书里那半粒米，让我想起楼下的饼干渣

语文读本里有一篇《观察蚂蚁》，作者趴在石阶边看蚂蚁搬食物。书里有一段我读了三遍：一只蚂蚁发现半粒米，自己拖不动，回洞叫来伙伴，两只一前一后抬起来，第三只赶到时插不上手，就在旁边跟着走，遇到拐弯的地方，它伸出前腿帮一把。

作者写到这里说：小蚂蚁有大力量，力量不在腿上，在一起上。以前读到这种句子我都是划过去就算读完。这回没有，因为那半粒米太眼熟了。

去年秋天，我在小区楼下的台阶边吃饼干，掉了一些渣。一会儿工夫，蚂蚁来了。一只大的绕着最大那块渣转了两圈，试着往前推，渣只挪了一指宽。它走了。我以为它放弃了，结果几分钟后它带着两只回来，三个脑袋凑到渣边上，各找一个角，喊不出声却像数着拍子，那块渣真的动了。

当时我蹲在那儿笑，觉得好玩，拍了一张照片就上楼了。书里那个第三只蚂蚁的动作让我想起照片里也有个细节：三个里有一个好像没怎么出力，只是贴着渣走。我当时还笑它偷懒。原来它不偷懒，拐弯的时候，是它伸腿把渣按住的。我把照片放大看了好几遍，那只蚂蚁的前腿真的伸着，搭在渣边上，身子斜着，像全身都在使劲。

书里说蚂蚁抬得动比身子重几十倍的东西，靠的是谁也不撒手。我想起搬书那次，我们四个抬一箱练习册，箱子太重，走到半路两个想放下歇歇，箱子一歪，书撒了一地。大家蹲在地上捡，谁也没怨谁，重新码好再抬，这一回没人再提歇的事。蚂蚁没有谁想歇，不是因为它们不累，是因为它们没有想过自己可以不管。

合上书，我在扉页写了一句话：道理不是书教的，是书把我见过的东西点着了。楼下的饼干渣我早就见过，书里那半粒米让我重新看懂了它。第二天放学，我特意绕到台阶边看了看，蚂蚁还在，那块饼干渣早没了，地上只剩一小片干净的砖缝。

The Half Grain of Rice in the Book Reminded Me of the Crumbs Downstairs

Our Chinese reader includes an essay called Watching Ants, in which the author squats by a stone step watching ants carry food. One paragraph I read three times: an ant finds half a grain of rice, cannot drag it alone, runs back for help, and two of them lift it, one at the front one at the back. A third ant arrives too late to get a share of the work, so it simply walks alongside, and at the turns it stretches out a front leg to steady the load.

The author writes: the great strength of a small ant lies not in its legs but in standing together. In the past I would have skimmed such a sentence and called it reading. This time I could not, because that half grain of rice looked so familiar.

Last autumn I was eating biscuits on the steps in our neighborhood and dropped

some crumbs. Before long the ants came. A large one circled the biggest crumb twice, tried pushing it forward, and moved it only a finger width. Then it left. I thought it had given up, but minutes later it returned with two others. Three heads found the crumb, each taking a corner, and though they made no sound it was as if they counted a beat together — and the crumb really moved.

I squatted there laughing, thinking it was fun, and took one photo before going upstairs. The third ant in the book reminded me of a detail in my photo too: one of the three seemed to do almost nothing, just walking tight against the crumb. I had laughed at it for slacking off. It was not slacking. At the turn, it was the one pressing the crumb down with its leg.

The book says ants can carry things dozens of times their weight because nobody lets go. I remembered the time the four of us carried a box of workbooks. It was so heavy that halfway two of us wanted to set it down for a rest; the box tilted and books covered the floor. No ant thinks of resting — not because they never tire, but because it never occurs to them to stop caring.

When I closed the book, I wrote one line on the flyleaf: the lesson was not taught by the book; the book lit up what I had already seen. I had long seen the biscuit crumbs downstairs; the half grain of rice in the book made me understand them again. After school the next day I detoured to the steps on purpose. The ants were still there, the crumb was long gone, and all that remained was a clean seam between two bricks.

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