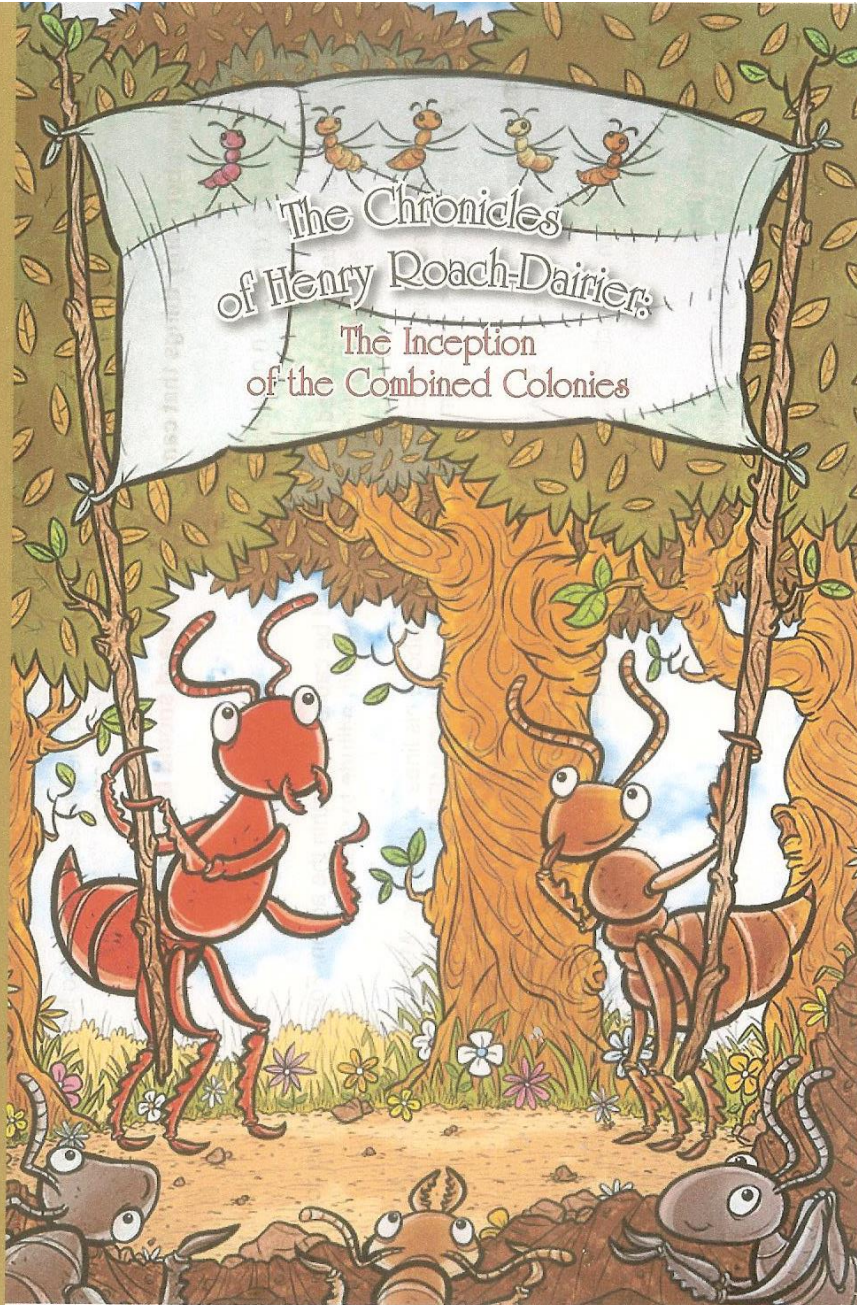




The Chronicles of Henry Roach-Dairier II:

The Inception of the Combined Colonies

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Notes of Importance to My Readers for a Better Understanding of This Work

Henry Roach-Dairier II

I come from a long line of creatures—both ant and roach—named Henry, famous namesakes with already-recorded deeds that make it difficult to walk in their pods sometimes. I resented it as a nymph.

