蚂蚁把我的饼干搬走了

10月12日　星期一　晴

今天放学，我坐在阳台的小凳子上吃饼干。饼干太脆，我一捏，碎渣掉了一地，最大的一块有指甲盖那么大。我正要扫掉，忽然看见一只蚂蚁已经爬到了那块渣跟前。

它绕着那块饼干渣转了两圈，转得特别快，像先数一数这块东西有多大。然后它用前腿推了一下，渣动了一点点，又停住了。它又推，渣还是不动。我以为它要走了，它果然走了，往地砖缝里钻进去，不见了。

我有点失望，把目光移开去看别的地方。可是等我再回头看，那块渣旁边多了两只蚂蚁，然后是四只，然后一队蚂蚁从砖缝里排出来，把渣围住了。它们一人占一个角，谁也不推了，一起使劲，那块渣居然动了，慢慢地朝砖缝走。走到缝口，渣太大塞不进去，蚂蚁们就地拆，一小口一小口咬下来搬走，剩下的渣越来越小，最后连最小的那只也能叼动了。

我跳起来跑去告诉妈妈：妈妈快来看，蚂蚁在搬我的饼干！妈妈拿着放大镜出来，说别出声，咱们蹲着看。放大镜里的蚂蚁好大呀，我头一回看清它们头上有两根触角，两只蚂蚁碰一碰触角，就像在咬耳朵说话。

妈妈说，它们就是在说话，告诉对方饼干在哪儿，从哪条路走最顺。我问蚂蚁没有嘴巴怎么说话，妈妈说蚂蚁的话在触角里，咱们听不懂。我觉得这比电话还神气。

吃晚饭以前，我又去阳台看，地上一块饼干渣都没有了，干干净净，只剩砖缝黑黑的口。我故意又放了一小片饼干在缝边上，想看看它们还来不来。放完我就进屋了，隔着玻璃盯。不到十分钟，一只蚂蚁来了，还是先转两圈，然后不见了。吃晚饭的时候我再去，那片饼干又没了，缝边上干干净净。

晚上我在日记本上写：今天蚂蚁搬走了我的饼干。它们的家到底在哪儿呢？砖缝里面是不是有一条很长很长的路，路上全是蚂蚁，都在排队搬东西？明天我要早点写完作业，再蹲到阳台上去看。

The Ants Carried Away My Cookie

October 12, Monday, sunny.

After school today I sat on the little stool on the balcony eating a cookie. The cookie was so crisp that when I squeezed it, crumbs fell all over the floor, the biggest piece as large as a fingernail. I was about to sweep them away when I saw one ant already at that piece.

It circled the crumb twice, very fast, as if counting how big the piece was first. Then it pushed with its front legs; the crumb moved a tiny bit and stopped. It

pushed again; the crumb still would not move. I thought it was giving up. It did leave — it crawled into the seam between two floor bricks and disappeared.

I felt a little disappointed and looked away. But when I looked back, there were two more ants beside the crumb, then four, then a line of ants came out of the brick seam and surrounded it. Each one took a corner, nobody pushed alone any more, and all together they heaved — and the crumb actually moved, traveling slowly toward the seam. At the mouth of the seam the crumb was too big to fit through, so the ants took bites right there, carrying off tiny mouthfuls, and the crumb grew smaller and smaller until at last even the smallest ant could carry a piece.

I jumped up and ran to tell my mother: Mom, come quick, the ants are carrying my cookie! Mom came out with a magnifying glass and said, do not make a sound, let us squat and watch. In the glass the ants were so big. For the first time I saw the two feelers on their heads clearly. Two ants touched feelers, like whispering into each other ears.

Mom said that is exactly how they talk — telling the other where the cookie is and which road is smoothest. I asked how they can talk without mouths. Mom said the words of an ant live in its feelers, and we cannot understand them. I think that is more wonderful than a telephone.

Before dinner I went back to the balcony. Not one crumb was left on the floor, all clean, only the dark mouth of the brick seam. On purpose I placed one more small piece of cookie by the seam, to see whether they would still come. I went inside right after and watched through the glass. In less than ten minutes an ant came, circled it twice as usual, and vanished. At dinner time I looked again — the piece was gone, and the edge of the seam was clean again.

At night I wrote in my diary: today the ants carried away my cookie. Where on earth is their home? Is there a long, long road inside that seam, full of ants, all in line, all carrying things? Tomorrow I will finish my homework early and squat on the balcony to watch again.

