一月二十五日，星期二，大雪

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放学的时候雪下得正紧，校门口白茫茫一片。我心想，完了，今天作业多，爸爸晚上还要加班，堆雪人肯定没戏了。我踩着雪往家走，一路都在想怎么说服爸爸少加一点班。

结果回到家，爸爸看见窗外的雪，眼睛比我还亮。他把笔电往书桌上一放，说，换衣服，下楼。我愣了两秒钟才反应过来，高兴得差点跳起来。我们全副武装：帽子、手套、围巾，爸爸还翻出了他上学时候的雪地靴，踩在雪上咯吱咯吱响，他说这双靴子四十年了，就等大雪天穿。

我们分工：我滚头，他滚身子。我捧雪攥了个雪球推，推到篮球大就推不动了。回头一看，爸爸那个雪球已经滚到半人高，他弓着背，两手推着，一步一步往前拱，雪在他脚下咯吱咯吱地叫。我说爸你小点，他说来不及了，越滚越大，你看，停不下来了。最后他那个雪球大得我们俩都抱不动，他干脆用铁锹一块一块往上面加雪，堆出一个比我还高的身子。我的小雪球头搁上去，显得身子太大头太小，像一个大胖墩顶了个小脑袋。爸爸想了想，又围着身子加了一圈雪，把腰收细了一点，好看了。

鼻子出问题啦。家里胡萝卜昨天用完了。爸爸披上外套就下楼，十分钟后回来，手里举着一根胡萝卜，像举一面旗。他说超市就剩最后一根，一个大爷跟他抢，他跑得快。他把胡萝卜插上去，退后两步端详，又拔下来换个角度重插，插到满意为止。眼睛他用煤球抠了两小块按上去，嘴巴是一根树枝压出来的弧线。

该拍照了。爸爸蹲在雪地里，指挥我：站这儿，手搭在它胳膊上，脸别看镜头，看它。我照做了，手搭在雪人那根树枝胳膊上。爸爸又喊，笑一个，跟它合影呢。咔嚓。他又拍了一张他自己在雪人旁边竖大拇指的，说这张要发给他老家我爷爷看。

上楼的时候，爸爸鞋全湿了，他在门口跺脚，雪渣子乱飞。我问他，爸，你堆雪人的技术怎么这么好。他擦鞋，想了想说，我小时候年年堆，你爷爷家的场院，堆过一整排。他说这话的时候语气跟平时不一样，像在说别人的事，又像在说很久很久以前的事。

我现在趴在窗台写日记。楼下那个雪人站在路灯底下，头小小的，鼻子长长的。我忽然明白了一件事：爸爸不是陪我堆雪人，是他自己早就想堆了。他心里藏着一个小孩，平时上班收着，一下大雪就放出来啦。

January 25, Tuesday, Heavy Snow

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At dismissal the snow was falling hard, and the school gate was a white blur. I thought, it's over - so much homework tonight, and Dad has to work overtime, so the snowman is definitely off. I walked home through the snow, rehearsing how to talk Dad into working a little less.

But when we got home and Dad saw the snow outside the window, his eyes lit up

brighter than mine. He set his laptop on the desk and said, change clothes, let's go down. I froze for two seconds before it registered, then nearly jumped for joy. We geared up completely: hats, gloves, scarves. Dad even dug out the snow boots from his school days; they crunch-crunch on the snow, and he said the boots are forty years old and had been waiting just for a heavy snow day.

We split the work: I roll the head, he rolls the body. I packed a ball and pushed it until it was basketball-sized and I could push no more. I looked back - Dad's ball was already half his height, and he was bent at the waist, pushing with both hands, inching forward, the snow crying crunch-crunch under his feet. I said, Dad, make it smaller. He said, too late, it grows the more I roll, look, I can't stop it. In the end his ball was too big for both of us to hug, so he used a shovel to pile snow onto it block by block, building a body taller than me. My little snowball head on top looked like a tubby kid with a tiny head. Dad thought a moment, added a ring of snow around the body and slimmed the waist a bit - much better.

The nose was a problem. We ran out of carrots yesterday. Dad threw on his coat and went downstairs, and ten minutes later came back holding up a carrot like a flag. He said it was the last one at the supermarket, an old gentleman raced him for it, and Dad was faster. He stuck it in, stepped back to study it, pulled it out and re-stuck it at a new angle, and kept going until he was satisfied. For eyes he broke off two bits of a coal briquette and pressed them on; the mouth was an arc pressed in with a twig.

Photo time. Dad crouched in the snow and directed me: stand here, hand on its arm, don't look at the camera, look at it. I did as told, my hand on the snowman's twig arm. Dad called out again, smile, you're posing with it. Click. Then he took one of himself next to the snowman giving a thumbs-up, saying this one must be sent to my grandparents back in his hometown.

Going upstairs, Dad's shoes were soaked through, and he stamped at the doorway, snow grit flying. I asked him, Dad, how are you so good at building snowmen? He wiped his shoe and thought a moment: I built one every year as a kid - in the courtyard at your grandpa's house, I once built a whole row. He said it in a different tone from usual, as if talking about someone else, or about something very very long ago.

Now I am writing this diary at the windowsill. Downstairs that snowman stands under the street lamp, head small, nose long. I suddenly understood one thing: Dad was not building a snowman to keep me company - he had wanted to build one for ages. He keeps a child hidden inside himself, tucked away during workdays; when a heavy snow falls, out it comes.