

灯下共读草房子

儿子四年级那年，师生共读书目里有《草房子》，我也找来一本，晚饭后各捧一本，坐在客厅两盏灯下。起初是我陪他读，读了几晚我发现，是他陪着我重新读一遍。

读到杜小康家道中落、在校门口摆小摊那几章，儿子忽然把书扣在膝盖上，问我，杜小康为什么去摆摊啊，他不上学了吗。我没急着答，反问他，你觉得他愿意去吗。儿子想了很久，说，不愿意，可是他爸破产了，总得有人挣钱。我又问，那你觉得他丢人吗。儿子说，不丢人，他摆摊还带着课本，晚上照着路灯背书。那晚我们聊到杜小康的白手套，聊到大人也会把日子过坏，过坏了接着过。儿子最后说，杜小康比他班上传纸条的同学厉害多了。我点头，顺手在书页角上折了一道。共读的好处就在这儿：问题从他那儿来，答案从我们俩中间长出来，比我一个人看书时想得到的都新鲜。

讨论秃鹤那几章，我们吵起来了。儿子坚持秃鹤在汇操里故意捣乱不对，我说不然呢，他被笑了六年。儿子说，可那是一年级全体同学的比赛。我们谁也说服不了谁，最后各让一步：秃鹤委屈是真的，闯祸也是真的，两件事不用抵消。儿子合上那章时嘟囔了一句，要是我坐他旁边，我不笑。就这一句，我觉得这书共读值了。

最意外的是读完那晚。儿子洗完头，头发湿着，忽然站在卫生间门口说，妈妈，我想变勇敢。我问，你想勇敢做什么。他想了半天，说，现在还没有想好的事，就是想先变勇敢，事情来了才接得住。我一时竟答不上来。我原以为共读是我给他讲书，到头来是他替我翻开了书里我当年没看见的那几页。灯下各捧一本书的晚上，往后我还想再多一些。

Reading Grass House Together Under the Lamp

The year my son was in fourth grade, the school's shared reading list included Grass House. I got myself a copy too. After dinner we each held a book, sitting under two lamps in the living room. At first I thought I was keeping him company in reading. After a few evenings I realized he was keeping me company in rereading it.

When we reached the chapters where Du Xiaokang's family falls on hard times and he sets up a small stall by the school gate, my son suddenly clapped the book shut over his knees and asked, why does Du Xiaokang run a stall, does he stop going to school. I did not answer right away. I asked back, do you think he wants to. He thought a long time and said, no, but his father went bankrupt, someone has to earn money. I asked again, do you think it is shameful. He said, no, he keeps his textbooks at the stall and recites lessons under the streetlight at night. That night we talked about Du Xiaokang's white gloves, about how grown-ups can wreck their days too, and go on living once they are wrecked. My son ended by saying Du Xiaokang was far more impressive than the classmates who pass notes in his class. I nodded and folded a corner of the page. This is the gift of shared reading: the questions come from him, and the answers grow between the two of us, fresher than anything I would have thought up reading alone.

We argued over the chapters about Bald Crane. My son insisted that Bald Crane sabotaging the drill competition was wrong. I said why not, the boy had been laughed at for six years. My son said but that was a contest for the whole grade. Neither of us convinced the other, and in the end we each gave ground: Bald Crane's grievance is real, and his mischief is real too, and the two do not cancel each other out. Closing that chapter my son muttered one sentence: if I sat next to him, I would not laugh. For that one sentence alone, the shared reading was worth it.

The biggest surprise came the night he finished the book. With his hair still wet from washing, he suddenly stood at the bathroom door and said, Mom, I want to become brave. I asked, brave for what. He thought a long while and said, there is no particular thing yet, I just want to be brave first, so that when something comes I can hold it. For a moment I had no answer at all. I had thought the shared reading meant me explaining the book to him. In the end he turned, for me, the pages I had missed when I was his age. I would like many more evenings of one book each under the lamps.