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War & Bees

2020

School of Language and Culture

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Creative Writing

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of practice-led research in the form of a full-length script for a feature film; plus, a 6000-word essay (exegesis). A summary of the script is as follows.

Bridget, a devout Catholic woman, returns to her role as beekeeper in her hometown of Mangonui to find that she has been replaced by young drug dealer, Skunk in anticipation of her employer, Delia's retirement. As such, Bridget's future is made uncertain. She simultaneously takes on the role of planning a local gala in conjunction with the church and attempts to avoid her estranged sister. Skunk and Bridget vie for the role of beekeeper and the attention of Delia with increasingly reprehensible behaviour.

The two come together when the bees they both so love are destroyed, leaving Skunk unemployed and Bridget in a deep depression. It takes losing those closest to her for Bridget to realise that her behaviour and conservative opinions are driving wedges between herself and her family. Upon understanding the error of her ways, she begins to make serious amends with those that she has offended. Having lost sight of her eminent redundancy, Bridget is surprised to be offered a home with her sister and her illegitimate daughter, Mary and a job as the local Church's verger. Whilst Skunk and Bridget may never be friends, they find themselves allies in their small community.

The script is framed by an Exegesis which is a 6000-word essay on the subject of:

a) The genre of the script
b) The development process from synopsis to second draft

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Thea Bailie-Bellew
Author

EXEGESIS – PARTS ONE & TWO

EXEGESIS PART ONE

War and Bees

In a tepid climate that claims to be progressive and open-minded, twenty-first century cinema is a beacon of disappointment and frustration. The media's interpretation of the industry is optimistic, flooded with headlines to inform us of every time the celluloid ceiling is broken, charting new horizons without offering any kind of perspective. It is impressive to learn of a 7% increase in 'clearly identifiable' female protagonists in cinema between 2017 and 2018 – obvious progress. We are placated because we appear to be moving in the right direction. When presented context, the statistics are considerably more alarming: in 2018, clearly identifiable female protagonists featured in 31% of films, whilst males comprised 52% and ensembles 17%. (Lauzen, 2019) It isn't much better off screen. Women comprised only 27% of all creators, including writers, directors, and editors. (Lauzen, 2018)

It is not as simple as merely transmitting facts. A brief news archive search for 'feminist film' comes up with a myriad of results, juxtaposed between praising any film with a female lead as 'feminist' irrespective of any progressive theme or characterisation, or praising a male celebrity for aligning himself with the word 'feminism' to earn himself brownie points. (Trent, 2020) The #MeToo and Time's Up movements arising from the Weinstein effect gave opportunity to criticize the film and entertainment industry for simply not being better for women. (Zacharek, Dockterman, & Sweetland Edwards, 2017) In breaking the silence encircling the invincible men who control Hollywood, women should have had the opportunity to write more stories, direct more stories, and watch more stories – about and for themselves.

How are we supposed to accurately represent women in cinema when women are unable to take part in telling stories for the screen? This essay shall extend upon story elements depicted in recent feminist texts, written either by women or with a female lead, and their utilisation in constructing *War and Bees,* a script illustrating the importance of female relationships and self-discovery.

War and Bees details the journey of a sheltered young woman with extreme religious morals as she must find her identity in a sinner's world, evicted from her comfort zone. To do so, she must interact responsibly with those who go against her values to maintain the little certainty

– in herself, in others, and in God – that she retains. Story elements were adapted from the following titles: *The Vicar of Dibley 'The Arrival'* (Plowman & Curtis, 1994), *Little Women* (Gerwig, 2019), *We Bought A Zoo* (Brosh McKenna, Crowe, 2011), *The Secret Life of Bees* (Prince-Blythewood, 2008), and *Thelma and Louise* (Khouri, 1991), as well as pivotal influence from The Holy Bible (King James Version). Elements from these texts were chosen based on narrative structure, setting, character development, and the theme of sisterhood, reinforced by biblical motifs and respective scripture.

