修钟的人不看钟

电影里那座火车站的大钟停了三十年。站长着急，旅客着急，所有人都围着钟面打转，催师傅赶在通车日前把它修好。可那位白发老钟匠从头到尾没有抬头看过那座钟一眼。他把大钟拆成上千个零件，摊在一张旧绒布上，每天只摆弄其中几个，给齿轮上油，给游丝整形，跟每一个零件讲道理。

站长拍着桌子问他到底哪天能修好。老钟匠只回答了一句：钟是修好的，不是催好的。他干活的时候不看进度，不看日历，甚至不看表。徒弟替他上发条试走，他先听声音，再摸摆轮的幅度，差一丝一毫都要拆回去重来。电影放到大半，我几乎忘了那座钟什么时候能走，只记得他的手，稳得像在修一件传家的东西。

银幕灯光亮起来的时候，我第一个想到的却是我自己。

上学期期末，我给自己定了个吓人的目标：前十天把数学错题全过一遍，再背完两本英语词汇。计划表贴得比书桌还大，每天睡前都要盯着表划勾。头三天我还算稳，从第四天起就乱了：错题只来得及看一半，词汇背了后面忘前面。我开始熬夜，熬到十一点半，第二天上课打晃，错得更多。越急越错，越错越急，那几天我做作业的手都是浮的，像有人在我背后不停按快进。

后来数学老师把我叫到办公室，只问了一句：你到底是想学完，还是想划完勾？我愣了半天，答不上来。那句话和电影里老钟匠的话撞在一起——钟是修好的，不是催好的。我一直在盯着自己的钟面：还剩多少天，还剩多少页，却从没低头看过手底下的零件：这道题我到底懂没懂，这个词我到底记牢没有。

老钟匠不是不关心结果。他比谁都希望钟走起来，只是他明白，大钟的准时，藏在每一个小齿轮的转速里。我现在也试着这样安排：把期末的大目标拆成每天的小齿轮，数学每天只吃透两道错题，英语每天只记十五个词，完成就把绒布上的零件归位，不去数还剩多少。头两个星期，做题的速度慢下来，错误率却实实在在往下掉，晚上十点半能睡，白天眼睛是亮的。

电影结尾，那座停了三十年的大钟当当地敲响，全站的人仰头看钟面。老钟匠没有看钟，他低头在收工具，像收摊一样平常。我喜欢这个结尾。它让我相信，把每一个零件修顺的人，迟早会听见自己的钟响。我要做的，就是低下头，跟今天这两个齿轮讲道理。

The Clock Repairman Never Looks at the Clock

In the film, the great clock of the railway station had stood still for thirty years. The station master was anxious, the passengers were anxious, and everybody circled the dial, urging the repairman to finish before the reopening day. But the white-haired old clockmaker never once raised his eyes to look at that clock. He took it apart into more than a thousand pieces, laid them out on an old velvet cloth, worked on only a few of them each day, oiled the gears, straightened the hairspring, and reasoned with every single part.

The station master banged the table and demanded a date. The old man answered with one line: a clock is repaired, not hurried. While working he watched no progress, no calendar, not even his own watch. When his apprentice wound it for a test run, the old man listened to the sound first, then measured the swing of the balance wheel, and sent anything off by a hair back to the bench for another round. For most of the film I almost forgot when the clock would ever run again; all I remember are his hands, steady as if he were mending an heirloom.

When the lights came up, the first thought that found me was my own.

Last term I set myself a frightening goal: finish all my math mistakes in ten days and memorize two vocabulary books besides. The plan sheet was bigger than my desk, and every night I stared at it to tick the boxes. The first three days held; from the fourth everything slipped. I stayed up until half past eleven, swayed through classes the next day, and made more mistakes. The more anxious I grew, the more errors I made; the more errors I made, the more anxious I grew. My hand floated over the homework like someone behind me pressing fast-forward.

Then my math teacher asked me only one question: do you want to learn it, or do you want to finish ticking boxes? I had no answer. That question collided with the words of the old clockmaker: a clock is repaired, not hurried. I had been staring at my own dial, counting the days and pages left, and never looked down at the parts in my hands: whether I truly understood this problem, whether that word truly stayed.

The old man cared about the result more than anyone; he simply knew that the accuracy of a great clock hides in the turning speed of every small gear. I now split my big goal into daily gears: two math mistakes fully understood a day, fifteen English words a day. When they are done, the parts go back on the cloth, and I do not count what remains. In the first two weeks my pace slowed, yet my error rate fell for real, and I could sleep by ten thirty with bright eyes next morning.

At the end of the film the clock that had slept for thirty years struck, and the whole station looked up at its face. The old clockmaker did not look. He bent over his tools, packing them away like a street vendor closing shop. I love that ending. It makes me believe that the one who keeps every gear smooth will hear his own clock strike in time. My task is simple: bend down and reason with the two gears of today.

