

*To all my brilliant
author and illustrator friends
who keep me buzzing with ideas.*

– Mo O’Hara

*I dedicate this book to Luca and
my parents. Thank you for being so
supportive and loving.*

– Aya Kakeda



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Honey’s Hive



Mo O’Hara

ILLUSTRATED BY

Aya Kakeda



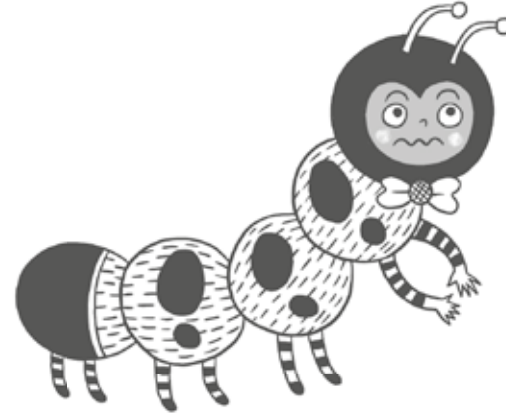
ANDERSEN PRESS



HONEY



BELLA



BOB



HEX



BEANIE



FRED



NANA



MISS IVY



THE QUEEN



Chapter 1

The sun was beginning to warm the air in the little garden by the cottage. Honey buzzed around the flowerpots next to the hive, her stripy fuzz all blown about and her wonky antennae twitching with excitement.

‘Major Honey to Ground Control. It looks like a rocky entry, but don’t worry, danger is my middle name,’ Honey shouted into an imaginary walkie talkie. ‘Over and out.’

I should explain. Honey’s middle name was not actually ‘Danger.’ She didn’t even have a middle name. Most bees don’t. And she was not in any real danger either. There isn’t much danger you can get into when you’re flying around two feet off the ground.

But Honey liked to be a little . . . well . . . dramatic.

She was supposed to be practising her flower landings for Bee School, but Honey was putting it off. *Procrastinating*. And she knew exactly what that word meant because someone was always telling Honey that she was procrastinating. Pretty much every day.

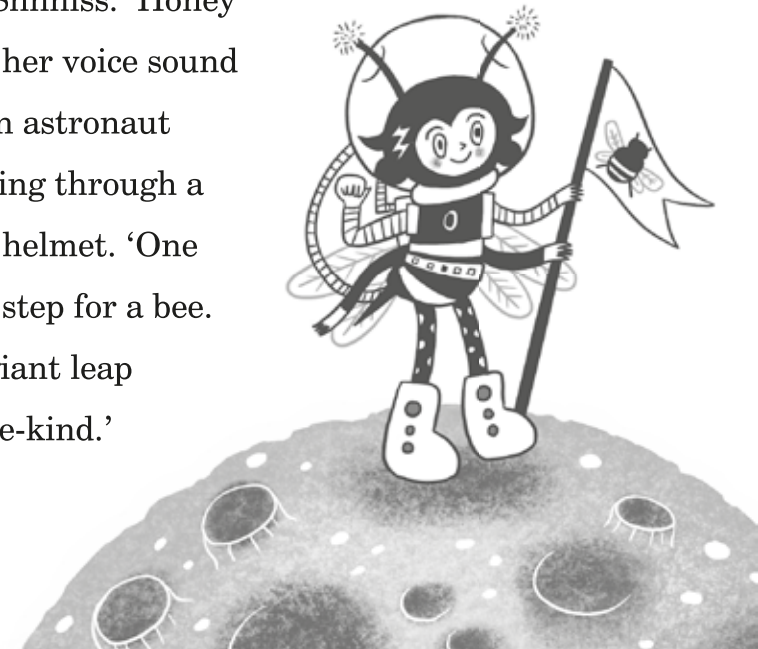
Sometimes, when Honey was supposed to be studying hive history, really she would be imagining herself as the queen of an ancient Egyptian beehive.



Sometimes, when she was supposed to be learning an important waggle dance, really she would be imagining that she was twirling pirouettes like a swooping swarm of swallows.

Today she was supposed to be practising how to land on a flower head to collect pollen (a fairly essential life skill for a bee) but instead she was picturing herself as the first bee to land on the moon.

‘Shhhiss.’ Honey made her voice sound like an astronaut speaking through a space helmet. ‘One small step for a bee. One giant leap for bee-kind.’



She stepped onto a geranium. In her head she seemed to glide onto the surface of the moon. In reality, she overbalanced and the flower tipped, sending Honey tumbling antenna-first into the dirt.

