把土翻醒

2026年4月4日 星期六 晴

今天爷爷正式收我当徒弟，教的第一课是种萝卜。他先把一小畦地指给我看：就从这儿开始，翻土、播种、浇水，一样一样来。

先翻土。铁锹立起来比我高，我把锹头踩进土里，压下去，土却只进去一点点，再抬起来，胳膊发酸。爷爷接过去，两脚一前一后，锹进去得又深又稳，一翻，土底下翻出几条蚯蚓，慌慌张张地钻。爷爷说：蚯蚓在，土就肥，别伤着它们。他翻过的土是松的，黑里带褐，一小块一小块，像没敲碎的冰糖。他递给我一把小锄，让我把土块敲碎。我敲了半天，手上磨出一道红印，土块还是有的大。爷爷蹲下来抓一把，指缝里漏下去的细土沙沙响：碎不碎不要紧，萝卜籽自己会找缝。

再播种。爷爷把萝卜籽摊在纸上，籽小得像沙子，棕黄色。他用手指在土上按出一条浅沟，两指深，说：种子埋深了不出，埋浅了干死，一指深正好。我捏着籽往沟里放，手抖，籽撒得东一颗西一颗。爷爷不嫌，跟在我后头，把挤成一堆的籽分开，说：苗跟苗也要有地方住，太挤了谁都长不好。

最后浇水。我抱着水管要往沟里冲，爷爷按住管口：水太急，会把籽冲跑。他把水开到最小，顺着沟边慢慢喂。水渗下去，土色变深，他让我蹲下看：看，土在喝水，喝到种子那儿就停了。

收工的时候太阳偏西，畦面平平的，看不出底下有种子。我问爷爷萝卜什么时候出来，他说：别催，它自己认得时候。我在日记里写：原来种菜最难的不是手上的活，是等。我把这一畦地画在日记本上，画了个箭头：种子在土底下，我在土上头等。

Waking the Soil Up

April 4, 2026, Saturday, sunny.

Today Grandpa formally took me on as his apprentice, and the first lesson was planting radishes. He pointed to a small bed and said: we start here — turning the soil, sowing the seeds, watering, one by one.

First, turning the soil. The spade stood taller than me when upright. I pressed the blade into the ground with my foot, and it barely went in; lifting it made my arms ache. Grandpa took it back, one foot before the other, and the spade went in deep and steady. One turn, and a few earthworms appeared from underneath, hurrying back down. Grandpa said: where there are worms, the soil is rich; do not hurt them. The turned soil was loose, dark brown, in small clumps like unbroken rock candy. He handed me a small hoe to break the clumps. I worked half a day and rubbed a red mark on my hand, and some clumps were still big. Grandpa squatted and grabbed a handful,

letting fine soil sift through his fingers with a soft sound: big or small does not matter; the radish seeds will find their own cracks.

Then sowing. Grandpa spread the radish seeds on paper, tiny as sand grains, brownish yellow. With his finger he pressed a shallow furrow two fingers deep, saying: buried too deep they will not rise, too shallow they dry out; one finger deep is right. I pinched the seeds and dropped them along the furrow, my hand shaking, scattering them here and there. Grandpa did not mind; he followed behind me, separating the seeds that had piled together, saying: seedlings also need room to live; too crowded and none of them grows well.

Finally, watering. I grabbed the hose to flush the furrow, and Grandpa pressed the nozzle: too strong a stream will wash the seeds away. He opened the water to the smallest flow and fed it slowly along the edge of the furrow. The water seeped down and the soil darkened. He made me squat and look: see, the soil is drinking, and it stops drinking when it reaches the seeds.

When we finished the sun leaned west. The bed looked flat and empty, with no sign of the seeds below. I asked when the radishes would come out, and Grandpa said: do not rush them; they know their own time. In my diary I wrote: the hardest part of gardening is not the work of the hands but the waiting. I drew this bed in my diary with an arrow: the seeds are under the soil, and I wait above it.

