竹扫帚比我想的重

十二月八日，星期四，大雪。今天早上下车的时候，操场整个铺了一层白，一个脚印都没有，我都不太舍得踩。

早读还没开始，班主任吹哨带我们去杂物间领扫帚。杂物间的门冻上了一层薄冰，徐爷爷替我们掰开。里面的竹扫帚码成一排，有两把冻在了一起，帚头粘得死死的。我和周扬一人攥住一个把儿，使劲一掰，咔啦一声才分开。徐爷爷说，那两把搁了两天，竹扫帚怕水，越扫越冻。

分工是班主任定的。我们组负责教学楼前台阶和楼前那条路。组长方浩分活儿：他和周扬拿铁锹对付厚雪，我和王旭拿竹扫帚扫浮雪，刘小桐用簸箕把雪运到操场角上。方浩多嘱咐了一句，谁先扫完自己那片就去帮别人，别混在一起挡道。

雪是干粉状的，扫帚一挥，雪雾扑进领口，凉得人一缩。台阶上的厚雪铁锹几下就铲完了，底下却冻着一层前天的薄冰，铁锹铲不动。周扬蹲下来拿冰铲一点一点刮，冰铲刮在冰上，声音刺得牙根发酸。刮完他抓了一把保洁员备着的沙子撒上去，说撒了沙，再冻也不滑。

我的手套里在冒汗。扫了十分钟，后背湿了，风一吹又一阵一阵地凉。耳朵尖冻得通红，刘小桐团了个雪球塞进我后脖领，我追着她绕旗杆跑了半圈，回去接着扫。

最后是堆雪。我们把雪全扫到花坛一边，堆成长长的一堆。周扬想堆雪人，班主任说堆雪人会被路过的一二年级碰倒，老老实实堆成堆就行。我们用锹背把雪堆拍实，把坡面拍得光光的。方浩在雪堆顶上插了一根柳条，说这是我们组的活儿记号。

回到教室，我外套下摆的水在地上滴出一小圈。教室里全是烘手套的白汽，窗户上的冰花比早上又厚了一层。我在日记里写：竹扫帚比我想的重，可我的手一直是热的。窗外的雪被扫成了整齐的两排，中间的路干干净净。

The Bamboo Broom Was Heavier Than I Thought

December 8th, Thursday, heavy snow. When I got off the bus this morning, the playground was covered with a layer of white, without a single footprint, and I almost did not want to step on it.

Before first period, our homeroom teacher blew the whistle and took us to the broom room. A thin sheet of ice had formed on the door, and Grandpa Xu pried it open for us. The bamboo brooms inside were stacked in a row, and two of them had frozen into one piece, their bristles stuck tight. Zhou Yang and I each grabbed a handle and pulled hard, and they finally came apart with a crack. Grandpa Xu said those two had sat there for two days. Bamboo brooms fear water; the more snow they sweep, the more they freeze.

The homeroom teacher decided the assignments. Our group was in charge of the front steps of the teaching building and the road in front of it. Our group leader

Fang Hao split the work: he and Zhou Yang took the shovels for the deep snow, Wang Xu and I took the bamboo brooms for the loose snow, and Liu Xiaotong carried snow to the playground corner with a dustpan. Fang Hao added one rule: whoever finishes his own patch first goes to help the others, but do not crowd in and get in the way.

The snow was dry and loose. One sweep of the broom sent snow mist into my collar, cold enough to make me shrink my neck. The deep snow on the steps went down in a few shovelfuls, but under it was a thin sheet of ice from two days ago, and the shovel could not scrape it off. Zhou Yang crouched down and worked at it with an ice scraper, the scraper grinding harshly against the ice. When he finished, he sprinkled a handful of sand from the bucket the janitor had prepared, saying that with sand, even if it froze again it would not be slippery.

My palms steamed inside my gloves. Ten minutes of sweeping left my back wet with sweat, and the wind made it cold in patches. My ear tips turned red. Liu Xiaotong packed a snowball and stuffed it down the back of my coat. I chased her half a lap around the flagpole, then went back and kept sweeping.

The last job was piling the snow. We swept it all to one side of the flower bed and piled it into a long mound. Zhou Yang wanted to build a snowman, but the teacher said a snowman would be knocked over by the little grades passing by, so just pile it neatly. We patted the mound firm with the backs of the shovels and smoothed its slopes. Fang Hao pressed a willow branch into the top of the mound and said this was the mark of our group's work.

Back in the classroom, the hem of my coat dripped a small circle on the floor. The room was full of white steam from gloves drying by the stove, and the frost flowers on the windows were thicker than in the morning. I wrote in my diary: the bamboo broom is heavier than I thought, but my hands were hot the whole time. Outside the window, the snow has been swept into two tidy banks, with a clean path in the middle.