我给蚂蚁画了一张地图

10月15日　星期四　晴

今天早晨上学以前，我故意把一小块饼干放在花坛边的地砖上，跟妈妈说：我今天要弄清蚂蚁的家在哪儿，你别催我。

我在旁边蹲着等。太阳晒得脖子热，我没动。过了好一会儿，那只我认识的个头最大的蚂蚁

来了，还是先绕着饼干转两圈，这回它不推了，转身就走。我悄悄跟在它后面，一边走一边把兜里的面包屑一小撮一小撮放在地上，当路标，这样回来就不会迷路。

它走的路特别直，拐过一个墙角，穿过一片晒着的被子底下，最后钻到院墙根下一个小小的洞口。洞口边上堆着一圈细土，像小山。我趴下去看，洞里黑黑的，有蚂蚁进进出出。有一只出来时嘴里叼着一个白白的、米粒大的东西，走得比谁都快，我猜那是它们的孩子。

我跑回家拿粉笔，在院墙根的地砖上画了一张地图：从花坛画一条线到墙角，再画到院墙的小洞，线上画了小叉叉，代表我放的面包屑。画完我得意极了，喊妈妈出来看。妈妈蹲在地图前看了一遍，摸摸我的头说，这就是探险家画的地图呀，还知道留路标。

我问妈妈，蚂蚁是不是也有一张地图在脑子里。妈妈说不知道，不过蚂蚁认路靠鼻子，地上有它们自己留下的味道，别的蚂蚁闻着味道就能走。我觉得它们比地图还厉害，地图不会自己画自己。

吃晚饭我又去看我的地图，看着看着我发现不对——我放在地上的面包屑路标，一小撮一小撮全都不见了，连粉笔线边上那撮最大的也没了。蚂蚁把它们也搬走了，连我留的记号都不放过。我蹲在粉笔线旁边数了数，一共放了八撮路标，一撮都没剩，地上只剩粉笔画的线，白白的，弯弯曲曲，像我真的给它们画了一条路。

我在日记里写：今天我给蚂蚁画了地图，蚂蚁收走了我的路标。明天我在洞口再放一小块饼干，看看它们晚上是不是也出来搬。妈妈说晚上别蹲外头，那就在日记里先记下来，明天白天补看。

I Drew a Map for the Ants

October 15, Thursday, sunny.

This morning before school I placed a small piece of cookie on the floor tile by the flower bed on purpose, and told my mother: today I am going to find out where the ants live, so do not hurry me.

I squatted nearby and waited. The sun made my neck hot, but I did not move. After a long while, the big ant I know came along. It still circled the cookie twice first, but this time it did not push — it turned and left. I followed it quietly, dropping pinch after pinch of bread crumbs from my pocket onto the ground as trail marks, so I would not get lost on the way back.

Its road was very straight. It turned around a wall corner, passed under a quilt drying in the sun, and finally disappeared into a tiny hole at the foot of the courtyard wall. Around the mouth of the hole was a little ring of fine soil, like a tiny mountain. I lay down and peered in: the hole was dark, and ants went in and out. One came out carrying something white and the size of a rice grain in its jaws,

walking faster than anyone — I guessed it was one of their children.

I ran home for chalk and drew a map on the tiles by the wall: a line from the flower bed to the wall corner, then to the little hole, with small crosses on the line for my bread crumbs. When I finished I was so proud. I called my mother out to see. She squatted before the map, looked it over, and patted my head: this is a map an explorer would draw — and you even left trail marks.

I asked Mom whether the ants also carry a map in their heads. She said she did not know, but ants find their way with their noses: there is a smell they themselves leave on the ground, and other ants follow it. I think that is even better than a map, because a map cannot draw itself.

After dinner I went to look at my map again, and while looking I noticed something wrong — every pinch of bread crumb I had left as a trail mark was gone, even the biggest pinch by the chalk line. The ants carried those away too. They would not spare even my marks. I squatted beside the chalk line and counted: I had left eight pinches of trail marks, and not one was left. All that remained on the ground was the chalk line, white and winding, as if I really had drawn them a road.

In my diary I wrote: today I drew a map for the ants, and the ants collected my trail marks. Tomorrow I will place another small piece of cookie by the hole and see whether they come out for it at night too. Mom said do not squat outside at night — so I write it in the diary first, and I will check by daylight tomorrow.

