

Forbidden: José F. Nodar

In a bustling anthill beneath an old oak tree, young Antoin the ant was brimming with curiosity. His antennae twitched with excitement as he overheard tales from elder ants about the wondrous world above.

One day, as Antoin was enjoying a particularly juicy crumb, he turned to his mother, Antonia, and asked, "Mum, why can't we explore the humans' homes? They sound so amazing!"

Antonia sighed, shaking her head. "Antoin, how many times do I have to tell you? The humans' homes are forbidden. They're dangerous, and no place for a young ant."

"But why?" Antoin persisted. "What's so dangerous about them?"

Antonia finished munching on her crumb and started to explain. "Well, let me tell you a story," she began. "Once upon a time, your great-uncle Anthony decided to ignore the rules and ventured into a human kitchen."

Antoin leaned in, captivated already. "What happened?"

"Anthony was always a rebellious ant," Antonia continued. "He crawled right up onto a shiny, smooth surface the humans call a 'countertop.' There, he found the most magnificent feast he'd ever seen. Crumbs of every kind were scattered about – bread, cookies, cheese – it was like a dream."

Antoin licked his mandibles in anticipation. "That doesn't sound so bad."

"But," Antonia said, raising a stern leg, "Anthony didn't realise that the humans had set a trap. They call it 'cleaning.' Suddenly, a giant human appeared with a cloth and started wiping everything away. Anthony barely escaped with his life, slipping into a crack in the wall just in time."

Antoin gasped, his antennae trembling. "What happened then?"

"That wasn't the worst of it," Antonia said gravely. "Humans have something called 'sprays' and 'powders.' They use them to keep us out. Anthony had to dodge these dangers as well, and when he finally made it back to the anthill, he was a changed ant. He never ventured into a human home again."

Antoin nodded, finally understanding the gravity of the situation. "I promise, Mother, I won't go into the humans' homes."

Antonia smiled, patting him gently with her antennae. "Good. Now, let's get back to work. There are plenty of safe crumbs out here for us."

Antoin couldn't help but glance up at the looming human house in the distance. While the humans' homes still held an allure of the forbidden, Antoin decided they were best left to imagination.