My grandfather, Henry Roach-Dairier, penned the life stories of his ant great-grandfather and great-grandmother—Adeline Harvester and her mate, Henry (now known as the book, *The Chronicles of Henry Roach-Dairier: To Build a Tunnel*) and then his ant grandfather and grandmother—Henrietta Harvester and her mate, Antony Dairier (which became the volume *The Chronicles of Henry Roach-Dairier: New South Dairy Colony 50*). When I was near the end of my eleventh season cycle, my grandfather told us his summarized version of the *Inception of the Combined Colonies*. This occurred over Last Day dinner after I had gotten in trouble for scaring my cousin to tears over fire ant tunnels under Roacheria. That began my fascination with the past. Later, my mother wrote my grandfather's early life after convincing Grandfather to tell it (with my mother using a voice imager) over the course of several Seventhday afternoons. That became *The Chronicles of Henry Roach-Dairier: The Re-creation of Roacheria*. It was that honesty from Grandfather that convinced me to accept my destiny to continue his mission of promoting understanding between ants and roaches.

To Build a Tunnel and *New South Dairy Colony 50* are now required reading in 3rd year Basics in all the Combined Colonies and in our little corner of Roacheria, Meadow Commonwealth, which from its beginning was more like an ant colony than a Roacherian community. I think the day is not far off when my grandfather's early life, *The Re-Creation of Roacheria*, will also become required reading.

After that Seventhday when my grandfather gave us his synopsis of the *Inception of the Combined Colonies*, I spent a lot more time with him.

"How come you never wrote a book about the Inception?" I asked.

He laughed before saying, "Between counseling clients, caring for your mother, your aunt, and your uncle, and all the work here in Meadow Commonwealth, there was never a moment to consider it."

“I don’t know what to think,” I said. “My Antstory book tells about how cruel the roaches were, and how that led to the belief that roaches have no essence. Then I look at my Roachstory account of that time, which makes it seem like some sort of ‘great time’ for roaches. How can anybody sort out the truth?”

Grandfather was silent.

I continued, “Then, I can’t forget when you told us about ‘point of view’ after that trainer stepped on you for getting the season cycle wrong.” For any of my ant readers who are unfamiliar with this ancient Roacherian form of punishment, a roach parent or trainer orders an offending younger roach to lower him or herself into the most humble and humiliating position. Then the parent or trainer—and sometimes a powerful employer over an employee—stomps down as hard as possible on the back of one’s thorax, right at the most vulnerable and weak spot where the back of a roach’s head plate meets the top of the thorax. I am grateful to say that I have never had to undergo that painful punishment.

Grandfather twitched his antennae in thought before he spoke. “I was fortunate to hear my grandfather’s story directly from him. Then I was lucky enough to find old Rex’s journal after having Henry, Adeline, and Gabriel’s journals given to me. A creature with the patience to search could probably find some records of that time in Roacherian Archives. Your mother’s status as a counselor would get you access to those documents, should you be interested. The colonies involved, South Harvester 45, South Dairy 1, and Fire 2, would definitely have records and documents. Often, personal journals are given to such archives and might be available. Anything in Old South Dairy 50 has been lost forever, of course, since the disastrous death of that colony.”

We both sighed, thinking about the tragedy of Old South Dairy 50 and the tremendous loss of life the day Antony Dairier, my great-great-grandfather, hatched, when an accident in the science facility sent poisonous fumes through the entire colony.

“But,” Grandfather said, looking deeply into my eyes, “someone with great determination might find colony support to search for the truth.”

“Are you saying I should write it?”

He shook his antennae. “I would never be so presumptuous as to tell anyone what life work they should choose. Only Essence can answer that for you.”

Grandfather left this world the next season cycle, a few days after my thirteenth hatching anniversary. As we gathered to cover him, I listened to many creatures speak about how he had inspired them.

My mother’s words last words to him were these: “I promised I would wait, and I have, but now I *will* publish the story of your young adult life.”

