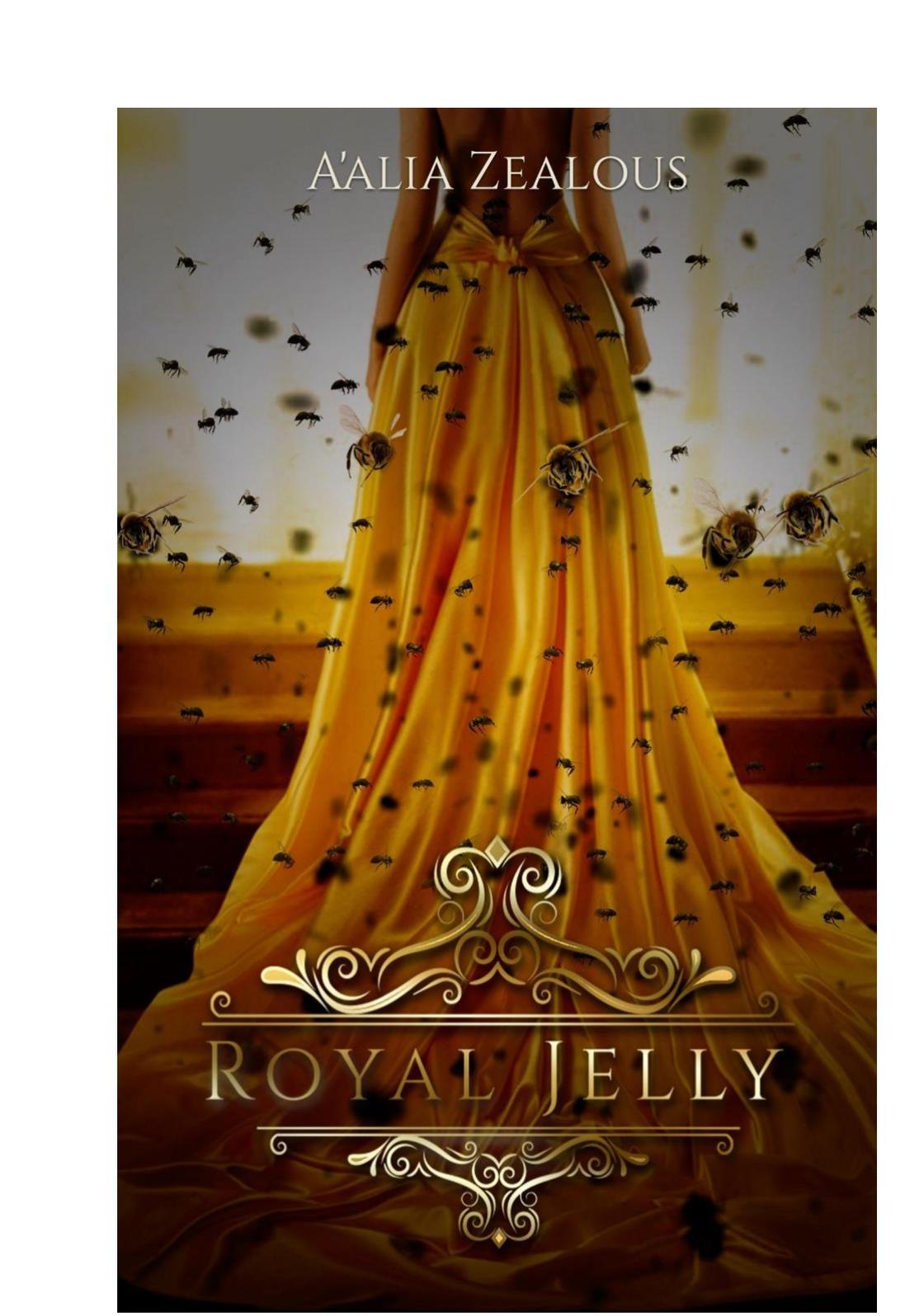


Royal Jelly

By A'alia Zealous

A woman is shown from the waist down, wearing a long, flowing yellow dress with a red sash. The dress is covered in numerous bees, some of which are flying around her. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall scene is surreal and dramatic.

A'ALIA ZEALOUS

ROYAL JELLY



Copyright 2020 by A'alia Zealous

All rights reserved. No parts of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review.

