故意让我难堪。

看电影的时候，我忽然懂了老师那四个字。皮影师傅说皮子不骗人，书法老师说笔骗不了人，他们说的其实是同一件事：手上偷的懒，最后都会亮在明处，谁都藏不住。电影里那个小徒弟一开始也偷工减料，刻皮子少刻一道纹，灯一照，幕布上那块皮就灰扑扑的，跟旁边精细的部分摆在一起，一眼就能看出来。后来他重新刻，刻到手上的茧子比皮子还硬，幕布上的影子才活过来。

这部电影让我学会的第一件事，是把烦人的重复看成功夫本身。从今往后我打算这样练字：每天只精写十个字，每个字先读三遍帖再下笔，写完跟帖上的字并排比一比，找出差的一点，第二天专补那一点。我不再一页一页赶任务，我要像皮影师傅那样，把每一刀都刻在灯下经得起看的地方。

前几天我把新写的字贴在展示墙角落，没有贴得多么显眼，但我自己知道，那十个字，每一个都对得起那盏灯。电影散场已经两个星期了，可我心里那盏灯一直没关。

# The Lamp of the Shadow Puppet Master

Our school took us to see a film about an old shadow puppet master who guarded one lamp and one cloth screen and performed on it his whole life. One scene stays in my memory: behind the screen the master trimmed the wick brighter and said to his young apprentice, hide does not cheat people; those who cheat the hide cheat only themselves. Once the lamp is lit, every cut and every line on the screen can be seen clearly by everyone sitting below. On the way home that day, my head was full of that lamp.

I have practiced calligraphy for three years, since the summer of Grade Three. At first I wrote with great energy, then more and more wearily: one horizontal stroke had to be written dozens of times, one pressing stroke kept being corrected, and the characters in the copybook seemed to stand in line against me. Once, in a hurry, I finished a whole page by swinging the brush carelessly, and the strokes came out rough and fuzzy. The next day in calligraphy class the teacher posted that page on the display board, said nothing, and wrote four words beside it: the brush cannot

lie. My face burned, and I went home and sulked in my room, sure the teacher wanted to shame me.

While watching the film I suddenly understood those words. The puppet master says the hide cannot cheat, my teacher says the brush cannot lie, and they mean the same thing: every laziness of the hand will finally stand in the light, and no one can hide it. In the film the little apprentice also cut corners at first, leaving out one carved line on a piece of hide. Under the lamp that piece looked dull on the screen, and beside the fine parts anyone could spot it at a glance. Later he carved it again, until the calluses on his hands grew harder than the hide, and only then did the shadows on the screen come alive.

The first thing this film taught me is to see annoying repetition as the skill itself. From now on I plan to practice like this: ten characters a day, carefully; before the brush touches paper I read each character in the copybook three times; after writing I place my character beside the printed one, find the one point that differs, and repair exactly that point the next day. I will not rush through page after page. Like the old master, I want every cut to sit where the lamp can inspect it.

A few days ago I posted my new writing at the corner of the display wall, not in a showy place, but I know those ten characters are all worthy of the lamp. The film ended two weeks ago, yet the lamp inside my heart has never gone out.