The central narrative relative to each of these texts is the change in setting for the protagonist. In each of the five texts, the protagonist leaves their home location for a new setting that poses trials and tribulations for them to overcome. This serves as the initial action narrative to drive the plot and interpersonal relationships forward. It sets up the preliminary problem for the protagonist to solve (i.e. overcoming the judgments of the local people), whilst also initiating the emotional journey that the character must overcome in order to progress through internal conflict. (Eleftheriotis, 2010) This is particularly evident in *We Bought a Zoo*. The protagonist, Benjamin Mee, struggles to connect with his children and his work whilst grieving the loss of his wife. This culminates in Benjamin quitting his job, selling his city house, and pulling his children out of school in favour of finding a 'fresh start' free of reminders of his deceased wife. The family purchases a small, rural zoo – run down and filled with apprehensive, if not abrasive, zookeepers (the 'locals'). (pg. 14; Brosh McKenna & Crowe, 2011) The action narrative of changing settings and having to amalgamate with the locals takes precedence over the internal narrative: Benjamin's need to understand his grief and connect with his children. This is mimicked similarly in *The Vicar of Dibley's 'The Arrival'*. The first episode of the series opens on the death of the local vicar and news of a new vicar's appointment. Geraldine Granger is appointed as the local vicar to a small-town parish, who were otherwise expecting a male vicar.

> 'David Horton: Owen, this is Geraldine. She's the new vicar.
> Owen Newitt: No it isn't! She's a woman!'

(Plowman & Curtis, 1994, S01E01)

Geraldine's internal and action narrative collide as she struggles to overcome the judgment and prejudice from the locals, whilst they struggle to accept the vicar's gender. In both examples, the immediate interpersonal conflict between the protagonist and the locals leads

to professional and/or personal failings, therefore driving the action narrative forward by requiring productive communication between the characters.

This approach to narrative can be depicted through the understanding of Joseph Campbell's theory of the 'monomyth'. (Voytilla, 1999) The monomyth is constructed of twelve stages that detail the 'Hero's Journey' – the path that the protagonist takes throughout the story to fulfil the action narrative and thus the structure of the story. Of the twelve stages, the second is the call to adventure, in which the hero's ordinary world is disrupted and presents a challenge. The call to adventure depicted in *We Bought a Zoo* and *The Vicar of Dibley* is the moment that either protagonist finds themselves in a new, strange place with its own challenges, and marks the beginning of the true story from the set-up. From here, internal narrative can develop from dramatic action as cause and effect. (Aristotle, trans. 1895, I.IX) This structure has been recycled through drama over the course of history to depict a wide range of stories across genre and medium to critical acclaim (e.g. *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, 2008) and *Star Wars Episode IV, A New Hope* (Lucas, 1976)), and is easily identified colloquially by the reader or audience.

In *War and Bees*, this is adapted to the moment after the protagonist, Bridget, arrives in the secondary location of her hometown, Mangonui. It immediately becomes apparent that Bridget is under pressure to find a new job and home when her live-in housekeeping role is pulled from underneath her feet. This could be considered a peripeteia even early in the story as it is evident that there is an inability for Bridget to turn back and the implied consequences of failing in her 'quest' are significantly negative. (Aristotle, trans. 1895, I.VI)

In some texts, the 'locals' that the protagonist must face are in the form of male gatekeepers – men who block progress of the female protagonist.

The disparity between the number of men and women who comprise the entertainment industry is not because of a lack of female creatives, but rather the hurdles that they must jump in order to achieve the same goals. Male gatekeepers – directors, producers, funding boards – often hold the positions of power that determine those who may progress through the industry and those who do not. Stories that do not represent these men – whether negatively or at all – will not receive the same funding or the same promotion as their

counterparts. (Brown, 2019) This issue is not solely observed in the film industry, but also in publishing, finance, and science. (Connell, 2005)

