



## Flight of the Honey Bee

Raymond Huber

illustrated by Brian Lovelock

### Outline:

The cold is coming and Scout is on a daring flight in search of the last flowers of autumn. Scout's mission is very dangerous, but it is also vital, because the flowers provide the precious nectar the hive needs to make honey. Can the hive make enough honey to survive the long winter months?

### Author/Illustrator Information:

Raymond Huber lives in New Zealand. He has been a social worker, gardener, primary-school teacher, lecturer, and is currently a writer and editor. He's written science and English textbooks and short stories for children. *Sting*, his first novel, was short-listed for both the New Zealand Post Children's Book Award and the Sir Julius Vogel Awards, as well as being selected as a Storylines Notable Book. His second junior fiction novel, *Wings*, continued the adventures of the honey bee named Ziggy.

Brian Lovelock is a scientist working in the power industry in New Zealand. He has painted all his life but has only recently ventured into the world of book illustration. His previous titles include *Did My Mother Do That?* and *Roadwork*, which won a New Zealand Post Children's Book Award. Brian was recently long-listed for the Kate Greenaway Medal for his work on *Demolition*.

## Raymond Huber on *Flight of the Honey Bee*

I was always scared of bees until I got a real live beehive for my birthday. After watching their fascinating organized lives, I came to like bees (but I still wear a protective suit when opening the hive!).

Honey bees and humans have been partners for ages: we give them homes and they pollinate our food. But the world's bees are now endangered, so I wrote this book to show how intelligent and essential (even appealing) bees are. I imagined the viewpoint of a flying bee and all the challenges she'd face out in the world. For added thrills, I made Scout meet a few more dangers than the average bee on an average day!

Writing a picture book is a bit like creating a poem; there are limited words, so every word has to work hard (like a bee) to suggest character and story, to be accurate, and to delight the ear.

## Discussion Questions and Activities

### Physical characteristics

Draw a picture of Scout and label the parts of her body as described in the book. Write a brief description of what each part is used for.

Honey bees are just one type of bee. Research and list some other kinds of bees and their similarities and differences to honey bees.

Scout does a special dance on the wax comb to describe to the other bees where the flowers are. Play a game of Bee Charades with your class. Each student can take a turn at miming a description of a location in your school or area, and the rest of the class has to guess the place.

### Honey bee habitat

Look at the honey bee's hive on pages 6–9. Do you think this hive was made by bees or humans? Why do you think that? What is the purpose of man-made beehives? Research what man-made beehives and bee-made beehives look like. Compare the two and list similarities and differences. Why would humans create beehives?

In what areas might you find honey bees? Research other kinds of bees and find out what types you might find where you live.

### Literature and context

Find other books about honey bees in your school library. How do the authors and illustrators of the other

books deal with the subject of honey bees differently than Raymond Huber and Brian Lovelock do?

### Examining literature

Is this book fiction, nonfiction, or a mixture of both? What clues lead you to this answer?

The text in this book is presented in two font styles. Why do you think the text is presented this way? Read the book using each font separately and then discuss how the different fonts change the purpose and alter the perception of *Flight of the Honey Bee*.

Identify the events in a honey bee's life as described in this book. Have students work in small groups to present this as a Keynote/PowerPoint presentation.



As a class, write a list of the facts about honey bees as presented in the book.

Which writing style do you prefer: the descriptive storytelling style or the informative, factual style? In what types of texts would each of these writing styles usually be used? What style of writing is found in novels, short stories, newspaper articles, and reference books?

The author uses descriptive language or imagery throughout the book. For example, “Scout’s wings hum to life” (page 9) and “An arresting smell drifts on the breeze” (page 10). What other examples can you find? How do these descriptions help bring the world of the honey bee to life?

The author uses metaphors, such as “an ocean of flowers” (page 10); alliteration, such as “a flash of feathers” (page 12); and similes such as “Eyes as black as polished stones” (page 10). List other examples of these literary devices found in this book.

Punctuation, such as exclamation marks, dashes, and ellipses (...), is used to create excitement and suspense in the book. What examples can you find?

## Responding to literature

Before beginning a study of this title, conduct a survey to ascertain students’ reactions to honey bees. Ask questions like:

- Are you scared of honey bees?
- How do bees make honey?
- Are honey bees aggressive to humans?

Redo the poll after reading *Flight of the Honey Bee* and discuss the results.

Do you think a bee would make a good pet? Why or why not? Hold a class discussion.

How would you feel if you encountered a swarm of honey bees on their way to collect nectar? Write a diary or blog entry.

Whose point of view is this book told from? Look at the spread on pages 18–19. Rewrite this scene from the point of view of the wasps. Think about the reasons the wasps would want to attack the honey bees.

Write a book review on *Flight of the Honey Bee*. Note what you liked about the book and if you think the author and illustrator did a good job of conveying information in an interesting way. Mention any books that are similar to *Flight of the Honey Bee* and make a recommendation as to who you think will like this book.



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