Table of Content

Chapter 1: The Servant	9
Chapter 2: Queen Nasira	17
Chapter 3: Nine	26
Chapter 4: The First Queen	30
Chapter 5: The Weeping Wall	40
Chapter 6: Balenda	48
Chapter 7: Malala	55
Chapter 8: Aidene	60
Chapter 9: Zemira	68
Chapter 10: The Queen's Birthday	73
Chapter 11: The Queens' Study	85
Chapter 12: Balenda's Song	93
Chapter 13: Malala	98
Chapter 14: Aidene	109
Chapter 15: Suri	118
Chapter 16: Zemira	131
Chapter 18: Tempest	151
Chapter 19: The Favorites	158
Chapter 20: Malala	163
Chapter 21: Suri	170
Chapter 22: Making Moves	174

Chapter 23: Zemira	181
Chapter 24: Reyna	188
Chapter 25: Aidene	190
Chapter 26: The People	194
Chapter 27: Malala	202
Chapter 28: Queen Nasira	207
Chapter 29: Reyna	216
Chapter 30: Tempest	221
Chapter 31: Zemira	229
Chapter 32: Undiscovered Talent	234
Chapter 33: Suri	241
Chapter 34: Reyna	245
Chapter 35: Tempest	274
Chapter 36: Malala	278
Chapter 38: Crowning	306
Queen Cells	316
Queen Honey Bee Life Cycle	25

To all the honeybees that create a healthy ecosystem for us all. Who knew the life of a Queen Honey Bee could be so tragic. It's baffling the types of societies that live right under our noses.



Chapter 1: The Servant

“Ten.”

Gasps flutter and echo all about the room. *Ten?*

I glance up at Queen Nasira from the corner of my eye. My heart beating fast as I strain to take in as much of her beauty as I can without lifting my head too high.

Stunning.

You can tell in her youth she was gorgeous, even with time her mature face still radiates with allure.

I stare in awe at her form fitting cream dress, the red designs swirl and curve around her bodice as the rest of the dress hangs tightly to her sharp collar bone and blooms at her waist.

With Queen Nasira’s spine erect and her shoulders elegantly squared, she sits behind her giant oak desk, facing the rest of us. Completely unphased by this information. But why would she be? She is the queen afterall.

The sunlight shining in through the tall, stained glass windows on the left and right of us, beams down on her, turning her curly blonde hair into a golden halo that shields her light skin. It also makes the jewels nestled in her crown sparkle with pride.

Balenda clears her throat, calling for order as her dark brown eyes glare out at the servants under her care. They immediately gather themselves, casting their eyes away from the head maid standing to the left of the queen. You honestly wouldn't be able to tell Balenda apart from the other servants if it wasn't for her white embroidered apron lying atop her uniform setting her apart.

The Spiritual Sages continue to stand to the other side of Queen Nasira, all three of them wearing robes of deep shimmery gold. Of course the poise of the Queen is unmatched, but the Sages have a powerful dominating presence that makes it seem as if all the light in the room is bending towards them. Almost being sucked into the air around them and refracting back to the world.

Their hoods cover most of their faces, but from what I can tell there are two women and one man. I try not to stare, but they're so fascinating. I never thought I'd ever be in the presence of the Sages in my lifetime. I've heard stories of them and their travels ever since I was a little girl. Stories told throughout the land and amongst the nobles. About how they've wandered far and wide through space and time, how they've witnessed miracles and even performed a few themselves, and how they can read the stars to give messages as to what's to come.

No one has seen the Sages for almost half a century, but under the cover of night last year, they arrived in Queen Nasira's bed chambers to give her this same message.

Ten.

They told her she is to be given ten divine daughters to be raised as heirs to the throne.

The guards and servants were in a frenzy upon discovering three unidentified figures had somehow gotten into the Queens chambers, but now those same figures are back to aid in the fate of our domain.

All the servants in the castle have gathered in Queen Nasira's office, spilling out into the hall in a sea of identical burgundy uniforms. The queens royal color. Various High Ladies who live in the surrounding cities of Hivena, sit comfortably in plush chairs closest to the Queen. Their elaborate locks, braids, and coils are done up in complex styles to match their equally elaborate dresses that reflect their status. There's almost a dress in every color, and they look radiant against the various shades of cocoa brown and mahogany skin.

