隔着桌面，磁铁牵起了回形针的手

女儿五岁半，最近对冰箱贴着了迷，出门要摸一遍，吃饭要问一遍：妈妈，它们为什么不掉下来？与其被问一百遍，不如陪她玩一遍。我趁午休在网上下单了一包磁铁，又翻出家里的旧物：回形针、图钉、钥匙、硬币、积木、发夹，装进一只鞋盒，当作我们的实验材料。

快递到的那个傍晚，我把鞋盒倒在客厅茶几上，宣布磁铁实验室开张。女儿先捏起那块黑色磁铁，在桌面上推回形针。回形针像被无形的手牵着，一路小跑跟着磁铁走。她推一下，它跑一下，她咯咯笑个不停。玩到兴头上，她把磁铁挪到桌子底下，回形针竟在桌面上站了起来，隔着木板朝磁铁探身。

女儿愣了两秒，随即爆发出那天最大的惊叹：妈妈！磁铁会穿桌子！她急着把钥匙、硬币、积木全塞到桌子底下去试，钥匙被吸住了，硬币纹丝不动，积木更不用提。她忙得满头汗，一会儿喊这个，一会儿喊那个，客厅像炸开了一小锅爆米花。

晚上洗完澡，我们坐在床上一起查原理。绘本式的科普页翻开来，磁铁周围有一圈看不见的磁力线，纸、木头、塑料都能穿过去，铁做的东西才会被抓住。女儿用手指沿着插图上的线圈画，画到一半忽然跳下床，跑回客厅，把磁铁贴在冰箱门上，再在门外面贴一张纸条：纸条被里面的磁铁按住了。她回来时一脸郑重：妈妈，冰箱是铁做的。

那一刻我特别庆幸自己那天没有嫌麻烦。如果我只是随口答一句因为它有磁性啊，她大概永远不会自己发现冰箱是铁做的。孩子的科学不是灌进去的，是她自己伸手抓回来的，我们只需要把鞋盒倒在茶几上。

现在那块黑色磁铁住在女儿的枕头边，夜里当小夜灯的开关玩，白天在冰箱上排成一列兵。每次她举着磁铁冲我喊妈妈你看，我都放下手里的活走过去。陪她做实验的这些傍晚，是我一天里最舍不得快进的部分。

Across the Table, the Magnet Took the Paper Clip by the Hand

Our daughter is five and a half and lately obsessed with the fridge magnets - touching them every time we go out, asking every mealtime: Mom, why don't they fall down? Rather than answer a hundred times, I decided to play through it with her. Over lunch break I ordered a pack of magnets online, and rummaged through the house for old things: paper clips, thumbtacks, keys, coins, blocks, hairpins, all packed into a shoebox as our experiment materials.

The evening the parcel arrived, I tipped the shoebox onto the living room table and declared the magnet laboratory open. My daughter picked up the black magnet first and pushed a paper clip across the tabletop. The clip trotted along behind the magnet as if led by an invisible hand. She pushed once, it ran once, and she giggled without end. In the middle of the fun she slid the magnet under the table - and the paper

clip actually rose up on the tabletop, leaning through the wooden board toward the magnet.

She froze for two seconds, then let out the biggest cry of wonder that day: Mom! Magnets can go through tables! She rushed to shove keys, coins, and blocks under the table one after another. The keys were caught, the coins did not budge, the blocks hardly worth trying. She bustled until she was sweating, shouting this and that, the living room popping like a small pot of popcorn.

After her bath that night we sat on the bed looking up the principle together. We opened a picture-book science page: around every magnet lies an invisible loop of magnetic field lines; paper, wood, and plastic let it pass through, but things made of iron get seized. My daughter traced the loops in the illustration with her finger, then suddenly jumped off the bed, ran back to the living room, pressed the magnet against the inside of the fridge door, and held a slip of paper on the outside - the paper was pinned in place by the magnet within. She came back with a solemn face: Mom, the fridge is made of iron.

In that moment I was so glad I had not found it a hassle that day. Had I merely waved it off with because it is magnetic, she would probably never have discovered on her own that the fridge is iron. A child's science is not poured in; she reaches out and grabs it back herself. All we need to do is tip the shoebox onto the table.

The black magnet now lives beside her pillow, serving at night as the switch of her night light and by day standing in a row of soldiers on the fridge. Every time she holds it up and shouts Mom look, I put down my work and walk over. These evenings of experiments with her are the part of my day I am least willing to fast-forward through.