老头子的两张票

我到儿子家带孙子，是六月的事。路过电影院，那孩子指着海报上的猴子，又指指我，说：爷爷，我领你看电影。我笑着应了，心里没当真。小孩的话，说过就忘。可我没想到，他把这话当了真，一当就是一个学期。

先发现不对的是他妈妈。她说，爸，咱家这娃邪门，两块钱的辣条舍不得买，钱不知道往哪儿藏。我其实知道。夜里孩子摇存钱罐，咕噜咕噜，我在隔壁听得清楚。周末他拎着袋子收易拉罐，脸晒得黑，回来先把毛票捋平，再塞进猪嘴。我装作没看见，转过身去抹了把眼睛。

我在村里看了一辈子露天电影。布一场幕布，扛条长凳，为占地方跟老伙计抢过位置。散场星星满天，走黑路回家，嘴里还学着戏里的词。进城这些年，我路过那电影院十几回，一次也没进去过。不是不想，是觉得那地方不是给我这号人开的。

秋末那天孩子放学没直接回来。他进门时气喘吁吁，从兜里掏出两张票，双手递到我面前，说：爷爷，明天下午三点，我买好了，两张。票在他手里焐得起了毛边。我接过来，手抖，只好背过身去看那票上的字，看了三遍。我说好。声音哑了，我赶紧咳嗽两声盖过去。

当晚我翻出压箱底的白衬衫，领子硬硬的那种，又拿热水抿了头发。孩子妈妈笑我：看个动画片，至于吗。我说，你不懂。那孩子躺在床上还念叨明天别迟到。我在门外听着，心里又满又疼。他攒了一学期的钱，就为领我进一趟电影院。这份心，比什么都重。

电影演什么我记不全，只记得那孩子全程坐得笔直，笑得响。演到小猴子想妈妈，我掏手绢按眼睛，他装作没看见，把纸巾递过来。我接了，没说话。散场出来他把票要回去一张，说要夹进他的存钱罐留纪念。我那张，贴身放进装户口本的红包布包里。有人问我那是什么，我就说：这是我孙子给我挣的体面。

Two Tickets in an Old Coat Pocket

I came to the home of my son to look after my grandson in June. Passing the cinema, the boy pointed at the monkey on the poster, then pointed at me, and said: Grandpa, I will take you to a film. I laughed and agreed, and did not take it to heart. The words of children are said and forgotten. But I did not expect that he took it seriously, and kept taking it seriously for a whole school term.

His mother noticed first. She said, look, this child of ours is strange, he will not spend five yuan on spicy strips, and who knows where he hides his money. I actually knew. At night the boy shook his piggy bank, gurgle gurgle, and I heard it clearly through the wall. On weekends he collected cans with a bag, his face tanned, and came home to smooth the small notes flat before feeding them into the mouth of the pig. I pretended not to see, turned away, and wiped my eyes.

In the village I watched open-air films all my life. A cloth screen was hung, a long bench carried, and we once fought an old friend for a good spot. After the show

the sky was full of stars, we walked the dark road home, still acting out the lines from the play. These years in the city I passed that cinema more than a dozen times and never went in. Not that I did not want to. I felt that place was not opened for the likes of me.

Late in autumn the boy did not come straight home after school. He came in out of breath, took two tickets from his pocket, and held them out to me with both hands: Grandpa, tomorrow three in the afternoon, I have bought them, two tickets. The tickets had gone fuzzy at the edges from being warmed in his palm. I took them, my hands shook, so I turned my back to read the printing, three times over. I said good. My voice went hoarse, and I covered it with two coughs.

That night I brought out the white shirt at the bottom of my chest, the kind with a stiff collar, and combed my hair with hot water. The mother of the boy laughed at me: it is only a cartoon, is it worth it. I said, you do not understand. The boy lay in bed still muttering about not being late tomorrow. Listening outside his door, my heart felt both full and aching. He saved money a whole term just to take me into a cinema. Such a heart is heavier than anything.

I cannot recall the whole film. I only remember the boy sitting ramrod straight the entire time, laughing out loud. When the little monkey missed its mother, I took out my handkerchief and pressed my eyes, and he pretended not to see and passed me a tissue. I took it and said nothing. Coming out he asked one ticket back, saying he would keep it in his piggy bank as a memory. My ticket went into the red cloth bag with the household register, close to my things that mattered most. When people ask what it is, I say: this is the dignity my grandson earned for me.