灯守人不怕黑

那是一部很安静的电影。海岛上的灯塔要换灯，旧的煤油灯换成电灯，可电缆一时通不上岛，看守老陈还得守着老规矩：每天天黑前擦净灯罩，添油，点火，记录风向。岛上没有别人，没有观

众，最远的渔船在十几海里外。记者上岛采访，问他：没有人看见你的时候，你还这么认真做什么。老陈想了很久，说：灯不是给看见的人亮的，是给看不见的人亮的。

电影里有一场戏我记到现在。台风过境后第二天，塔顶的玻璃碎了一半，老陈爬上三十多米的旋梯，一手扶着栏杆，一手把新玻璃一块块递上去。他的手在抖，镜头没有躲。下来以后他在本子上写：今日灯明，照见海面十二海里。字迹被汗洇开了一角。他没有写苦，也没有写功，只写了灯亮着。

我想起我走读的那半个学期。

晚自习结束已经九点半，回到家还要再写四十分钟作业。那段时间我背的古诗第二天就忘，物理的受力分析画一张错一张，没有人看见我几点睡，也没有人看见我几点起。有天夜里我对着一道电学题发呆，忽然问自己：这样没人看得见的努力，到底有什么用处。那几天我做题的手是软的，字是飘的，连早读都不过心。

老陈那句话把我从这件事里拽了出来。灯不是给看见的人亮的，是给看不见的人亮的。我的努力也一样：它不是给老师看的勾，不是给家长看的排名，它是给那个看不见的、几个月后的自己亮的。考试那天坐在考场里的人是我，需要灯的人也是我。平时每一个没人看见的夜晚，都是在给那天的我留一盏光。

想通这一点以后，我没有把计划改得更大，反而改小了：古诗每天只背四句，睡前默一遍；物理每天只画两张受力图，画完对答案，错的那张第二天重画。我不再问什么时候能进步，只问今晚的灯添了没有。期末我的物理从七十多分爬到八十八，不算惊人，但我知道那十一分是从哪些夜晚里来的。

电影最后，电缆上了岛，电灯取代了煤油灯，老陈在交接单上签了字，把用了三十年的灯罩擦得锃亮，放好。他离岛那天，渔船从灯塔下面过，船上的孩子抬头看灯，灯亮着。我特别喜欢这个镜头：守灯的人不怕黑，因为他知道自己就是那个把黑夜过完的人。我也要做自己的守灯人，今晚先把今晚的灯点上。

The Keeper of the Light Is Not Afraid of Dark

It was a very quiet film. The lighthouse on the island was changing its lamp: the old kerosene light was to give way to an electric one, but the cable could not reach the island yet, so the keeper, Old Chen, still kept the old rule: wipe the lamp glass clean before dusk, add oil, strike the flame, record the wind. There was no one else on the island, no audience; the nearest fishing boat lay twelve miles out. A reporter came ashore and asked him: when nobody sees you, why still take it so seriously. Chen thought for a long time and said: the lamp is not lit for those who can see, but for those who cannot.

One scene has stayed with me. The day after the typhoon passed, half the glass on the tower top was shattered. Chen climbed the spiral stair of thirty meters, one hand

on the rail, the other passing new panes up one by one. His hand trembled, and the camera did not look away. Afterward he wrote in his log: lamp lit today, sea visible for twelve miles. Sweat blurred one corner of the handwriting. He wrote neither of hardship nor of merit, only that the lamp was burning.

It reminded me of the half-term I commuted to school.

Evening study ended at half past nine, and at home forty more minutes of homework waited. In that stretch, the classical poems I recited slipped out of my memory by the next day, and every free-body diagram in physics came out wrong. Nobody saw when I slept, nobody saw when I rose. One night, staring at an electricity problem, I suddenly asked myself: what is the use of effort that no one sees. For days my hand was soft over the exercises, my writing floated, and even morning reading passed through me without leaving a trace.

Chen's words pulled me out of that question. The lamp is not lit for those who can see, but for those who cannot. My effort was the same: it was not ticks for the teacher, not a ranking for my parents; it was a light left for the unseen self of some months later. The one sitting in the exam hall would be me, and the one needing a lamp would also be me. Every unseen evening was a light kept for that future me.

After that I did not enlarge my plan; I shrank it. Four lines of classical poetry a day, recited silently before sleep; two force diagrams in physics a day, checked against the answers, the wrong one redrawn the next morning. I stopped asking when progress would come and asked only whether tonight's lamp had been fed. By the final exam my physics had climbed from the seventies to eighty-eight. Nothing astonishing, but I know which nights those eleven points came from.

At the end of the film the cable reached the island, the electric light replaced the kerosene lamp, and Chen signed the handover sheet, polished the lamp glass he had used for thirty years until it shone, and set it aside. On the day he left, a fishing boat passed beneath the tower, and a child on board looked up: the lamp was burning. I love that shot. The keeper of the light is not afraid of dark, because he knows he is the one who walks the night to its end. I mean to be my own keeper, and tonight I will light tonight's lamp first.