‘Oooooof! Hmmm . . . More like a crash landing,’ she mumbled as she shook the dirt off her stripy fuzz.

A ladybird fluttered down and landed on the rim of the flowerpot.

‘You’re an early bird this morning,’ Nana Ladybird said.



‘You know what they say . . . the early bird catches the worm,’ Honey replied.

A brown wrinkly worm reared his head up from a mound of dirt in the pot.



‘Bird?! Where?!’ he shouted. ‘Where’s the bird?’

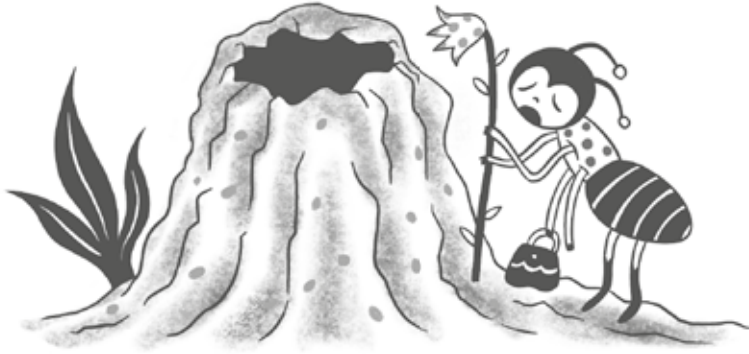
‘Oh, there’s no bird! It’s just a saying,’ Honey said.

The worm slumped back on the ground. ‘Phew,’ he said. ‘It’s a very upsetting saying.’

‘Sorry,’ Honey replied as the worm disappeared back into the dirt.

‘Hey, Nana Ladybird,’ Honey said, ‘what’s the buzz? Anything interesting happened since yesterday?’

‘The ants had about a hundred new kids,’ Nana answered.



‘Congrats!’ Honey hollered over to a very tired-looking ant walking up her anthill.

‘And Bob the caterpillar has nearly finished his cocoon.’

‘Looking good,’ Honey called to Bob.

The caterpillar beamed awkwardly and waved several of his legs.



‘And no sign of that spaceman breaking into your hive,’ Nana said.

‘Nana, I’ve told you, he’s not a spaceman. He just wears that big outfit with the head cover because he thinks it protects him from getting stung,’ Honey said. Then she leaned into Nana and whispered, ‘But we could totally sting him if we wanted to.’

‘He’s a spaceman!’ Nana insisted.

‘He’s a hu-man,’ Honey said. ‘He calls himself a “beekeeper” which is totally lame. Like he keeps *us*? We keep *him*. We share our honey with him. We should call ourselves human keepers.’

Nana laughed. ‘Anyway, aren’t you supposed to be in Bee School, Honey?’ she asked.

‘No, it’s OK, I don’t have any lessons today. I have my worker bee meeting with the headteacher later.’

‘Worker bee meeting?’

‘Yes. Every young bee has to have a talk

with her to decide their bee job for when they grow up. Today is a taster day where I can try out the worker bee jobs and see what suits me.’ Then Honey stopped and looked up at the sun. ‘Oh no! I’m late! I’d better shake a wing! My best friends Hex and Beanie have already had their meetings, I can’t be late for mine. Miss Ivy will make me recite the Bee Code a hundred times in detention.’ She paused. ‘Again.’

‘What’s the Bee Code?’ Nana asked.

Honey clasped two of her arms in front of her and saluted with another one.



‘A bee must . . .

Bee loyal, bee strong.

You must always get along.

Bee considerate, bee kind.

Work hard and you’ll find

Your place in the hive.

You’ll help it survive.

Together, you see,

You can be your best bee.’

‘Sounds like you know it well, dear,’ Nana smiled.

‘When you have to recite something a hundred times it kinda sticks in your head,’ Honey nodded. ‘It’s just so Bee-centric. You know what I mean, Nana?’

‘Not really, dear, you *are* a bee.’

‘But being a bee is soooooo booooooring. Humans and other animals have a much better time. Birds get to migrate and travel to exotic places. Squirrels get to do all kinds of cool acrobatics to find food and hide nuts. And caterpillars get to transform into totally different insects altogether.’

‘Yeah, I’m a bit nervous about all that transforming stuff actually,’ Bob the caterpillar shouted over.

‘You got this, Bob. I’m totally jealous,’ Honey hollered back. ‘You’ll make a fab butterfly. Anyway, what was I saying?’ she said to Nana.

