

The Beehive

Imagine please, if you are able,
The scenic setting of this fable:
In a garden, green and luscious,
Stuffed with flowers, trees and bushes.
Crucially, this garden stored
A creepy-crawly smorgasbord!
For teeming through its thriving thickets
Were beetles, aphids, ants and crickets,
Millipedes and dragonflies,
Centipedes and butterflies,
Earwigs, maggots, worms and slugs,
Woodlice, snails and ladybugs;
And, tucked within a grove of trees,
A sturdy hive of honey bees.

Like well-oiled cogs of one machine,
These bees toiled gladly for their queen,
Building waxen combs to hold
A treasure trove of liquid gold.
Over them was Queen Beatrice,
Beloved, noble queen of bees,
Who treated all her personnel,
It must be said, extremely well.

One day the queen, Her Majesty,
Called for an assembly

Of all the workers, grubs and drones,
Addressing them in earnest tones,
“The things that I’m about to mention
Are important, pay attention.
I know it’s true, I’ll swear my crown,
That today, before the sun goes down,
This pleasant weather will transform
Into a vicious thunderstorm!
Not one insect will survive
Unless they’re tucked up in our hive.
Fly, my pretties, go beseech
Every creature in your reach,
Even pests and parasites,
To tuck themselves in here tonight.”
And so her bees set out to warn
The garden of the coming storm...

One bee informed a nest of ants
Of the storm and of their chance
To trust the Queen and join her swarm
And avoid the dreadful storm.
One ant known for being mean
Said, “We already have a Queen,
No proper ant would dare forget
Her Majesty Queen Antoinette.
I’d never pledge my loyalty
To someone else’s royalty!”
The other ants cried out in chorus,
“There you go, he said it for us,

So if you've nothing else to say,
BUZZ OFF, bee, just go away!"
But from the angry insect throng
A few ants chose to come along.

Another bee went to the snails
And laid out all the apt details,
Including, as she felt she should,
"Our hive is made of solid wood
And I'm afraid our entrance slot
Is smaller than the shells you've got.
To get inside you must discard
Your precious shells, so big and hard."
Old Ma Lusk, an aged snail,
Replied in whispers slow and frail,
"I'd like to thank you, gentle bee,
For your kind concern for me.
But see my shell? It's great protection
Against the weather and infection,
So thanks again, but sorry, no
I'd never give it up to go."
The others answered, "We concur!
There is no snail as wise as her.
BUZZ OFF, bee, be on your way,
We've decided that we'd rather stay."
But from the snails a certain few
Said to the bee, "We'll come with you."

A certain bee, despite the impediment,

Found some earthworms in the sediment.
She cried, "My friends, although you're blind,
Before the sun sets you will find
A massive storm is on its way,
So come into our hive today!"
One earthworm said, "Though I've no eyes,
It's clear as day you're telling lies!
A dreadful storm? A mighty breeze?
You're pulling legs, you awful tease!
No matter how much you insist
I'll never trust your hive exists!"
The other worms cried, "We agree!
He said it so persuasively,
Now you never will persuade us
Never! Even if you paid us!
BUZZ OFF, begone, you silly bee!
And curse your wretched fantasy!"
But some worms had a little faith
And asked the bee to keep them safe.

One bee found the butterflies
And urged them all to mobilise
Adding, as he felt he must,
"There's just one thing you should adjust;
You know, of course, that in our home
We are stocked up with honeycomb
Which unfortunately clings
To your large and lovely wings.
Our Queen says all wings must be folded

That's the rule, we must uphold it!"
The butterflies began to scoff,
"You think we'd dress up like a moth?
Fold our wings to go inside?
We'd rather die than wound our pride!
Don't you think it's such a pity
To hide our wings, so big and pretty?
I fear you're quite mistaken, sonny,
BUZZ OFF! Go back to making honey."
But some went with the bee and said,
"I'd rather be a moth than dead!"

At a grimy metal bin
A bee spoke to the flies within
Accomplishing her special mission
To offer refuge, with one condition,
"If you want to come, our Queen
Is very strict about hygiene,
Therefore to avoid her wrath
You're going to need to have a bath."
One fly replied, with mouth still full
Spitting chunks of food and drool,
"D'you really think your words can lure
Us to lead a life that's pure?
D'you think a bee outdoes a fly?
We're not so different, you and I.
I'll say this once and say it clear,
We don't like your type round here.
I think you'd better just BUZZ OFF,

Go on now, shoo! Ya pompous toff!”
But out of them some flies thought, “Gosh,
I think I’d better have a wash...”

An enthusiastic bee called on
Grasshoppers chirping on the lawn,
“Hop to it lads, get in that hive!
Here’s your chance to stay alive!”
The grasshoppers just mocked and jibed,
“This lawn was fun till you arrived!
Lighten up, ya daft old bee,
Don’t live life so solemnly!
Don’t get so flustered, have some fun!
Come, make music in the sun!
Be happy! Be hoppy!
Not gloomy and sappy!
We don’t want to hide indoors
And do your silly working chores!
Now BUZZ OFF bee, don’t spoil our vibe.
Go watch paint dry with your tribe!”
But some grasshoppers, ones with brains,
Went to the hive to dodge the rains.

Bees flew back from here and there, and
With them, insects from their errand.
Queen Beatrice was waiting for
Their arrival at the door,
She gave her bees her gratitude
And welcomed the others to her brood.

When all the bugs were safe inside
She looked around and almost cried,
“Where’s the others? Weren’t there more?
Well it’s too late, now shut the door.”
The door was sealed without a crack
Not just before the sky turned black...

Darkness blotted out the light.
The day became as black as night.
The insects trembled at the sight.
They realised that the bees were right.
They wouldn't go without a fight.
They reckoned that the bees just might
Let them in the hive despite
How they had been so impolite.
Alas! The door was shut too tight!

The ants ran to Queen Antoinette
Who informed them with regret,
“I’m sorry, though I did my best...”
Then died beneath their falling nest.

The hardened shell of every snail
Was shattered by the wicked hail
Leaving them with no defence
Against the fearsome elements.

The worms were swept of any doubts
As holes became small waterspouts

And sadly in the soggy ground
The disbelieving worms were drowned.

In the vicious, howling gales
Butterflies turned into sails
And once caught in the mighty breeze
Were bludgeoned up against the trees.

The flies sat smug inside their bin
Thinking nothing could get in,
But, alas, when lightning hit it
The flies were all incinerated.

The grasshoppers, without the sun,
Without their songs and without fun,
Without leisure or relief
Simply pined away from grief.

But the bugs inside the hive,
Though trembling, remained alive.
Through it all, old Queen Beatrice,
Consoled the bugs with words of peace.
She said, "From now on, here's your home;
The hive, the brood, the honeycomb.
You're not just guests, you've now become
My own dear kids, and I'm your mum."
When this was said, the grateful critters
Soon recovered from their jitters
And in a choir umpteen strong

Weathered out the storm in song.

Since that event, how things have changed!

The course of nature rearranged.

The garden grew back lusher, greener,

Fresher, safer, nicer, cleaner.

The bugs themselves would all declare,

Their older lives could not compare!

What they lost, they got back more,

Bigger and better than before,

And of those things, not in the least,

Was a home among the bees.

This tale, though one of small proportions

Is one of wisdom and importance.

Learn from all these creepy-crawlies;

Note their blunders and their follies,

But most of all, you really must

Be careful where you place your trust.

The End