

Betsy the Honey Bee

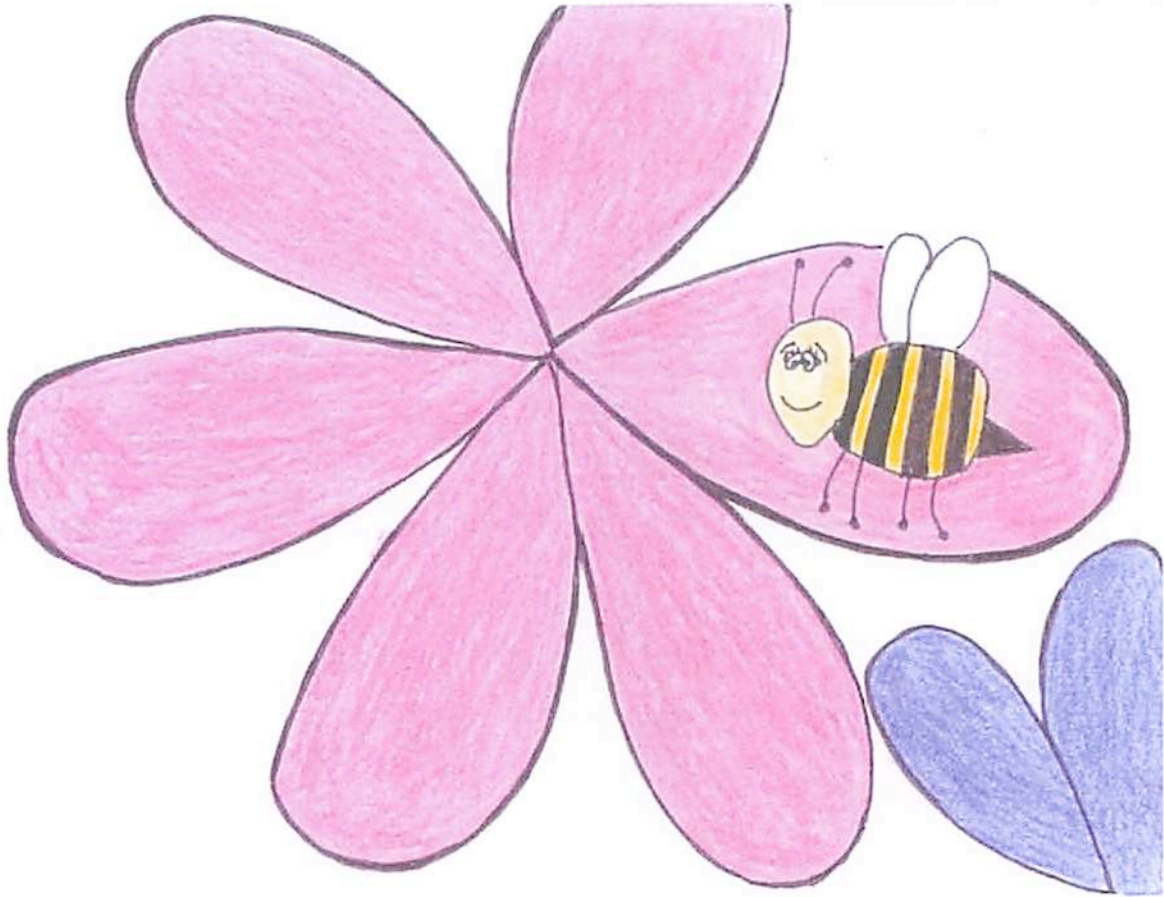
By Isabel Callejo-Brighton

Betsy the Honey Bee lived with her mother, father, and all the worker bees in her hive. One day, Betsy decided to travel to the entrance of the honey hive. There were hundreds of busy bees zooming in and out bringing pollen back to the honeycomb to make more honey.



Everyone said good morning to Betsy, but no one invited her out of the hive. Later that day she decided that it was time for her to see the outside world, so when the next swarm of worker bees went out for their shift, Betsy snuck in behind the last worker, and buzzed out of the hive with them.

As they traveled around the yard, Betsy could not believe what she saw... row after row of purple, pink and yellow flowers.



They had great big petals and green leaves. She was so excited to see all the beautiful colors that when she looked behind her, the swarm was nowhere in sight!

Betsy looked all around her, but she was alone. Suddenly she felt very tired and needed to take a rest. She saw a perfect flower petal to rest on, and buzzed to her landing.

It was only when she settled down did she realize that she wasn't on a petal at all, but the arm of a young girls dress.



Betsy looked up, and the girl looked down at her. Betsy was about to introduce her self, and apologize for sitting on the girls arm, but before she knew it, the girl screamed and started waving her arms around. Her mother spotted Betsy at once, and swatted at her again and again. "Wave your arms Amanda!" said Amanda's Mom, "It's going to sting you!" Bewildered, Betsy was thrown from the girls arm and was tossed high into the air. Catching her breath, Betsy buzzed away and over the fence and out of sight as fast as she could. She dove into the beehive before the girl and her mother knew what had happened.

That evening, beekeeper Jim saw Betsy sitting at the entrance of the beehive looking very sad indeed.

"What's the matter Betsy, why do you look so gloomy?" he asked.

"Well," Betsy sniffled, "I finally went exploring out of the hive today. I got really tired, and I decided to take a rest on a flower. But I didn't know it wasn't a flower, but a girl's dress instead. She screamed when she saw me, even though I started to apologize. I didn't mean to make them upset. All I heard was her mother telling Amanda to shoo me away. Why don't they like me?"

