**billybuzz the drone.**

**From The suns babies by Edith Howes.
Age Rating 2 to 4.**

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**"You are lazy," said the boy who watched the bees. "Why don't you work like the others?" Billybuzz the Drone helped himself to a little more honey from the best pantry; then he turned his big brown head slowly towards the boy who watched the bees. "You people will never take the trouble to understand us," he said. "You call us lazy, but we cannot work. We are not made like the workers." "How is that?" asked the boy. "Surely you can fly about and gather honey? That is easy enough." "Not if one's tongue is too short," replied the Drone. "The Worker Bees have long, hairy tongues to lick the honey out of the deep flower-cups, but my tongue is too short, and would not reach far enough down." "But you could gather pollen to make bee-bread for the baby bees," said the boy. "I have no pollen-basket," said the Drone. "Can you not make wax?" "No. I have no wax pockets in my coat." "Then you could be a soldier-bee, and help to guard the Queen and hive." "I should be useless. I have no sting." "Oh, well, at any rate you could be a nurse and give the babies their meals, like those nurses over there." "Why should I? Why should I work at all when I am the King?" The boy stared. "You a King!" he cried "Yes. Did you not know that we have a King and Queen?" asked the Drone. "I knew that you have a Queen; we often hear about her. But I didn't think about a King."**

**"Well, I am the King--at least, I intend to be soon. At present I am a Prince. When my Queen comes out we shall be married, and then I shall be King. There are other drones waiting, but they shall not have her. Listen--she is singing in her golden room now. That means that she is coming out soon. I must be ready for the beautiful Queen." He walked out of the hive into the sunshine. Here he brushed himself and spread his shining wings and looked very big and handsome. There was a stir in the hive, and the young Queen flew out and mounted into the air. With a rush Billybuzz flew swiftly after her, followed by the other drones who had been waiting. Whoever could catch the Queen first was to marry her, so they all did their best. Higher and higher they flew, till they were all out of sight. The boy waited below, and presently the disappointed drones came back, bringing the news that Billybuzz had won the race. So Billybuzz the Drone married the Queen, and became King. A few days later the boy again came to watch the bees. "Where is Billybuzz the King?" he asked a drone who sat at the front door in the sunshine. "Dead!" said the drone. "Dear me!" said the boy. "How did that happen?" "Oh, he just died," said the drone. "We all die very soon after we become kings. We are not made to live as long as the workers or the queens." "Is that so? Then I would rather be born a worker than a king," said the boy. "Everyone to his taste," said the drone. "A short life and a merry one**