计划表上的自由块

暑假第一天，我趴在凉席上写了一张计划表：上午八点半到十点半写作业，下午读书加午休，傍晚跟爸爸去游泳，晚上自由活动。写完我举起来给妈妈看，她笑了，说我像个布置作业的老师。我把计划表贴在书桌上方，觉得自己已经把整个暑假安排明白了。

头一周确实顺。每天上午两页数学、两页语文，中午抄几行好词好句，傍晚的游泳也一次没落下。可是第二周热起来，客厅的风扇呼呼地转，电视里正好播我最爱看的动画片。我对自己说，就看一集，作业晚上写也一样。一集变成两集，晚上九点半我才坐到桌前，字写得比平时潦草，妈妈检查时皱了好几次眉。

七月底的一天，妈妈指着墙上的计划表问我：打卡格怎么只勾到七月十二号？我嘟囔着说后面几天也写了，只是没打勾。她没接话，把当天的计划表翻给我看：上午写作业，下午自由，晚上读书。那天下午我确实玩了一整个下午，可心里总不踏实，听见钟摆滴答，就想起还有两本练习册没碰。玩是玩了，玩得一点也不痛快。

那天晚上我重画了一张计划表，把下午整段改成自由块，只在最下面加了一行：八月二十号之前，作业全部写完。这样前面是任务，后面才是玩。八月十几号我赶得凶，每天多写两页，傍晚的游泳改成晚上去。八月十九号晚上，我合上最后一本作业本，喊了一声，把隔壁的狗都惊得叫了两声。第二天我带着同学去游泳，在水里泡到天擦黑。

最后十几天是真玩。跟表哥去河堤捉知了，帮爸爸从车上往下搬西瓜，晚上在院里数星星，没有一次心里惦记着没写完的作业。我慢慢明白，计划表不是把我捆住，是替我把玩护住。先把该做的做完，后面的快乐才不打折扣。

开学前一天，我把那张画了两次的计划表从墙上取下来，夹进语文书。第二周那张被风扇吹得卷了边的，我留着没扔。它提醒我：假期的快乐不是等来的，是先安排、后痛快的。

The Free Block on My Plan

On the first day of summer vacation, I lay on the cool mat and wrote myself a plan: homework from eight thirty to ten thirty in the morning, reading and a nap in the afternoon, swimming with my dad in the evening, free time at night. I held it up for my mother to see, and she laughed, saying I looked like a teacher handing out assignments. I taped the plan above my desk and felt I had the whole vacation figured out.

The first week did go smoothly. Two pages of math and two pages of Chinese every morning, a few lines of good sentences copied at noon, and not a single swimming session missed. Then the heat came. The fan in the living room spun with a steady hum, and my favorite cartoon was on TV. I told myself just one episode, and homework could wait until night. One episode turned into two, and I only sat down at nine

thirty, writing sloppier than usual. My mother frowned several times while checking my work.

One day at the end of July, my mother pointed at the wall and asked why the check boxes stopped at July twelfth. I mumbled that I had done those days too, just without checks. She said nothing, just turned the plan over to show me the daily rows: homework in the morning, free in the afternoon, reading at night. That afternoon I did play the whole afternoon, but my heart was not at ease. Every tick of the clock reminded me that two workbooks were still untouched. I played, but not happily at all.

That night I redrew the plan. I changed the whole afternoon into one free block and added a single line at the bottom: finish all homework before August twentieth. Tasks first, play after. In mid August I pushed hard, two extra pages a day, swimming moved to night. On the evening of August nineteenth I closed the last notebook and shouted, startling the dog next door into two barks. The next day I took my classmates swimming and stayed in the water until dusk.

The last ten days were pure play. I went catching cicadas on the river dike with my cousin, helped my dad carry watermelons off the truck, and counted stars in the yard at night, never once worrying about unfinished homework. I came to understand that the plan did not tie me up; it protected my play. Finish what must be done first, and the joy after it comes in full.

The day before school opened, I took the twice-drawn plan off the wall and slipped it into my Chinese textbook. The one from the second week, its edges curled by the fan, I kept as well. It reminds me that the joy of vacation is not waited for; it is arranged first, then enjoyed fully.

