灯守人不怕黑

那是一部很安静的电影。海岛上的灯塔要换灯，旧的煤油灯换成电灯，可电缆一时通不上岛，看守老陈还得守着老规矩：每天天黑前擦净灯罩，添油，点火，记录风向。岛上没有别人，没有观众，最远的渔船在十几海里外。记者上岛采访，问他：没有人看见你的时候，你还这么认真做什么。老陈想了很久，说：灯不是给看见的人亮的，是给看不见的人亮的。

电影里有一场戏我记到现在。台风过境后第二天，塔顶的玻璃碎了一半，老陈爬上三十多米的旋梯，一手扶着栏杆，一手把新玻璃一块块递上去。他的手在抖，镜头没有躲。下来以后他在本子上写：今日灯明，照见海面十二海里。字迹被汗洇开了一角。他没有写苦，也没有写功，只写了灯亮着。

我想起我走读的那半个学期。

晚自习结束已经九点半，回到家还要再写四十分钟作业。那段时间我背的古诗第二天就忘，物理的受力分析画一张错一张，没有人看见我几点睡，也没有人看见我几点起。有天夜里我对着一道电学题发呆，忽然问自己：这样没人看得见的努力，到底有什么用处。那几天我做题的手是软的，字是飘的，连早读都不过心。

老陈那句话把我从这件事里拽了出来。灯不是给看见的人亮的，是给看不见的人亮的。我的努力也一样：它不是给老师看的勾，不是给家长看的排名，它是给那个看不见的、几个月后的自己亮的。考试那天坐在考场里的人是我，需要灯的人也是我。平时每一个没人看见的夜晚，都是在给那天的我留一盏光。

想通这一点以后，我没有把计划改得更大，反而改小了：古诗每天只背四句，睡前默一遍；物理每天只画两张受力图，画完对答案，错的那张第二天重画。我不再问什么时候能进步，只问今晚的灯添了没有。期末我的物理从七十多分爬到八十八，不算惊人，但我知道那十一分是从哪些夜晚里来的。

电影最后，电缆上了岛，电灯取代了煤油灯，老陈在交接单上签了字，把用了三十年的灯罩擦得锃亮，放好。他离岛那天，渔船从灯塔下面过，船上的孩子抬头看灯，灯亮着。我特别喜欢这个镜头：守灯的人不怕黑，因为他知道自己就是那个把黑夜过完的人。我也要做自己的守灯人，今晚先把今晚的灯点上。

The Keeper of the Light Is Not Afraid of Dark

It was a very quiet film. The lighthouse on the island was changing its lamp: the old kerosene light was to give way to an electric one, but the cable could not reach the island yet, so the keeper, Old Chen, still kept the old rule: wipe the lamp glass clean before dusk, add oil, strike the flame, record the wind. There was no one else on the island, no audience; the nearest fishing boat lay twelve miles out. A reporter came ashore and asked him: when nobody sees you, why still take it so seriously. Chen thought for a long time and said: the lamp is not lit for those who can see, but for

those who cannot.

One scene has stayed with me. The day after the typhoon passed, half the glass on the tower top was shattered. Chen climbed the spiral stair of thirty meters, one hand on the rail, the other passing new panes up one by one. His hand trembled, and the camera did not look away. Afterward he wrote in his log: lamp lit today, sea visible for twelve miles. Sweat blurred one corner of the handwriting. He wrote neither of hardship nor of merit, only that the lamp was burning.

It reminded me of the half-term I commuted to school.

Evening study ended at half past nine, and at home forty more minutes of homework waited. In that stretch, the classical poems I recited slipped out of my memory by the next day, and every free-body diagram in physics came out wrong. Nobody saw when I slept, nobody saw when I rose. One night, staring at an electricity problem, I suddenly asked myself: what is the use of effort that no one sees. For days my hand was soft over the exercises, my writing floated, and even morning reading passed through me without leaving a trace.

Chen's words pulled me out of that question. The lamp is not lit for those who can see, but for those who cannot. My effort was the same: it was not ticks for the teacher, not a ranking for my parents; it was a light left for the unseen self of some months later. The one sitting in the exam hall would be me, and the one needing a lamp would also be me. Every unseen evening was a light kept for that future me.

After that I did not enlarge my plan; I shrank it. Four lines of classical poetry a day, recited silently before sleep; two force diagrams in physics a day, checked against the answers, the wrong one redrawn the next morning. I stopped asking when progress would come and asked only whether tonight's lamp had been fed. By the final exam my physics had climbed from the seventies to eighty-eight. Nothing astonishing, but I know which nights those eleven points came from.

At the end of the film the cable reached the island, the electric light replaced the kerosene lamp, and Chen signed the handover sheet, polished the lamp glass he had used for thirty years until it shone, and set it aside. On the day he left, a fishing boat passed beneath the tower, and a child on board looked up: the lamp was burning. I love that shot. The keeper of the light is not afraid of dark, because he knows he is the one who walks the night to its end. I mean to be my own keeper, and tonight I will light tonight's lamp first.