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"An engaging collection of observations about honeybees and their activities."—*Publishers Weekly*

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From Reader Review The Queen Must Die and Other Affairs of Bees and Men for online ebook

Ani Nercissian says

Interesting read. You don't need to be a beekeeper to enjoy this book. Longgood is excellent at comparing human behavior with bee behavior. If you're even remotely interested in bees, pick up this quick read.

JamiG4 says

Full of dry humor and witty reflection on both bees and human beings. I love the way William perfectly captures the essence of cultural ideas making them clear in a concise and often blunt way. The egocentricity of humans is constantly on the chopping block. Yet his constant questioning, rather than making statements, brings a level of openness that allows the reader to contemplate his own perspectives in line with the information presented.

The only criticism I would have is on his ability to discuss the ways bees deal with death in a practical way while seeming more attached or judgmental in his discussion of the fatal nature of their procreation and how drones may be unfairly treated. But perhaps that is my own sexist leaning...

Overall, I forgive any criticisms as his writing style and practical philosophy regarding the place of humans in this Universe are so full of insight and humility.

JoAnne says

Thoroughly enjoyable description of the lives of honeybees for the general public from the perspective of a beeloving beekeeper. One statement about propolis in the book is not correct. Recent research (unknown to the author) has discovered the extreme importance of the propolis bees make from plant resins to coat and seal their hive. It is their communal immune system and they actually gather different plant resins to make it, depending on what pathogens they are exposed to- kind of like getting the right medicine for what ails you.

Wendy says

Fascinating, educational, delightful read on all things bees. I wish I'd read this before we had nests removed from our trees and pool rocks--as I would have left them alone and studied them instead. I loved the correlations to socialist society!

Claudia Michelli says

Beautifully written and engaging story of the honey bee. The author expresses such love and respect for the

elusive bees, their complex and harmonious interactions and community of living. Their social network is unparalleled and pales by comparison to human society which is discordant and rooted in conflict. Bees have been around for 100 million years and are unsurpassed in their intelligence and cooperative adeptness.

Kara Skye says

William Longgood is, in my opinion, the world's best beekeeper. He is also a talented author who can take the subject of bees and discourse relationships of all kinds using bees. The reader is taken completely into the world of bees - with very little human intervention at all, save for his presence as our guide - and yet suddenly so many things about life's interactions are revealed. I have read this book three times in my life (although after having amnesia, the second read was as new to me as the first. I recorded it read aloud for myself and my sons as I often reference the bees when giving advice to my sons. I don't have to become a beekeeper, now, to know about bees; but if I were, I am certain that any advice I have given to my sons would have been given out around the hives. I'm sort of an old guy that way, and my mother, Bunny, was sort of an old beekeeper's daughter in that way. She'd watch the bees and listen, intently, to the beekeeper's explanations about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

There is so much wisdom in this book; reading it is like being let in on a secret. I recommend it - even to those who've never owned a hive (and I haven't). Thanks to this book, I have given great advice to my boys like, 'if you do catch up with the Queen, for God's sakes keep going!' William Longgood in any lifetime remains one of my favorite authors. Some people know so much about bees.

Ruin says

The best book I've read in years: it sent me on a binge of similar books hoping they'll be as good. Longgood writes charmingly and affectionately, without shying away from the crueller sides of either bees or men. I found myself endeared to the bees even when they were being terrible. I found myself sobbing my eyes out at their suffering. I found myself looking up bee-keeping regulations in my city. I immediately recommended it to my mother and she too adores it.

Stephen says

Before reading this book, I thought bees were cool, and I liked the taste of honey. I knew about queens and workers and bee dances, I knew about swarming and I knew how a beehive is constructed. I'm not a beekeeper, but my dad is, and I have enough curiosity that I've picked up some of the basics.

Mr Longgood's quiet little thirty-year-old book, though, is a kind of meditation on beeness: an exploration of the motivations, desires, and attitudes of the simple honeybee as she goes about her business. The questions he raises range from the unknowable (do drones know that successful copulation will mean their death?) to things that science may eventually give us the answers to (how does a colony decide when to swarm?) but each is considered so thoughtfully and with such genuine affection for the bees that you are infected.

He examines the contrasts between honeybee and human societies, marvels at the completeness of nature's design where the bee is concerned, and writes with gripping drama about the most exciting moments in the

hive, which typically pass unheeded by beekeepers (with the exception of swarming, which is rarely missed).

A fine piece of literature, which I recommend highly whether you are interested in bees or not.

Nick says

This was a wonderful book, but I may be biased in saying this due to my obsession with bees. It's very informative in terms of beekeeping, but it goes beyond that. Longgood not only writes about bees, but he also writes about us, humans. He compares the bee's actions to ours very insightfully. It's clear that Longgood loves bees in the way he writes about them, and I feel that his writing could make anyone love bees as much as I do. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn not only about these amazing insects, but about the world we live in.

Sjancourtz says

This is one of those wonderful books that helps us see how interrelated we are with all of nature. I'm not a beekeeper, but was still fascinated by his fluent, even at times romantic descriptions of how the bees selflessly devote their brief little lives to the welfare of the hive. It's beautifully written. For those of you who enjoy a good, contemplative read, that makes you look up and view all the plants and creatures around us with more understanding and wonder, definitely, read this book. I'm not a particularly spiritual or philosophical person, but still, it made me appreciate these little animals, and even as an atheist to see, perhaps, the hand of Providence in the whole thing.

Azure Giroux says

Amazing book. There's always so much more to learn about these amazing creatures.

Jane says

This is a wonderful book. It is fascinating whether you are interested in bees or not, with astute observations about the natural world and our connections to it. Highly recommend!

Cheryl says

Definitely enjoyed this and read it start to finish without a break. It was alluded to in another book I read so I picked it up and am so glad I did. Not my usual sort of book but I thoroughly enjoyed it. The author's fascination with bees is both interesting and contagious. Beekeeping sounds like something I'd enjoy.

I agree with the other reviewers, poor drones...Male readers might want to skip that chapter, it is rather traumatic!

Rebecca Rogers says

Great book. Bees are such amazing creatures and this book tells of some of those things.

Deb says

This is one of the early books I chose to read on beekeeping a couple of years ago. I found it a great introduction to bee facts, bee lore and that strange breed, beekeepers. But it was the philosophical aspect that I loved most.

How does a colony survive? What is justified for the good of the whole? What are our imperatives? What is the value of an individual? What is the value of life spent in unrelenting toil?

Yikes, this makes it sound deathly serious, which it certainly isn't. It is the captivating tale of Longgood's introduction to beekeeping and the understanding he has developed of bees. I love his mantra that once you think you know all about bees and their behaviour, and how we can control it, they'll just go right along and do the opposite. He is much given to reflection, and asks us to question our role in the natural order.
