

Many bees flew out of the hole. But this time they did not fly around in a panic.

Suddenly they flew at the bears. They stung them on their noses and in their eyes and on their lips. They stung them on every spot they could reach with their new stingers.

The bears could not understand what the trouble was. They howled with rage and terror. They wanted that honey!

They tried to crawl up higher on the tree, but it was no use. More and more bees attacked them. Those that had been out getting honey flew home. They all attacked the bears together.

The bears became wild with pain and fear. Soon they gave up and dropped to the ground.

The bees kept stinging them. The bears ran into the forest. The bees chased them there.

Then the bears ran into the lake. Finally the bees left them alone.

When the bears came out, they told all the other animals what the bees had done. Now all the animals are afraid of the bees.

## HOW THE BEES GOT THEIR STING



### An Algonquin Indian Tale



A LearningIsland.org  
15 - Minute Book

*Editor: Jennifer Robinson*

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How the Bees Got Their Sting / An Algonquin Indian Tale

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Then he gave them the terrible stings which they have had ever since. Since the wasps and hornets were their cousins Wakonda was happy to give them stings as well.

Some people think this was a big mistake. They would be very glad if Wakonda had not given stings to the yellow wasp and the black hornet.

Things began to happen very soon. A group of bees found a knot hole in a big hollow tree. They began to build their nest in it. Then they started to load in the honey.

They had made the combs, and were filling them. Along came a couple of bears. Bears are great honey thieves, but it had been hard for them to find where the bees hid their honey.

They could hardly believe that right here before them was a great swarm of bees. The bees were filling the air with their buzzing as they flew in and out of the knot hole.

The bears smiled to themselves. They would have honey for dinner.

They began climbing the tree. They would put their big paws into that hole and pull out the honey comb.

But they never reached that knot hole. They made a lot of noise climbing the tree. This scared the bees.

When his feast of honey was over he listened to their tales of sorrow and woe. He was angry when he heard of how many enemies the bees had. He was also mad at the attacks upon the hard working bees.

For a time Wakonda didn't know how to help them. He told them to go home that day. They were to come back later. By then he would know just what to do.

The bees were so happy with this news that they could not keep it to themselves. They ran to tell their cousins the wasps and hornets, and even bumblebees.

When the day came the bees were ready. So were the wasps, hornets, and bumblebees.

Wakonda welcomed the bees, but was a little worried about their visitors. He asked them some hard questions.

The bees were in a good mood about the help that was coming. That was why they didn't say anything about the bad habits of their cousins.

Then Wakonda made a speech to the bees. He told them how much he loved them for always being busy. He wished all animals were that hard working. He was glad they worked so hard to spend their summer gathering up food for the long, cold winter.

## **HOW THE BEES GOT THEIR STING**

There once was a time when the bees had no stings. They were as harmless as house flies. They were just as hard working as they are now.

They loved to fly around and collect nectar. They would use it to make honey. But they had a lot of trouble in keeping their honey from being stolen, for every creature loves it.

They hid their honey combs way up in hollow trees and in the cracks of high rocks. But someone always found it.

The bears, who are very fond of honey, would always look out for it. They were very clever in getting it when once they found where it was hidden.

Birds with long beaks would suck it out. Even the little squirrels were always stealing it.

Because of this lots of bees often starved in the long winters. The honey was their winter food, but it had been stolen from them.

The bees were in danger of being destroyed. They stopped working together and scattered into little groups.

They would try to store away a little honey in the most secret places. It was just enough to keep them alive from season to season. But even these little hives were often found and the honey was eaten.

Things had gotten so bad that the bees had almost given up hope. They were afraid they would all die.

Just as they were about to give up, they heard that Wakonda was coming. Wakonda was the strong spirit – the one who sent the mosquitoes. He was coming around on a tour, to see how everything was going with his creatures.

Wakonda was greater than even Nanahboozhoo, who may have been a relative of his. He didn't come around very often, or did anything for anyone.

This year Wakonda had left his beautiful home at Spirit Lake. He was travelling through the country, and he was willing to help all who were in real need.

The bees decided to go to him and ask for help. They brought him some honey as a gift, even though they had very little of it.

Wakonda was very friendly to them. He ate the honey they brought him.