This has been illustrated in many texts over the years with dichotomous results – does the female protagonist triumph over the male gatekeeper? In *Little Women,* Jo March faces up against a senior male publisher in order to ensure that her book is published, and then further in order to determine pay and royalties. Ultimately, the publisher turns her down – she must alter her ending to his requirements, and even then, he chooses only to publish based on personal gain. (Gerwig, 2019) One may argue that this is an issue of historical female suffrage – *Little Women* is set in 1868 during first-wave feminism, prior to women receiving the right to vote in the USA in 1920. (Flanagan, 2020) Looking at a more contemporary setting, Thelma and Louise face a group of police officers in the infamous final scene – driving over the Grand Canyon to remain free instead of having their fate determined by men and the law. (Khouri, 1991) Again, one may excuse that Thelma and Louise were simply being rightfully apprehended by the law. (Smith, 2016) Geraldine Granger faces the church committee she calls her friends in each episode of *The Vicar of Dibley*, to put forth amendments to improve the village of Dibley. This church committee consists of one woman to five men, not including Geraldine herself. (Plowman & Curtis, 1994) Regardless of any excuse, the evidence is clear. Male gatekeepers are an element of society that women must navigate in order to achieve their personal and professional goals.

In *War and Bees*, this is illustrated when Bridget is faces with the possibility of chairing the new annual honey expo. Having befriended the open-minded vicar, Roddy, she faces a consortium of elder men in positions of power and must convince them to allow her to chair the expo and represent the church. Bridget wins this role on a technicality – nobody else is better qualified.

For female characters to persevere through situations in which they are systematically disadvantaged, it is critical to develop character traits that allow her to overcome this difficulty. Determination is a protagonist trait unrelated to any storyline, plot device, or narrative but required in order to advance a story further. It could be considered a trait that is observed in all protagonists because of this prerequisite. However, in the twenty-first century, women are born determined and made aware that they are to navigate a world build to benefit men. (Willett, Anderson, & Myers, 2016) Bridget exemplifies this trait in organising the

honey expo to the church's approval, by exceeding expectations as set by potential employer Alf, and in bettering herself with the recognition of internalised misogyny. Bridget does not necessarily do this in ways that are otherwise expected of her – much like the behaviour perpetrated by Thelma and Louise. (Dutt, 2014) Instead, she does it using blackmail and hard grifting – employing 'unladylike' techniques and other traits that are typically exemplified and encouraged in men but reprimanded in women.

The challenge of the male gatekeeper is clear evidence in the texts of the struggle experienced by women on modern day society. This is compounded by the requirement that women compete against one another to secure positions past these gatekeepers.
At the core of *War and Bees* is a power struggle between two women – who can be the better person, the better beekeeper, the better daughter. Both women have equally valid reasons for wanting or needing to be in that top position so attempt to tear the other down in order to secure it. On one hand, Bridget's entire sense of belonging and home is integrated into her role as Catholic housekeeper to her surrogate maternal figure, Delia. On the other, Skunk's welfare depends on maintaining her job as cheerful gardener and beekeeper and forming a meaningful relationship with Delia. The question asked is who is more deserving of that top spot?

This is an explicit example of internalised misogyny at work: when women express misogynistic behaviour towards their own gender, whether unconsciously or not. 'Girl power' and 'chick flick' movies of the nineties to the 2010s were rife with internalised misogyny, both purposefully and not. *Pretty Woman* (Milchan & Marshall, 1990) depicted the moment that two upper-class retail servicewomen refused to sell to Julia Roberts' Vivienne based on her 'lower' status as a prostitute, instead of assisting or raising her up. (Cohen, 2018) Similarly, *Angus, Thongs, and Perfect Snogging* (Chadha, 2008) initially pits protagonist, Georgia, against antagonist, Lindsay, based on superficial value – such as wearing a thong or a push-up bra. Georgia immediately presumes herself superior to Lindsay based solely on the fact that she doesn't wear these feminine items.

