

# FICTION STORIES

## Superpower

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When I came back from the bathroom, she had already ordered a tableful of dishes. It was her habit when she was angry: ordering a lot, eating very little, refusing to take the leftovers home, and not allowing me to do so, either.

“The more I think about it, the angrier I get. Where has the basic trust between people gone?” She was referring to the incident at the cinema earlier—her reason for ordering the food.

According to the original plan, we should have gone to the movie first; and by the time it ended, we would be just hungry enough to fully enjoy the delicious cuisine at this restaurant.

But right when we were buying the tickets, it suddenly dawned on me that, for this one-month anniversary of our relationship, we should be dressed in the “couple” outfits we had bought the day before. When we went home to change clothes, we had an unprecedented little disagreement over the color of our shoes—which, fortunately, was resolved by a kiss before leaving home.

I didn’t realize the true tragedy then: we had left our student ID cards in our old clothes. Because of this, the ticket attendant insisted on not giving us the student discount. After arguing back and forth, he remained adamant, saying it was a superior directive.

Based on my limited life experience in Beijing, I knew that if he had said, “It’s not allowed, in principle,” then my student bus pass could have worked. But the phrase “superior directive” usually meant there was no room for negotiation.

Under the impatient glares from the people in line behind us, I decided to buy the full-priced tickets. Minimizing the duration of annoyance was the most important principle for new couples on a date.

But her mood had clearly been ruined. She tugged my hand and said, “Let’s not watch the movie.”

The topic of our conversation during dinner inevitably turned to the indifference of humanity and the loss of trust.

At that time, being inexperienced in the ways of the world and unfamiliar with the real estate market, I couldn’t fathom a more boring romantic scenario than this. So, without waiting to finish eating, I couldn’t help but take out the two tickets for the next screening from my pocket and ask, “Are you still interested?”

She didn’t answer right away. After first confirming that the word “student” was, indeed, on the tickets, she asked with a slightly delayed surprise, “How did you manage to do this?”

“I have a superpower.”

She smiled so hard and snorted—her eyes shimmering with an innocent light, as though she didn’t know one could pass by the cinema on the way to the bathroom.

As long as you were willing to pay full price, the ticket boy would be ready to sell you *any* kind of tickets. Ω