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.

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.

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.