We remain silent and still as we bear witness to the Queen signing the Daughters Diplomacy drawn up under the watchful eyes of the Sages. Her thin lace-gloved fingers artfully move a pen across the bottom page, sealing the dominion's fate.

This has to be one of the most exciting days in a queendoms' existence, to watch as our Queen ushers us into the new phase of her life, the raising of Dwarf Queens. It's an honor to be a witness to something so grand. The start of a new era, a new queen.

Once the Diplomacy is signed by the queen, it's then stamped and signed by a few select High Ladies and the Sages. I watch from my spot in line, shoulder to shoulder with the only other nine

women dressed in white, setting us apart from the other servants. The White Flowers, a highly revered group of servants handpicked by Queen Nasira herself to shepherd in and represent this new cycle of life.

One girl for each new Dwarf Queen to come.

Queen Nasira gathers the documents, her face poised and unexpressive, and rises from behind her desk, towering over everyone in the room. When she stands to her full height you can truly take in her statuesque frame. There's no mistaking who the queen is.

She glides from behind the desk. Balenda follows closely behind her along with the Sages. We make a path for them, servants flanking each side of the room as she makes her way to the door. A lovely cloud of geranium floats off of her and lingers in the air as she passes. The High Ladies rise and follow right behind them, an army of colorful shimmery dresses and elaborate kinky hair. Once they exit out of the office it's our turn.

The other nine women and I follow closely behind in a line of our own, down the extensive hall of the second floor of the castle. My chest expands with pride as the other servants watch us, giving us a respectable amount of space.

We follow the parade of heels clacking against the polished marble floor to the end of the corridor where an enormous balcony awaits. It looks out onto a vast clearing of neatly trimmed green grass, framed by an endless forest. This is where Queen Nasira will address the entire queendom, gathered in her courtyard. As we

approach, I can hear the low humming of the subjects as the White Flowers and I stay behind in the shadows of the open balcony doors. Most of the other servants and High Ladies gather together on the platform, towering over the crowd. The rest of us stay behind in the hall, so as not to crowd the balcony.

The warm air from outside circulates in towards me, making me feel alive...eager.

As soon as the subjects catch sight of Queen Nasira emerging through the balcony doors, deafening shouts and cheers fill the air.

“Long live Queen Nasira!”

“We love you Queen Nasira!” They shout.

She waves and gracefully walks to her podium, guards dressed in red standing alert on either side of her. She stands there for a moment, absorbing the praise, her red coated lips stretching into a brilliant smile. She finally holds up a lace-gloved hand, quieting down the cheers and chants.

“Thank you all for being here today,” she smiles as the crowd ceases to a low buzzing. “As your Queen, I have solemnly sworn to not only protect and serve this domain and the people of this land, but to honor the trust that you have given me to make decisions based in integrity, and for the benefit of the people.” My heart swells as she speaks. Every word is laced in honey and flows like a love letter to the people.

I straighten my back and fold my hands in front of me, like I’ve seen her do many times before. I wish I could have been born as one

of her divine daughters. A ping of jealousy hits me. I would've been proud to have a mother like her, but I quickly let the thought and emotions pass. I may not have been born a divine daughter, but I'm able to serve her now, and that's all that matters.

Queen Nasira reveals a large sheet of parchment that was hiding in a fold of her dress. She unravels it in one smooth flourish, presenting the Daughters Diplomacy to the subjects.

“Today marks the day of a new era. It is time to start the process of raising our future queen through the same process that I was once chosen as your queen. I have spoken to my advisors countlessly, and I've solely meditated on this endeavor for months. Today I am proud to take on the oath and responsibility of Queen Mother, for tomorrow will officially be The Day of the Pupa!” Cheers erupt from the crowd.

Excitement bubbles all around at the news of the Dwarf Queens being born tomorrow. The arrival of new babies is exciting within itself, but the arrival of new *royal* babies is like watching a rare eclipse.

It takes a moment for Queen Nasira to quiet everyone down again. “Our spiritual advisors have searched far and wide and have communed with the stars to confirm that the ten blessed women in our domain have been foreseen to bring about daughters, each who's fates align with greatness. We've waited patiently, and all of the signs from above and below point to the chosen Dwarf Queen babes as holding significant leadership qualities and attributes that hold the key to ushering our people into a prosperous era.” She goes

quiet for a moment and takes a deep breath as a far off look mists in her eyes. “I remember how my late Queen Mother nurtured me and taught me everything I needed to know to be a good queen, and today I vow as your queen, to take on the responsibility of Queen Mother to raise these girls and bring about your next leader!” The crowd roars.

