为秃鹤拍桌子的人是我

那天我拍了一次桌子。拍完我才反应过来，全班在看我。其实我本来没打算说话，是听到小杨那句秃有什么好同情的，血一下子冲上头顶。我站起来的时候凳子往后滑出去半尺，吱的一声，全班都听见了。

我为什么反应那么大，会前我自己也没想明白。我们读《草房子》，读到秃鹤被起外号，读到他在广播操里故意乱动，我本来只觉得好笑。会前我甚至准备了一个笑话，想在会上讲秃鹤戴帽子那段。可是小海发言的时候说，秃鹤抬头走路那天，他头上顶着的是自尊。我坐在那儿，手心出汗。我想起隔壁班有个男生，因为耳朵大，被叫了一学期招风耳，后来他再也不举手了。

所以我站起来替秃鹤说话。小杨说他捣乱活该被笑，我说他捣乱之前，先被笑了三年。小杨说他报名游行也是出风头，我说出风头的人心里最疼，你不懂。这句话说出口我就后悔了，太冲。可话收不回来，两个人隔着两排课桌吵，我声音越来越大，手在桌子上一拍。就是那一声，全班静了半秒，又炸开。粉笔灰从讲台边飘过来，落在我的袖口上，我那时候根本没工夫拍掉。

真正让我哑口无言的是刚子开口。他说我没事，你们吵我的时候能不能小点声。我这才知道，全班都听见了，包括那个光头本人。我转过身看他，他冲我摆摆手，那个手势我这辈子忘不了，不是原谅，是大人对小孩的那种摆法。我的脸烫得厉害，坐下去，再没发言。

老师后来的三句话，我记在书的第一页。散会后我在走廊问她，秃鹤后来还笑不笑。她说让我自己想。我想了一路。放学我绕到小杨那儿，跟他说对不起，不是为吵架，是为那句你不懂。小杨挠挠头，说明天他去跟刚子说，他表哥戴帽子的事，他也去说。

读书会散了两个星期，那天的争论还没散。它散在我翻开《草房子》的每一次里，散在我路过隔壁班、再也没跟着笑招风耳的那些下午里。

I Was the One Who Slapped the Table for Bald Crane

That day I slapped a table. Only after the slap did I realize the whole class was looking at me. I had not planned to speak at all. It was Xiao Yang's line about there being nothing to sympathize about being bald that sent the blood straight to my head. When I stood up, my stool slid back half a foot with a squeak the entire class heard.

Why I reacted so strongly, I had not figured out even myself before the meeting. Reading The Straw House, at the parts where Bald Crane gets nicknames and where he deliberately messes up during calisthenics, I had honestly just found it funny. Before the meeting I even had a joke ready about the chapter where Bald Crane wears a hat. But when Xiao Hai shared, he said that on the day Bald Crane walked with his head up, what he carried on top of it was self-respect. I sat there with sweaty palms. I remembered a boy in the next class whose ears were big; they called him Weather-Vane Ear for a whole semester, and afterward he never raised his hand again.

So I stood up to speak for Bald Crane. Xiao Yang said he deserved the laughter

for causing trouble. I said he had already been laughed at for three years before he ever caused trouble. Xiao Yang said signing up for the parade was just showing off. I said people who show off hurt the most inside, and you do not understand. The moment it left my mouth I regretted it. Too sharp. But words cannot be taken back. We argued across two rows of desks, my voice getting louder and louder, until my hand slapped the table. That single sound froze the class for half a second, then it exploded again. Chalk dust drifted over from the podium and landed on my cuff; I had no presence of mind to brush it off.

What truly left me speechless was Xiao Gang speaking up. He said: I am fine, could you argue about me a little more quietly. Only then did I learn that the whole class had heard, including the bald boy himself. I turned to look at him. He waved his hand at me, a gesture I will never forget. It was not forgiveness; it was the way an adult waves off a child. My face burned badly. I sat down and did not speak again.

The teacher's three closing sentences I copied onto the first page of my book. After the meeting I asked her in the corridor whether Bald Crane still smiles later. She told me to think for myself. I thought the whole way home. At the gate I detoured to Xiao Yang and apologized, not for the argument but for the line you do not understand. Xiao Yang scratched his head and said tomorrow he would go talk to Xiao Gang, and that he would also bring up his cousin who wears a hat.

The reading club ended two weeks ago, but that day's argument has not ended. It lives on in every time I open The Straw House, and in the afternoons when I pass the next class and no longer laugh along at Weather-Vane Ear.