My grandmother was too overcome with grief to speak that day, but she talked to all of us many times later about how our grandfather was the most cherished one in her life, and how she never regretted leaving her prominent father's house to join the simple life style of Meadow Commonwealth.

When my turn came to speak at Grandfather's covering, I hesitated. Then I couldn't help what tumbled out. "That story . . . that truth. . . I'm going to find it. For you, for me, for everybody. It's too important to leave undone."

Saying a thing is easy. Doing it is quite another matter. I hope I have composed this account up to my grandfather's standards. Because there is as much of a story in the digging—literal and figurative—as in the ancient events themselves, I (unlike my grandfather) have included parts of my own life within the narration of the past. I have included editorial comments as well to help both ant and roach readers understand aspects they might not know.

Like my grandfather, and my mother who narrated his story, I have decided to include here at the onset how ants and roaches came to be the evolved and intelligent creatures we are. Later, you, my readers, will see this again in the context in which Daeira first spoke these words to the members of her colony.

The Beginning

As revealed to Daeira Dairier in dreams and meditation

In the beginning, Essence roamed the skies looking for the right place to start a world. She saw that our planet already had cycles of day and night, water and air. It had a set path around its sun so its cycles could be numbered, but it had no life.

"I will see what can live and grow here," she said, and joined herself with it. The Creative Life Force of Essence endowed the waters with miniscule plants and creatures and the cycle of life began. Essence cherished this new life, but was tired from her journey across the cosmos, so she entered the earth and went to sleep.

Eons later when she awoke, the planet was filled with life forms. The water and land and air teemed with a great variety of plants and creatures. Some were tiny and frail, others huge and fierce. There was great variety even in their coverings—smooth, hard, scaly, furry. The large, scaly ones dominated at that time.

Essence watched her world. The sun fed the plants, which fed the moving creatures, who then were eaten by larger ones, and on and on. They grew, propagated, and returned to feed the earth when their time was over. Some creatures failed and disappeared, but new ones evolved to take their place.

And ants were there.

Essence, satisfied with the balance and cycles, cradled her world, and went to sleep again.

The pain of many shocks woke Essence. Chunks of matter hurled through the cosmos and struck the planet, killing millions of life forms and knocking the planet in its cosmic path. The dust from their impact screened the sun's light, denying life-giving

energy to plants. Essence watched in dismay as thousands of species disappeared from her cherished world. In her grief, she shook. Hills tumbled. Mountains sent forth liquid fire from within.

But even in grief, Essence's Creative Life Force found its way again. An infinite variety of flowering plants came to be. A few species of the scaly creatures and the small ones with fur and feathers survived.

And ants were still there.

Essence watched for many eons as the fur creatures increased in size and began to dominate. "What would happen," Essence said, "if I interfered and gave one life form an advantage? If I gave a tad of my intelligence to a creature, could it create something original, as I have?"

Essence looked closely at each species and finally chose one that seemed different from others. This species was not entirely covered with fur, stood on only two appendages, and had a well-developed nervous system. She infused them with more intelligence and waited to see what would happen.

Season cycles passed. Generations of Duo Pods came and went. Essence saw that they made tools, built things, and developed the planet. Their machines grew ever more complex. Satisfied, Essence took a nap.

Essence awoke with a fever. The planet's surface was a shambles. The air and the water were fouled. All the Duo Pods, all of the feathered creatures, and most of the furry ones were dead forever.

"What has happened to my world?" Essence cried.

Grief for her failed experiment and illness consumed Essence. The earth shook. Storms raged. Her tears covered many lands. Then slowly, the earth healed itself. Although it would take many more eons for all of the Duo Pod creations to return to the earth, the world looked new and fresh once more. Essence found that one substance the Duo Pods had made would not break itself down and feed the earth. They had indeed created something original. Her experiment had not been a total failure.

She looked around hopefully and found that ants, roaches and other insects were not only still there, but had grown greatly in size and changed in other ways.

