苹果的心事

果盘里住着一个红苹果，他每天最开心的事，就是听小主人天天讲学校里的新鲜事。可是有一天，小主人拿起刀，把他切成了两半。那一刀亮亮的，一点都不疼，就是眼前忽然开阔了，他看见了自己白白嫩嫩的内心，还有点不好意思。

小主人把他放在盘子里，转身去写作业。红苹果闲着没事，跟另一半聊天。聊着聊着，他发现自己不对劲：白白的脸正在一点一点变黄，黄了又变褐，像旧照片。他慌了，心想我是不是坏了，我是不是变丑了，等会儿小主人还愿意吃我吗。另一半安慰他，别急，我也在变。两个苹果对着叹气，盘子里安静极了。

小主人的妈妈走进厨房，一眼看见了两个变褐的苹果。她咦了一声，笑了，把苹果端到水池边，用温水轻轻冲了冲，又拿一个小盘子把它们扣住。红苹果眼前一黑，心想完了，这下更没人看见我了。结果他听见小主人跑过来问，妈妈，苹果怎么褐了，是不是坏了。

妈妈说，没坏，这是氧化。红苹果竖起耳朵听。妈妈的声音像讲课本又像讲故事：苹果的肉里住着氧化酶，刀一开，肉碰着空气，氧化酶和氧气一拉手，肉就慢慢褐了，跟铁钉生锈是亲戚。褐了也能吃，就是不好看。想让苹果不变色，要么挤点柠檬汁，要么像现在这样扣上盘子，少碰空气。红苹果听得入了迷，原来他的变色不是变坏，是跟空气拉了一次手。

小主人听完，揭开小盘子看了看，说虽然褐了一点，还是他的苹果。他咬了一大口，红苹果甜得眯起眼睛。他想，原来变褐不可怕，可怕的是没人告诉你为什么。

后来红苹果的兄弟姐妹们被切开时，都不慌了。他们排着队等柠檬汁，像等一场小雨。小主人如今切完苹果总记得扣盘子，因为他妈妈说过，跟空气少拉手，就多一分白净。红苹果觉得这一家子都学了科学，连果盘都变得讲道理了。

The Secret Worry of the Apple

In the fruit plate lived a red apple, and his happiest hour each day was listening to his little owner talk about the news at school. Then one day the little owner took up the knife and cut him in half. The blade shone, and it did not hurt at all; only the world suddenly opened wide, and he saw his own white and tender heart, and felt a little shy.

The little owner set him on a plate and went off to do homework. The red apple, with nothing to do, chatted with his other half. As they talked, he noticed something wrong: his white face was turning yellow bit by bit, and the yellow was turning brown, like an old photograph. He panicked. Was he spoiled? Was he ugly now? Would the little owner still want to eat him. His other half comforted him, saying do not worry, I am changing too. The two apples sighed at each other, and the plate was very quiet.

The mother of the little owner walked into the kitchen and spotted the two

browned apples at once. She said oh, and laughed, carried them to the sink, rinsed them gently with warm water, and covered them with a small plate. The world of the red apple went dark, and he thought, now nobody will ever see me. Then he heard the little owner run up and ask, mother, why did the apples go brown, are they spoiled.

His mother said they are not spoiled, this is oxidation. The red apple pricked up his ears. Her voice sounded half like a textbook and half like a story: inside apple flesh live oxidizing enzymes; when the knife opens the apple and the flesh meets the air, the enzyme and the oxygen hold hands, and the flesh slowly browns, a cousin of a rusting nail. Browned apples can still be eaten, they just do not look pretty. If you want an apple not to change, squeeze on some lemon juice, or cover it with a plate like now, so it meets less air. The red apple listened, spellbound. So his browning was not going bad; it was just holding hands with the air once.

The little owner finished listening, lifted the small plate to look, and said brown or not, they were still his apples. He took a big bite, and the red apple squinted with sweetness. He thought: browning is not what should be feared; what should be feared is that nobody tells you why.

After that, when the brothers and sisters of the red apple were cut open, none of them panicked. They lined up waiting for the lemon juice, like waiting for a light rain. The little owner now always remembers to cover the plate after cutting, because his mother said the fewer handshakes with the air, the more whiteness stays. The red apple felt that the whole family had learned science, and even the fruit plate had become reasonable.