“Long live Queen Nasira! Long live Queen Nasira!” They chant. The air feels electrified as the hairs on my arms stand at attention. It’s official, the ten Dwarf Queens born tomorrow will be brought to the castle to be raised under Queen Nasira herself. I can’t even fathom how those mothers must be feeling. Oh the excitement I would feel if I knew that I was possibly carrying the fetus of a future queen. The glow they must have.

A smile tugs at my lips just as Queen Nasira lifts her arms to the sky, that’s our cue. The other White Flowers and I glide onto the balcony barefoot. Our dresses drag behind us in a flowing white river. The other servants make a way for us as we pass them and the podium, where Queen Nasira is standing with her arms outstretched to us. My heart picks up speed and heat creeps up my cheeks as the people shout blessings and blow kisses. My cheeks begin to ache from how hard I’m smiling, but I can’t help it. Somewhere down there are my parents looking up at me. Watching me represent our land and the future Queen.

I briefly lift my hand to my necklace hidden under the collar of my dress. The simple silver chain, with the little green stone dangling from it, tickles my collar bone. It’s a family heirloom that’s

been passed down from the women in my family, and when they learned I was chosen as a White Flower, my mother gave it to me for good luck. Tears of joy burn my eyes. I just know I'm making them proud.

I look to my left and right at the other Flowers, beaming in their pure white dresses. Many of them couldn't help the smile that formed on their faces either.

With our heads held high, a line of guards help us to climb onto the balcony balustrade to face the crowd. I bathe in the land's chants and cheers trailing all the way up from the ground below and echoing throughout the sky. The stone railing is warm and comforting on the soles of my feet, heated from the rays of the sun.

I reach for the women on either side of me, holding their hands as we've practiced in rehearsal. The woman to the right of me intertwines her shaky fingers into mine and I squeeze them back reassuringly. Using my thumb to rub soothing circles on the back of them. There's no need to be afraid. This is a glorious day, and we are all blessed to be chosen to be a part of it.

The wind blows through my hair and whistles in my ears as the trumpets sound, dancing in the wind. That's when I close my eyes and let the warm air fill my lungs for the last time. The world around me goes completely still, just as we jump.

Chapter 2: Queen Nasira

One by one, ten nursemaid's file into the foyer of the castle out of the chilly night air. They're wrapped up in their coats, each carrying a tiny bundle in their arms. A couple of the bundles are crying, but the rest are mostly peaceful.

At least the quiet bundles know better.

I watch over them from the grand staircase as the nursemaids turn right, disappearing down a corridor that houses the nurseries. Disdain darts around in my chest as my eyes roam over their little bodies as they pass. All of them filled with the youth my subjects and servants think I seem to lack. Even before the Sages came with their visions, my people were beginning to question when I would start the raising of daughters. Of Dwarf Queens.

"Fetch their formulas," I order over my shoulder. A servant to my left bows his head and descends the stairs to scurry off to the kitchen. When he comes back, his arms are full of a silver tray holding ten identical bottles with golden rings around the base of the nipple. Milky gold liquid swims inside the bottles and glitter under the light emanating from the crystal chandelier. The pride of

our dominion. The substance that will make these girls into Dwarf Queens.

The purest form of Royal Jelly.

As soon as the last babe is in the castle, the guards close and lock the giant wooden doors with a groan and a clank, blocking out the wet chill and muffling the rain. I descend the stairs and have the servant, and my other lady in waiting Jewel, follow me to the hall where all the nursemaids disappeared to.

The Dwarf Queens Quarters is one long hall that expands down to the right. Doors flank both sides, along with lamps mounted on the walls to illuminate the corridor. I look around at the floor and ceiling, memories of my childhood flooding back to me as if a dam had been broken. I haven't been in this part of the castle in ages, there was no need for me to be. This section was created for children. Nevertheless, I can't help the ghosts and feeling of nostalgia that seeps out from the walls. Fond memories mixed with anguish.

