那张贴在课桌上的纸条

初一第一次数学测验，我考了六十二分。

卷子发下来那一刻，我把试卷往抽屉最里面塞，像藏一个见不得人的东西。

课间，同桌林小羽把一张纸条贴在我的文具盒盖上，上面写：错题不是丢人的地方，是待补的地方。

字是她那种歪歪扭扭的字，末尾还画了一个举着扳手的火柴人。

那天放学她拦住我，说，你数学好，我英语好，咱们中午互相考二十分钟，谁也不许嫌谁笨。

我说我数学不好。她说，六十二分是你上个月的数学，这个月的得重新算。

我们的互相考核从那个周三中午开始。

她考我，一元一次方程移项变不变号，我答对了；角平分线的性质，我答错了，她让我把那条性质抄了三遍。

我考她英语单词，sheep 的复数她脱口而出，dictionary 她拼到一半卡住，我提醒她第一个音节，她自己把后面拼完了。

中午二十分钟，一个学期几乎没有断过。

有几天我烦了，觉得浪费时间，她也不劝，隔天中午照样拿着两张小卡片站在我桌前。

期中我数学八十九分，她英语从七十一分到八十六分。

成绩出来那天，我们谁也没请客，只是在纸条上那个火柴人旁边又画了一个，两个火柴人一起举着扳手。

现在回想这件事，我想明白了几层。

鼓励不是一句加油，鼓励是她把卡片准备好、把时间固定下来，是我陪你做。

共同进步也不是平均用力，而是各自补上对方的缺口，像两块齿轮咬在一起，互相带着转。

我原先觉得接受帮助是承认自己不行，后来才明白，接受帮助只是把不行的地方放到桌面上，放上来才有机会补。

更深的一层是，帮别人的那个中午，我学到的比被帮的那个中午还多，讲一遍，才是真的会。

那张纸条我到现在还留着，文具盒旧了，纸条的胶都干了，字还清楚。

错题不是丢人的地方，是待补的地方。这句话我后来也写给了别的同学。

The Note Stuck on My Desk

In the first math quiz of junior one, I got sixty-two points.

The moment the paper was handed back, I pushed it to the bottom of my drawer, like hiding something shameful.

At break, my deskmate Lin Xiaoyu stuck a note on the lid of my pencil case. It read: a wrong answer is not a place to be ashamed of, it is a place to be repaired.

The handwriting was her own crooked kind, and at the end she had drawn a matchstick figure holding a wrench.

That day after school she stopped me and said, you are good at math, I am good at English, let us quiz each other for twenty minutes at noon, and neither may call the other stupid.

I said my math was bad. She said, sixty-two is your math of last month; this month has to be counted again.

Our noon quizzes began that Wednesday.

She quizzed me: when a term moves across the equals sign, does the sign change; I got it right. The property of an angle bisector, I got wrong, and she made me copy that property three times.

I quizzed her on English words; the plural of sheep came out of her mouth at once, dictionary stuck halfway, I reminded her of the first syllable, and she finished the spelling herself.

Twenty minutes at noon, almost without a break for a whole term.

Some days I got annoyed and thought it a waste of time; she did not argue, and the next noon she stood before my desk with two small cards as usual.

At the midterm I got eighty-nine in math, and her English rose from seventy-one to eighty-six.

The day the results came out, neither of us treated the other to anything; we only drew another matchstick figure beside the first on the note, two figures holding wrenches together.

Thinking it over now, I have understood several layers.

Encouragement is not a single cheer; encouragement is her preparing the cards and fixing the time, is me doing it with you.

Mutual progress is not equal effort either, but each mending the gap of the other, like two gears meshed, turning each other along.

I used to think accepting help was admitting I was no good; now I know it only means putting the weak place on the table, where it can finally be repaired.

Deeper still: at the noon when I helped her, I learned more than at the noon when I was helped, because explaining once is truly knowing.

I still keep that note. The pencil case is old, the glue of the note has dried, but the words are still clear.

A wrong answer is not a place to be ashamed of, it is a place to be repaired. I have since written this sentence for other classmates too.