

## 他把手伸向最上层，又收了回来

晚上九点多，我路过儿子房间，门缝里透出台灯的光。他趴在书桌上，正把文具盒里的东西全掏出来，一样一样摆。铅笔头对齐，橡皮放进小格，卷笔刀卡在侧槽里，摆完还用手把每样按了按。那个灰蓝色的新文具盒立在他手边，普通得不能再普通。

我想起下午在文具店的那一幕。货架最上层是新款，印着奥特曼，带灯带密码锁，四十五。儿子一进门眼睛就往上层去，手也往上伸。我在后面看着，没出声。他的手伸到一半，停在半空，收了回来，改拿中层一个灰蓝素面的。我当时心里动了一下，装作没看见。

他在那个灰蓝盒跟前站了很久。货架中层还有另外两个，一个深蓝带指南针图案，一个黑蓝拼色。他把三个都拿下来，并排放在隔板上，一个一个拉开拉链听声音，又掂重量，还把盒盖合上按一按，看瘪不瘪。售货员过来推荐上层新款，他小声说那个太贵了。售货员愣了一下，我看她眼神软下去。我说要不看看那个带灯的，他说不用的，这个能装就行。

结账的时候他主动问，十九块。我说就这个？他说这个最经用，你看这个拉链是金属的，那个塑料的容易崩。他说得头头是道，显然在货架前那十几分钟不是白站的。回家的公交上他抱着盒子，靠在我胳膊上睡着了，盒子压在胸口，像抱着什么要紧的东西。

此刻我站在门缝外，看他摆文具。旧盒他没扔，放在抽屉口，说里面还能放跳绳卡。他不知道我在看他。他也不知道，他把手从最上层收回来那一下，我全看见了。三年级的男孩开始替家里算账，算得不动声色，连心疼都怕惊动大人。我没推门进去，轻轻带上了门。那个灰蓝盒子他大概会用很久，而我会记得很久——不是记得他懂事，是记得他懂事得那么小心。

## He Reached for the Top Shelf, Then Pulled Back

After nine at night, I passed my son's room and lamplight leaked through the crack of the door. He was bent over his desk, emptying his pencil case and laying everything out. Pencil tips aligned, erasers into the small compartment, the sharpener slotted into its side groove; when done he pressed each item down with his hand. The new grey-blue case stood beside him, plainer than plain.

It brought back the scene at the stationery store that afternoon. The top shelf held the new model, Ultraman printed on it, with lights and a combination lock, forty-five yuan. The moment we walked in, my son's eyes went up and his hand followed. I watched from behind and said nothing. His hand rose halfway, stopped in midair, and came back down, taking instead a plain grey-blue case from the middle shelf. Something stirred in me; I pretended not to notice.

He stood before that grey-blue case a long time. The middle shelf held two others, one dark blue with a compass print, one black-and-blue color-block. He took all three down, lined them on the divider, opened each zipper to hear its sound, weighed each in his hand, snapped the lids shut and pressed them to see if they

dented. A shop assistant came to recommend the new model upstairs. He said quietly, that one is too expensive. The assistant froze for a second; I saw her eyes soften. I said, shall we look at the one with lights? He said no need, this one holds things, that is enough.

At checkout he asked first: nineteen yuan? I said this one? He said this one lasts, look, the zipper is metal, the plastic one snaps. He argued it point by point, clearly those ten-plus minutes at the shelf were not wasted. On the bus home he held the case, slept against my arm, the case pressed to his chest like something precious.

Now I stand outside the crack of the door, watching him arrange his stationery. He did not throw out the old case; he set it at the mouth of the drawer, saying it can still hold the jump-rope card. He does not know I am watching. He also does not know that the moment he pulled his hand back from the top shelf, I saw all of it. A third-grade boy has begun keeping the household accounts for us, so quietly that even his thoughtfulness is afraid to startle the grown-ups. I did not push the door open. I closed it softly. He will probably use that grey-blue case a long time, and I will remember it a long time, not remembering that he is considerate, but remembering how carefully he became considerate.