

Tails

STING IN THE TAIL

Summer after summer the bees made warm, sweet honey. But every year their honey was stolen, by bears, by birds and by humans. They buzzed threateningly at the marauders, but it did no good. They swarmed and swooped at them, but their honey was lost.

So the bees flew up to where the great god Jove lived high on his mountain top, taking with them their finest honeycomb made from the sweetest flowers.



"This is food fit for the gods," said Jove when he had tasted it. "Tell me what you need, and I shall give it to you."

The bees explained their problem and said, "Give us a weapon so that we can defend ourselves against the thieves."



Jove frowned. This was not the sort of request he had expected. There was a long silence before he spoke again.

"Very well," he said at last. "I shall give each and every one of you a sharp sting."

The bees were delighted, and were thanking Jove when he interrupted them: "But there's just one thing."

"Anything that pleases you, great Jove," they said, thinking he would request an eternal supply of honey.

"If you use your sting, YOU DIE."

