那个酸掉牙的菠萝

10月19日 星期六 小雨

今天妈妈从菜场拎回一个菠萝，外皮黄得发亮，按一按还软，卖菠萝的摊主拍着胸脯说甜。结果这个菠萝从头到尾都在撒谎，它是我吃过最酸的菠萝，没有之一。

先说削皮。刀刚划开一道口子，香味就冲出来了，浓得黏鼻子，闻起来是百分之百的甜。爸爸一边削一边宣布，今晚这个菠萝管够。他削得飞快，皮削下来，肉黄得像小太阳，眼也挖得干干净净。谁也没想到，外表和香味全是假话。

切好装盆，盐照放，水照倒，二十分钟一分没少。盐水是请过菠萝了，可它根本不听。第一块是妈妈试的，她咬下去脸色一变，把那块举给大家看，说你们谁也别想逃。我凑上去舔了一小口，舌头立刻像被电了一下，整颗牙都酸倒了，赶紧灌了半杯温水。爸爸不信邪，咬了一大口，接下来三秒钟他一言不发，然后猛地跳起来去找糖罐，那样子像被烫了脚。

全家对着盆里的菠萝发愁。倒掉可惜，吃又吃不下去。弟弟还不服气，又去舔了一口，结果整张脸皱成一团，像被捏住的橡皮鸭子，逗得大家本来愁着也笑出了声。最后还是奶奶有办法。她把菠萝全倒进小锅，加半碗水和好几勺白糖，小火慢慢熬，边熬边搅。二十分钟后揭开锅盖，酸甜味变成了果酱香，酸脾气全被糖收走了。果酱抹在馒头上，我一次吃了两片，谁还敢说这个菠萝不行。

晚上我在日记里写：今天明白了一个道理，闻着甜的未必吃着甜，看着酸的也未必没用。一个酸掉牙的菠萝，让奶奶一锅熬成了果酱。它不是不好，只是还没遇到对的锅。妈妈在旁边补了一句：也不只是菠萝，还有挑菠萝的妈妈。我们都笑了。

The Pineapple That Set My Teeth on Edge

October 19th, Saturday, light rain.

Today Mom carried home a pineapple from the market. Its skin shone yellow, it gave softly to the thumb, and the stall owner thumped his chest swearing it was sweet. As it turned out, that pineapple lied from start to finish. It is the sourest pineapple I have ever eaten, bar none.

Start with peeling. The moment the knife opened a slit, the fragrance rushed out, thick enough to stick to the nose, smelling one hundred percent sweet. Dad announced while peeling that tonight there would be more than enough pineapple. He worked fast. The skin came off, the flesh was yellow as a little sun, every eye cleanly removed. No one guessed that both the looks and the fragrance were lies.

The pieces went into a bowl. Salt added, water poured, a full twenty minutes, not one missing. The salt water had indeed invited the pineapple to behave, but it refused to listen. Mom tasted the first piece. Her face changed, and she held the

piece up for everyone: none of you can escape this one. I leaned in and licked a tiny corner. My tongue got an electric shock at once, my whole jaw went sour, and I had to chase it with half a glass of warm water. Dad would not believe it and bit off a big piece. For three seconds he said nothing, then sprang up and went hunting for the sugar jar, looking as if his feet had been scalded.

The whole family stared at the bowl in despair. Throwing it away was a pity; eating it was impossible. Grandma found the answer in the end. She tipped all the pineapple into a small pot, added half a bowl of water and several spoonfuls of sugar, and simmered it slowly, stirring as it went. Twenty minutes later, lifting the lid, the sour-sweet smell had become jam fragrance, the sour temper entirely collected by the sugar. Spread on steamed buns, I ate two slices in one sitting. Who now says this pineapple is no good.

At night I wrote in my diary: today I understood that what smells sweet is not always what tastes sweet, and what looks useless is not always useless. A pineapple sour enough to set teeth on edge became jam in Grandma’s one pot. It was not bad. It simply had not met the right pot yet. Mom chimed in from beside me: not only pineapples, but also the mother who picks them. We all laughed.