

THIRD GRADE STATE WINNER

The Mystery of Luci's Bees

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“Bzzzzzz!!” blurted the bees buzzing around their bee boxes as Luci woke up one sunny morning on her farm where she lived with her family.

Luci was a cheerful eight-year-old girl with straight dark brown hair. She lived in a brown and gray farmhouse. Her farm was not as big as other farms, but she liked living on her farm with all the different animals. They had chickens, a few pigs, and some sheep.



She heard loud noises from the bee boxes where she kept her honey bees. She got dressed and went outside. Some of the farm animals were also making loud noises. They seemed scared. They were pacing back and forth in their pens. She went to check on the bees, but they seemed fine to her so she decided to leave them alone.

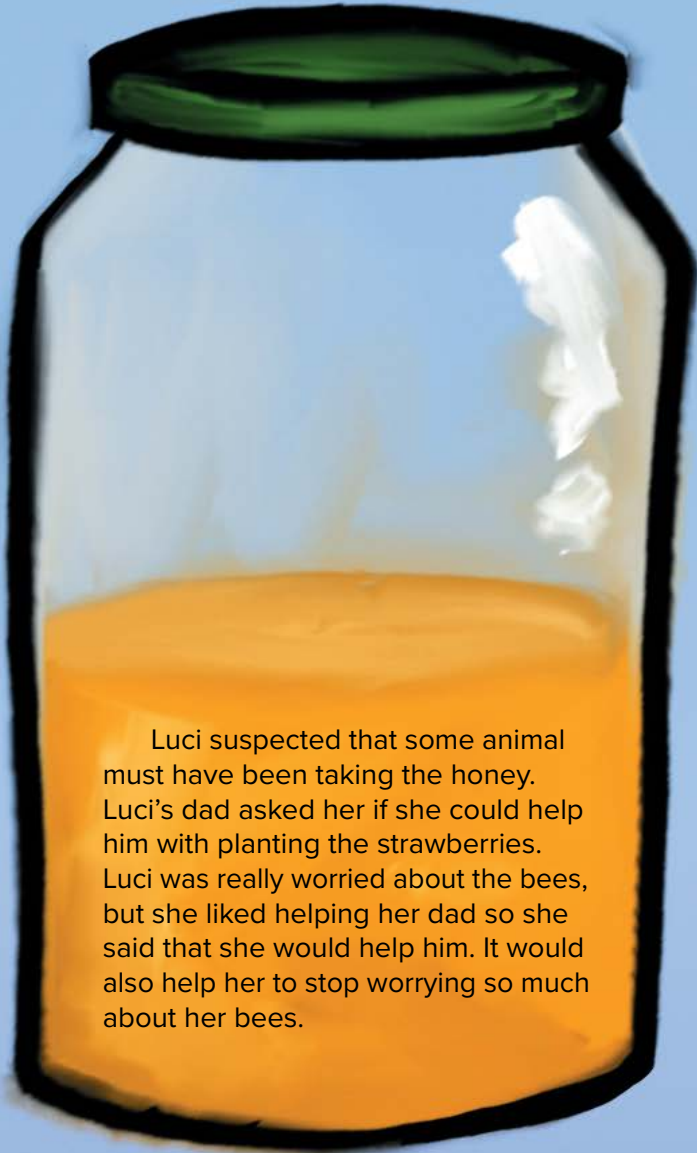


Luci went inside to eat breakfast, but while she was eating, she still heard unusual noises coming from the farm animals. She decided to watch the farm animals from the window, but she still didn't see anything going on with the bees. The animals seemed to be disturbed by something though.



Later that afternoon, she decided to go get some honey from the bee boxes. Luci realized she didn't collect as much honey as she usually did. She thought something was wrong with the bees! Luci was worried when she saw that some of the bees were also missing!

She told her mom and dad, but they didn't see anything going on with the bees. Her three sisters took care of the other farm animals, but Luci loved taking care of the bees because she knew that bees can help plants grow by pollinating them.



Luci suspected that some animal must have been taking the honey. Luci's dad asked her if she could help him with planting the strawberries. Luci was really worried about the bees, but she liked helping her dad so she said that she would help him. It would also help her to stop worrying so much about her bees.

It was fun learning how to plant strawberries with her dad. Luci made sure to also plant flowers nearby that the bees would like such as California poppies, blanket flowers, purple coneflower, and globe gilia, but she was still so worried about the bees.

Luci wasn't sure who exactly was stealing the honey from the bee boxes though.



Her mom called them to go inside for lunch. Luci had some delicious sandwiches for lunch, but she could not stop thinking about the bees! She had to find out who was stealing the honey.

One day, Luci went outside, and suddenly she spotted a wasp flying around the bee boxes! She remembered that wasps steal honey from bees! Luci had to keep the wasp away from the bees!

She knew nectar is high in natural sugars, which gives the bees energy to do their jobs. If the wasps were stealing the nectar, the bees could not do their jobs! Luci also knew that one bee only makes one-twelfth a teaspoon of honey in its entire life!



She went inside to tell her parents. Luci's parents didn't know what to do, but now they were also really worried about the bees. They agreed that the wasps could be a problem for the bees. Luci didn't want to get stung by a wasp, so her mom and dad told Luci to stay inside for now.

Every morning, Luci woke up to the sound of lots of buzzing. She could not forget about the bees! She got an idea. Maybe they could give the wasps honey, and they would leave the bees alone.

Luci went upstairs and told her mom and dad the idea, and they liked it. Luci and her parents moved the bee boxes away from the wasps. Then, they got some honey and spread it on a tree located to the north of their farm.

The wasps followed them there, buzzing all the way! Not once did Luci or her parents get stung. They went back home and watched to see if the wasps stayed with the honey tree rather than flying back to the bee boxes.



“It worked! The wasps are away from my bees!” Luci happily exclaimed.

That was why Luci went back to the tree near their farm every now and then to spread some honey on the trees. The wasps never bothered Luci’s bees again.

Editor Note: According to agricultural experts, the bees, like the wasps, would also be attracted to the honey trap, but it is a sweet story nonetheless!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Luciana Infante

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Luciana's sister told her wasps steal honey from bees, and that inspired her story. Through research the third-grader discovered that on average bees only make one-twelfth a teaspoon of honey in their lifetime and that bees help plants grow by pollination.

These fun facts helped Luciana create the story's structure and find her hook for the story. She enjoyed describing the characters and setting; however, her favorite part was writing the conclusion since she wanted a happy ending! Luciana hopes readers learn that bees are important while enjoying this sweet tale.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Sofia Martin

MILLIKAN HIGH SCHOOL
SCOTT COPPENGER, ART TEACHER

Sofia, a senior from Los Angeles county, learned a lot illustrating this story - about the different flowers that bees pollinate, how to take care of bees, and how bees and wasps differ, especially visually.

Sofia's illustration process started by sectioning the tale and creating a storyboard. Next she took the background photos for the illustrations and then drew accompanying images using digital tools. Finally, she combined the mediums to make the sweet story come to life in a unique and engaging way.