坐在孩子左边

我是被我儿子发现哭的。电影演到一半，银幕上那位母亲又对着电话说我挺好的，挂了电话，一个人吃饭，桌上照旧摆三个碗。我坐在儿子左边，他递爆米花过来，手背碰到我的手，我才知道这个孩子已经长到一米七，下巴上有了一层青色胡茬的影子。

电影里的女儿住校，丈夫常年在外跑运输，母亲一个人守着家，谁问都好，什么都我挺好的。直到她在车站翻到母亲的病历本，一沓挂号单夹在里面，日期排到上个月。整个影厅静了，我也跟着哭，因为我想起我自己。

每晚儿子房间灯一灭，我还在客厅收拾书包、灌热水壶、把明天要穿的校服熨平。十二点上床，他早睡了。熨斗的汽雾打湿过我的袖口，客厅里安静得能听见冰箱嗡嗡响。他偶尔问我怎么这么晚，我说忙完就睡。这句话和电影里那位母亲说的，一字不差。我从来没告诉过他，我一天里最想的时刻，就是等他放学进门那几分钟。

散场时儿子盯着我看，问：妈，你咋哭了。我说没事。走到公交站，我停下来，对他说：其实我每天最想听你说学校的事，谁和谁吵架了，食堂的菜咸了，都行。他愣了两秒，开始讲同桌把墨水弄到袖子上、老师罚他抄课文、体育老师临时改了项目。他讲得又快又乱，讲到激动处还用手比划老师挥粉笔的样子，旁边的乘客回头看他，他也没察觉。我全都接了。

车来了，我们上车，他坐我左边，头快靠到我肩上又挪开。到站他先下车，替我按住门，说了句下回挑个不哭的片子。我笑着点头。电影里那位母亲最后把病历本收回包里，说：下次给你留钥匙。我想，亲情里许多话不是没有，只是习惯先说安全的那一句。等有人先说一句真的，另外那些就都跟上来。

Sitting to the Left of My Child

My son was the one who noticed me crying. Halfway through the film, the mother on the screen said into the phone again: I am doing fine. She hung up, ate alone, and still set out three bowls on the table. I was sitting to the left of my son. He passed me the popcorn, and the back of his hand brushed mine, and only then did I realize this child had grown to a meter seventy, with a faint blue shadow of stubble on his chin.

The daughter in the film lives at school, the husband drives long hauls far from home, and the mother keeps the house alone: fine when asked, fine about everything. Not until a day at the station, when the daughter finds the medical record book with a stack of clinic slips tucked inside, dated up to last month. The whole hall went quiet, and I cried with it, because I saw myself.

Every night after the light in the room of my son goes off, I am still in the living room packing his schoolbag, filling the hot water flask, pressing the uniform for tomorrow flat. I get into bed at twelve; he has long been asleep. Once in a while

he asks why so late, and I say: I sleep when the chores are done. That line matches the mother in the film word for word. I never told him that the moment I wait for all day is the few minutes when he walks in after school.

At the end, my son looked at me steadily and asked: Mom, why did you cry. I said it was nothing. Walking to the bus stop, I stopped and said to him: Actually, what I most want to hear every day is about your school. Who argued with whom, the canteen made the vegetables too salty, anything. He stood still for two seconds, then began telling me about his deskmate who spilled ink on his sleeve and got lines from the teacher, and how the PE teacher changed the event without notice. He talked fast and out of order, and I took it all in.

The bus came. We boarded, he sat on my left, his head almost falling onto my shoulder before he moved it away. At our stop he got off first and held the door for me, saying: Next time pick a film that does not make people cry. I nodded, laughing. Near the end of the film, the mother puts the medical record book back into her bag and says: Next time I will leave you a key. I think many words in a family are not missing; we simply get used to saying the safe one first. Once someone says one true thing, all the rest follow.