我当了一回拼盘比赛的评委

11月4日 星期三 晴

前天的水果拼盘比赛，我们组因为小雅请假只有三个人，弃权了。老师看我闲着，塞给我一张打分表：来，当小评委。我本来挺高兴，评委就是光明正大吃九个组的拼盘。结果表上一列列细目把我镇住了：设计创意、刀工摆盘、团队合作、介绍表达，每项五星，还要写一句评语。

我端着表从第一组看起。看设计时我才知道，那些漂亮的拼盘在动刀之前都先在草稿纸上画过图，有的还画了两版。第三组的草图上标着谁切谁摆谁汇报，箭头画得跟作战地图一样。我偷偷把这张表多看了一会儿，原来合作不是四个人一起动手，是先把活分清楚。

看切摆时我更外行了。我原以为切水果谁不会，可镜头拉近看，人家苹果片厚薄一样，香蕉片泡过盐水不发黑，葡萄对半掐的时候刀口对着刀口。第五组有个男生切橙子，切到一半发现太厚，全组没有扔，把厚的改摆底层，薄的放上层，摆出个渐变。我在创意那一栏给了他们五星，评语写：厚的没有扔，脑子没停过。

评比展示最考验人。有的组介绍词背得滚瓜烂熟，可端盘子的手一直在抖；有的组说得磕磕绊绊，盘子却摆得稳当。我纠结了很久怎么给分。轮到我们班的传统强队时，他们的天鹅拼盘真好看，可介绍时全组只听见组长一个人说，另外三个站在旁边像举牌的。我犹豫了一下，团队合作那栏给了四星，手落下去的时候我心里咯噔一下，像做了亏心事。可第二天成绩公布，强队真的没进前三，老师说评委的分数跟老师观察到的对上了。

晚上我在日记里写：当评委比吃拼盘难多了。舌头只管甜不甜，打分表还要看刀工、看分工、看谁在补谁的窟窿。弃权本来委屈，可这一回我看懂了比赛，比拿一个奖划算。

I Served as a Judge at the Platter Contest

November 4th, Wednesday, sunny.

At the fruit platter contest the day before yesterday, our group had only three people because Xiao Ya was absent, so we withdrew. The teacher saw me idle and pressed a scoring sheet into my hands: come, be a junior judge. I was delighted at first, since a judge meant a license to eat through all nine groups' platters in broad daylight. Then the rows of criteria on the sheet stopped me cold: design creativity, knife work and plating, teamwork, presentation, five stars each, plus one line of comment required.

I carried the sheet and watched from Group One onward. Only while watching the designs did I learn that every beautiful platter had first been sketched on scratch paper, some in two drafts. Group Three's sketch labeled who cuts, who arranges, who presents, with arrows drawn like a battle map. I stole a long look at that sheet. So teamwork is not four people diving in together; it is dividing the work clearly first.

Watching the cutting made me feel even more amateur. I thought anyone could cut fruit. But up close, those apple slices were all the same thickness, the banana slices had been soaked in salt water to stay pale, and when grapes were pinched in half, the cut faces matched each other. In Group Five a boy slicing oranges discovered halfway that his slices were too thick. Instead of throwing them out, the group moved the thick ones to the bottom layer and the thin ones on top, plating a gradient. I gave their creativity five stars and wrote the comment: the thick slices were not discarded; their brains never stopped.

The presentation round tested people most. Some groups recited their scripts perfectly while the hands carrying the plates trembled; others spoke in stumbles yet set the plate down steady as stone. I agonized over how to score. When our class's traditional powerhouse came up, their swan platter was genuinely beautiful, but during the introduction only the group leader spoke while the other three stood beside them like sign holders. I hesitated, then gave their teamwork four stars. The moment my pen came down my heart skipped, as if I had done something shameful. But when results were posted the next day, the powerhouse really missed the top three, and the teacher said the judges' scores matched what she had observed.

At night I wrote in my diary: being a judge is far harder than eating platters. The tongue only asks whether things are sweet; the scoring sheet also reads knife work, division of labor, and who is patching whose holes. Withdrawing had felt unfair, but this round I understood the contest, and that was worth more than winning one prize.