Chickens and my magical garden

Are you a peasant? Do you know how to grow cucumber? Have you ever carried 50 pounds of soil from 1st floor to 8th floor? I am! I do! I have!

Several years ago, our family moved into a new penthouse apartment on the top of the building with a garden. My first impression of the garden was that it was tiny and desolate. The garden form is a rectangle, with one swing set the right corner and a small field in left corner. Wild yellow plants grew everywhere and Japanese creeper conquered the wall of the entrance, to announce that they are the garden protectors. Rotten leaves, broken table, and piles of ash showed that this garden had been obsolete for months. “People in this city usually don’t have much time. They are busy. We need to rebuild this garden,” my dad murmured.

That afternoon on a warm summer day, my dad and I carried brooms and hoes to the garden and started our journey to this magical garden. Our neighbor was an old couple. The grandpa, (forgive me, I don’t know his name), is a genius at gardening. Compared to other bald buildings, his garden is full of green, like an emerald in a desert. He noticed that we were new here and helped us voluntarily. He jumped over the wall between our gardens like a squirrel.

“You see, this pawpaw tree is useless for there is not enough soil in the garden. It can’t grow anymore,” grandpa said. “Cut it into pieces and bury them.”

“How could I cut this little tree trunk? It is too dense!” I said.

Grandpa went back to his house and carried a chopper with him, “Take this and cut the trunk from above.” After three hours of work, I was worn out. It is not finished. The other day I went back to the garden and miracle happened! Someone did the work for me. It must be him, the grandpa.

In the next several months, my dad and I were trying to collect bags and bags of soil and backpacked them to the 8th floor. Meanwhile, we started to grow cucumber, sponge cucumber, tomato, lettuce, strawberry, chili, bitter gourd, and pea… Our lovely grandpa helped us a lot while we grew the vegetables: how to filter soil, how to transplant towel gourd, how to cure the plants. By the end of the summer, our garden was full of fruits and vegetables. One night in the summer, my parents were lying on the folding bed and enjoying the cool wind.

“We already have so many vegetables. If we could have chickens, then we wouldn’t need to buy eggs anymore,” my mom said.

“Then let’s do it!” my dad jumped up.

The coming autumn, my uncle brought us some fertilized eggs. My mum was laughing at my dad, “This is just a joke. I am not going to raise chicken.”

“Never mind. I will take care of them. Come and see these eggs! Are there any difference with eggs we eat everyday?” dad asked.

“I see some dark dots on the top,” I replied.

“Yes, those are zygotes. Isn’t that amazing?” my dad said.

My dad put them under the light and covered them gently with soft cloth.

“They should be preserved under 40 Celsius degree for 24 days. There is even a saying about it. After 24 days, we could have chickens!” my dad smiled. I smiled back but did not take it serious since I doubted whether he was able to bring them out alive.

Of all the fourteen eggs, four of them survived. Others were dumped or inadvertently killed by my parents-we thought they were rotten eggs and broke them. I didn’t catch the moment when little chickens were coming out of their shells but I did see their cute faces. They were hiding under wings of a grown-up chicken we bought from market. When I was trying to touch them, their adoptive mother was unhappy, making some deep noises. They were so tender and soft and trembling in my hands. On their forehead were some white lines, which would latter be replaced by pea combs. Their feather is bright and smooth and claws are transparent.

They grew up very fast, but comparatively slower than those in the factory. After three months, it is hard to tell the difference between them and their mother. Everyday after school, I volunteered to feed them. Once they heard any sound outside the door, they were clucking continually to welcome me. Obviously, they had no idea about queuing. What I saw was several meatballs trying to push against each other and stay as close as possible to the door. What I usually do is sitting on a chair and teasing them with yolk. Their favorite food is eggs! Sometimes, I put rice right under my legs. They were afraid of me but could not reject hunger. Chickens are like human: some are brave and some are timid. There was always one brave chicken who stretched out her head like a turtle, looking up at my face. Once she thought it was safe, she made up her mind and pecked rice with lightening speed. At the right moment, I stretched my arms, pretending I am a huge eagle. She was scared and jumped up. I laughed so badly. What a stupid chicken.

I liked my chickens very much. However, in my eyes, they were just chickens, stupid chickens, until one day I was told that we were about to eat them.

My dad came to me. “ Longhao, you need to pick a chicken and kill it. We are going to make lunch out of it.”

“No. I am scared.” I replied.

“Scared of what? Be a man. This is just a chicken!” my dad was laughing at me.

“No. At least I fed them before. I don’t want to do this.”

My dad went to the garden and came back with one chicken in his hand. I escaped back to my bedroom and closed the door. I did not want to slaughter a chicken because I knew what happened to them. I need to pluck the feather from the chicken’s neck, hold a sharp knife on my right hand and slice the knife with one fast and power motion. The chicken struggled for her last minute of life. It is scary to see bleeding.

That day, we had a great lunch. The homemade chicken tasted very good.

“Dad, could we have chicken every week?” I asked.

How I revise this essay

For this version, I add an anecdote about the grandpa, change the beginning with three questions so that it is more breathe-taking and expend the ending of why I am afraid of killing a chicken. I also use dialogue to end my essay bluntly. I also corrected many errors and words in my essay, add and delete some sentences. This essay has only one topic-garden and the most important part of the garden is chicken.