"Ah, my faithful ants," she said. "You have been with me from the earliest days and have always been civilized. Perhaps the intelligence I gave the Duo Pods was not enough. I will try again. I will give you not only the gift of knowledge, but my compassion as well. And this time, I will not sleep, but will watch over my world. I will be available to my creatures, speaking to their minds when they seek me. When each one's time on earth is done, the part of me that is in them will return to me in unity forever. Eat then, my ants, of the lasting creation of the Duo Pods—plastic—and receive my gifts. Cherish my world and seek to understand its mysteries."

And so we are.

While Essence was speaking, a group of roaches approached. They took the gift of intelligence, but ran away before the second, more important gift of compassion and inner essence was given. Thus they received no more of Essence than had the extinct Duo Pods.

Bemused, Essence observed the roaches as they ran from her. "I must watch and see what comes of this development."

Measuring Time and Distance: My great-great-grandmother, Master Henrietta, the first to understand the writings of the extinct Duo Pods, unraveled some rather unusual things about the measurement systems of those highly-intelligent creatures. While they, like we, found that a season cycle had 365 days and divided those days into fifty-two quarter time frames of seven days each, their beginning of each new season cycle has always seemed a bit odd to me. Their time frames varied from twenty-eight to thirty-one days each, and they had just twelve such time frames. Ours makes much more scientific sense: thirteen time frames of twenty-eight days each, and then Last Day, which is Winter Solstice. It is not part of any time frame, nor is it part of a quarter time frame. Last Day simply *is*. Then we begin a new year on what the Duo Pods called December 22. Our Summer Solstice Celebration, falling exactly half way through our season cycle, is always the 14th of Seventh Time Frame, with Extra Day falling right before it every fourth season cycle—again not part of any quarter time frame, but simply *there*. But Summer Solstice fell on what the Duo Pods called June 21. Such important calendar events on completely non-logical days! Lastly, the Duo Pods gave strange names to the days of their quarter time frame: Monday, Tuesday . . . Our Firstday, Secondday, etc. are ever so much simpler.

The Duo Pod word for h-unit, “hour”, was more similar to what we call it, but they had a strange way of measuring distance. A number of f-units, 5, 280 to be precise, made up a “mile”. Our d-unit is close to that in distance but an even 5,000 f-units. Other Duo Pods used completely different units in 10s, 100s, and 1000s they referred to as “metric”. Why didn’t they simply use one system? I’ve asked that of some of our archeologists, but as of this writing, they don’t really have an answer.

The Cast of Inception of the Combine Colonies:

This list may be important to both ant and roach readers since it involves the present, the past, and several locations. My ant friends often complain that Roach names are so similar, and therefore hard to keep track of, but my roach friends say the same about ant names. I provide here a list so that such confusion might not occur for my readers.

From the past:

Daeira: Spiritual Guide of South Dairy 1

Dagan and Dailey: Leaders of South Dairy 50's trade group to South Harvester 45

Dagny: Spiritual Guide of South Dairy 50

Dahlia: South Dairy 50's Council Chief

Dangelis: Spiritual leader South Dairy 1 before Daeira

Dara: Young adult female who finds Duncan after his escape

Delana: South Dairy 1's Council Chief

Dodie and Dart: Duncan's parents

Duncan: Young male ant who escaped South Dairy 1

Fadi: Fire Ant 2's Commander of the invasion

Faith: Fire Ant 2's spiritual guide

Farr: The fire ant captain who becomes Commander in South Dairy 1

Fauna and Fane: Fire ant scouts

Fleur: Fire ant captain who remains in South Harvester 45 as its first guard commander

Fredrika: Fire Colony 2's Council Chief

Hadi: South Harvester 45's spiritual guide

Hal and Haley: Mated pair of South Harvester 45 who communicate with Dagan and Dailey and the fire ants

Hesper: South Harvester 45's Council Chief

Ragnar: Roach who bought South Dairy 1 from Rainart and who denied all plastic to the ants

Rainart: First roach who enslaved South Dairy 1

Rand: Ragnar's warrior commander

Rashad: Rainart's employee, interpreter for the ants

Royce: Ragnar's oldest son

My contemporaries:

Daisy: Chief Archivist at South Dairy 1

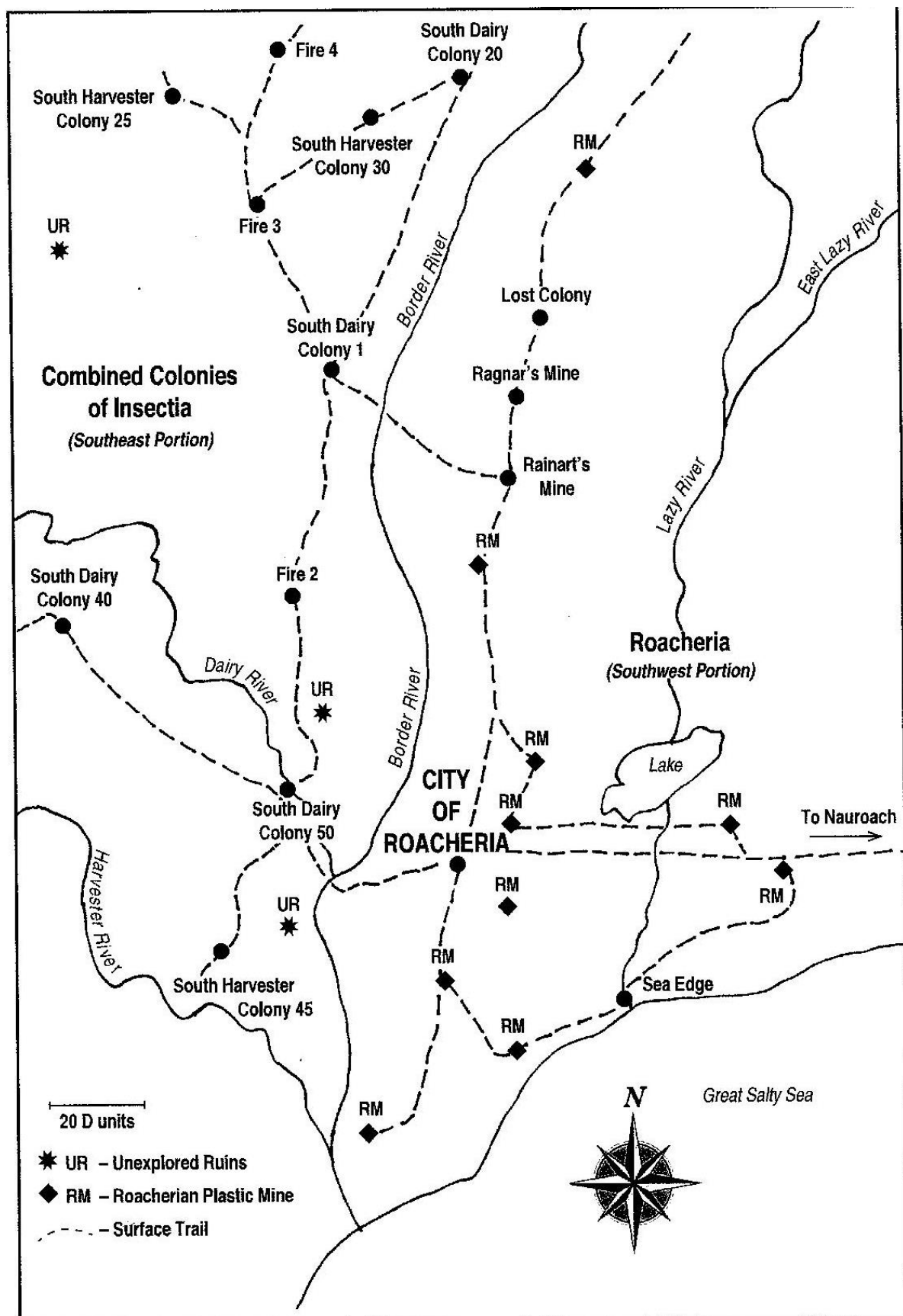
Darlene: Descendant of Daeira's sister

Gabrielle: My mother, a counselor of law and only female member of the South East Roach Control Board, governing body of Roacheria

Rabiah: Descendant of Rainart

Raissa: Rabiah's daughter

Rastus: Descendant of Ragnar



Chapter 1

Fourth Time Frame 28, 22 B.C.C. (Before the Combined Colonies) or 11 O.R. (Organized Roacheria—as all roaches are taught)

Daeira Dairier rose slowly from deep meditation. She sighed. Being the spiritual leader of her dairying colony had been a blessing when she began. Now it seemed a great burden.

