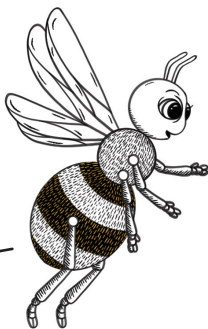


# Harriet

*Adventures of a Honey Bee*



**By Diane Belinfanti**

*Illustrations by Sol Casemajor*

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## *Dedication*

I dedicate this book to Chase, Dylan,  
Liam, and Orlando, who sweeten my life  
and bring me the greatest joy.

## *Thanks*

I offer my deepest thanks, respect,  
and gratitude to those among us who strive  
to help save Mother Earth and all her children.

Thanks also to the honey bees, those amazing  
little creatures who taught me so much  
and who work tirelessly to pollinate the  
planet and beautify our world.

Let's keep them safe.



## CHAPTER 1: **ARRIVAL**

The hive pulsed in anticipation of the morning's new arrivals, and the buzzing of thousands of honey bees filled the air. In the nursery, the bees darted here and there, inspecting the birthing beds. Some of the beds were empty, while others were covered with blankets. As they scurried about, the bees called out to one another in greeting.

From one end of the nursery came the sounds of cheering and clapping, along with shouts of "Way to go, Victoria!" and "It's a girl. Congrats!"

Two bees stopped to chat. "Still here, Charlotte?" one of them exclaimed in surprise. "I thought you had the night shift."

"I did," Charlotte yawned in reply, "but they're

a bit shorthanded this morning, so they asked me to stay.” She yawned again and rubbed her weary eyes.

“Well, I hope you get a break soon. You look beat.”

“I am,” Charlotte admitted sleepily. She glanced at the clock on the wall. “Oops! Got to go!” she cried. Then she waved goodbye and hurried off.

“Did you hear the news?” someone announced to the room. “Margaret’s newborn has arrived.”

“It’s about time,” another snorted. “She’s been sitting by that bed for so long, I’m surprised her wings haven’t fallen off by now.”

“Have you seen Sofia?” a worried bee shouted frantically. “Her newborn’s almost here! Someone needs to find her!” Desperate, off she raced in search of the missing bee.

Another complained to anyone who would listen, “Frankly, I don’t know how on earth all these newborns are going to fit in this hive. We’re overcrowded as it is.”

“Oh, Gertrude,” someone nearby scolded. “You say that every week. The colony can handle more bees. We’ll make room. We always do.”

Two sisters stood side by side, looking down at the floor dejectedly. Bits and pieces of wax and dirt were

scattered everywhere. “Look, Rita,” one whined, “I’ve been on my feet all day mopping. I’m exhausted. You clean this mess. I’m going to bed.” She turned on her heels and started to leave.

“We’re all exhausted, Edith,” Rita hastened to remind her sister. “But you know as well as I do that we’re both going to be in big trouble if this floor isn’t properly cleaned. And I simply can’t do it alone. Besides,” she pointed out, “the work will take half as long if we do it together. Come on,” she urged, putting her arm around Edith’s shoulder encouragingly. “Let’s just finish up here and call it a night. What do you say?”

“I guess you’re right,” Edith grumbled. Grabbing their cleaning supplies, the two got to work without delay.

In a far corner of the nursery, a slightly nervous but very excited honey bee sat quietly next to one of the beds. Her newborn was due any minute, and she wanted to be sure everything went smoothly. A bee buzzed by and called, “Still waiting, Beatrice? That newborn sure is taking her time!”

Beatrice just nodded. Suddenly, her friend Chloe appeared, a frantic look on her face. “Listen,

Beatrice,” Chloe pleaded. “Sofia’s missing, and her newborn is due any time now. We’re organizing a search party. Can you help us out here? It’ll only take a few minutes.” Examining Beatrice’s bed, she announced, “You’ve got a lot of time before *this* one shows her face. What do you say? Can you give us a hand?”

“I wish I could, Chloe. I really do,” Beatrice replied apologetically, “but I can’t leave my newborn’s bedside right now. She’ll be here soon. I just know it.”

Chloe shook her head. “I hope you’re right,” she said doubtfully. “Thanks, anyway.” Then she took off in search of someone—anyone—who might be able to help.

Beatrice shrugged her shoulders. *Chloe probably thinks I’m just trying to avoid work, she sighed, but if there’s one thing I know, it’s new honey bees. And this one is definitely on her way.* All at once, as if on command, the covering on the bed started to move. Then it moved again. Beatrice leaned forward, her eyes focused and alert. Suddenly, she heard a faint chomp, chomp! A tiny hole appeared in the blanket. Beatrice smiled to herself. She had delivered enough newborns to know what that meant. *Aha!* she thought. *Any second now...*