When looking at the film industry and pop culture, internalised misogyny also applies to the macrocosm. (Mumford, 2017) Young, female viewers are often chastised for watching films marketed towards their demographic, such as *Twilight* (Godfrey & Hardwicke, 2008) and *The Fault in Our Stars* (Godfrey & Boone, 2014). (Damelin, 2019) This approach to female-

centric films is no longer appropriate in a third-wave feminism world. A contemporary audience is likely to struggle with identifying with a protagonist who has no other motivation to oppose their antagonist for superficial issues. This comes in the wake of the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, which sees women from around the world unify in order to create a more progressive tomorrow for all women. (Zacharek, Dockterman, & Sweetland Edwards, 2017)

In *The Secret Life of Bees* (Prince-Blythewood, 2008), protagonist Lily fits into a very different demographic to that of the Boatwright sisters in 1964. Lily understands the differences and injustices that plague the Boatwright sisters because of their black skin that do not affect her as a white girl. However, she does not let this prejudice her views as she is encouraged to do so, and instead embraces their differences as an opportunity to learn. Alternatively, zookeeper Kelly in *We Bought A Zoo* (Brosh-McKenna & Crowe, 2011) is situated as the love interest for grieving widow, Benjamin Mee. Kelly is made acutely aware of her position considering the missing space of Benjamin's late wife, however, she does not give into distemper. She instead uplifts and supports Benjamin throughout his grief. Examples of women supporting each other in the media offers critical representation for young girls growing up in an environment where their behaviour is highly scrutinised. This issue of internalised misogyny is *War and Bees* is resolved when highly-coveted Delia asks Bridget one crucial question – why didn't they solve these problems together? Instead of there being one top spot, the audience learns that it can be a shared position where the best outcome is one decided by mutual respect.

The depiction of women within a religious order in cinema often comes with controversy and criticism. The term 'nunsploitation' was coined to describe films that turned the sanctity of the convent into prisons, leaving young postulants at the mercy of violence and sexual exploitation. (Newton, 2014) Examples include *The Devils* (Russell, 1971), to which Roger Ebert stated, 'We are filled with righteous indignation as we bear witness to the violation of the helpless nuns' (Ebert, 1971), and *Viridiana* (Alatriste & Buñuel, 1961), which was described as 'drama of the shocking education of this girl in the realities of passion'. (Crowther, 1962) Alternatively, *The Sound of Music* (Wise, 1965), whilst based on a true story, depicts a woman's need to leave the convent in order to express her faith and know her truth. Norman Allen of the On Being Project clarifies this: 'Unlike the Mother Abbess, her [Maria] gifts can't be expressed behind stone walls.' (Allen, 2015) Ultimately, all three of

these texts depict the convent – and by proxy, Catholicism and devout religion – as an oppressive force on women.

Faith-based cinema saw a resurgence in the early 2010s following the success of 2004's *The Passion of the Christ* (Davey & Gibson, 2004), and yet, the 'virtue' of male religious figures has yet to be exploited to the degree of neologism. *War and Bees* was developed to represent the influence of religion in women's lives without requiring change or loss of religion to resolve the story. Two female characters were developed to explore two interpretations of Christianity – Bridget Keene, a devout, practising Catholic with active participation in the Church, and Skunk, a lapsed Anglican Protestant. Both characters follow the same Bible but interpret it differently, which is exposed in their interactions and perceptions of one another and the world around them.

Primary influence for these characters came from *The Vicar of Dibley* (Plowman & Curtis, 1994) and *The Secret Life of Bees* (Brosh-McKenna & Crowe, 2011) in which the main characters' devout Christian beliefs were extolled in text. Geraldine Granger and August Boatwright, respectively, are leaders for their churches and their communities. Geraldine Granger's contemporary and open-minded interpretation of the Bible results in increased congregation size for her second sermon in the quiet, rural town of Dibley. This positively resolves the action narrative for the pilot episode, '*The Arrival',* to the delight of the church committee. (Plowman & Curtis, 1994, S01E01) Alternatively, August Boatwright helps protagonist Lily absolve herself of guilt regarding her mother's disappearance by teaching her positive morals from the Bible. This resolves the protagonist's internal narrative whilst drawing on a prominent relationship line, favouring religion as the vehicle to do so.