The dream of the previous night had been very troubling. She stood before a gathering of colony members during Seventhday Meditation Service. The tight feeling in her thorax nearly brought on tears. Her expression must have been troubling them; she could feel and smell the worry emanating from their antennae as they reclined on the soft earthen floor of the meditation chamber, silent and solemn. Only a few beeswax lamps provided the faintest glow in the darkened chamber. Perhaps she should not tell them this dream until she understood it better herself. But the last words of the message had been quite clear: “You must prepare them.”

Prepare them for what?

While all ants felt the presence of a living spirit deep within them (which they referred to as their essence), not all of them were privileged to hear messages from a “greater presence” they called Essence. Daeira’s first dream message had come during her last season cycle of formal training—a time when most young adult ants chose their life’s work. It was shortly after the death of their previous spiritual leader, Dangelis, a female who had never taken a mate or had a family, but lived to a very great age helping colony members learn to live in harmony with the natural world and be truly compassionate with each other.

Earlier that morning, Daeira’s thoughts had gone back ten season cycles to when her first dream vision had occurred. “I had a beautiful dream last night,” Daeira had told her mother the morning after colony members had covered their cherished spiritual leader in the heart of the colony. “I saw a warm, glowing place of peace and light. I saw Old Dangelis among many ants who seemed to shimmer in the glow. I saw Grandmother again, there with Old Dangelis, who told me we should not mourn for her because she was with a great company of those gone before and all was well.”

The moment Daeira had stopped talking, her parents had taken her to the Council Chief.

“Our new spiritual leader has been revealed,” they had told their leader.

Daeira had been acclaimed as the colony's new spiritual guide, the Voice of Essence, as soon as she described the dream-message to the Council. All the fuss over her had frightened the young female at first, for she was just twenty season cycles old then. Another dream the following night had reassured her that she need not worry about whether or not she was up to the task. Since that day, she had been recording her dreams, telling the whole colony about the care they must show to each other, meeting with small groups daily and larger groups every Seventhday, teaching young adults how to meditate, and showing others how to direct young adults in the way they should live and know Essence.

Daeira, like her predecessor, had also realized she could not serve her colony in the way she had been called and have any energy left for a mate or family. She never asked any male to spend time with her—as she had during her season cycles of job exploration—and politely turned down all invitations that came to her. Young males understood and stopped calling on her.

Now, she faced her colony and said in a shaky voice, “My cherished colony members, a period of very great sorrow will be coming upon us soon. It will test our beliefs and values to our core. But we must support each other, for only in that way will we survive this time of trouble. It might last many season cycles, but we will endure. And when ‘soon’ is, I also do not know. But Essence will be with us all through it. Of that I am certain.”

A thousand questions, all the same, followed. Daeira could not answer them. “I will tell you more as it is revealed to me,” was all she could say. Days went by. The initial anxiety was forgotten and life went on in the colony as it always had.

Fifth Time Frame 28, 22 B.C.C.

A time frame later when the moon had completed its phases from new to full to new again, one of the colony messengers tapped on Daeira's portal. She put down her writing and let in her visitor.

“Master Daeira, I'm sorry to disturb you, but Council Chief Delana wishes you to come with me to the surface. Two roaches are there and Delana wants your advice as to what to do about them.”

