我的同桌小明

我的同桌叫小明，他坐在我右边的位子上，第三排，靠窗。他比我矮半个头，圆圆的脸，鼻梁上横着几粒淡褐色的小雀斑。头发剪得很短，一根根站得直直的，像草坪里没剪齐的草。他笑起来眼睛眯成两条缝，嘴角有两个浅浅的酒窝。我们的课桌中间用铅笔画过一条清清楚楚的界线，不过早就被蹭得看不见了。

上周四数学测验，我伸手拿文具盒，才发现自己没带橡皮。我把文具盒翻了个底朝天，又翻书包，连衣服口袋都摸了一遍，什么也没有。卷子上那个写错的数字越看越刺眼，好像在笑话我。我小声跟同桌说了，他一句话没说，从文具盒里拿出一块崭新的橡皮，白白的，棱角还尖尖的，咔的一声，在我面前掰成了两半。他把大一点的那半推到我面前，说：用这个，别担心，我们一人一半。我愣了一下，想把小的那半换回来，他按住我的手说：客气什么，我们是同桌呀。

那半块橡皮现在还躺在我的文具盒里，边角已经磨得圆圆的，我一直没舍得换。

周五轮到我们小组值日。老师安排我们扫地、倒垃圾。小明抢过扫帚，从后排往前排扫，我拿着簸箕在前面接。扫到最后一排的桌腿边，有一小团纸屑粘在地上，怎么扫都扫不起来。他蹲下来，用指甲把它抠下来，弹进簸箕里。抬垃圾去走廊尽头的垃圾桶时，袋子太大，口老是散开。他两手拢住袋口，我托住袋底，两个人一摇一晃地抬过去。回到教室，夕阳从窗户斜进来，照得地面干干净净，我们的影子在黑板后面的墙上拉得很长。

小明和我之间，没发生过什么大事，就是掰开的一块橡皮，一起抬过的一袋垃圾。妈妈问我他有什么好，我想了半天，只想出一句：只要我需要，他就在右边那个位子上。

My Deskmate Xiao Ming

My deskmate is named Xiao Ming. He sits to my right, in the third row by the window. He is half a head shorter than me, with a round face and a scattering of light brown freckles across the bridge of his nose. His hair is cut short and stands up stiffly, like grass in a lawn that has not been mowed for a long time. When he laughs, his eyes narrow into two slits, and two small dimples appear at the corners of his mouth. A clear border was once drawn down the middle of our desk with a pencil, but it has long since been smudged and blurred.

Last Thursday we had a math test, and when I reached into my pencil case I found that I had forgotten to bring my eraser. I rummaged through the pencil case, turned my schoolbag upside down, and even checked the pockets of my clothes, but found nothing. The wrong digit on my answer sheet stared back at me, as if mocking me. I quietly told my deskmate. Without a word, he took out his brand-new eraser, white with a still-sharp corner, and broke it in two right in front of me. He pushed the slightly larger half toward me and said, use this one, do not worry, we each have

half. I was a little stunned. When I tried to push it back, he pressed my hand down and said, what are you being polite about, we are deskmates after all.

That half of an eraser is still in my pencil case now. Its edge has worn round, but I still have not replaced it.

Friday was our group cleaning duty. The teacher assigned us to sweep the floor and take out the trash. Xiao Ming grabbed the broom and swept from the back row toward the front, while I held the dustpan ahead and caught for him. When we reached the desk leg in the last row, a clump of paper scraps stuck to the floor refused to come off. He crouched down, scraped it off with his fingernails, and flicked it into the dustpan. When we carried the trash to the bin by the hallway, the bag was too big and its opening kept slipping open. He held the opening shut with both hands while I lifted the bottom, and we carried it together, bumping along, all the way to the bin. By the time we got back to the classroom, the setting sun was slanting through the window, lighting up the clean floor, and our shadows stretched long across the wall behind the blackboard.

Nothing big ever happened between Xiao Ming and me, just one broken eraser and one trash bag we carried together. When my mother asked me what is good about him, I thought for a long time and could only think of one thing: whenever I need him, he is right there, in the seat to my right.

