坐在他们后面的人

周阳坐在第四排，正好在第三排那对同桌的后面。他当这一组的组长，值日表归他排，所以那两个人做的事，他看得最清楚。

那对同桌里靠窗的男孩叫小明。周阳对他的印象是从头发开始的：剪得极短，一根根竖着，早上检查仪容的时候，值日生拿手按都按不下去。他脸圆，鼻梁上横着几粒淡色的雀斑，安安静静的，很少见他举手，也很少见他离开座位。

十一月的一个测验，周阳看见那个坐里侧的女孩把文具盒翻了个底朝天，又去翻书包，肩膀越缩越紧。他当时还想，是不是又忘带东西了，要不要提醒她举手跟老师说。结果还没等他动，小明从自己盒里拿出一块新橡皮，两只手一掰，咔，断成两半，大的那半顺手推了过去。整个过程不到十秒钟，谁也没说话，两个人都低着头继续写。周阳在后面看着，笔停了半拍。他想，要是坐他旁边的人忘了带东西，他多半会把自己的递过去，可是掰开一块新的，他未必舍得。

十月底轮到周阳这一大组值日，小明和女孩分在一小组扫地。周阳提着簸箕跟在后头收垃圾。他看见小明扫得极慢，扫帚贴着桌腿绕圈，一团粘住的纸屑，扫帚推了两下没动，小明就蹲下去，用指甲把它抠下来，弹进簸箕。周阳张了张嘴，想说地上那点东西看不见的，反正检查也不查桌腿底下，话到嘴边又咽回去了。

抬垃圾的时候，袋子口老散。小明捏住袋口，女孩托住袋底，两个人一摇一晃往楼梯口走。周阳拎着空簸箕跟在后面，看他们的影子被走廊的灯拉得很长，一高一矮，晃到拐角不见了。

晚上周阳写班级日志，写到值日那一栏，本来只打算写已完成。笔停了停，他加了一行：第三排两位同学，扫地仔细，垃圾抬到楼下。写完他又想了想，在日记本背面写了一句跟日志无关的话：今天看见有人把新橡皮掰成两半。要是有人问我好朋友是什么，我就给他看这个。

The One Who Sits Behind Them

Zhou Yang sits in the fourth row, directly behind the pair of deskmates in the third row. He is the leader of this group, and he is the one who arranges the cleaning roster, so he sees more clearly than anyone what those two do.

The boy by the window is named Xiao Ming. Zhou Yang first noticed him because of his hair: cut extremely short, standing up strand by strand. During the morning appearance check, the duty students pressed their hands on it and could not flatten it down. He has a round face with a few pale freckles across his nose, and he is quiet. Zhou Yang rarely sees him raise his hand, and rarely sees him leave his seat.

One test in November, Zhou Yang watched the girl on the inner side turn her pencil case upside down, then rummage through her schoolbag, her shoulders hunching tighter and tighter. He was thinking, she forgot something again, should he remind her to raise her hand and tell the teacher. Before he could move, Xiao Ming took a new eraser out of his own case, broke it in two with a snap, and slid the larger half

across. The whole thing took less than ten seconds. Neither of them said a word; both kept their heads down and went on writing. Zhou Yang, sitting behind them, paused with his pen in midair. He thought: if the person next to him forgot something, he would probably hand over his own, but breaking a brand-new one in half, he might not be willing to do that.

In late October it was the turn of their big group for cleaning duty, and Xiao Ming and the girl were paired to sweep. Zhou Yang followed behind carrying the dustpan to collect the trash. He watched Xiao Ming sweep very slowly, the broom circling around the desk legs. A clump of paper scraps stuck to the floor would not move after two pushes, so Xiao Ming crouched down, scraped it off with his fingernails, and flicked it into the dustpan. Zhou Yang opened his mouth, about to say that nobody can see that bit of dirt, the inspection never checks under the desk legs anyway, then swallowed the words.

When it came time to carry out the trash, the mouth of the bag kept coming open. Xiao Ming pinched it shut while the girl lifted the bottom, and the two of them swayed their way toward the bin by the stairs. Zhou Yang trailed after them with an empty dustpan, watching their shadows stretch long under the hallway light, one tall and one short, disappearing around the corner.

That evening Zhou Yang wrote the class log. For the duty column he had planned to write only one word: done. He paused, then added a line: the two students in the third row swept carefully and carried the trash downstairs. After writing it, he thought for a moment more, and on the back page of his diary he wrote a sentence that had nothing to do with the log: today I saw someone break a new eraser in half. If anyone ever asks me what a good friend is, I will show them this.

www.vv99.net