两个星期的实验

初二的暑假前，我给自己定了个小计划：两个星期里，每天晚上读书三十分钟，绕着小区跑两圈。我没告诉爸妈，也没写在表上贴墙，只在笔记本最后的一页空白上画了十四个小方格，每天完成一个，就填一个。

头几天顺风顺水。晚饭后读一章书，下楼跑两圈，回来在格子上一勾。方格一个个被填上，我开始觉得这事太容易了。读到第三本书的一半时，我发现晚饭后的半小时过得比以前快，手机好像也没那么好玩了。

第九天，傍晚下大雨。我望着窗户想，雨这么大，就算了吧。手机都拿在手上了，才想起那十四个方格，空着五个会很难看。我披上雨衣下楼，小区跑不成，就在楼道里上上下下跑了六层。楼道里声控灯一层层亮起来，我的脚步声在楼里回响，像有人在跟着我跑。回来鞋全湿了，可那个格子填上了。

第十四天，最后一个格子填完。回头看，读书的三十分钟让我读完了整本书，跑步从一圈喘成三圈不停。更让我意外的是，两个星期到期以后，我还是想每天读书、每天跑。实验结束了，事情自己长了出来。妈妈是在第十六天发现的，她看见笔记本上的方格，问我这是什么，我说是一个实验，已经到期了。她笑着说那再续两个星期呀，我想了想，又画了十四个格子。

以前我总以为自我提升要搞得很隆重，做一张大表，向全家宣布，然后三天热度。这两个星期教会我另一件事：目标不用大，定一个小到不肯断的目标，让习惯从小事里长出来。真正的敌人不是雨，也不是懒，是那句算了吧。

如今我想开始什么事情，先问自己：能不能坚持两个星期？能，就去做。那页十四个方格还留在笔记本后面，我没有撕掉。

The Two-Week Experiment

Before the summer of my second year in junior high, I made a small plan for myself: for two weeks, read for thirty minutes every evening and run two laps around my neighborhood. I told neither my mother nor my father, and I did not write it on a chart for the wall. I simply opened to a blank page at the back of my notebook and drew fourteen small squares. Each day I finished, I filled one square.

The first days went smoothly. After dinner I read a chapter of a book, ran two laps downstairs, and came back to tick a square. The squares filled up one by one, and I began to think this was far too easy. Halfway through the third book, I noticed that the thirty minutes after dinner passed faster than before, and the phone seemed less interesting.

On the ninth day it rained hard in the evening. I stared at the window and thought, the rain is this heavy, let us call it a day. The phone was already in my hand when I remembered the fourteen squares, and five empty ones would look too

obvious. I put on my raincoat and went down. Since I could not run around the neighborhood, I ran up and down the six floors of the building. The motion-controlled lights in the stairwell came on floor by floor, and my footsteps echoed through the building as if someone were running along with me. My shoes were soaked when I came back, but that square was filled.

On the fourteenth day I filled the last square. Looking back, the thirty minutes of reading had carried me through the whole book, and my running had grown from one lap out of breath to three laps without stopping. What surprised me more was that after the two weeks ended, I still wanted to read and to run every day. The experiment was over, but the habit kept growing. My mother found out on the sixteenth day. She saw the squares in my notebook and asked what they were. I said it was an experiment, and it had already expired. She laughed and said, then continue for two more weeks. I thought about it and drew fourteen more squares.

I used to think self-improvement had to be a grand declaration: a big chart, an announcement to the whole family, and then giving up after three days. This two-week experiment taught me something else. Set no big goal; set a small one you refuse to break, and let the habit grow out of it. The real enemy is not rain or laziness but the single thought of calling it a day.

Now, whenever I want to start something, I ask myself first: can you hold on for two weeks? If yes, go ahead. That page of fourteen squares is still at the back of my notebook, and I have not torn it out.