铲到第三锹，冰裂了

十二月九日，星期五，雪后。昨天下的雪把校门口那条坡道冻成了一块整冰，保安刘叔叔铲了半天没铲开，眉头皱成一团。今天轮到我们六年级值日，班主任说，今天别的活儿都往后排，先把这条坡道拿下。

工具是从器材室领的：四把铁锹、六把竹扫帚、两个大簸箕，还有一小桶粗沙。铁锹刚拿到手还带着器材室的铁锈味，锹面冰凉，手贴上去粘一下。班主任把坡道分成四段，两人一段，从坡顶往下铲。

我和李多被分在坡顶那段。她先铲，铁锹刃磕在冰上，弹回来，只刮出一道白印子。换我铲，斜着插进去试，锹刃卡在冰缝里，冰纹丝不动。第三锹我换了个角度，从冰的边缘下锹，整锹压下去，听见冰底下咔地一声闷响，一大块冰翘了起来，裂了。李多跳起来喊裂了裂了，后面几组的人全回过头来。班主任说别高兴太早，把裂的往边上归拢。

冰一开，后面就顺了。铁锹铲雪，扫帚收尾，簸箕把碎冰端到花坛边上倒。我们组跟隔壁组为了倒雪的位置拌了两句嘴，都说自己那片先扫到。最后还是刘叔叔拿脚一划，说中间这条线归你们两家共用，谁也别争。

扫到一半，我的棉手套湿了，指头冰得发僵。李多把她的手套脱下来扔给我，说她里面还戴了线手套。我愣了一下，她已经在用我的湿手套垫着抓雪堆了。我们俩谁也没说谢，谢字在铲雪的时候说不出口。

雪堆是最后堆的，堆在花坛四周，把冬青的根围起来。班主任说这叫给冬青盖被子，雪化的时候根喝得饱。我们一锹一锹往冬青根上覆雪，覆得厚厚的。张一凡还把自己的红围巾解下来系在冬青枝上，说给它也戴个围巾，全班笑，但没人拆。

上课铃响时坡道见了地面，黑水泥地，湿但不滑。我们的铁锹靠在墙边排成一排，锹面上的冰化成水往下淌。我在日记里写：冰是硬的，可它怕找角度的人。今天最暖的一件事，是李多扔给我的那副手套。

On the Third Shovelful, the Ice Cracked

December 9th, Friday, after the snow. Yesterday's snow had frozen the sloped road by the school gate into one solid sheet of ice. Security Uncle Liu shoveled at it for half an hour without breaking it, his brow knotted up. Duty fell to us sixth-graders today, and our homeroom teacher said everything else could wait; first, we take this slope down.

We got the tools from the equipment room: four shovels, six bamboo brooms, two big dustpans, and a small bucket of coarse sand. The shovels still smelled of iron rust from the room, their blades ice-cold, sticking to your palm when you touched them. The teacher split the slope into four sections, two people each, shoveling from the top down.

Li Duo and I got the top section. She went first, her shovel edge striking the ice and bouncing back, leaving only a white scratch. I tried next, stabbing in at an angle; the blade jammed into a crack but the ice did not budge. On the third shovelful I changed the angle, drove the blade in from the edge of the ice, and pressed the whole shovel down. A muffled crack sounded from under the ice, and a big slab lifted up and split. Li Duo jumped up shouting that it had cracked, and every group behind us turned around. The teacher said do not celebrate too early; push the broken pieces to the side.

Once the ice broke, everything went smoothly. Shovels for the ice, brooms for the finish, dustpans to carry the chunks over and dump them by the flower bed. Our group and the next one got into a squabble over where to dump the snow, each insisting they had swept that patch first. In the end Uncle Liu drew a line with his foot and said the middle line belongs to both groups, so stop arguing.

Halfway through, my cotton gloves got wet and my fingers went numb with cold. Li Duo pulled her gloves off and tossed them to me, saying she had wool liners on underneath. I hesitated for a second, and she had already grabbed snow with my wet gloves padded in her hands. Neither of us said thanks. You cannot say thank you in the middle of shoveling snow.

The snow piles came last, banked around the flower bed to wrap the privet's roots. The teacher said this is tucking the privet in with a snow blanket; when it melts, the roots drink their fill. Shovelful by shovelful we covered the roots thick. Zhang Yifan even unwound his red scarf and tied it around a privet branch, saying it deserves a scarf too. The whole class laughed, but nobody took it off.

When the bell rang, the slope showed its ground, black cement, wet but not slippery. Our shovels leaned against the wall in a row, the ice on their blades melting and running down. I wrote in my diary: ice is hard, but it fears the person who finds the right angle. The warmest thing today was the pair of gloves Li Duo threw me.

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