I look behind me at the gray brick wall that marks the beginning of the corridor, only it isn't a wall at all, but a secret passageway to a quaint study tucked away on the second floor of the castle. The stairwell is curved in so peculiarly that it only looks like a solid brick wall when you first glance. But it isn't much of a secret, most of the servants know about it. They had to keep tabs on us at all times, and if one of us showed up missing, that was somebody's head.

I snap myself out of the memories of my sisters and I running up and down those stairs and head into the first nursery, right next to the ‘not so secret’ staircase.

The nursery is equipped with everything a babe would need plus more. There’s no shortage of stuffed toys, gifts from the commoners. The cradle sits at the back of the room, shrouded in a white canopy. Balenda and the Sages are already surrounding it, hovering over the baby.

All three of the Sages are cloaked in deep black robes this time. It makes them look as if they’re walking black holes that will suck any and everything up into their orbit, and disappear into thin air.

I eye them.

Their robes must be enchanted. They never have any luggage with them, and if they don’t carry any luggage, then how can they change robes?

One of the Sages tie’s a light and dark green ribbon on a beam at the end of the crib, then turns to me, feeling my presence behind them. I fix my mouth to address her, but I remember that I don’t know her name, or any of their names for that matter. Naturally, as the queen, I would be well within my right to make them identify themselves and call them what I please, but I don’t know what they are or what they look like under those big robes and hoods. They’ve walked this earth for centuries, and it would be wise for me to heed the wisdom of *my* late Queen Mother and take care in the presence of the Sages.

They aren't nearly as tall as me, I tower over everyone in the land, but the air around them feels electrified somehow. As if pure power radiates off of them. They seem to be absorbing the darkness around us.

"Her royal aura emanates green," one of the Sages says. I look at the two ribbons on the end of her crib and scrunch my brows.

"She has two different shades of green?" The Sage nods.

"At the moment, her aura is a light green because she is a child, but over time her aura will darken to a deeper shade of green." I keep my hands clasped in front of me. Green is the color of a healer and a public servant. Not the strongest color we have amongst the babes. "Her path shows that she will cast the entire land in green and bring about an era of healing, growth and immense change." I sniff, nodding my head, not entirely impressed by the baby's royal color. I was hoping for something with a little more power and ferocity.

The Sages have been predicting Queens and Dwarf Queens' royal colors for ages. The aura colors radiate around the baby, and with special sight and abilities, you can see them. The colors give insight into the qualities of the babe and what her life represents. It can also tell us what kind of Queen she will be. Unfortunately for this babe, a public servant will not help her to survive in a world of power and authority. There's no mercy for push-overs.

"Thank you Sages, you have been very kind and generous with your knowledge and wisdom. My servants have made up rooms for you to rest before you continue on your journey."

“That won’t be necessary, Queen Nasira,” she smiles. “You have been a gracious host and we must be on our way.” She hands me a sheet of sturdy parchment paper. Scrawled across it are the babies numbers by room, royal colors, and their predicted meaning if they were to reign. My eyes immediately catch the words purple and pink for two of the babies, which I’m most pleased for. Purple is the sign of an excellent leader, and pink is the closest to my own royal color, which means she will also have great potential and a powerful presence.

A frown pulls at my lips again as I read the other colors. Spotting yellow, orange... and a gray. Seems like it won’t be hard discovering who the next queen will be. This brood of Dwarf Queens has only given us a couple of strong potentials to choose from. This makes my job much easier. But the smirk quickly falls from my face as the name of the birth mother next to one of the colors catches my eye.

The three Sages turn to leave, but before they exit, the Sage that seems to be their leader, since she’s the only one that speaks, turns back to me.

“Oh, and Queen Nasira...do not underestimate the ability of these girls based on their royal colors.” I keep my face blank. *It isn’t possible that they can read my mind, is it?*

“Some of the most modest and unadorned flowers have been known to grow through concrete, while some of the most embellished and beautiful flowers have been known to perish under the slight pressure of another beautiful flower.” I smile a tight

lipped smile and nod my head. Another cryptic riddle those Sages are so fond of.

I watch them leave and as soon as they exit the room I can breathe a little easier. The light from the moon shines through the window in relief. Happy that it can now shine without the Sages consuming its light.

I glide over to the cradle to peer down at the baby and I falter. Her tiny body looks like a loaf of bread wrapped in a little white bundle on top of her blankets. Her smooth, deep brown skin and curly head of hair looks supple and malleable to the touch. She makes a little noise, opening her eyes to reveal dark brown orbs filled with the purest innocence I've ever seen in a long time. It's obvious why everyone is melting over these babies.

