递纸巾的那只手

我本来是去躲清净的。家里吵了一晚上，我拿了票就出门，随便进了一场动画片，想着看看小孩怎么笑，自己也松快松快。坐下才发现旁边是个小学生，一个人，座位号第五排七座，他坐七座，我坐三排，隔着一排空座，斜对着他。

片子演到小女孩在村口等妈妈，等来一句今年又不回来。我听见身后有吸鼻子的声音，越来越响。我斜眼看，是那孩子，眼泪顺着眼镜的边往下淌，他越抹越多，眼镜歪在鼻梁上，人往座位里缩，恨不得把自己藏进椅背。

我手边正好有一包纸巾，超市打折买的，塑料壳都还没拆。我捏着那包纸巾，忽然犹豫起来：给不给？现在的家长都教孩子别理陌生人，我要是搭话，孩子会不会吓着。银幕上小女孩跑过草垛，那孩子的哭声压不住了，闷闷的，像怕被人听见。

我把纸巾递过去，停在他手边，不多说一句。他扭头接了，哑着嗓子说谢谢。我这才转头看他，帮他把眼镜扶正，说了句：片子好，哭不丢人。他擤了鼻子，攥着纸巾，肩膀松下来，重新看向银幕。

后半段我看不太进去，总斜着眼看他。他哭完那一小阵，居然笑了，银幕上小女孩的妈妈提前回了家，站在院子门口。他笑的时候露出豁了的门牙。

散场时他把那包纸巾放回我座位扶手上，说了第二声谢谢。我摆手让他留着，外面风大。走出影院，我在台阶上站了一会儿。家里那点吵，忽然不算什么了。我想起他放回纸巾时认真的样子，像在完成一件顶顶要紧的事。原来被需要是这样的：一包没拆封的纸巾，一句不丢人，就能把一个孩子的晚上接住。我把手插进口袋，往家走，脚步比来时轻。

The Hand That Passed the Tissues

I had gone out to escape the noise. The family had argued all evening, so I bought a ticket and left, dropping into a cartoon at random, thinking I would watch children laugh and loosen something in myself. Only after sitting down did I notice a schoolboy nearby, alone, seat seven in row five, while I sat in row three, one empty row between us, angled toward him.

The film reached the part where the little girl waits at the edge of the village for her mother and receives the news that she is not coming this year either. I heard sniffling behind me, growing louder. I glanced sideways. It was the boy, tears running down the rim of his glasses, wiping and making it worse, the glasses sliding crooked on his nose, his body shrinking into the seat as if he wanted to hide inside the chair back.

There happened to be a pack of tissues beside me, bought on sale at the supermarket, the plastic still unopened. I held it and suddenly hesitated: pass it or not. Parents these days teach children to ignore strangers. If I spoke, would the boy

be frightened. On the screen the girl ran past the straw stacks, and the muffled crying behind me could no longer be held down, quiet because he feared being heard.

I passed the pack and let it stop at his hand, saying nothing extra. He turned, took it, and managed a hoarse thank you. Only then did I look at him, straightened the glasses on his face, and said: It is a good film, and crying is no shame. He blew his nose, kept the tissue in his fist, his shoulders dropped, and he faced the screen again.

I hardly saw the second half, glancing sideways the whole time. After the crying passed, he actually laughed, when the mother on the screen came home early and stood at the gate of the yard. His laugh showed a chipped front tooth.

At the end he placed the pack back on the arm of my seat and said thank you a second time. I waved him off, telling him to keep it, the wind outside being strong. I stood on the cinema steps for a while afterward. The quarrel at home suddenly did not weigh so much. I kept seeing the solemn way he set the pack down, like completing a matter of great importance. So this is what it means to be needed: one unopened pack of tissues and one line about no shame can catch an evening for a child. I put my hands in my pockets and walked home, my steps lighter than on the way here.