The vegetable fight, a Chinese short story for HSK 4

Sūn Lán's little boy cries at anything green on his plate. Every dinner is a fight, until one tired evening she tries something new.

你小时候有不爱吃的东西吗？后来怎么爱吃了？我有一个吃饭的故事！
Nǐ xiǎo shíhou yǒu bú ài chī de dōngxi ma? Hòulái zěnme ài chī le? Wǒ yǒu yí ge chī fàn de gùshi!
Was there a food you hated as a child? How did you learn to like it? I have a story about eating!

我儿子小时候不吃青菜。一口都不吃。盘子里有绿的东西，他就哭。
Wǒ érzi xiǎo shíhou bù chī qīngcài. Yì kǒu dōu bù chī. Pánzi li yǒu lǜ de dōngxi, tā jiù kū.
When my son was small, he did not eat vegetables. Not one bite. Something green on his plate, and he cried.

每次吃晚饭都像打仗。我说："吃青菜！"他说："不！"我爱人说："别管他，饿了就吃。"可是他从来没有饿到想吃青菜。
Měi cì chī wǎnfàn dōu xiàng dǎzhàng. Wǒ shuō: "Chī qīngcài!" Tā shuō: "Bù!" Wǒ àiren shuō: "Bié guǎn tā, è le jiù chī." Kěshì tā cónglái méiyǒu è dào xiǎng chī qīngcài.
Every dinner was a fight. I said: "Eat your vegetables!" He said: "No!" My husband said: "Leave him. He will eat when he is hungry." But he was never hungry enough for vegetables.

一天晚上，我太累了，没有力气再吵了。所以我换了一个办法。
Yì tiān wǎnshang, wǒ tài lèi le, méiyǒu lìqi zài chǎo le. Suǒyǐ wǒ huànle yí ge bànfǎ.
One evening I was very tired. I had no strength left for a fight. So I tried something different.

你猜，我做了什么？
Nǐ cāi, wǒ zuòle shénme?
Guess what I did?

我只在他的盘子里放了肉和米饭，一点儿青菜也没放。青菜都放在我和我爱人的盘子里。
Wǒ zhǐ zài tā de pánzi li fàngle ròu hé mǐfàn, yìdiǎnr qīngcài yě méi fàng. Qīngcài dōu fàng zài wǒ hé wǒ àiren de pánzi li.
I put only meat and rice on his plate, and no vegetables at all. All the vegetables went on my plate and my husband's.

儿子看看我们的盘子，问："为什么我没有？"我说："这是大人的青菜。你太小了，小孩子不能吃。"
Érzi kànkan wǒmen de pánzi, wèn: "Wèi shénme wǒ méiyǒu?" Wǒ shuō: "Zhè shì dàrén de qīngcài. Nǐ tài xiǎo le, xiǎoháizi bù néng chī."
My son looked at our plates. He asked: "Why don't I have any?" I said: "These are grown-up vegetables. You are too small. Children can't eat them."

我爱人一下子就明白了。他吃了一口，说："好吃，真好吃！大人的青菜！"他看起来特别高兴。他要是去演戏，一定演得很像。
Wǒ àiren yíxiàzi jiù míngbai le. Tā chīle yì kǒu, shuō: "Hǎochī, zhēn hǎochī! Dàrén de qīngcài!" Tā kàn qǐlái tèbié gāoxìng. Tā yàoshi qù yǎnxì, yídìng yǎn de hěn xiàng.
My husband understood at once. He took a bite and said: "So good! Grown-up vegetables!" He looked very happy. He is a good actor when he wants to be.

儿子吃饭的时候一直看着我们，什么也没说。你猜，他第二天晚上做了什么？
Érzi chī fàn de shíhou yìzhí kànzhe wǒmen, shénme yě méi shuō. Nǐ cāi, tā dì-èr tiān wǎnshang zuòle shénme?
My son watched us through the whole dinner and said nothing. What do you think he did the next evening?

我去厨房拿汤的时候，他从我的盘子里拿了一片青菜，一下子放进了嘴里。我在厨房门口看见了，什么也没说。
Wǒ qù chúfáng ná tāng de shíhou, tā cóng wǒ de pánzi li nále yí piàn qīngcài, yíxiàzi fàngjìnle zuǐ li. Wǒ zài chúfáng ménkǒu kànjiàn le, shénme yě méi shuō.
When I went to the kitchen for the soup, he took a piece of green from my plate and put it in his mouth, fast. I saw it from the kitchen door, and I said nothing.

第二天他拿了两片。后来他开始问："妈，我现在够大了吗？"我总是说："还不行。最多吃一片。"
Dì-èr tiān tā nále liǎng piàn. Hòulái tā kāishǐ wèn: "Mā, wǒ xiànzài gòu dà le ma?" Wǒ zǒngshì shuō: "Hái bù xíng. Zuìduō chī yí piàn."
The day after that he took two. Soon he began to ask: "Ma, am I big enough now?" I always said: "Not yet. One piece at most."

