周六的果盘是我和妈妈一起做的

十一月八日，星期六，晴。早上八点多，妈妈提着布袋子问我：今天中午的水果沙拉，你自己做行不行？我嘴上说行，心里其实没底——沙拉酱我会挤，水果可从没挑过。妈妈把果篮递给我，说挑水果的事也归我。我们去了菜场。水果摊上苹果堆成小山，我专挑红得好看的，妈妈拿过去闻了闻，又放回堆里，挑了几个颜色淡些的，说闻着有香气的才面，红得发亮的不少是打了蜡的。挑橙子要捏，紧实但按下去有一点点弹的才好，太硬的干，太软的过了头。香蕉要挑皮上带芝麻点的，妈妈问我知不知道那是什么，我说不知道，她说那是熟透的记号，甜。我捏着那把带点的香蕉，觉得自己像学会了什么暗语。

回到家开始切。妈妈先把苹果皮削掉，示范怎么切块：刀要稳，手指蜷起来抵住刀身，别伸食指。我第一刀就切歪了，块大一块小一块。她不重切，说摆盘能补救。她切梨的时候刀刃在砧板上嗒嗒响，像小马蹄子；切圣女果最利索，刀尖一点，两半落在砧板上，汁水不外溅。苹果切好要泡进淡盐水，不然一会儿就锈成褐色，这个也是妈妈教的。香蕉最后才切，她说香蕉先切会被沙拉酱沤软。

摆盘我把玻璃碗搬到桌上，按颜色一层层码：苹果垫底，橙子瓣围着边，香蕉片搭在上面，圣女果对半点缀。沙拉酱绕着圈淋下去，白线像丝带。妈妈站在旁边说，好看也是味道的一半。奶奶从屋里出来，先递给她第一勺，她眯着眼说甜。爸爸凑过来抢了一大叉，说明天还吃，我嫌他贪，心里已经在排明天的搭配了。

洗完刀和砧板，右手腕还有点酸。我把果盘收进冰箱，酸酸的感觉留在手上，像自己真的会做一样东西了。

The Fruit Bowl on Saturday: A Fruit Salad Made With Mom

November 8th, Saturday, sunny. A little past eight in the morning, Mom carried her cloth bag and asked me: can you make the fruit salad yourself today? I said yes, though inside I was not sure. I knew how to squeeze the dressing, but I had never picked fruit. Mom handed me the fruit basket and said the picking was mine too. We went to the market. Apples were piled into little hills at the stall, and I chose the reddest ones. Mom took them, sniffed, and put them back, picking paler ones instead, saying apples smell right before they taste soft, and the shiny red ones often wear a coat of wax. Oranges must be squeezed: firm with the smallest give, because hard ones are dry and soft ones are past their best. For bananas, look for the sesame speckles on the skin. Mom asked if I knew what they were. I did not. She said they are the marks of full ripeness, and they mean sweetness. I carried that bunch of speckled bananas feeling like I had learned a secret code.

Back home we started cutting. Mom peeled the apples first and showed me how to dice them: keep the knife steady, curl the fingers against the blade, never point the index finger. My first cut went crooked, the pieces big and small. She did not recut them, saying plating can make it up. When she cut the pear, the blade went clip-clop

on the board like a small horse's hooves; her cherry tomato cuts were the quickest, a tap of the knife tip, halves landing on the board without spilling juice. Apple pieces go into light salt water or they rust brown, another thing Mom taught me. Bananas are cut last, she said, or the dressing makes them mushy.

For plating I carried the glass bowl to the table and layered by color: apples on the bottom, orange segments around the rim, banana slices on top, tomato halves for dots. The dressing went round and round, a white ribbon. Mom, standing nearby, said that looking good is half of tasting good. Grandma came out of her room and got the first spoonful; she narrowed her eyes and said it was sweet. Dad grabbed a big forkful and said he wanted it again tomorrow. I called him greedy, but inside I was already planning tomorrow's mix.

After washing the knife and the board, my right wrist still ached a little. I put the fruit basket away in the fridge, the sore feeling still on my hands, as if I had truly learned to make one thing.

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