



THE BEES AND THE BEEKEEPER

Once there was an old beekeeper who took care of many bees and many beehives. He built all the beehives himself and it took him a long time to finish a house for every one of his bees. In return, the bees rewarded him with pollinating all the flowers and trees in his garden so that every plant would bear delicious fruits. They also flew to the surrounding woods and meadows, so he was never short of good honey all year round. Of course, he shared the honey equally with the bees, just as every good beekeeper should.

They lived as friends, helping each other, for many years until one day a thief visited the garden. The thief knew well he needed to find a moment when neither the beekeeper nor his bees were near the hives. Crouched in the bushes, he waited for the right moment. T

As he watched the bees left to go collect pollen from flowers, but the beekeeper was still tending to their hives and scything the grass around them. Finally, when the sun was at the highest point in the sky, he put down his tools and left the hives to have lunch. That was exactly what the thief was waiting for. He ran to the hives and, unable to open them, destroyed every last one of them and pulled out the honeycombs.

When the beekeeper returned, he found a scene of devastation. There were

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honeycombs lying everywhere, the hives were broken to pieces and the honey was gone. He ran about the broken hives, pulling his hair and looking for something he could still save. In the end he had no choice but to build all the hives from scratch. He went to his shed to saw wooden planks for the new hives, then took the planks back to the garden to start the construction. First, he cleaned the mess after the old hives and slowly built the new ones in their place. He built them exactly like the old ones so that he wouldn't confuse his little bees. Then he started painting them with the same colour as before.

But just as he picked up the brush, the bees returned from the meadows and saw the beekeeper standing by a pile of ruins of their old houses. Surely he must have destroyed their beautiful homes! With a deafening buzz they whooshed down to attack. Although the beekeeper only wanted to help them, they stung him viciously. He had no way to defend himself from their assault. The pain from the stings forced him down to his knees and swollen all over he crawled towards the shed to find shelter. But he wasn't strong enough and the bees kept stabbing him until he stopped and cried out: "My dear bees, you will sting me here to death while the real scoundrel flees!"

If the bees were capable of thinking, perhaps they would realise that first impressions are often misleading.