

The Boy and the Little Bee

A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration of a young boy with dark skin and curly hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a yellow t-shirt, blue shorts, and green rubber boots with yellow circles. A red satchel is slung over his shoulder, and a small, fuzzy bee is perched on his hand. He is standing next to a wooden birdhouse. In the background, a girl with brown hair, wearing a straw hat and blue overalls, is smiling. The scene is set in a sunny garden with yellow flowers.

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Leo loved his school garden more than any other place. Every morning before class, he pulled on his green rubber boots and ran to see what was growing. His mustard-yellow t-shirt and blue shorts made him easy to spot between the tomato plants. Today, something tiny was buzzing near the sunflowers. Leo stopped and tilted his head. What could it be?



A little bee hovered in the air, no bigger than a thumbnail. Her fuzzy orange body had dark stripes, and her wings shimmered like tiny windows. She had big shiny black eyes and a small round face that seemed to smile at him. Leo held his breath. He had never seen a bee so small and so bright. The bee buzzed closer, curious about the boy in the sun hat.



"Hello!" said the bee in a cheerful voice. "I'm looking for a safe place to build my nest." Leo blinked. "A nest? Don't bees live in hives with lots of other bees?" The little bee laughed. "Some do, but not me. I'm a solitary bee. I live alone, and I need a cozy spot to lay my eggs." Leo's eyes grew wide. He had so many questions.



Just then, the garden teacher walked over in her denim overalls and wide straw hat. "I see you've met one of our native bees," she said, smiling. "She's a mason bee, and she doesn't live in a hive like honeybees. Solitary bees nest alone in small holes and hollow stems. They need safe places to raise their young." Leo nodded slowly, thinking hard.



"But where can she find a nest?" Leo asked. The teacher pointed to a bare patch of soil near the fence. "Many solitary bees struggle to find good nesting spots. We can help by building a bee hotel—a special home made of wood and hollow stems." Leo's heart gave a happy thump. "Can we build one today?" he asked. The little bee buzzed with excitement.



Leo and the teacher gathered what they needed. They found a small wooden box and cut bamboo stems into short tubes. Leo stacked the tubes inside the box like tiny round rooms. "This will be perfect," the teacher said, handing him a smooth piece of wood. "Solitary bees love hollow stems. They lay their eggs inside and seal them up." Leo worked carefully, his red satchel swinging from his shoulder.



The little bee watched from a daisy. "That looks cozy!" she chirped. "I can't wait to move in." Leo grinned, showing the small gap between his front teeth. "We're almost done," he said. He placed the finished bee hotel on a sunny post, facing the flowers. The teacher secured it with twine. "Bees need warmth and shelter," she explained. "This spot is just right."



Leo stepped back to admire their work. The bee hotel looked like a tiny apartment building for bees. The hollow stems were lined up neatly, and the wood gave it a sturdy roof. "Do you think she'll like it?" Leo whispered. The teacher nodded. "Let's give her some space and watch." They sat quietly on a bench, waiting.



The little bee flew a few circles around the hotel. She landed on the edge of a bamboo tube and peered inside. "It's perfect!" she squealed. "Just the right size for my eggs." She disappeared inside, then popped out again. "Thank you, Leo!" she called. "You've given me a home." Leo's cheeks flushed with pride. He had never helped a bee before.



Over the next few days, something magical happened. More solitary bees arrived in the garden. They were different sizes and colors—some tiny and dark, others with stripes of yellow and black. Each found a hollow stem in the bee hotel. The garden buzzed with happy new friends. Leo watched them come and go, feeling like a very lucky boy.



The teacher showed Leo how to check the tubes without disturbing the bees. "See the little mud caps?" she said. "That means a bee has laid an egg inside and sealed it. In a few weeks, a new bee will hatch." Leo gently touched the smooth wood. He imagined tiny bees sleeping inside, safe and warm. His small act of kindness had made a big difference.



One afternoon, the little bee landed on Leo's sleeve. "My eggs are safe," she said. "You helped me when I needed it most. Not all bees live in hives—some of us just need a little space and a kind friend." Leo nodded. "I'm glad I met you," he said. "Now the garden is full of buzzing and busyness." The bee twirled in the air, happy.



Leo told his classmates about the solitary bees. He showed them the bee hotel and explained how hollow stems make perfect nests. His friends were amazed. "Can we build more?" they asked. Leo looked at the teacher, who smiled and nodded. Soon, the whole class was collecting stems and wood to make more bee homes around the school garden.



By the end of spring, the garden had three bee hotels. Each one was full of hollow stems, and each one hummed with tiny, busy bees. Leo's favorite was the first one, where his little friend had made her nest. He often sat on the bench, watching the bees fly in and out. The garden felt alive and friendly, thanks to the little solitary bees.



The teacher gave Leo a special job: Bee Keeper of the Garden. He wore his sun hat and green boots, checking the hotels each morning. The little bee still visited him, landing on his hand with a gentle tickle. "You're a good friend to bees," she said. Leo smiled, his gap-toothed grin wide. "And you're a good friend to me," he replied.



From that day on, Leo understood something important: not all bees live in hives. Some live alone and just need a safe place to nest. A few hollow stems and a little kindness can make a whole garden buzz with happiness. And sometimes, the smallest friend can teach the biggest lesson.