那半块橡皮

学期末最后一天整理书包，文具盒倒过来抖，哗啦一声，掉出半块橡皮。它躺在地上，边角全磨圆了，中间还留着一道掰开的裂口。我捡起来，忽然想起它是怎么来到我这里的。

那是十一月的一个星期四，数学测验进行到一半，我写错了一个数，伸手去摸橡皮，摸了个空。文具盒里只有铅笔和尺子。我掀开书包，把里面的东西一样一样往外拿，试卷、水杯、跳绳，就是没有橡皮。我的脸开始发烫，卷子上的错号像一个小黑洞，越看越深。同桌小明看见了，没问为什么，从自己文具盒里拿出一块新橡皮。那块橡皮他刚用没几天，还带着文具店的香味。他两只手捏住，咔的一声掰成两半，把大的那半放在我卷子上，说：给你，剩下的我也够用了。我小声说谢谢，他摆摆手，眼睛还盯着自己的卷子。

再往前想，还能想到九月份刚开学换座位那天。老师按高矮排，小明坐我旁边。他个子不高，圆脸，鼻梁上有几粒雀斑，头发短短的，一根根竖着。他坐下第一件事，是用铅笔在两张课桌中间画了一条线，跟我说：过界要举手报告哦。说完自己先笑了。那条线后来早磨没了，我们谁也没报告过。

还有十月底那次值日。我们俩一组扫地，他扫得细，连桌腿底下都要扫出来。一团粘在地上

的纸屑，扫帚推不动，他直接蹲下去，用指甲抠下来。垃圾袋口总散，他捏着袋口，我抬着袋底，两个人晃晃悠悠送到楼梯口的垃圾桶。回来的时候天快黑了，教室空空的，只有我们俩的影子被走廊的灯照在墙上。

我把那半块橡皮放回文具盒最里面。它不新了，也不值什么钱，可它是被掰开的，掰开它的那个人每天就坐在教室第三排我右手边的位子上。下学期换座位之前，我想跟他说一声：这条桌子中间的线，咱们别画了。

The Half Eraser

On the last day of the semester I was packing my schoolbag when I turned my pencil case upside down to shake it out. With a clatter, half an eraser fell onto the floor. It lay there, all its corners worn round, a crack still running through the middle where it had been broken. I picked it up, and suddenly I remembered how it had come into my possession.

It was a Thursday in November, halfway through a math test, when I wrote a number wrong and reached for my eraser, only to find nothing there. My pencil case held only pencils and a ruler. I opened my schoolbag and took things out one by one, test papers, water bottle, jump rope, but no eraser. My face began to burn. The wrong mark on my paper looked like a small black hole that grew deeper the more I stared at it. My deskmate Xiao Ming noticed. He did not ask why. He took a new eraser out of his own pencil case. He had used it for only a few days, and it still carried the smell of the stationery shop. He gripped it with both hands and snapped it in two, then placed the larger half on my paper and said, here, take this, the rest is enough for me too. I whispered thank you. He waved his hand away, his eyes still on his own paper.

Thinking further back, I remember the day in September when we changed seats at the start of the new term. The teacher lined us up by height, and Xiao Ming ended up beside me. He is not tall, with a round face, a few freckles on the bridge of his nose, and short hair standing up strand by strand. The first thing he did after sitting down was draw a line down the middle of our two desks with a pencil and tell me, if anything crosses the line, you have to report it. Then he laughed at his own joke. That line wore away long ago, and neither of us ever reported anything.

And then there was the cleaning duty in late October. The two of us were a team sweeping the floor. He swept carefully, even under the desk legs. A clump of paper scraps stuck to the floor would not budge under the broom, so he crouched down and scraped it off with his fingernails. The trash bag kept opening, so he pinched the mouth of the bag while I lifted the bottom, and we swayed our way down to the bin by

the stairs. On the way back it was almost dark. The classroom was empty except for our two shadows thrown on the wall by the hallway light.

I put the half eraser back at the very bottom of my pencil case. It is no longer new and is not worth much, but it was broken in two, and the one who broke it sits every day in the seat to my right, in the third row of the classroom. Before we change seats next term, I want to tell him: this line down the middle of the desk, let us not draw it anymore.

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.