

睡前的最后一小时给了草房子

11月3日 星期一 晴

最近一个星期，我睡前的最后一小时都给了《草房子》。妈妈把台灯调到最亮，我靠在床头读，读到困了也不肯先闭眼。

今天读到桑桑放学的一段，乐死我了。别的孩子放学往家跑，桑桑放学先要干一件大事：他举着红旗在村口指挥，把油麻地小学的白鸽一群群赶回鸽笼。那些鸽子是他的宝贝，落在屋顶上、电线上，他仰着头数，一只都不能少。可是后来，桑桑把鸽子卖了，把卖来的钱都给了纸月。读到这里我愣住了：那是他最宝贝的东西啊，说卖就卖了。我在被窝里掰着手指想，我要是有一群白鸽，我大概连一只都舍不得卖。桑桑做这件事的时候，脸上一定是安安静静的。

书里放学路上的事都好玩：桑桑和阿恕一路踢着瓦片走，路过秦大奶奶的破屋，绕得远远的；纸月走在芦苇荡边上，影子被夕阳拉得老长。我忽然特别羡慕桑桑，他的放学路又长又好看，有河、有桥、有白鸽。我的放学路只有两条马路和一个红绿灯。

白天在学校，我脑子里还装着书里的故事。课间我学白鸽落满屋顶的样子比划给同桌看，讲着讲着自己先笑了。同桌问：真有那么好看？我把书塞进书包，明天就带给他。好书要传下去，像传一根点燃的火柴。

昨晚合上书，我把书放在枕头边，躺在床上翻来覆去地想：要是我也在油麻地上学就好了。我想跟桑桑一起赶鸽子，想坐纸月旁边看她悄悄借橡皮，想在秦大奶奶骂人的时候躲得远远的，又在她跳水救人的时候第一个喊好。想着想着我就笑了，妈妈进来关灯，说：笑什么，快睡。我说：我在想我的朋友，他们住在油麻地。

妈妈关灯出去了，窗外有风。我在日记本上补了一行：好书就是让你睡前舍不得闭眼的书。明天晚上，台灯一开，我又回油麻地了。

The Last Hour Before Bed Belongs to the Straw House

November 3, Monday, Sunny

For the past week, the last hour before bed has belonged to The Straw House. My mother turns the desk lamp to its brightest, and I lean against the headboard reading, refusing to close my eyes first even when I am sleepy.

Today I read the part about Sangsang after school, and I laughed myself silly. Other children run home after school, but Sangsang has a big job first: he holds up a red flag at the village entrance and directs the school's flock of white pigeons back into their coop, group by group. Those pigeons are his treasures, perching on rooftops and power lines while he tilts his head to count them—not one may be missing. But later, Sangsang sold the pigeons and gave all the money to Zhiyue. I froze at this: those were his most treasured things, and he sold them just like that.

Under the quilt I counted on my fingers, thinking that if I had a flock of white pigeons, I probably could not bear to sell even one. When Sangsang did it, his face must have been perfectly calm.

Everything on the way home in the book is delightful: Sangsang and Ashu kick tile shards along the road, detouring far around Grandma Qin's shabby hut; Zhiyue walks along the edge of the reed marsh, her shadow stretched long by the setting sun. I suddenly envied Sangsang terribly. His road home is long and beautiful, with a river, a bridge, and white pigeons. My road home has only two streets and one traffic light.

Even at school in the daytime, the stories still fill my head. At break I mimicked for my deskmate how the pigeons cover the rooftops, and I laughed first while describing it. He asked: is it really that wonderful? I stuffed the book into my schoolbag—I will bring it to him tomorrow. A good book should be passed on, like passing a lit match.

Last night, after closing the book, I set it beside my pillow and tossed in bed thinking: how wonderful it would be if I went to school in Youmadi. I would drive the pigeons home with Sangsang, sit beside Zhiyue and watch her quietly lend an eraser, hide far away when Grandma Qin scolds, then be the first to cheer when she jumps into the river to save someone. Lost in these thoughts, I started smiling. My mother came in to turn off the light and said: What are you smiling at? Go to sleep. I said: I'm thinking of my friends. They live in Youmadi.

Mother switched off the light and left; wind moved outside the window. I added one line to my diary: a good book is one that makes you reluctant to close your eyes before sleep. Tomorrow evening, when the lamp turns on, I will be back in Youmadi.