读书会上的那句话

周五下午，黑板上写着班级读书会五个字，粉笔灰还在空气里飘。老师没有讲话，只写下三个字：秃鹤。教室里嗡了一声，又静下来。小海第一个举手站起来，说他最记得游行那段，秃鹤把头抬得高高的，好像头上顶着什么宝贝。小海学着那个样子，挺胸，下巴扬起，后排几个同学笑出了声，小海没有坐下去，等老师点头才坐。

我分享的是广播操比赛那一段。我说，秃鹤故意做错动作的时候，我很生气，恨不得钻进书里冲他喊；可他举手报名参加游行那天，我突然明白了。我跟大家说，他不是想逗笑别人，他是想让别人闭嘴。说完这句，我同桌的桌子安静了一会儿，我听见她把这句话轻轻抄进了本子。

小杨是真的脱口而出：秃有什么好夸的，我表哥也秃，天天戴帽子上学。好几个人同时回头。阿原没有举手，直接站了起来：秃鹤不是帽子，他是长大的人。小杨说他名字也好笑。阿原说他叫陆鹤，名字里的鹤就是勇敢的意思。两个人你一句我一句，有人帮小杨，说秃鹤在广播操里捣乱那段确实讨厌；有人说他只是想让人看见他。教室乱成一锅粥，讲台上的粉笔被忘了，粉笔头都磨干了。

老师等大家说完，只讲了三句话。她说，秃鹤捣乱那天，他在求大家看他；他走游行那天，他在看他自己。今天我们肯吵架，是因为我们开始替别人想事情了。老师停了一下，又补了一句：这就是读书读出来的。

散会的时候，我走出教学楼，看见小杨在操场拐角堵住小刚。我们班的刚子也是光头，以前大家都叫他灯泡。我没有听清小杨说了什么，只看见刚子挠了挠头，笑了，两个人一起往小卖部方向跑去。

第二天，黑板上秃鹤两个字被人擦了，下面多了一行很小的粉笔字：油麻地的孩子都在长大。不知道是谁写的。我把这行字抄进《草房子》最后一页的空白处，抄完又把游行那一页重新读了一遍。

That Sentence at the Reading Club

On Friday afternoon, five characters were written on the blackboard: Class Reading Club. Chalk dust still floated in the air. The teacher said nothing and simply wrote three words: Bald Crane. The classroom buzzed for a moment, then fell quiet. Xiao Hai raised his hand first and stood up. He said the parade scene impressed him most, when Bald Crane held his head high, as if he were carrying something precious on top of it. Xiao Hai copied that posture, chest out, chin up. A few kids in the back row laughed out loud, but he stayed standing until the teacher nodded him back to his seat.

My turn was the radio calisthenics competition. I said that when Bald Crane deliberately messed up the movements, I was so angry I wished I could climb into the book and shout at him. But the day he raised his hand to join the parade, I suddenly

understood. I told the class: he was not trying to make people laugh; he was trying to make people stop. After I said that, my deskmate's desk stayed silent for a while, and I heard her quietly copying the sentence into her notebook.

Xiao Yang really did blurt it out: What is great about being bald? My cousin is bald too, and he wears a hat to school every day. Several heads turned at once. A Yuan stood up without even raising her hand: Bald Crane is not a hat. He is a person growing up. Xiao Yang said his name sounded funny too. A Yuan said his real name is Lu He, and the He in it means crane, the brave bird. The two went back and forth. Some sided with Xiao Yang, saying the part where Bald Crane sabotaged the calisthenics really was annoying. Others said he just wanted people to see him. The classroom boiled over, and the chalk on the podium was forgotten, its tip worn dry.

The teacher waited until everyone finished, then said only three sentences. She said: the day Bald Crane caused trouble, he was begging everyone to look at him; the day he marched in the parade, he was looking at himself. The fact that we are willing to argue today means we have started thinking for other people. She paused, then added one more line: that is what reading a book gives you.

When the club broke up, I walked out of the teaching building and saw Xiao Yang cornering Xiao Gang at the bend of the playground. Our classmate Xiao Gang is bald too, and people used to call him Lightbulb. I could not hear what Xiao Yang said. I only saw Xiao Gang scratch his head, laugh, and then the two of them ran off together toward the little shop.

The next day, someone erased the two words Bald Crane from the blackboard, and under them appeared a line of tiny chalk writing: Every child in Youmadi is growing up. I never found out who wrote it. I copied that line into the blank space on the last page of my copy of The Straw House, and after copying it, I read the parade chapter once more.

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