作业在前，玩在后

我的计划表贴在书桌正上方，人却整天贴在床上。太阳爬上来，光正好照在那张纸上，我在凉席上翻个身，心想暑假还长，晚上写也一样。头几天，作业本一页没动，动画片倒是一部没落下。

七月十号夜里十一点，我被一道数学题卡住，草稿画满两张，手抖得厉害。妈妈站在门口说，白天干什么去了。我答不上来。不是题难，是我把六天的作业全堆到了晚上，白天玩得心虚，晚上写得潦草，第二天自己看都认不出。

隔天早上我破天荒先坐到桌前，把上午的作业清完才下楼。头三天最难熬，蝉在树上叫，小伙伴在院里喊我，我手心都痒。第四天下午，我和表哥去河堤捉知了，一整个下午没有一本作业

在身后等着我，那感觉跟平时不一样。表哥的网兜够不着高处的知了，我替他望风，我们笑得蹲在草里。回程碰上一只大白鹅伸着脖子追我们，表哥的鞋跑掉一只，我笑得直不起腰。

从那以后我把计划表改了：作业放最前，玩放最后，中间留一个自由块。八月里每天上午两页数学、两页语文，下午爱干什么干什么。有天帮妈妈剥豆角，我一边剥一边想，原来计划表不是摆设，它把一天摆顺了，人就不拧巴了。

八月里有一天下午，爸爸卸车上的西瓜，喊我搭手。我搬了十几趟，晒得脖子发红，晚上捞起井里的西瓜吃，甜到心里，没有一丝惦记作业的味道。以前也吃西瓜，嘴里甜、心里悬着事，味道总差一截。那晚我才尝出，痛快的滋味是要先用白天的正经事换来的。

八月二十七号晚上，我把那张皱巴巴的计划表重新贴回墙上。它被汗手摸出了黑印子，边角也卷了。我贴它不是纪念，是提醒自己：管住一天的办法，是把最难的事放到最前面。顺序对了，整个假期就顺了。

Homework First, Play After

My plan was taped right above the desk, while I stuck to my bed all day. As the sun climbed, its light fell right on that sheet of paper, and I rolled over on the cool mat, thinking vacation was still long and night writing would do the same. In the first days, my homework books stayed untouched, while I missed not a single cartoon.

At eleven at night on July tenth, a math problem blocked me. Two sheets of scratch paper filled up, and my hands were shaking. My mother stood at the door and asked what I had done all day. I had no answer. The problem was not hard; I had piled six days of homework into one night. I played uneasily by day and wrote sloppily by night, and the next day I could barely read my own writing.

The next morning I sat down before anything else and cleared the morning homework before going downstairs. The first three days were the hardest. Cicadas sang in the trees, friends called me from the yard, and my palms itched. On the afternoon of the fourth day, my cousin and I went catching cicadas on the river dike, with no homework waiting behind me all afternoon. That felt different. His net could not reach the high cicadas, so I kept watch for him, and we laughed until we squatted down in the grass. On the way home a big white goose chased us with its neck stretched out; my cousin lost one shoe, and I laughed so hard I could not stand straight.

After that I changed the plan: homework first, play last, with one free block in between. Every morning in August, two pages of math and two of Chinese, and the afternoon was mine. One day, shelling beans with my mother, I thought as I worked: the plan was not decoration. It straightened out the day, and a person stops feeling

twisted.

One afternoon in August, my dad was unloading watermelons from the truck and called me to help. I carried over a dozen trips, my neck red in the sun, and at night we fished a watermelon out of the well and ate it, sweet to the heart, with not a trace of unfinished homework in the taste. I had eaten watermelon before too, sweet on the tongue but with a worry hanging behind it, and the flavor always fell short. That night I finally tasted that the feeling of pure joy has to be traded for first, with the serious work of the daytime.

On the evening of August twenty seventh, I taped that wrinkled plan back on the wall. Dark marks from sweaty hands covered it, and its corners had curled. I put it back not as a souvenir but as a reminder: the way to master a day is to put the hardest thing first. Get the order right, and the whole vacation runs smooth.

