水进洞那天，一个孩子帮了我们

我是洞里的搬运工。那两天雨没有停过，水从洞口那道裂缝渗进来，越渗越大。洞里存粮的洞室先湿了，接着是放卵的地方。姐姐们把卵一粒一粒叼起来，往高处送。我背着一粒卵往上爬，回头看见水已经漫到洞口下面。

我们从洞里出来，洼地里全是水。洞口塌了半边，剩下的出口也被水堵了一半。我们挤在高处，触角碰来碰去，谁也说不出办法。卵放在一片湿叶子上，几只姐姐围着，不让我们踩到。

一个小孩蹲在洼地边上，看了我们很久。他跑开了，回来的时候拿着一个浅花盆、一把小铲，还有一截树枝。他在高处挖开干土，把花盆放在那里。然后他的小铲插进我们旧洞旁边的土里，铲起一小块，连我几个兄弟一起，稳稳放到台阶上的花盆里。

我一开始吓得触角都竖起来了。可那个小孩屏着气，铲子放得很轻，没有伤到谁。他铲了一铲又一铲，越铲越慢。叼着卵的姐姐不松口，他就把卵连土一起请走。水里的卵漂着，他伸手够不着，就把树枝伸进水里，等姐姐把卵放上去，再轻轻抬起来。

他把树枝架在洼地和花盆之间。我们的探路蚁先爬上去，碰了碰，是干的，能走。于是我们排成一串，顺着树枝往花盆走。走到花盆边，新土软软的，洞口是他刚挖开的，不大不小，正好是我们进出的宽。

搬完那天，雨又下了一场，台阶上没有积水，洼地里的水却更深了。我们在新洞里把卵一粒一粒码好，存粮也一粒一粒归位。我爬到花盆沿上，看见那个小孩坐在楼门口的台阶上，正看着我们这边。

后来每天出洞，我都从花盆沿上绕一圈。那个小孩经过时脚步很轻，从不碰我们的花盆。我不知道他叫什么名字。我们的触角碰不到他，可洞里存粮最干净的一粒，我一直记着，是留给他的。

The Day Water Flooded Our Hole, a Child Helped Us

I am a porter in the nest. The rain did not stop for two days. Water seeped in through the crack by the hole, more and more. The chamber where we stored food got wet first, then the place where the eggs were kept. The elder sisters picked up the eggs one by one and carried them upward. I climbed with an egg on my back and looked back to see the water already rising at the mouth of the hole.

We came out into the low patch, which was full of water. Half of the entrance had collapsed, and the remaining exit was half blocked by water. We crowded onto high ground, our antennae touching one another, and none of us could think of a way. The eggs were placed on a wet leaf, and several elder sisters stood around them so we would not step on them.

A child squatted at the edge of the low patch and watched us for a long time. He

ran off and came back with a shallow flowerpot, a small trowel, and a stick. He dug open the dry soil on the high ground and set the pot there. Then his trowel went into the soil beside our old hole, lifting a small piece, carrying several of my brothers along, and set it steadily into the pot on the steps.

At first I was so frightened that my antennae stood straight up. But the child held his breath and set the trowel down gently, hurting no one. He scooped again and again, slower each time. The elder sister holding an egg would not open her jaws, so he took the egg away together with the soil. When eggs floated in the water out of his reach, he stretched the stick into the water, waited for a sister to place the egg on it, and lifted it up carefully.

He set the stick between the low patch and the pot. Our scout ants climbed on first, tapped it, and found it dry and walkable. So we lined up and walked along the stick toward the pot. At the edge of the pot the new soil was soft. The entrance was one he had just dug, neither too big nor too small, exactly the width we needed to pass.

That day after the move, it rained once more. No water collected on the steps, while the water in the low patch grew deeper. In the new nest we stacked the eggs one by one and put the stored grain back in place. I climbed onto the rim of the pot and saw the child sitting on the step by the building entrance, looking toward us.

After that, every day when I left the nest, I made a round on the rim of the pot. When the child passed by, his footsteps were light, and he never touched our pot. I do not know his name. Our antennae cannot touch him, but the cleanest grain in our store, I have always remembered, is kept for him.