Daeira couldn't imagine how her advice would help, for she knew nothing of the roaches who lived several d-units on the other side of a very shallow, slow-moving river meandering along the edge of their colony's meadow area. But as she walked up the tunnel to the surface, the tight feeling in her thorax that she had experienced the previous time frame returned. She stopped for a moment at the colony's entrance. She knew from her previous trips out of the mound that she must let the half-light near the entrance help her adjust to the intensity of the

morning sun. Like most colony members, she was more accustomed to smelling her way along the tunnels with her antennae (and writing or reading by the dim light of a single beeswax lamp) than using her eyes in the brightness of the surface.

A fair-sized group of ants stood around one large and one slightly smaller roach standing just outside the main entrance to the mound. The large one was three times the size of any ant. Off to the left, other ants watched over a herd of grasshoppers. Still others were up in nearby trees, tending aphids as they sucked sap from slender tree branches. The sweetness in the late spring air helped relieve Daeira's anxiety. It was a pleasant day, but the heat of summer would soon be upon them. She turned her attention to the group directly ahead of her.

Council Chief Delana addressed her. "Master Daeira, thank you for coming. These two roaches arrived about an h-unit ago, gesturing to our entrance watchers that they wished to speak to someone in charge. We have been trying to communicate with them, but we don't know their language, and they don't know ours. Do you have any ideas about what they might want?"

Daeira circled the two roaches slowly, and then she reached out her two front pods in friendship. The two roaches didn't reach back, as ants would know to do, but lowered their bodies and spread their front pods out from their sides. She walked around them again as they remained in the lowered position and twitched her antennae, wondering what to do.

At the twitch, the two roaches rose. Daeira lifted her front pods in a questioning gesture and said slowly in Ant, "What do you want?"

The larger of the two pointed to himself and said, "Sir Rainart." Then he gestured to the other roach and said, "Rashad."

Daeira pointed to herself and said, "Daeira."

The two nodded, lowered themselves again briefly, and repeated the name. Daeira pointed to the ground, grass, and the sky, saying the words in Ant. The roach named Rashad repeated each word she said. Rainart remained quiet.

Daeira turned to Delana. "I think they want to learn our language so we can communicate. But I feel something else, too; I don't understand it yet."

Delana nodded but remained silent. Daeira stared at the two roaches and lifted up a thought, *Essence, are they to be trusted?* No words from Essence came into Daeira's mind, only a mixed feeling: maybe yes, maybe no.

The silence continued.

Finally the smaller roach lowered himself, spread out his front pods again and said, "Daeira, chenche Rashad sky, ground, grass, chenche, chenche."

Daeira had never felt so conflicted before. It was now clear to her that the roaches wanted to learn the Ant language, but the feeling of warning remained. Would teaching them bring on the sorrow she had dreamed about? Or would teaching this roach prevent the predicted trouble? Why couldn't Essence be as clear about this as she had about the dream?

Daeira rubbed her head with one front pod and walked around the two roaches again, trying to see whether she felt an air of goodness about them, as she always felt when greeting a colony member. The two lowered themselves, but then Rashad rose and extended his two front pods. He understood the greeting! He did want to learn. Daeira reached out and touched his pods with hers. Again, the feeling she got was neither good, nor bad—just different.

A soft breeze brought a fresh, earthy smell and the sound of grasshoppers clicking their mandibles as they chomped the lush grass. Daeira made a decision. "Delana, I feel certain they want to learn our language. I don't know whether their purpose is good or not, but it would be wise to be able to talk to them either way."

"Will you be able to teach them with all your other duties?"

"Yes, I think I can. And as they follow me around and listen, they will learn our ways as well. That may be a very good thing."

The other ants standing by, including the messenger, drifted away to their regular tasks now that there did not seem to be any immediate danger. Only Daeira and Delana remained with the two roaches. "Come," Daeira said, motioning with her right front pod that they should follow her, "I will teach you to speak Ant."

Sir Rainart gestured to Rashad that he should follow. Then he pointed to himself and looked back to the way he had come. He said something to Rashad that Daeira could not understand. Then he walked away.

Daeira turned again to Rashad and repeated, "Come," as she walked toward the colony entrance.

Rashad followed her.