我第一次给菠萝削皮

10月12日 星期六 阴转晴

今天我家来了一个菠萝，个头不大，屁股圆圆的，站都站不稳，往台面上一放就歪倒，像个喝醉的小胖墩。我自告奋勇要削它，妈妈把水果刀递给我，自己退到一边当观众。

第一刀我就切歪了。刀顺着菠萝转，皮削下来厚一道薄一道，掉在案板上像一条断了色的彩带。削完一看，菠萝身上还留着一块块没去净的黄皮，活像没洗干净的脸。这还不算糟，最难的是挖眼。那些黑眼斜着排，我照着妈妈的样子用刀尖去挑，挑出来的洞一个深一个浅，菠萝身上顿时全是麻子。我有点灰心，把刀放下，说它这辈子毁了。

妈妈走过来，没笑话我，只把菠萝转了个方向，说：眼睛不能一个个挖，要顺着它们排的斜线，两刀斜着夹出一个三角口，整条眼沟就出来了。我试了试，果然，刀尖斜插下去再斜挑上来，一条眼连着一条眼，整整齐齐地揭下来，菠萝身上留下一道螺旋的沟，比妈妈平时削的还好看。原来菠萝的眼不是乱长的，是排好队等着被请走的。

切好的块我主动泡了盐水。我记住了上次的教训，掐着表泡满二十分钟，一分钟都没少。等待的时候我在盆边转了三圈，想伸手又缩回来，怕自己前功尽弃。捞起来请妈妈先尝，她咬了一口说甜。我再尝，确实甜，甜里还带一点我自己劳动的味道，说不上来，就是比平时买的罐头菠萝多一层东西。

晚上我在日记里写：今天我把一个麻子脸菠萝救成了螺旋纹菠萝。削菠萝跟写作业差不多，蛮干不行，得找到它排队的规律。妈妈听见我这么说，从厨房探出头来，说这比喻用得她无话可说。

The First Time I Peeled a Pineapple

October 12th, Saturday, cloudy then sunny.

A pineapple came to our house today. Not big, with a round bottom, unable to stand straight: set on the counter it tipped over like a tipsy little chubby thing. I volunteered to peel it. Mom handed me the fruit knife and stepped back to be the audience.

My first cut went crooked. The knife traveled around the fruit, skin coming off thick in places, thin in others, falling onto the board like a ribbon with its color broken. When I finished, patches of yellow skin still clung to the fruit, like a face that had not been washed properly. That was not the worst part. The hardest job was digging out the eyes. They sat in slanting rows. I copied Mom, prying at them with the knife tip, and the holes came out one deep one shallow, turning the pineapple into a pockmarked face. My heart sank. I put the knife down and announced that its life was ruined.

Mom walked over without laughing. She just turned the pineapple a quarter turn and said: do not dig the eyes one by one. Follow the slanting lines they form, two cuts making a V, and the whole eye-groove lifts out in one strip. I tried it. Sure enough: knife tip angled in, angled out, one eye joining the next, coming off in neat strips, leaving a spiral groove on the fruit, prettier than Mom's usual cutting. It turned out pineapple eyes do not grow in disorder. They stand in queues, waiting to be escorted away.

I soaked the pieces in salt water on my own, remembering last time's lesson, and kept them in for a full twenty minutes, not one second short. I fished one out and asked Mom to taste first. She bit and said sweet. I tasted too. It was sweet, and the sweetness carried something else, the taste of my own labor, hard to name, just one layer more than canned pineapple.

At night I wrote in my diary: today I rescued a pockmarked pineapple and turned it into a spiral-patterned one. Peeling a pineapple is a lot like doing homework. Brute force does not work. You have to find the pattern in which it stands in line. Mom heard this from the kitchen and poked her head out to say the comparison left her speechless.