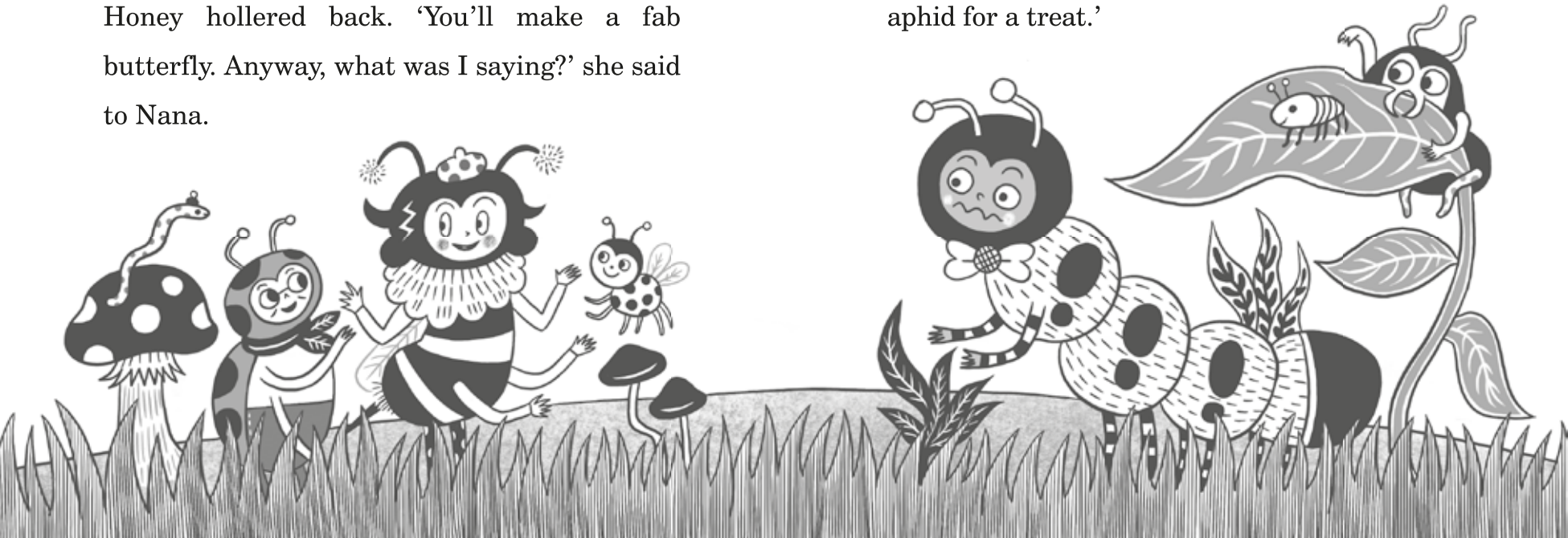
‘How boring it is to be a bee.’


‘Yeah, and humans get to have all kinds of adventures like skateboarding and rowing boats and landing on the moon – and what do we get to do? Buzz around.’

‘You get to pollinate plants and make honey,’ Nana smiled. ‘And be a part of your hive. *That’s* important.’

‘But it’s not EXCITING, Nana.’

‘You young insects and your excitement. In my day we were grateful for an occasional aphid for a treat.’





Chapter 2

I should let you know that at this point a tiny, tiny aphid who was crawling along the leaf nearby quickly turned around and headed back the other way muttering, 'Why does everyone want to eat me? Why can't we all just get along?' in a tiny, tiny aphid voice. Unfortunately, he turned around right into the path of a very hungry beetle. Ah, the circle of life - but that's another story.

'Anyway, gotta go. Bye, Nana Ladybird!'

Honey made a beeline (see what I did there?) for the hive.

She zoomed into the entrance, rounded the corner, and slammed straight into her big sister Bella who was guarding the way.

'Aaaaah!'

Honey barrelled into Bella, and they tumbled across the floor in a sprawl of flailing antennae, arms and legs. They landed in a jumbled heap against a wax wall.

Bella jumped up and shook herself off. This was clearly not the first time she had been barrelled into by her little sister. Bella was a whole head taller than Honey and broader across the shoulders. She was always neat and disciplined and aside from them having the same zigzag on their heads you would never suspect they were sisters - even though everyone in the hive was actually related. The Queen bee was everyone's mum. (It's a bee thing. We'll get to that later.)