Regarding these two examples, faith make these women and their community stronger. By depicting the positive influence of religion on female character's lives, we may be able to begin to negate the damaging connotation that spirituality is oppressive for women. To reinforce this idea in the minds of the audience, biblical motifs, scripture, and homology were used liberally in the script of *War and Bees*. *War and Bees* is based from scripture from John 8:7 (KJC), which states, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her', and also from Luke 23:34 (KJC), 'Then said Jesus, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do'. This message of forgiveness and understanding sin is integral to Bridget's perception of the world, and more importantly, Skunk. The breaking of the sun after the rain

is homologous to the story of Noah's Ark, which is also foreshadowed in the depiction of the story on Vicar Roddy's raincoat.

Misogyny is an extensive issue that effects women of all creeds differently based on race, gender, and sexual orientation – it would take volumes to document these experiences and their representation in cinema. What has been offered in this essay is a small window of insight into the way that contemporary feminist teachings have developed the faith-based film, *War and Bees*. By highlighting story elements such as setting, narrative, character traits, motifs, and interpersonal relationships, it is possible to cultivate a story that demonstrates a modern day perspective of what it is like to be female and the difficulties that entails.

SYNOPSIS: Bridget Keene – a devout Catholic – has settled. Estranged from her family, she is content to live and work as a housekeeper for her childhood ballet teacher, Delia. The two travel to their hometown of Mangonui, where Bridget can tend to her beloved bees, only this year is different. The beach bach has been sold and Bridget must now play second fiddle to the new beekeeper, Skunk – everything that Bridget has been taught to abhor. To survive, Bridget is simply going to save Skunk from eternal damnation, avoid her estranged sister, and chair the local honey expo.

When Bridget learns that young Skunk is also a drug dealer, all attempts to help her fly out the window. Blackmailing Skunk out of the picture, Bridget is free to handle her sister's attempts at reconnection whilst she struggles to book vendors for the expo. Tragedy strikes when the bees contract a fatal disease and are destroyed, along with any potential future for either Bridget or Skunk.

Condemned for her actions by Delia, Bridget is forced to make amends with Skunk, who has landed herself in danger. Bridget sacrifices her bond with bees in favour of providing Skunk with a future. Begrudgingly, with only hours to spare, Skunk decides to help Bridget with running the honey expo, resulting in a successful expo and options open for Bridget. Bridget has grown confident and independent, now knowing what she is truly capable of, and decides to discover what's next in Mangonui.

WORLD: Set in modern day New Zealand, *War and Bees* splits its story between a metropolis and a small, rural town through the months of a hot kiwi summer. It follows kiwiana tradition of breaking away from the hustle and bustle of city life in favour of the more relaxed pace of a holiday town, such is Mangonui.

Mangonui is a fictional blend of two Northland towns: the real Mangonui and the nearby Cable Bay, designed to depict a tight-knit community with limited facilities directly facing out onto the Pacific Ocean. Through the summer, the population doubles to around 3000 inhabitants with the incoming wave of wealthy city slickers that, whilst offering a well

needed boost to local income, also increases the divide between those who have and those who have not. The demographic is made up primarily of holidaying families and wealthier, older people who have moved into retirement on the coast and adults between the ages of eighteen and thirty are often hard to come by. The local schools are underfunded, and the single supermarket is as over-priced as the beaches are over-populated. A town in which everyone knows everyone, and their secrets, may be endearing to some but may also be more nefarious than at first glance. Most of the population could be considered liberal, representative of the 'chilled-out' mindset that New Zealanders are renowned for. Through the summer, the biggest priorities are ensuring that the beer stays cold and that the tan lines aren't too severe. Even at the peak of tourist season, the beaches are the sole source of entertainment with exemption of occasional events arranged by the Church, the only community organisation in town.