门后的计划表

我家巷子口有个叫林小北的伙伴，他管时间的本事，是我这个暑假亲眼看着学来的。他家的门后贴着一张计划表，是他自己画的，字歪歪扭扭，格子却画得笔直。他跟我说，这张表他贴了又撕、撕了又贴，前后改了四回，最后连他爸妈想给他加两页口算，都得先来跟他讲理，讲赢了才能往格子里填。

七月的第一个星期，我们约好傍晚去池塘边钓龙虾。下午四点我喊他，他站在门后看了一眼表，说四点二十行不行，他的读书格子还差十分钟。我在楼下等那十分钟，听见他在屋里翻书，一点不着急。到了池塘边，他钓得比我稳，说反正作业上午写完了，坐一下午也不亏。

他的计划表上有两样东西让我眼馋。一样是打勾的铅笔印，做完一样划一个勾，碰过不算，做完才算。有一回他中午抄课文，只抄了一半就去接电话，回来补完才打勾。另一样是表最下边的自由格，整整齐齐写着星期几到星期几干什么：跳棋、骑车、去奶奶家。他妈妈说那是他最宝贝的一栏，谁也不许动。

八月头一场雨下了两天，我们出不了门，他就把跳棋摆到我家来教我们下。他一边跳一边讲他定的规矩：每天晚饭后半小时棋，多出来的时间归自己，想下几盘下几盘。那两天我们杀得昏天黑地，他输了也不掀棋盘，因为他第二天的作业格子早就勾满了，输赢都不耽误事。

开学前几天，他提前把作业清完，剩下的日子真按自由格过日子：骑车去镇上书店，回来给邻居送西瓜，傍晚在院里支起跳棋等人。八月底我再去他家，门后那张表已经画满勾，铅笔印淡的淡、深的深，像一层一层的年轮。他妈说，这表今年没用上第二张。

这个暑假过去，我学到的不是照抄他的格子，而是他那句话：做完了才能打勾，碰过不算。我也在门后贴了一张自己的表，头几天就勾满了三格。勾上去的那一刻，比玩什么都亮堂。

The Plan Behind the Door

At the mouth of our lane lives a friend named Lin Xiaobei, and his way with time is something I watched and picked up this summer. Behind his door hangs a plan he drew himself, the characters crooked but the boxes ruled straight. He told me he had stuck it up, torn it down, and redone it four times. Now even his parents, if they want to add two pages of mental math, must first argue their case with him, and only if they win may they fill a box.

In the first week of July we planned to fish for crayfish by the pond at dusk. I called him at four, and he stood by the door, checked the plan, and asked whether four twenty would do, since his reading box still had ten minutes to go. I waited downstairs those ten minutes and heard him turning pages inside, not in a hurry. At the pond he fished steadier than I did, saying his homework was finished by morning anyway, so a whole afternoon sitting cost him nothing.

Two things on his plan made me envious. One was the pencil checks: one task done, one check drawn; merely touching it does not count, only finishing does. Once he copied a text at noon, got halfway through, went to answer the phone, and came back to finish before making the check. The other was the free block at the bottom of the plan, neatly listing which days were for Chinese chess, biking, or a visit to his grandma at her house. His mother says that is the column he treasures most, and no one may touch it.

The first big rain of August kept us indoors for two days, so he brought the chess board over to teach us. While jumping his pieces he explained the rule he set: half an hour of chess after dinner each day, and any time left over belongs to himself, as many games as he likes. We played fiercely those two days. When he lost he did not flip the board, because the homework boxes for the next day were already full, and winning or losing interfered with nothing.

In the days before school opened, he cleared his homework early and lived the rest exactly by the free block: biking to the bookshop in town, delivering watermelons to neighbors, setting up the chess board in the yard at dusk and waiting for players. When I visited his home at the end of August, the plan behind his door was covered with checks, the pencil marks light and dark in layers, like tree rings. His mother said this year they never needed a second sheet.

With the summer over, what I learned was not to copy his boxes but his line: you may only check it when it is done; touching it does not count. I taped my own plan behind my door, and in the first few days three boxes were already full. The moment a check goes on, it feels brighter than any game.