I study Balenda's face out of the corner of my eye as she adjusts the blanket to let the baby's arms free. Her eyes ooze in awe as adoration softens her mature brown face. I could slap her and she'd still be in a trance, ogling that baby.

I clear my throat and hold out my hand for one of the bottles. Balenda startles, caught by surprise as if she forgot I was still in the room. She places a bottle in my hand and I gently nudge it towards the baby's lips. It took all of two seconds before she greedily latched on, grabbing onto the bottle and my thumb with her little hands. Making tiny grunting sounds as she ate. Her eyes go round with hunger, and for a moment, a warmth lights up in my chest and trails through my heart, softening my face and shoulders.

I wonder if this is how my Queen Mother and the Queen Mothers before me felt when their Dwarf Queens first arrived at the castle. I stare for a moment, a maternal feeling washing over me.

It lasts for all but a minute when reality douses me like a bucket of ice water and I remember why these babies are here in the first place. Ruling a people is not a fairy tale. Becoming queen and keeping order is an unforgiving job, and the challenges these girls will face as Dwarf Queens will be treacherous.

The baby's tiny warm hand continues to possessively grasp my thumb as memories of the blood bath I had with my sisters flood my mind. The night it became just me. I blink away my emotions, swallowing the lump in my throat.

Let's not forget why everyone truly wants these babies here...why The People have pressed so hard to have them here. Because everyone thinks I'm growing weak and outdated. Too old to continue to reign, as if these children can replace the wisdom and protection I've brought to this nation. As if I'm disposable.

My face sinks even further as I pull the bottle from the baby's mouth. She gives a little whine in protest, reaching for it back. I hand it to Balenda and turn to leave, the tender moment broken.

"Wait your Majesty. What shall we call this one?" I stop and look over my shoulder at her and the babe. Watching as she picks her up and swaddles her, giving her back her bottle. The motion annoys me.

"Nothing yet. Some of them won't be alive long enough to even realize they have a name." The soft smile plummets from Balenda's face as her body goes rigid. Astonishment and foreboding settles into her features, making her swallow repeatedly. An amused smile tugs at my own lips. "Oh don't look so heartbroken Balenda, you barely even know them."

The People think that they can use these babies to get rid of me, but not if I have anything to do with it.

I turn, leaving her to tend to the child. I look back at the parchment paper the Sages handed me, going over the birth mothers' names again as I stroll off to visit the other girls in their nurseries. Eager to see one in particular.

Queen Honey Bee Life Cycle

The Beginning of a life Cycle

When queen bees are laid by the current queen, they're laid in a specific direction to signify to the worker bees that those are the eggs destined to become queens. After three days, the eggs develop into larvae, a little blind white grub with no legs.

The queen larvae are fed a special, exclusive diet of royal jelly. Which has all the nutrients in it to make them physically bigger than all the other bees and strong enough to carry out the task of producing and laying all of the future eggs for the hive. Although all of the baby bees eat royal jelly for their first few days, the queen is the only one who continues this diet for the rest of her life.

As the larvae grows, it sheds its outer skin multiple times over a period of days, and after about six days, the egg cell is sealed by worker bees.

The Fight For Queenship

Once the adult queen bee is mature (about sixteen days) she emerges from her cell by eating through the wax and emits a sound called piping. Which is a war cry to all the other adult queen bees that hatched in the hive to come find her. The adult queen bees find each other and collide into a fight until death. The last queen remaining is the hive's queen.

If other adult queen's feel like they cannot win some will escape and go find other hives to become queen over.

The Hive is Watching

If at any time the colony feels like the queen bee is not performing well, or is a sick or weak queen, they may choose to replace her through a process called supersedure. They may choose to lay more eggs and feed them royal jelly in hopes to have a queen strong enough for their needs.

If they don't recognize her as their queen, or a foreign queen tries to take over the hive, they may attack her. Forming a tight ball around her into a cluster, overheating her, and ultimately, killing her.

August 20th is National Honeybee Day!

To learn more about honey bees check out:

[The Bee Conservancy](#)

Follow [Erika Thompson](#) on Tiktok

[Bees in the D](#)

