班会最后十分钟，我讲了那块冰

班会进行到最后一项，班主任说：安全提醒这十分钟，交给安全委员。我走上讲台，手里捏着一张写好的稿子。稿子上列了六条：不踩冰、不打实心雪仗、台阶扶扶手、走路学企鹅、远离屋檐冰挂、雪天骑车慢。稿子是我头天晚上写的，条条都对。可我一开口，把稿子放下了。

我说：我不念这些，我给你们讲一块冰。去年十二月，教学楼东边那块水泥地，前一天洒水冲干净，夜里一冻，第二天早上就是一整片看不见的冰。我端着水杯走过去，脚底下一滑，人是往后坐下去的，手腕先着地。后来手腕打了三个礼拜夹板，字写不好，作业本上全是歪的。我说：我摔的那一下，全班只有前排的周小禾听见，咚的一声。冰就是这么欺负人，它不响，也不让你看见。

教室里特别静。我接着说，雪天最怕的不是雪，是雪化了又冻上的东西。台阶边上那一圈水，白天亮晶晶的，晚上就变成滑梯。屋檐下的冰挂看着好玩，可它哪天想掉下来，不会先打招呼。我说到这儿，抬头看了一眼，后排的董小川使劲点头，他去年肯定也被冰欺负过。

然后我教全班走企鹅步：脚掌整个落地，两脚外八，一小步一小步挪。二十几个人在座位边上原地走了十几秒企鹅步，教室里全是笑声，可是这十几秒我估计大家一辈子忘不了。班主任在旁边也走了两步，她走得最像。

下课前班主任补了一句：今天抢答答对的题、后墙贴的照片，都是雪好玩的地方；最后这十分钟，是雪会咬人的地方。好玩的和会咬人的，加在一起才是完整的冬天。看见雪高兴，看见冰小心，这一条比稿子上六条都管用。

放学出校门，校门口那条路结着薄冰。我走在队伍最前头，一步一步走企鹅步。身后传来王果果的声音：你看你看，安全委员走得多标准。我没回头，继续一步一步稳稳地走。那块冰害我三个礼拜没写好字，可是今天，它换来了全班都会走的企鹅步。

The Last Ten Minutes: I Told Them About That Patch of Ice

When the class meeting reached its last item, our homeroom teacher said: these ten minutes of safety reminders are for the safety monitor. I walked up to the platform holding a script I had written. The script listed six rules: do not step on ice, do not throw packed snowballs, hold the railing on stairs, walk like a penguin, stay away from icicles under eaves, ride bicycles slowly on snowy days. I had written every line the night before, and every line was right. But the moment I opened my mouth, I put the script down.

I said: I will not read these out. Let me tell you about a patch of ice. Last December, the concrete ground on the east side of our teaching building had been washed clean with water the day before; it froze overnight, and the next morning it was one invisible sheet of ice. I walked over carrying a cup of water, my foot

slipped, I fell backward, and my wrist hit the ground first. My wrist was in a splint for three weeks afterward. I could not write properly; my homework was full of crooked characters. I said: when I fell, only Zhou Xiaohe in the front row heard it — one thud. That is how ice bullies people: it makes no sound, and it does not let you see it.

The classroom was very quiet. I went on: on snowy days the scariest thing is not snow but the things that melt and then freeze again. The ring of water along the stairs sparkles in daylight and becomes a slide at night. Icicles under the eaves look fun, but when one decides to fall, it will not say hello first. As I said this, I glanced up. Dong Xiaochuan in the back row was nodding hard — he must have been bullied by ice last year too.

Then I taught the whole class the penguin walk: whole sole flat on the ground, toes turned out, shuffling along one small step at a time. More than twenty people did the penguin walk in place beside their desks for ten-odd seconds. The classroom was full of laughter, but I reckon no one will forget those seconds ever. Our homeroom teacher took two steps too, and she looked the most like a penguin.

Before the bell, the teacher added one sentence: the quiz answers from today and the photos on the back wall show the fun side of snow; these last ten minutes are about the side of snow that bites. Fun plus biting together make a complete winter. Be glad when you see snow, be careful when you see ice — that one line works better than all six on my script.

Leaving school that afternoon, the road by the gate was covered with thin ice. I walked at the head of the line, step by steady penguin step. Behind me I heard Wang Guoguo say: look, look, our safety monitor walks the most textbook penguin walk of all. I did not turn around; I kept walking, one firm step after another. That patch of ice cost me three weeks of crooked handwriting, but today it bought the whole class a penguin walk they will keep.

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