苗住得太挤了

2026年4月20日 星期一 阴

今天早上我蹲在畦边看了半天——萝卜苗拱出来了！两片小叶，嫩绿嫩绿的，叶尖上还顶着一粒没掉的土。我数了数，一排挤了几十棵，头挨着头，像早操排队挤成一团的同学。我喊爷爷来看，爷爷看完说：挤了，得间苗。我问什么叫间苗，他说：把太挤的苗拔掉，留下强的，给它们地方长。

我舍不得。每一棵都是我看着拱出来的，拔哪一棵我都心疼。爷爷先动手，蹲下去，手贴着土，捏住一棵弱苗的根边，轻轻一拧就起来了，根细细的，像一根白线。他说：拔苗不是害它，是救旁边那几棵。我学着拔，挑叶子黄的、茎细的，一棵一棵拧。拔下来的苗爷爷不让扔，拿到厨房给奶奶，奶奶洗了用蒜炒了一盘，说：自己间的苗，自己吃。我吃了三块，有点辣，但是香。奶奶说这盘苗比买的青菜金贵，因为每一棵都先在我手心里待过。

间完苗，一排苗稀稀的，风一吹各自摇各自的，好看多了。爷爷教浇水：水瓢舀水，别从苗头顶上淋，要顺着畦边浇，让水自己走到根那儿。我浇的时候蹲着看，水在土里走，走得不快，土色一寸一寸变深。爷爷说：浇叶面是给它洗澡，浇根才是给它饭吃，菜不喜欢天天洗澡。我数

了数，一畦浇了十二瓢，浇完畦边踩过的脚印都陷得深。水声咕咚咕咚的，像土在咽口水。

晚上我在日记里写：今天学会两个词，一个叫间苗，一个叫浇根。爷爷说苗跟苗要留地方住，我想人也一样，同桌跟我挤了，我给他让了半块橡皮。萝卜苗还小，我不催它们，每天放学去看一眼，看它们把地方住开。今天放学我特意绕到畦边，风里那几排苗摇得很整齐。

The Seedlings Live Too Crowded

April 20, 2026, Monday, cloudy.

This morning I squatted by the bed for a long time — the radish seedlings had pushed through! Two little leaves, pale green, with a grain of soil still on the tip of one. I counted: a whole row packed with dozens of them, head against head, like classmates crowding together in morning exercise lines. I called Grandpa to look. He looked and said: too crowded; they need thinning. I asked what thinning means. He said: pull out the crowded seedlings, keep the strong ones, and give them room to grow.

I could not bear it. Every one of them had come up under my eyes, and pulling any one hurt. Grandpa started first. He squatted, hand flat on the soil, gripped the edge of a weak seedling at its root, and gave a gentle twist — it came up, its root thin as a white thread. He said: pulling a seedling is not harming it; it is saving the few beside it. I learned to pull, choosing the ones with yellow leaves and thin stems, twisting one by one. Grandpa would not let us throw the pulled seedlings away; he carried them to the kitchen for Grandma, who washed them and stir-fried them with garlic, saying: seedlings you thinned yourself, eat them yourself. I ate three pieces; a little spicy, but fragrant.

After thinning, the row stood sparse, each seedling swaying on its own in the wind, much better to look at. Grandpa taught me watering: scoop water with the ladle, do not pour over the tops of the seedlings; water along the edge of the bed and let the water walk to the roots itself. While I watered I squatted and watched the water moving through the soil, not fast, the soil darkening inch by inch. Grandpa said: watering the leaves is giving the vegetables a bath; watering the roots is giving them a meal, and vegetables do not like bathing every day. I counted twelve ladles for the bed, and after watering the footprints by the edge sank deep.

In my diary tonight I wrote: today I learned two phrases, thinning and watering the roots. Grandpa said seedlings need room to live, and I think people are the same — my deskmate and I were crowded, so I gave him half my eraser. The radish seedlings are still small; I will not rush them. I will look once after school every day and watch them spread out into the room they have.

