



5th Grade State Winner

The New Queen

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Illustrated by: Elk Grove High School



I woke up to our beehive swinging slowly in the spring breeze, and my bed swaying slightly. As a bee, I don't have a clock, so I looked through the small gaps of the old beehive.

I was late to inspect the hive! Bolting from my cell, I ran directly into Ms. Vivian. She is a very strict bee and was always perfectly on time.

“Ruby, you’re late again?” Ms. Vivian asked.

“I’m sorry Ms. Vivian.” I replied.



Ms. Vivian responded, “All bees in the hive depend on you. The queen has already fed you royal jelly; you will be anointed.” Royal jelly is a mixture of water, proteins, and sugars that is fed to the queen’s daughter, which transforms the princess into a queen. Suddenly, a drone bee approached Ms. Vivian.

"It is time for Queen Joana's daily cleaning," said the drone bee. A queen bee's cleaning occurs when worker bees assemble to clean the queen and groom her. Using their legs and antennas, they remove parasites, dirt, and debris.

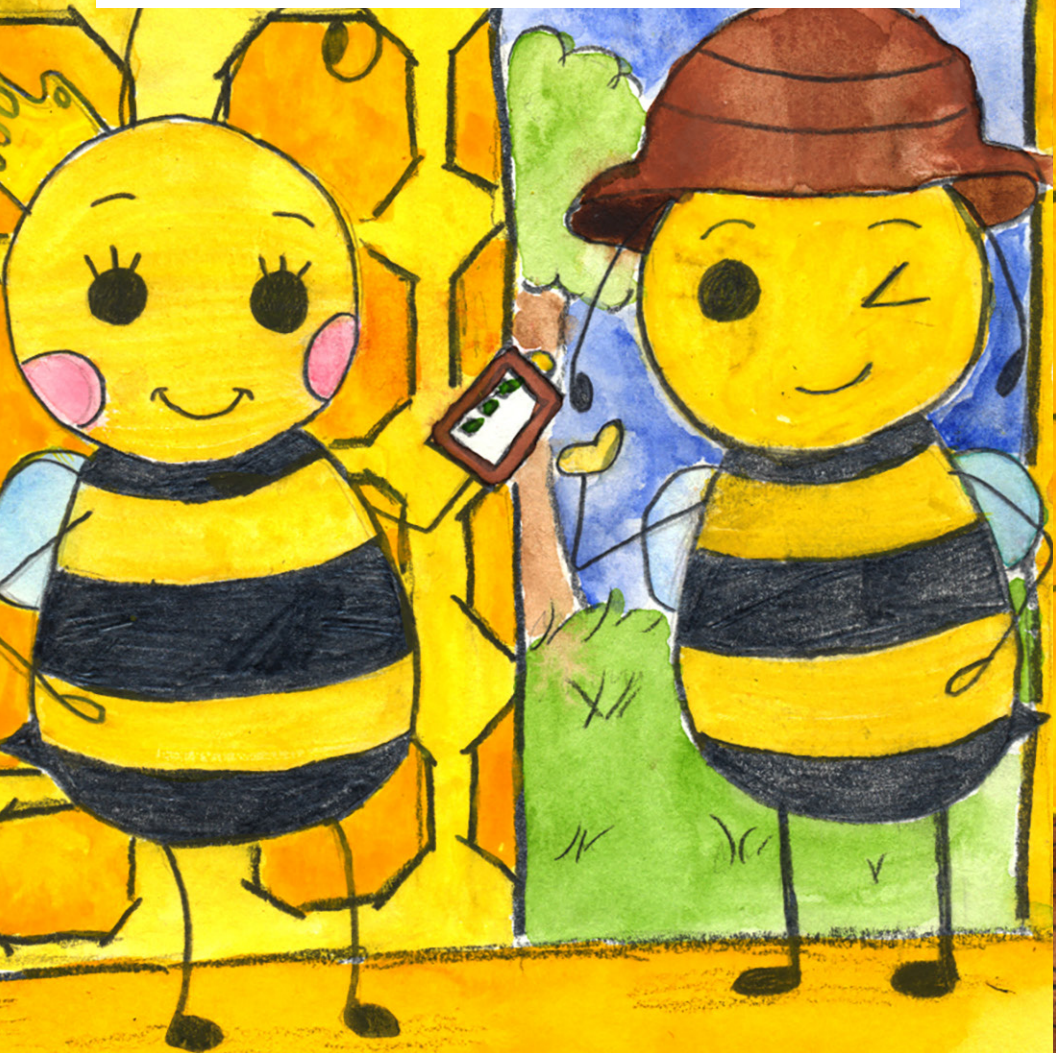
"I have to go," Ms. Vivian said.

"Of course," I replied.



I soon began my inspection of the hive. I watched a group of forager bees leave the hive to pollinate. During pollination season, forager bees are hardest at work, gathering pollen from every blossom and spreading the pollen from one blossom to another. This helps the plant to grow more fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

My mother, Queen Joana, inspects this hive every day. I have always been amazed by bees' work in our hive. I crawled along toward the worker bees busy cleaning the cells. I could also hear the guard bees outside the hive as I passed.




As I stepped outside I heard the loud “Zzzzz” of the guard bees. They guard the hive day and night to protect us from harmful threats. In the corner of my eye, I saw repair workers hard at work filling holes in the hive.

As I strolled, Ms. Vivian walked over to me. With little emotion, she stated, “The queen would like to meet with you tomorrow.”

“Of course, is everything okay?” I asked as my wings began to flutter. They do that when I’m nervous.





The next morning I woke up in my cell with my wings still twitching. I crawled down to the spot where my mother stood. She asked that I arrive very early in the morning while all the other bees were asleep.

“Good morning, Ruby,” my mother greeted.

“Good morning,” I responded, “I hope I’m not in trouble.”

“Of course not. Walk with me,” she said. “Remember when you were a larvae, and I told you about how you must be queen one day?”

I smiled and said, “Of course.”

“Well the time is upon us,” my mother said calmly. My mouth dropped and I was speechless.

“You’re welcome,” she said knowingly. “I want to discuss the details of how you will take a portion of the colony and start your own hive. You will be given 8,000 to 12,000 bees to help begin your new hive. This is only a small portion of our colony, but they will help you grow your hive over time. Our worker bees have quietly spent four months preparing a hive for you on a nice strong branch within our tree. I believe in you, Ruby. I know you will be the best queen for your bees,” my mother said with a proud tone.



Finally, the only words to escape from my mouth were, “Thank you, Mother!”

I beamed as I walked away, knowing that tomorrow I would reign as a queen in my own hive.

The next morning was bright and sunny without a cloud in the sky. A perfect day! I was ready to take my portion of the colony to start a new hive. As I emerged from my cell, I saw my mother with my new colony standing behind her.

“Oh my goodness!” I exclaimed to my mother.

She smiled, “I know you will do great. I made the guards aware that you may visit me any time you want.”





"I hope you'll visit our new hive too! I promise I'll visit soon!" I replied, I smiled and turned to my new colony. "Follow me!" I said, and we took off.

I heard my mother say, "Good luck!" as the swarm of bees followed behind me. We flew up into the hive on the strongest branch in our tree. Finally, my first day as the new queen!