一片变成两片，两片变成一小碗。到了十岁，他吃的青菜比他爸爸还多，每次我都说：“那是因为你现在大了。”

Yí piàn biànchéng liǎng piàn, liǎng piàn biànchéng yì xiǎo wǎn. Dàole shí suì, tā chī de qīngcài bǐ tā bàba hái duō, měi cì wǒ dōu shuō: “Nà shì yīnwèi nǐ xiànzài dà le.”

One piece became two, and two became a small bowl. At ten he ate more vegetables than his father, and every time I said: “That's because you're big now.”

现在我儿子是大人了，在上海工作。他有一个女儿，叫朵朵，今年六岁。你猜，朵朵不吃什么？

Xiànzài wǒ érzi shì dàrén le, zài Shànghǎi gōngzuò. Tā yǒu yí ge nǚ'ér, jiào Duǒduo, jīnnián liù suì. Nǐ cāi, Duǒduo bù chī shénme?

Now my son is grown up and works in Shànghǎi, and he has a daughter, Duǒduo. She is six. Guess what Duǒduo does not eat?

青菜。一口都不吃。盘子里有绿的东西，她就哭。

Qīngcài. Yì kǒu dōu bù chī. Pánzi li yǒu lǜ de dōngxi, tā jiù kū.

Vegetables. Not one bite. Something green on her plate, and she cries.

上个星期，我儿子给我打电话，听起来很累：“妈，朵朵每天吃饭都像打仗。我小时候是不是什么都吃？你当年是怎么管我的？”

Shàng ge xīngqī, wǒ érzi gěi wǒ dǎ diànhuà, tīng qǐlái hěn lèi: “Mā, Duǒduo měi tiān chī fàn dōu xiàng dǎzhàng. Wǒ xiǎo shíhou shì bu shì shénme dōu chī? Nǐ dāngnián shì zěnme guǎn wǒ de?”

Last week my son called me. He sounded very tired: “Ma, every dinner with Duǒduo is a fight. I ate everything as a child, didn't I? How did you handle me back then?”

他忘了！他真的以为他一直爱吃青菜。他还对朋友说：“我小时候从来不挑食。”

Tā wàng le! Tā zhēn de yǐwéi tā yìzhí ài chī qīngcài. Tā hái duì péngyou shuō: “Wǒ xiǎo shíhou cónglái bù tiāoshí.”

He has forgotten! He really thinks he always loved vegetables. He even tells his friends: “I was never a picky child.”

我爱人坐在我旁边，用手捂着嘴，笑得一点儿声音都没有。

Wǒ àiren zuò zài wǒ pángbiān, yòng shǒu wǔzhe zuǐ, xiào de yìdiǎnr shēngyīn dōu méiyǒu.

Next to me, my husband was laughing without a sound, with his hand over his mouth.

我可以把整个故事都告诉儿子。可是他知道了一定会笑，朵朵一看就明白了。所以我只告诉了他答案。

Wǒ kěyǐ bǎ zhěnggè gùshi dōu gàosu érzi. Kěshì tā zhīdào le yídìng huì xiào, Duǒduo yí kàn jiù míngbai le. Suǒyǐ wǒ zhǐ gàosule tā dá'àn.

I could have told my son the whole story. But he would laugh, and Duǒduo would see through it at once. So I gave him only the answer.

儿子说：“妈？你在听吗？我该怎么办？”你猜，我说了什么？

Érzi shuō: “Mā? Nǐ zài tīng ma? Wǒ gāi zěnme bàn?” Nǐ cāi, wǒ shuōle shénme?

My son said: “Ma? Are you there? What should I do?” Guess what I said?

“很简单。别给她青菜。”

“Hěn jiǎndān. Bié gěi tā qīngcài.”

“Easy. Don't give her any.”

Words in the story

青菜 qīngcài *green vegetables*	一口 yì kǒu *one bite*	盘子 pánzi *plate*
打仗 dǎzhàng *to fight a battle (here: a fight)*	力气 lìqi *strength, energy*	办法 bànfǎ *way, trick*
大人 dàrén *grown-up*	一片 yí piàn *one piece (of something thin, like a leaf)*	够 gòu *enough*
挑食 tiāoshí *to be a picky eater*	捂 wǔ *to cover (with a hand)*	吵 chǎo *to quarrel, to argue*

管
guǎn
to keep in line, to look after

当年
dāngnián
back then

演戏
yǎnxì
to act

一下子
yíxiàzi
all at once

答案
dá'àn
answer

Hear this story from an AI chatbot: kotokin.com/learn/chinese/stories/vegetable-fight