



# Letters from the Hive: An Intimate History of Bees, Honey, and Humankind

*Stephen Buchmann, Banning Reppier*

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They work hard, are devoted to family, love sex, and know the importance of a good piece of real estate. Honey bees, and the daily workings of their close-knit colonies, are one of nature's great miracles. And they produce one of nature's greatest edible bounties: honey. More than just a palate pleaser, honey was once an offering to the gods, a preservative, and a medicine whose sought-after curative powers were detailed in ancient texts . . . and are being rediscovered by modern medical science.

In **Letters from the Hive**, Prof. Stephen Buchmann takes us into the hive--nursery, honey factory, queen's inner sanctum--and out to the world of backyard gardens, open fields, and deserts in full bloom, where the age-old sexual dance between flowers and bees makes life on earth as we know it possible. Hailed for their hard work, harmonious society, and, mistakenly, for their celibacy, bees have a link to our species that goes beyond biology. In **Letters from the Hive**, Buchmann explores the fascinating role of bees in human culture and mythology, following the "honey hunters" of native cultures in Malaysia, the Himalayas, and the Australian Outback as they risk life and limb to locate a treasure as valuable as any gold.

To contemplate a world without bees is to imagine a desolate place, culturally and biologically, and Buchmann shows how with each acre of land sacrificed to plow, parking lot, or shopping mall, we inch closer to what could become a chilling reality. He also offers honey-based recipes, cooking tips, and home remedies--further evidence of the gifts these creatures have bestowed on us.

Told with wit, wisdom, and affection, and rich with anecdote and science, **Letters from the Hive** is nature writing at its best. This is natural history to be treasured, a sweet tribute that buzzes with life.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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