

## 不警觉的时候 When not alert

Winnie Mo

人们往往是在最不警觉的时候，遇到那些你以为不可能发生的事。

自从阿碧发现自己的书包躺在隔壁的楼台后，便格外小心。每天临睡前，她都会逐一检查门窗，确认全部锁好，才肯上床。这个动作反复进行，像是一种仪式，把不安留在门外。

此后很长一段时间，家里再没有丢过东西，生活恢复了安定的节奏。只是在夜深人静的时候，她偶尔还会听到窗外传来细碎的声响。掀开窗帘，在昏暗的灯光下，能看到几个人影，像“蜘蛛侠”般，借助铁栏，在狭窄的握手楼之间来回穿梭。他们动作熟练，几乎不发出声音。

阿碧渐渐相信，只要门窗锁好，就不会有问题。这个念头一次次被验证，最终变成了确信，也不再担心窗外发生的事会影响到她。

那天清晨，天刚亮，窗外仍是一片灰白。她起床后照常开窗，凉意扑面而来。洗漱完，她推开后门，走向阳台，准备收昨晚晾晒的衣服。门一推开，她愣住了——外面异常明亮。那不是清晨的光，而像是少了某种遮挡后突然暴露出来的空荡。

她低头去拿衣服，发现明明已经晒干的衣服上，竟然落了一层灰尘。她有些纳闷，又抬头看了一眼，这一眼，让她整个人僵在原地。

阳台边，那一排原本整齐坚固的铁栏杆，不见了。不是歪了，不是松了，而是全部消失了。她站在那里，好一会儿才反应过来，反复走近、后退、再

看。走到阳台边，只要一步踏空，下面是二十多米的深度。后果，她不敢想象。那一瞬间，大脑一片空白，连“被偷了”这几个字都来不及浮现。

那些铁栏杆很重。她想起隔壁安装铁栏时，几个工人从白天干到傍晚。焊接声刺耳，火花四溅，楼下的人都抬头张望。那是需要体力、经验和技术的活。而现在，它们在一夜之间，无声无息地消失了。

没有敲击声，没有火花，没有任何惊动人的迹象。仿佛有人早就摸清每个连接点，知道如何拆、如何运，在黑暗中配合得严丝合缝。想到这里，一阵寒意慢慢爬上来。

那一刻，她忽然意识到，这件事不是小偷能做的。那不是慌乱的盗窃，而更像一项被反复演练过的技术活。那些人，一定受过专业训练，懂结构、懂受力、熟练工具。这些训练有素的人，本可以在白天，在阳光下，用同样熟练的双手，换取一份稳定的收入。可这些技能却被用在这样危险、用在损害他人利益的夜里。

一旦这些人选择了这样的方式，几乎没有什么防护是真正可靠的。那些普通人眼里的保险防卫的铁栏杆、铁窗、铁锁，在他们眼里，只是等待拆解的构件。

阿碧这才明白，自己以为的安心，不过是一种错觉。她防备的，是有声响、有痕迹的危险；而真正不可防的，是那些安静、熟练、被现实推到黑夜中的人。他们不是“超人”，只是白天没有被需要的人。

房东得知后同样受惊，生怕吓走这个一向安分守信的租客，立刻联系焊接师傅。没过几天，新的铁栏杆重新焊好，一切恢复原样。那一夜铁栏消失的事，很快被焊点和铁锈覆盖，只像一场惊险而真实的梦。

此后，阿碧仍然会在睡前锁好门窗，只是心里再也没有从前那样安定。她开始明白，危险未必出现在你以为的地方；许多意外，正是在你自认万无一失时悄然发生。福与祸，往往并不分明，也无需铺垫。

有时，她也会想起那些夜行的人。动作娴熟，配合默契，在黑暗中谋生。她无法评判，只希望有一天，他们能将这身技术，用在更安全、更光亮的地方，为自己，也为他人，换取一份安稳。

## When not alert

The moment we relax is often the moment something goes wrong.

After Abi discovered her backpack lying on the neighbouring building's platform, she became especially cautious. Each night before going to bed, she checked every door and window, making sure they were all locked before allowing herself to sleep. The repeated routine felt almost ceremonial, a way of leaving her unease outside.

For a long time after that, nothing went missing. Life settled back into a steady rhythm. Still, on some nights, she heard faint rustling sounds outside. Pulling back the curtain, she could see silhouettes under the dim streetlight—figures moving like Spider-Man, using the metal bars to pass back and forth between the tightly packed buildings, so close they nearly touched. Their movements were smooth and practiced, almost silent.

Gradually, Abi came to believe that so long the doors and windows were locked, there would be no problem. The belief was confirmed again and again, eventually becoming certainty. She stopped worrying about whatever happened beyond the glass.

One morning at dawn, the light outside was still gray and flat. As usual, she opened the window after getting up, the cool air rushing in. After washing up, she

pushed open the back door and stepped onto the balcony to take in the clothes she had hung out the night before.

The moment she opened the door, she froze. The balcony was strangely bright—not warmed by sunlight, but exposed, as if something had been removed.

She bent down to gather the clothes and noticed a thin layer of dust on fabric that had already dried. Puzzled, she looked up. That single glance left her rooted to the spot.

The metal railings along the edge of the balcony were gone. They weren't bent or loosened—they had vanished completely. She stood there for several seconds before it sank in, stepping closer, then back, then forward again to be sure. One careless step and she would have fallen more than twenty meters. She didn't dare imagine the consequence. Her mind went blank; the word "stolen" hadn't even formed yet.

Those railings were heavy. She remembered when her neighbor had them installed—several workers laboring from morning until dusk, the shrill sound of welding echoing through the building, sparks flying, passersby below stopping to look up. It was work that required strength, skill, and experience.

And yet, overnight, they had disappeared—without a sound. No hammering. No sparks. No sign anyone had been disturbed. It was as if someone knew every joint, every stress point, exactly how to dismantle and remove the structure in complete darkness, working in perfect coordination. A chill slowly crept up her spine.

In that moment, she realized this was not something an ordinary thief could do. It wasn't a clumsy act of stealing, but a technical operation, clearly rehearsed. Whoever did this had professional training—they understood structure, load, tools. People like

that could have worked in daylight, under the sun, using the same skilled hands to earn a stable living. Yet those skills had been used instead in darkness, in a way that harmed others.

Once such people choose this path, almost no protection is truly reliable. What ordinary residents see as security—iron railings, window grilles, heavy locks—are, to them, merely assemblies waiting to be taken apart.

Only then did Abi understand that the sense of security she relied on had been an illusion. She had guarded against dangers that made noise and left traces. What proved impossible to guard against were those who were quiet, skilled, and pushed by reality into the night. They were not “supermen,” only people with no place for their abilities in daytime.

The landlord was equally shaken when he found out. Afraid of frightening away such a dependable tenant, he quickly hired welders. Within days, new railings were installed, and everything looked the same as before. The night the railings vanished was soon covered over by fresh weld marks and rust, like a vivid but fleeting dream.

After that, Abi continued locking her doors and windows every night. But the calm she once felt never fully returned. She had learned that danger does not always appear where you expect it. Many accidents arrive precisely when you believe nothing can go wrong. Fortune and misfortune are often inseparable, and rarely announced in advance.

At times, she still thought of those who moved through the city at night—skilled, coordinated, making a living in the dark. She found no simple way to judge them. She hoped only that one day, they might use their abilities in safer, brighter ways, to secure a living for themselves and a measure of peace for others as well.