萝卜出土的那一刻

2026年5月18日 星期一 晴

今天放学，爷爷站在畦边冲我招手：可以拔了。我扔下书包跑过去。我种的萝卜叶子已经一大蓬，风一吹呼啦啦响，可土底下的萝卜什么样，我一点不知道，爷爷说萝卜是躲着长的，拔出来才算收成。

爷爷教我：别硬拽叶子，那样叶子断了萝卜还在土里。要攥住萝卜叶子靠下的地方，身子往后坐，先晃两下，让土松，再慢慢拔。我攥住第一棵，晃了两下，手腕往上一提，土裂开一条缝，白萝卜露出一个头，再一提，整个出来了，带着一兜子土，白生生，尾巴上几根细须。我举着它喊，声音都变了，爷爷在旁边点头，说第一棵拔得稳，手没歪。第二棵我拔歪了，萝卜断在半截土里，我愣住，爷爷拿小锄把它刨出来，说：歪的能吃，就是不好看，明年你就知道手要正。

拔完爷爷让我浇水，收过的畦要浇一遍水，他说这叫养地，地也累，拔了这么多菜，得给它喝够。我提着水桶一瓢一瓢浇，浇过的地颜色深，没浇的浅，畦面像一块拼起来的棋盘。浇完水，地里升起一股土腥气，好闻。蜻蜓低低地飞，落在畦边的竹竿上，一动不动。

晚上奶奶把萝卜洗了，切滚刀块，炖了一锅萝卜汤，奶白奶白的。我喝了两碗，连汤带萝卜吃得肚子圆。自己种的萝卜，甜里带一点点辣，跟菜场买的不一样。爷爷也喝了一碗，说：你这一畦，比我的还齐。我耳朵热热的。

我在日记里写：从4月4日翻土到今天，四十四天。翻土最累，间苗最心疼，拔萝卜最痛快。爷爷教的三样活我全学会了，还学会一样他没教的：等。下一畦我打算种胡萝卜，胡萝卜比萝卜更躲，我等着。

The Moment the Radish Came Out of the Soil

May 18, 2026, Monday, sunny.

After school today, Grandpa stood at the edge of the bed and waved me over: they are ready to pull. I dropped my schoolbag and ran. The leaves of my radishes had grown into big tufts, rustling in the wind, but what the radishes looked like under the soil I had no idea. Grandpa said the radish grows in hiding; the harvest only counts once it is pulled out.

Grandpa taught me: do not yank the leaves, or the leaves will break and the radish stays below. Grip the leaves low, near the root, sit your body back, shake twice to loosen the soil, then pull slowly. I gripped the first one, shook it twice, and lifted with my wrist. The soil cracked open, a white radish showed its head, and one more lift brought the whole thing out, carrying a scoop of soil, white and clean, a few thin whiskers on its tail. I held it up and shouted, my voice changing. On the

second one I pulled crooked and the radish snapped halfway in the soil. I froze. Grandpa dug it out with the small hoe and said: a crooked one is still good to eat, just not pretty; next year your hands will know to stay straight.

After pulling, Grandpa made me water. The harvested bed needs one watering, he said; it is called resting the soil. The soil is tired too — it gave up so many vegetables and must drink its fill. I carried the bucket and poured ladle by ladle. The watered ground turned dark and the dry ground stayed pale, so the bed looked like a chessboard pieced together. After watering, an earthy smell rose from the garden, and it smelled good.

At night Grandma washed the radishes, cut them into rolling chunks, and stewed a pot of radish soup, milky white. I drank two bowls and ate until my belly was round. The radishes I grew myself taste sweet with a little spice, different from the ones bought at the market. Grandpa drank a bowl too and said: your bed is even neater than mine. My ears went hot.

In my diary I wrote: from turning the soil on April 4 to today, forty-four days. Turning the soil was the hardest work, thinning the hardest on the heart, pulling radishes the most joyful. I learned all three skills Grandpa taught, plus one he did not teach: waiting. For the next bed I plan carrots. Carrots hide even deeper than radishes. I will wait.

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