蚂蚁搬着饼干往高处跑

10月19日　星期日　阴

今天天阴阴的，云压得很低，妈妈说这种天像要下雨。下午我在台阶下的地砖上给蚂蚁摆了几粒饼干屑，这是我这星期每天干的事，蚂蚁认识我，我也认识它们。

可是今天的蚂蚁队伍跟平时不一样。平时它们慢悠悠的，今天走得又快又急，有几只简直是在跑。最奇怪的是，它们不往花坛边那个洞里搬了——一只大蚂蚁叼着最大那粒饼干屑，居然朝台阶上爬，后面的蚂蚁跟着它，一只接一只，把饼干屑往台阶高处送。

我蹲在台阶边看，一直看它们爬进第二级台阶墙根的一条缝里。那条缝比花坛的洞小多了，还比花坛的洞高。我跑去告诉妈妈：妈妈，蚂蚁搬家了！它们把饼干搬到台阶上面去了！

妈妈出来抬头看了看天，又看了看那条缝，说：蚂蚁搬家，大雨要下。它们觉出天要下雨，怕花坛的洞进水，把家搬到高处去了。我问蚂蚁怎么知道要下雨，妈妈也说不清，只说老话传了几百年，蚂蚁比人早知道雨。

我不太服气。我养过蚕，蚕也不知道下雨，蚂蚁凭什么知道。为了弄明白，我拿放大镜去看队伍里的蚂蚁，它们走的时候肚子贴着地，一根触角一会儿点一下地，点得特别认真，像在闻路。我把这个发现告诉妈妈，妈妈说那就是在闻自己留下的味道，也是在闻天里的湿气。晚上我睡觉的时候，雨真的来了，先是几滴砸在窗户上，后来哗啦一下连成一片，下得比什么时候都大。我趴在窗台上看院子，花坛那边积了水，那个洞口亮亮地反着光。

第二天雨停了，我去看：花坛边的洞被泥糊住了，台阶墙根那条缝还是干干的，有蚂蚁进进出出，叼着昨天搬上去的饼干屑渣。它们真的躲过了这场雨。

我在日记里写：今天蚂蚁搬着饼干往高处跑，躲过了一场大雨。蚂蚁比人早知道雨，这句话我以前不信，现在我信了。它们的小脑袋里到底装着什么，我还没想明白，下篇日记接着写。

The Ants Carried Cookies and Ran Uphill

October 19, Sunday, cloudy.

The sky was gray today, the clouds hung very low, and Mom said a day like this looks like rain. In the afternoon I placed a few cookie crumbs on the tiles below the steps for the ants — this is what I do every day this week. The ants know me, and I know them.

But today the ant column was different. Usually they walk slowly, at ease. Today they moved fast and urgent, and a few were almost running. The strangest thing: they no longer carried food to the hole by the flower bed. One large ant, holding the biggest crumb in its jaws, actually climbed up the steps, and the ants behind followed, one after another, sending the crumbs to the high part of the steps.

I squatted by the steps and watched them climb into a crack at the foot of the wall on the second step. That crack was much smaller than the hole by the flower bed, and much higher. I ran to tell my mother: Mom, the ants are moving house! They are carrying the cookies up onto the steps!

Mom came out, looked up at the sky, then looked at the crack, and said: when ants move house, heavy rain is coming. They feel that rain is near, they fear the hole by the flower bed will flood, so they move the home to higher ground. I asked how ants know rain is coming. Mom could not explain it either; she only said the old saying has been passed down for hundreds of years — the ants know the rain before people do.

I was not fully convinced. I have raised silkworms, and silkworms do not know rain either — why should ants. To find out, I watched the column with my magnifying glass: as they walked, their bellies touched the ground, and one feeler tapped the ground now and then, very seriously, as if sniffing the road. I told Mom what I saw,

and she said that is exactly them smelling the trail they leave, and also the dampness in the air. When I went to bed at night, the rain really came: first a few drops on the window, then all at once it poured in one great sheet, harder than ever. I leaned on the windowsill and looked at the courtyard. Water had gathered by the flower bed, and the mouth of that hole shone with reflected light.

The next day the rain stopped. I went to look: the hole by the flower bed was sealed with mud, but the crack at the foot of the wall on the steps was still dry, with ants going in and out, carrying the crumbs they had moved up yesterday. They really had dodged this rain.

In my diary I wrote: today the ants carried cookies and ran uphill, and dodged a heavy rain. The saying that ants know the rain before people — I did not believe it before, now I do. What is inside their little heads I have not figured out yet. I will keep writing in the next diary.