陪孩子读草房子，我先红了眼

儿子升入初中，学校开列课外书单，第一本就是《草房子》。我小学就读过它，便自告奋勇陪他共读，心想不过是一遍旧故事。没想到先撑不住的倒是我。

少年时读这本书，我记得的是桑桑的顽皮，是芦花荡里划船的快乐，杜小康在我记忆里只是那个家里最阔、当班长神气的孩子。这次陪儿子重读，读到红门变了颜色，读到杜小康跟着父亲去芦荡放鸭，夜里害怕得抱着父亲的胳膊，我在沙发上停下了书。儿子抬头看我，我谎称眼睛进了东西。

真正让我站不住的是摆摊那段。杜小康把家底摆在校门口的架子上，见人就招呼，声音不高，也不躲。我去年刚经历店里关张，那几个月我最怕的就是熟人认出我。所以我太知道一个大人低着头开口做生意要攒多少力气，何况他是个孩子。我红着眼跟儿子说，这段我小时候完全没读懂。儿子不太懂我为什么难受，他只知道书里那个摆摊的男孩让人佩服。我不解释，他也慢慢不问了，只是从那以后他路过校门口的小店，都会多看两眼。

儿子想了半天，问了一个把我问醒的问题：他为什么不哭？我愣在那儿。过了一会儿我说，可能他把哭的力气省下来干活了。儿子点点头，说那他比大人还厉害。那天晚上他自己又去翻书，第二天跟我说，杜小康后来读书比谁都刻苦，他把苦日子过成了课本。

我原本以为是我陪孩子读一本书，读完才明白，是孩子陪我把成年后的难处重新读了一遍。《草房子》还是那本《草房子》，只是如今我懂了杜小康，也懂了当年的父亲。推荐给家长，别把它只当孩子的书，它也是写给大人的。

Reading Grass House with My Child, I Was the One Who Teared Up

When my son entered middle school, the school posted its reading list, and the first book was Grass House. I had read it in primary school, so I volunteered to read along with him, thinking it was just an old story for a second pass. I did not expect that the first to break down would be me.

When I read the book as a boy, what I remembered was Sang Sang's mischief and the joy of rowing through the reed marsh; Du Xiaokang lived in my memory only as the richest kid in class, the class monitor who walked tall. This time, reading along with my son, I stopped on the sofa when the Red Gate changed color, when Du Xiaokang followed his father into the marsh to herd ducks and clutched his father's arm in the dark out of fear. My son looked up at me, and I lied that something had gotten in my eye.

What truly finished me off was the stall. Du Xiaokang laid his family's last possessions on a shelf by the school gate and greeted every passer-by, his voice low, never hiding. Last year my own little shop closed, and in those months what I feared

most was being recognized by someone I knew. So I knew exactly how much strength it takes for a grown-up to lower his head and open his mouth to do business - and this boy was only a child. With red eyes I told my son that I had not understood this part at all as a child. My son did not quite grasp why I was upset; he only knew that the boy at the stall in the book was someone to admire. I did not explain, and slowly he stopped asking - only from then on, whenever we passed a little shop by the school gate, he would look at it one more time.

My son thought for a long while and asked a question that woke me up: why didn't he cry? I sat there stunned. After a moment I said, maybe he saved the strength of crying for the work. He nodded and said that made him stronger than most grown-ups. That night he went back to the book on his own, and the next day he told me that Du Xiaokang studied harder than anyone afterwards - he had turned his hard days into a textbook.

I thought I was keeping my child company through a book. Only when we finished did I understand that he had kept me company through the hard parts of being an adult. Grass House is still the same Grass House; it is just that now I understand Du Xiaokang, and I understand my own father back then. To other parents I recommend it not as a children's book alone - it is written for grown-ups too.