山不响，路会回答

那是一部登山纪录片，拍一支学生登山队冲一座六千米的山。他们在山脊下被大雪挡住了三次。第一次，风雪太大，营地帐篷被掀掉两顶，全队撤回谷底；第二次，爬到五千米，氧气瓶出了故障，又撤；第三次，离顶峰只剩四百米，雾墙压下来，能见度不到五米，领队看了看高度表，

下令下撤。镜头里没有哭天抢地，只有队员把背包往肩上又提了提，一步一步往下走。下山路上，一个队员对着镜头说了一句话：山不会响，但你走过的路会回答你。

第二次下撤以后，他们没有散伙。全队回到谷底，把故障的氧气阀拆开研究，修好，重新检查每一只冰爪，然后第三次上山。纪录片没有给他们一个登顶的大团圆——第三次冲顶时天气再次变脸，队伍在四千米处停下，收队回家。片尾字幕写：该队次年春季再次尝试，登顶成功。没有欢呼的镜头，只有一行字。可就是这一行字，让我在座位上坐得笔直。

因为我想起校运会一千五百米的那一次。

初二秋天，我报名一千五百米，想证明自己能行。发令枪响后第一圈我还跟得上，第二圈踩到别人的鞋钉，整个人摔在跑道上，膝盖蹭破一大片，手掌也磨出了血。我爬起来，一瘸一拐走完最后三百米，全班在终点线那里安静地看着我。那之后整整一个月，我躲着体育课，跑步就找肚子疼的借口。我觉得摔那一跤就是结局，像一场电影放完了，字幕是我输了。

纪录片里那支队伍让我重新看了自己的那场比赛。他们三次被大雪挡回来，没有一次算输，因为每一次下撤都在回答：帐篷怎么固定，阀门哪里故障，雾里怎么结组。他们把失败拆成了可以修的东西。而我呢，我把摔倒当成一个评语，贴在身上整整一个月，从来没有拆开看过：我到底是起跑太急，还是摆臂乱了，还是摔过之后不敢抬腿。

想通以后我做了几件小得可笑的事：体育课的慢跑我不再请假，第一圈只跑七成力；体育老师教的三步一呼两步一吸，我在小区楼下数着练了两个星期；上个月班级测试，我重新跑了一千五百米，没进前三，但比上次快了十四秒。十四秒不多，可它是我摔出去的那一个月里，路给我的回答。

山不响，路会回答。雪不会给登山队打分，跑道也不会给摔倒的人打分，它们只记录你后来有没有继续走。我的打算是把这句话带进初三：模拟考砸了，就像一次下撤，把卷子拆开，找那个故障的阀门，修好，再上一次山。山一直在那里，不响，也不走，它等的就是愿意再来的人。

The Mountain Is Silent, but the Road Answers

It was a mountaineering documentary about a student team attacking a six-thousand-meter peak. Three times the snow wall stopped them below the ridge. The first time, the wind tore down two tents and the whole team retreated to the valley. The second time, at five thousand meters, an oxygen bottle failed, and they turned back again. The third time, four hundred meters from the summit, a wall of fog came down with visibility under five meters; the leader checked the altimeter and gave the order to descend. There was no wailing in the frame, only team members hoisting their packs higher on their shoulders and stepping down one by one. On the way down, one of them said to the camera: the mountain is silent, but the road you have walked will answer you.

After the second retreat they did not break up. The team returned to the valley,

took the faulty oxygen valve apart and studied it, repaired it, re-checked every crampon point by point, and went up for the third time. The documentary did not give them a summit happy ending: on the third push the weather turned again, and the team stopped at four thousand meters and came home. The closing caption read: the team tried again the following spring and reached the top. No cheering shot, just one line of text. That single line sat me straight in my seat.

Because it took me back to the fifteen hundred meters at our school sports meet.

In the autumn of eighth grade I signed up for the 1500 meters to prove I could do it. I kept pace through the first lap; on the second my foot caught another runner's spikes and I went down on the track, my knee scraped wide open, my palm raw. I got up and limped through the last three hundred meters while the whole class watched in silence at the finish line. For a full month afterward I dodged P.E. class and found stomach-ache excuses whenever running came up. I had treated that fall as the ending, like a film over, with the caption reading: I lost.

The team in the documentary made me rewatch my own race. Snow turned them back three times, and none of it counted as losing, because every descent had answered something: how to anchor a tent, where the valve failed, how to rope together inside fog. They took failure apart into things that could be repaired. I, instead, wore my fall as a grade stuck to my body for a month, and never once opened it to look: was I starting too fast, was my arm swing in disorder, or was I simply afraid to lift my legs after falling.

Once I saw that, I did a few laughably small things. I stopped skipping the slow run in P.E., and ran the first lap at seventy percent effort; I practiced the breathing rhythm my teacher taught, three steps inhaling and two exhaling, counting laps below my building for two weeks; at last month's class time trial I ran the 1500 meters again, made no podium, but finished fourteen seconds faster. Fourteen seconds is not much, yet it was the road's answer to the month I had thrown away on the ground.

The mountain is silent, but the road answers. Snow gives no score to the climbers, the track gives no score to the fallen; they only record whether you kept walking. My plan for ninth grade is to carry this sentence with me: a failed mock exam is one retreat, so take the paper apart, find the faulty valve, repair it, and climb again. The mountain stays where it is, silent, unwilling to leave, waiting for the ones willing to come back.