我们的拼盘在半路翻了

11月3日 星期二 阴

昨天比赛的事，我今天还得记一记，因为想起来心口还是会咚咚跳。

我们组做的是向日葵。分组设计时我们吵得最凶：阿哲要做蛋糕造型，我要做向日葵，另外两个人两边都不帮。最后投票，向日葵三比二胜出，阿哲嘴上说不服，动手却最卖力，西瓜圆块当花盘，香蕉片弯着当花瓣，一圈一圈摆，摆完他自己都凑近看了半天，说，还真像。

切摆环节我们超时了五分钟，花瓣总翘起来，压下去又弹起来，最后是拿牙签从背面别住的。评比展示按组次轮到我们，组长林林端着盘子往讲台走。教室过道本来不宽，他侧着身子过，谁的书包带挂了一下他的胳膊。盘子一歪，向日葵朝右边滑下去，西瓜花盘磕在讲台边上，滚了半圈，花瓣散了一桌。

全班安静了一秒。我们五个人全愣住了，然后不知道谁先动的手：阿哲把滚远的西瓜块捡回来，我扶正盘子，林林蹲在桌边把香蕉花瓣一片一片捡起来，另外两个拿纸巾吸桌上的汁。没有人说都怪谁。阿哲把那块磕缺了角的西瓜立回盘子中间，缺角朝下，说，花盘少了个角，就当被虫咬过，向日葵照样开。香蕉花瓣翘，我们干脆不压了，全组把花瓣朝上插成一圈，向日葵变成了一朵炸开的烟花。

三十秒介绍，林林只说了一句：这是我们的向日葵，昨天它翻过一次，这是它第二次站起来。投票我们没进前三，名次是第八。但老师点评的时候说，九个字：这组最像真正的比赛。

晚上我在日记里写：盘子翻了可以再摆，人散了就摆不回来了。今天阿哲给我发了条消息，说明年比赛他还跟我一组，我秒回了一个好字。

Our Platter Tipped Over Halfway There

November 3rd, Tuesday, cloudy.

I still have to write about yesterday’s contest, because even now my chest goes thump-thump when I think of it.

Our group made a sunflower. During the design stage we argued the loudest: A-Zhe wanted a cake shape, I wanted a sunflower, and the other two refused to take sides. In the end the vote went to the sunflower, three to two. A-Zhe said he was unconvinced, yet worked the hardest: round watermelon chunks as the flower disk, banana slices curved as petals, arranged ring by ring. When it was done he leaned in and studied it for a long while, then said: it really does look like one.

We went five minutes over time in the cutting and arranging stage. The petals kept springing up; press them down and they bounced back. Finally we pinned them from behind with toothpicks. When our turn came for the presentation, our leader Linlin carried the plate toward the podium. The aisle was not wide. He turned sideways to

pass, and someone's backpack strap caught his arm. The plate tilted, the sunflower slid right, the watermelon disk struck the edge of the podium, rolled half a turn, and the petals scattered across the table.

The class went silent for one second. All five of us froze. Then no one knows who moved first: A-Zhe retrieved the watermelon chunk that had rolled away, I straightened the plate, Linlin crouched by the table picking up banana petals one by one, and the other two blotted the juice with tissues. Nobody said whose fault it was. A-Zhe stood the chipped watermelon chunk back in the center of the plate, broken corner facing down, and said: the flower disk lost a corner, call it a bite from a bug. A sunflower still blooms. The banana petals would not lie flat, so we stopped pressing them and stuck them all up in a ring instead. The sunflower became a firework caught mid-burst.

For the thirty-second introduction, Linlin said only one sentence: This is our sunflower. It fell over once yesterday. This is it standing up the second time. We did not make the top three in the vote. We placed eighth. But when the teacher gave her comments, she said nine words that group looked most like a real contest.

At night I wrote in my diary: a tipped plate can be arranged again; scattered people cannot. Tonight A-Zhe sent me a message saying he wants to be on my team again next year. I replied with a single character, yes, instantly.