传阅本上的三十九个名字

班里那本《草房子》是谁带来的，传阅本上写得清楚：第一行，周小舟，九月四号。那天他抱着一本书站在讲台边，耳朵红红的，说这本书他读完了，想让大家也读。老师让他当第一个，他点头，坐下去以后跟同桌咬了半天耳朵。

老师把登记的事交给了我，我成了传阅本的管理员。我的活儿不复杂：早读前把书放到当天那个人的桌上，放学前收回来，在格子里打勾。听起来简单，做起来全是事。有人忘带作业本却忘不了这本书，有人放学把它忘在车棚，我追出去半条街。阿原借走那天正赶下雨，她把书塞进塑料袋，书包最里层，自己淋着雨跑回家，第二天书干干爽爽，她的刘海湿贴在脑门上。

我在传阅本上见过各种读法。小雨一天读完，名字后面打勾打得飞快。小壮借了三天，本子上两个箭头，可他读完那天在讲台上讲了五分钟杜小康，讲得磕磕巴巴，全班鼓掌。最让我意外的是班里最闹的雷雷，他平时坐不住三分钟，轮到他那天，居然一页一页读完了，还回来时跟我说，书里那个秃鹤跟他表哥，他表哥也被人笑话过。他说这话的时候不敢看我，眼睛看着书的封面。

书是一天一天旧的。我天天收它，我看得最清楚。先是封面起了毛，然后右下角翘起来，再后来书脊松了，翻开的时候得用手压着。有同学提议凑钱买本新的，老师说不换，旧的接着传。她说，书卷边，说明有人在读；书要是一点没旧，那才可惜。

学期结束那天，我数传阅本，三十九个名字，有的名字后面有箭头，有的名字后面写着还想再读。我把传阅本合上，发现它自己也卷边了，跟那本书一模一样。我把两样东西一起交给下学期的管理员，跟他说：看好它们，它们身上全是别人的夜晚。

Thirty-Nine Names in the Circulation Log

Who brought that copy of The Straw House to our class is written clearly in the circulation log: first line, Zhou Xiaozhou, September 4th. That day he stood at the edge of the podium holding a book, ears red, and said he had finished it and wanted everyone else to read it too. The teacher made him the first reader. He nodded, sat down, and spent a long while whispering to his deskmate.

The teacher handed the registering over to me, and I became the keeper of the circulation log. My job sounds simple: before morning reading, put the book on that day's reader's desk; before school ends, take it back and tick the box. It sounds easy, but it is full of errands. Some kids forget their homework but never forget this book; some leave it in the bicycle shed after school, and I chase down half a street to get it back. The day A Yuan borrowed it, it rained. She sealed the book in a plastic bag at the very bottom of her backpack and ran home in the rain herself. The next day the book was perfectly dry, and her bangs stuck to her forehead.

In the log I saw every kind of reading. Xiao Yu finished it in one day, ticking

boxes at lightning speed. Xiao Zhuang kept it three days, two arrows after his name, but the day he returned it he talked about Du Xiaokang at the podium for five minutes, stumbling over his words, and the whole class applauded. The biggest surprise was Lei Lei, the loudest boy in class, who cannot sit still for three minutes. On his day he actually read every page, and when he returned the book he told me that Bald Crane reminded him of his cousin, who gets teased too. He did not dare look at me when he said it. He looked at the cover.

The book grew old day by day, and I handled it daily, so I saw it best. First the cover grew fuzzy, then the bottom right corner curled, then the spine loosened so you had to hold the pages down when reading. Someone suggested pooling money for a new copy. The teacher said no, keep passing this one around. A book with curled edges means someone is reading it, she said. A book that never wears out is the real pity.

On the last day of the term I counted the log: thirty-nine names, some with arrows, some with the words want to read it again written after them. I closed the log and noticed it had curled edges too, exactly like the book. I handed both to next term's keeper and told him: take good care of them. They are covered with other people's evenings.