我们组的拼盘叫孔雀开屏

11月2日 星期一 晴

今天下午第三节课，我们班举行水果拼盘比赛。老师宣布规则：四人一组，四十分钟，从设计到上桌全自己动手，最后每组三十秒介绍，全班投票。我们班一共九个组，我们组五个人临时凑的——本来四人，多出来的小胖自告奋勇当试吃员。

先分组设计。组长小雨在草稿纸上画，我们围着出主意。有人提议做金鱼，有人说做花篮，吵了半天，小胖咬了口苹果说，不如做孔雀，羽毛好摆。大家一看苹果片，薄薄圆圆，可不就是一根根羽毛？定了。小雨画草图：盘子中间立半个橙子当身子，周围一圈苹果片放射状排开当尾羽，顶上三瓣橘子当冠。分工也定了：我和小敏切，小雨摆，小胖负责偷吃边角料并汇报甜度。

切的时候才知道手不比脑子听话。苹果片要薄，我第一刀切下来得有半厘米厚，被小雨嫌弃地拨到一边当底座。练到第四片才像样。小敏切香蕉更惨，切面发黑，赶紧泡进盐水。摆的时候全组屏住呼吸，小雨用镊子夹着苹果片一片一片挪，羽毛的弧度要一层压一层。最险的是插橘子冠，橙子身子在盘上打了个滑，全组四只手同时扶住，心跳声大得互相都能听见。

评比展示时，我们的孔雀最后一个上台。端着走的时候，隔壁组的桌子角差点刮到最外圈那根羽毛，我喊了半声啊，卡在喉咙里。介绍词是小胖念的，他平时说话磕巴，那天居然顺顺当当：这是孔雀开屏，羽毛是苹果，身子是橙子，试吃员亲测，甜。全班笑翻了，掌声也最响。

投票结果出来，我们组拿了最佳创意奖，奖状是老师手写的。晚上我在日记里写：四十分钟，我们组没红一次脸，这比奖状稀罕。小胖在日记本上抢着写了一行补充：试吃员认为，下次比赛还选苹果。

Our Platter Was Called a Peacock Spreading Its Tail

November 2nd, Monday, sunny.

This afternoon during third period, our class held a fruit platter contest. The teacher announced the rules: groups of four, forty minutes, everything from design to serving done by ourselves, then thirty seconds per group to present, and the whole class votes. There are nine groups in our class. Ours was five people thrown together at short notice, the extra one, Chubby, volunteered as official taster.

Design first. Our group leader Xiaoyu drew on scratch paper while we circled her pitching ideas. Someone suggested a goldfish, someone a flower basket. After a long argument, Chubby bit into an apple and said: why not a peacock? Feathers are easy to arrange. Everyone looked at apple slices: thin, round, they were feathers one by one. Settled. Xiaoyu sketched: half an orange standing in the center as the body, apple slices fanned out around it in radiating layers as tail feathers, three tangerine segments on top as the crest. Jobs followed: Xiao Min and I cut, Xiaoyu arranged, Chubby handled the scraps and reported sweetness levels.

Cutting taught us that hands are less obedient than brains. The apple slices had to be thin; my first came off half a centimeter thick and was flicked aside by Xiaoyu to serve as foundation. Only the fourth slice was presentable. Xiao Min had it worse with bananas, their cut faces turning black, so we dunked them in salt water. While arranging, the whole group held its breath. Xiaoyu moved apple slices one at a time with tweezers, each feather layer overlapping the last. The most dangerous moment was setting the tangerine crest: the orange body slid on the plate, four hands shot out together to steady it, and our heartbeats were loud enough for each other to hear.

At the presentation, our peacock went up last. Carrying it over, the corner of the next group's table nearly scraped off the outermost feather. Half of a scream escaped my throat and got stuck there. Chubby delivered the introduction. He normally stammers, but that day he went smoothly all the way through: This is a peacock spreading its tail. Feathers are apple, body is orange, personally tested by the taster: sweet. The class roared, and our applause was the loudest.

The vote came in and our group won the Best Creativity Award, the certificate handwritten by the teacher. At night I wrote in my diary: in forty minutes, our group never once had a quarrel, and that is rarer than the certificate. Chubby grabbed my diary and added one line: the taster's opinion is that next contest we should also pick apples.