

Ms. Rankin

English 11

Short Story for English 11

The honey stuck to her lips while she licked her fingers clean of the tenacious substance. She scooped cup after cup of the liquid gold into jars labeled "Black Modonna Honey," observing the honeybees working while she took what they lived for. A few bees crawled along her bare skin, unaware of her deed. After filling four jars of the fresh honey for house's needs, she took the plastic containers used for transferring the honeycombs. As she detached the combs, she hummed along with the steady rhyme of thousands of tiny, beating wings.

It was silent in the honey production room when she entered. The early morning light gave the old machinery a nostalgic glow, as she flipped the switch for the machines to begin warming up. A few bees swarmed around the top of the warehouse, as they did in every room on The Black Madonna Honey Ranch. She placed the new honeycombs in the supers, alongside dozens of other combs, sealed with wax and hung in rows. She picked up eight combs that were in the "honey production" stage, and placed them in the uncapper; she watched as the beeswax was gently pulled off the comb by the powerful machine, she removed them, and dumped the remains into the spinner. As the machine started to rotate, it gradually gained momentum in order to separate the good honey from the bad. It rotated around and her eyes followed as a lone honeybee buzzed over to see what all the commotion was about. She watched as the bee flew right into the pond of honey. The spinner was gaining celerity more rapidly and she could not bear to watch the poor creature drown in its own creation.

She pounded on the emergency button on the side of the spinner, but to no avail. Instead of the spinner slowing, it seemed to accelerate. Desperate to save the helpless honeybee, she carefully stepped on the ladder over the spinner and lowered herself into the ankle-deep honey and into the depths of the apparatus. She was flying now, around and around as if on an amusement park ride you rode for a nickel. She located the drowning insect and scooped the honey surrounding it in her hands. As she did so, the machine came to a gradual stop. Blinking in disbelief at the sudden change in speed, she waded through the sea of honey back to the emergency ladder and began to climb, using her elbows to stabilize herself. She lowered out of the spinner, carefully as to avoid letting the precious bee slip out of her hands, and came face to face with her Aunt. The deep purple dress she wore was covered with a flour-dusted apron. Her dark skin was shiny with sweat from the humid weather, and her big lips curled into an angry pucker.

“For heaven’s sake child! What did you think you were doin’? Going for a swim? You could have been killed! YOU BEST BELIEVE I’M CALLING YOUR MOTHER AS SOON AS I DEAL WITH---”

“Wait!” She exclaimed, trying to clam her shaking Aunt, “I was just trying to save him! It’s not my fault; he would have died if I hadn’t---”

“Who? Who would’ve died? This better be good Mia Rose Owens, or else you’re only friends are going to be bees, you know that?” She cringed at hearing her whole name used, it was only exercised in the most serious of cases.

“Him! The Bee! Hello, in my hands? THE BEE WOMAN!” She threw her hands up, closer to her Aunt’s face. Her Aunt looked into her hands and then back up. Her aunt’s face she saw, was still edged with rage. She brought her hands back down, looking into the puddle of

honey now accumulated on the beneath her. There was no bee to be found in her sticky hands or the floor. She bent her head up to the ceiling; the swarm had left as if to play a joke on her. For once in her life, there were no bees in the warehouse. None to be found at all.