"Oh Betsy, it's not that they don't like you. They just don't know that you're a good honey bee. Humans are scared of wasps, and yellow jackets and honey bees. You have to remember that it's hard for humans to tell the difference between all of them because they all look so similar. They assume that all of them sting for no reason."

"But I wasn't going to sting them," said Betsy.

"Well I know that, but that's because I know the difference between honey bees and wasps. They don't."

Betsy looked at him, and gave a big sigh.

"Listen, I'm going to Amanda's school next week to teach kids like her about honey bees and wasps. It's for their science class. After I meet them, they're going to come back to my garden and actually see some of my hives, including yours. I think if you try to say hi to her again after I teach them, I bet she'll react completely differently."

"I don't know..." said Betsy hesitantly.

"Just give it a try, I promise what happened before won't happen again."

For the next week, Betsy practiced flying with the other honeybees. Each day she got stronger and could fly farther and farther from the hive. She stayed as far away from humans as she could though. She didn't want to be swatted at again.

Finally the day arrived. She heard lots of children's voices entering her yard... Beekeeper Jim's yard. "It must be Amanda's class!" Betsy said to herself.



She didn't know what to do. She didn't know if she should hide back in the hive, or try again with the kids like Beekeeper Jim told her. Seeing all of their faces, and their arms waving about, Betsy was reminded of her first

exploration out of the hive. She decided to stay in side, but in a place where she could hear everything Beekeeper Jim was saying.

"Alright class," said Ms. Pollen. "We're here at Beekeeper Jim's garden. Everyone needs to pay attention to all of his instructions and remain very quite and still around the hives."

"Thank you Ms. Pollen, you led me right into my first instruction. As you will see class, there are lots of bees flying in and out of the hives. The next group of worker bees has just left to find flowers. It's very important to follow these rules. Ms. Pollen, will you hand these out?"

Amanda was the last to receive the piece of paper with the rules on them. It said:

#1. Be very still.

#2. If a bee lands on you, DON'T wave your arms. It's just stopping for a rest. It will fly away.

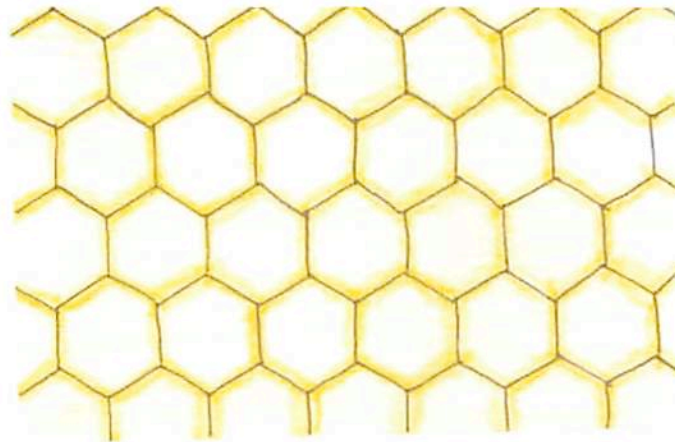
#3. Be respectful. This is their home. Imagine it as yours.

#4. HAVE FUN!

Amanda couldn't stop thinking about the bee that scared her last week. Fortunately, there weren't too many bees flying around now. Plus Beekeeper Jim seemed really nice.

"Alright class," Beekeeper Jim said. Everyone got quiet.

"This right here is a honey bee hive. That means that these bees make honey, which tastes really sweet. They make it with their bodies, and it stays in honeycombs that look like this. Does anyone know what this shape is?"



Amanda looked up, and raised her hand. "It's a hexagon!" she said.

"Excellent Amanda, it is a hexagon. A honeycomb is made up of hundreds of these shapes, which keep the honey from dripping out of the hive."

"Mr. Beekeeper," said Beatrice, Amanda's friend, "Don't bees sting you?"

"Well it's funny you ask that Beatrice because yes, bees can sting you, but it's very rare. The ones that sting the most are wasps, and they don't

make honey. Honeybees have two purposes... to make honey, and make more baby bees. They only sting if they think they're being attacked. That's why it's important to be still when around them. It's best to let them work, and watch them instead."

Amanda kept glancing over toward the hive. She saw one lonely bee sitting at the entrance to the hive. It was Betsy! Betsy had spotted Amanda right away, and knew not to mistake her dress for another flower!

The class began to head back to school. Amanda went right home since it was next door, and didn't walk back with Ms. Pollen.

After a few hours, Betsy decided to leave the hive once again. She zoomed ahead of the worker bees, and straight into Amanda's back yard. She spotted Amanda talking with her mom. As soon as she went inside, Betsy flew up to Amanda and landed at the table she was sitting at. Amanda gasped, but didn't move an inch. Betsy looked at her, and said, "Hi, I'm Betsy. I live in the hive next door."

Amanda looked at her, and let out her breath. "Hi Betsy. Are you a honey bee?"

"Yes I am!" said Betsy. "And I want you to come to my hive."

"Well I was just over there today..." said Amanda.

"I know." Said Betsy, "I saw you there, but now Beekeeper Jim and I have a surprise for you... something the other kids didn't get."

Amanda agreed, and followed Betsy out of her gate and next door to Beekeeper Jim's garden.

"Well hello," said Beekeeper Jim. "Back again so soon?"

"Yes," said Amanda. "I've got a little bee friend too. I'm not afraid of honeybees anymore."

Farmer Jim nodded and winked at Betsy. "Well Amanda, it just so happens that I have some honey for you to taste." Out of his pocket, Beekeeper Jim took a small jar of honey and a spoon, and handed it to Amanda. "This is from Betsy's hive," he said. She unscrewed the lid, and had a spoonful, with Betsy resting on her arm, smiling.

