小松鼠的桃宴日记

我是一只小松鼠，住在山顶桃树旁边的树洞里。桃树是小猴子种的，我替他干过不少活：风把桃子吹落，我替他从草窝里捡回来；虫子爬上树干，我替一只一只捉掉。不是白干，小猴子年年给我留最软的桃。可这年夏天发生的事，让我觉得，光收桃，怪不好意思的。

桃熟那天，小猴子摘了满满一筐，见谁送谁。他给我送两个的时候，我正把去年藏的松子往新树洞里搬。我数了数，一共三十七颗，颗颗饱满，我打算谁也不给。小猴子放下桃子说，周六上山吃桃宴，记得来。我嘴上说好，心里想，桃宴就是吃桃，我带松子去干什么。

周六我还是去了。桃宴摆在桃树下，石桌铺了大树叶，桃子切成一瓣一瓣，一人一份。小兔子带了一小篮萝卜条，老山羊带了一壶热茶。就我两手空空。小猴子把最大的一瓣递给我，说去年要不是你捡桃子、捉虫，这树还不知什么样呢。我捧着那瓣桃，脸比桃还红。我吃的哪里是桃，分明是白拿。

那瓣桃特别甜，甜得我回家翻出三十七颗松子，数出二十颗，装进小竹篮。第二天我送给小猴子十颗，给小兔子五颗，剩下的给老山羊和路上遇见的刺猬。奇怪，松子分出去，我一点也不心疼，反而想明天再分点什么。

再下个周六，我在桃树下办了自己的会，叫松子宴。我请了六个朋友，小猴子带桃子来，小兔子带萝卜糕来，老山羊的茶壶又坐上了石头。大家吃得满嘴香，说树洞里开宴头一回。我站在树洞口招呼大家，尾巴翘得高高的。

后来山顶有了规矩：谁有好东西，就分一分；分了东西，下个周末接着办。桃树还是那棵桃树，小猴子还是那个小猴子，可山上的周末再没冷清过。我如今有松子就分，帮桃树捉虫也更起劲。捉虫的时候我想，分享这事，跟藏松子正相反，越往外拿，洞里越满。

The Peach Banquet Diary of Little Squirrel

I am a little squirrel, and my drey is in the tree next to the peach tree on the hilltop. The little monkey planted the peach tree, and I did my share of work for him: when the wind blew peaches down, I picked them out of the grass for him; when worms climbed the trunk, I plucked them off one by one. It was not for nothing, for the little monkey saved the softest peaches for me every year. But something happened that summer which made me feel that just taking peaches was rather embarrassing.

The day the peaches ripened, the little monkey picked a full basket and gave them to everyone he met. When he brought me two, I was moving my cached pine nuts from last year into a new drey. I counted them: thirty-seven, every one plump, and I had decided to give none away. The little monkey set down the peaches and said, peach banquet on the hill Saturday, do come. I said yes with my mouth, while thinking inside that a peach banquet means eating peaches, so what would I bring pine nuts for.

I went on Saturday after all. The banquet was set under the peach tree, the stone table lined with big leaves, peaches cut into slices, one portion each. Little Rabbit brought a small basket of carrot sticks, and old Goat brought a pot of hot tea. Only I came empty-handed. The little monkey handed me the biggest slice and said, if you had not picked up the fallen peaches and caught the worms last year, who knows how this tree would look. I held that slice and my face went redder than the peach. What I was eating was not peach at all; it was plainly taking something for nothing.

That slice was especially sweet, so sweet that when I got home I dug out my thirty-seven pine nuts, counted twenty into a small bamboo basket. The next day I gave ten to the little monkey, five to Little Rabbit, and the rest to old Goat and the hedgehog I met on the road. Strange: giving the nuts away did not hurt one bit. Instead I found myself wanting to share something again tomorrow.

The Saturday after, I held my own gathering under the peach tree, called the pine nut banquet. I invited six friends. The little monkey brought peaches, Little Rabbit brought carrot cake, and the teapot of old Goat sat on the stone again. Everyone ate with mouths full of flavor, saying it was the first banquet ever held at a drey. I stood at the entrance of my drey greeting everyone, my tail held high.

After that the hilltop had a rule: whoever has something good shares it, and whoever has shared hosts the next gathering. The peach tree is still the same tree, the little monkey still the same monkey, but the weekends on the hill have never been quiet since. Now whenever I have pine nuts I share them, and I catch worms for the peach tree with even more energy. While catching them I think: sharing is the opposite of hiding pine nuts. The more you take out, the fuller the hole becomes.