

面馆里的真经：小雨第二次煮面的教训

第一次煮面之后，小雨觉得自己掌握了诀窍。第二个周六，她把上次的三步抄在一张便利贴上，贴在冰箱门边，还自己加了第四步：打一个鸡蛋。她信心满满地烧水、下面、计时，唯独忘了一件事——盐是凭手感放的。妈妈尝了一口，没说话，只是又加了半碗清水。那碗面咸得发苦，鸡蛋也煮散了，蛋花漂成一锅絮。

更糟的是捞面的时候，她的手背蹭到锅沿，烫出一道白印子。小雨这回真哭了，坐在厨房门口说：「取经太难了，我不取了。」妈妈什么也没反驳，牵着她下楼，走到巷口那家开了三十年的面馆。

面馆老板是个胖叔叔，一个人守一口大锅。妈妈问：「老李，你一天煮多少碗？」老李头也不抬：「两百碗上下，三十年了。」小雨在旁边掰手指算：一天两百碗，一年七万多碗，三十年——两百多万碗。她忽然不哭了，盯着那口锅看：老李捞面、甩水、浇头，每个动作快得像没过脑子，可每一碗都稳稳当当。

回家的路上小雨想明白一件事：书里走了十四年才取到的经，在巷口这口锅里也有。真经不一定在灵山，把同一件事做两百万遍，本身就是真经。她手背上的烫印两周才退，但那两周她每个周六都进厨房。

第三个周六，她端出一碗面，请妈妈尝。妈妈吃了一口，问：「这次正好，是怎么做到的？」小雨说：「盐用小勺放，眼睛盯着锅，手离锅沿远一点。」她说这话的时候特别平静，像老李甩那把漏勺。

The True Scripture Inside a Noodle Shop: Xiao Yu's Second Attempt

After her first attempt, Xiao Yu was sure she had cracked the code. On the second Saturday she copied those three steps onto a sticky note, taped it by the fridge door, and added a fourth step of her own: crack in an egg. Full of confidence she boiled the water, dropped the noodles, started the timer – and forgot one thing: the salt went in by feel. Mom took a bite, said nothing, and just added half a bowl of plain water. The noodles were bitterly salty, and the egg fell apart into wisps floating through the pot.

Worse, while lifting the noodles her knuckle brushed the rim of the pot and got a white burn mark. This time Xiao Yu really cried, sitting in the kitchen doorway: 'Fetching scriptures is too hard. I quit.' Mom didn't argue a word. She took her hand, walked downstairs, and led her to the noodle shop at the end of the alley that had been open for thirty years.

The owner, a portly uncle the family called Old Li, ran a single big pot all by himself. Mom asked: 'Old Li, how many bowls do you cook a day?' He didn't look up:

'About two hundred. Thirty years now.' Xiao Yu counted on her fingers beside her: two hundred a day, over seventy thousand a year, thirty years – more than two million bowls. She stopped crying just like that and stared at the pot: Old Li lifted the noodles, shook off the water, added the topping – every move so fast it looked thoughtless, yet every bowl came out steady.

On the way home Xiao Yu understood one thing: the scriptures the book says took fourteen years to fetch could also be found in that pot at the end of the alley. The true scripture isn't necessarily on Vulture Peak – doing the same one thing two million times is itself the scripture. The burn on her knuckle took two weeks to fade, and during those two weeks she went into the kitchen every single Saturday.

On the third Saturday she carried out a bowl and asked Mom to taste it. Mom took a bite and asked: 'This one is just right. How did you do it?' Xiao Yu said: 'Measure the salt with the small spoon, keep your eyes on the pot, keep your hands away from the rim.' She said it perfectly calmly, like Old Li shaking out his strainer.