The Church in Mangonui is Anglican with parishioners interpreting a more progressive stance on the Bible, a firm belief in the word of John 8 (KJV) – we are not to pass judgment on the sins of others for we are not without sin. As such, the Church boasts a large congregation of those both religious and those who want to be involved in community organisation. Without the involvement of the Church, it is likely that Mangonui would fail to thrive as a community throughout the summer, let alone through the trying winter months.

Alternatively, Bridget's Catholic beliefs developed through a far more conservative community that practice of repentance and absolution through confession. Sins such as homosexuality, prostitution, and premarital sex are actively opposed. Those who witness individuals exhibiting these sins are encouraged to 'save' those in danger of eternal damnation, for both of their souls, as it is considered God's will.

THEME: At its core, *War & Bees* is a story of self-discovery and growth: how one person can make grave mistakes or poor judgments and better themselves from it. There is not one person in the world who is not guilty of making mistakes to the denigration of another, the author included. The purpose of mistakes is to encourage the individual to make different choices in the future and to learn from the repercussions. It may not always be a pleasant experience, but it gives way to an opportunity for growth. This functions hand in hand with the theme of forgiveness, both to others and to oneself – the Bible preaches that nobody is

without fault and flaw and the sooner than we learn to practice forgiveness, the sooner we can better ourselves.

Bridget heralds this understanding in scene 89, when she surrenders her sole beehive and her treasured beesuit to Skunk. Bridget has come to this choice after the previous sequence of events force her to evaluate her behaviour and treatment of Skunk. She must recognise spiritually that Skunk's perceived sins have already been forgiven in the eyes of God and that she does not need 'saving' from damnation. Her attempts to help Skunk have had serious negative impact on her relationship with Delia as well as on Skunk's personal life, and that it is going to take more than an ill-defined apology in order to make amends. This requires recognition of her own sins and the impact that they have had on many people.

Skunk rebuffs Bridget's previous apology and expects more from her, having been in a position of power and responsibility. This forces Bridget to analyse her behaviour, to learn and grow from her misgivings. Bridget admits that the hive is stolen and truly belongs to Skunk anyway. This offers Skunk a future. Self-discovery is reflected in the knowledge that Bridget knows now that this is what will resolve Skunk's issues, as it may have resolved her own once upon a time. In someone so entirely different to her, Bridget can recognise similarities between them.

This instantly changes Bridget's action narrative as her original goal of reclaiming her bees is no longer a possibility. The audience should be able to recognise this and recognise that Bridget understands this also. It opens the rest of the script to opportunity as Bridget's motivation is now otherwise unknown. Bridget and the audience are going to discover what is in store for Bridget together.

The script should cultivate a feeling of relief from the audience as the conflict between Bridget and Skunk comes to an end, and with it, Bridget's conflict with Delia and the uncertainty regarding Skunk's future. A sense of pride may also resonate as Bridget has truly had to work on herself in order to come to such a sacrifice. Simultaneously, the audience may express sadness at Bridget giving up her passion and potentially her ultimate happiness.

PROTAGONIST: Bridget Keene is a cosmetically modest woman who has never had to grow up or take responsibility for herself and her actions. For the most part, she is well-meaning; keeping to herself and her role as a housekeeper. However, Bridget is limited by her lack of

experience in the real world, resulting in sheltered and socially impractical logic defined by rigid Catholic rubric. Her attitude is incompatible with a world that demands connection with other people from all walks of life.

It is established early in the story that her true passion lies in beekeeping and so her goal is to be able to tend regularly to a bee colony. This is hindered by losing access to the hives that she is comfortable with when they are at first sold, but then Bridget is also replaced as primary beekeeper, offering Skunk as the barrier and antagonist to Bridget's goal. Bridget's immediate decision is to try and align herself with Skunk in order to at least have some small access to the bees. However, Skunk's attitude clashes with Bridget's and so Bridget sets out to sabotage and ultimately eliminate Skunk's connection to the bees so that she may resume her rightful position.

Bridget's behaviour moves from morally questionable to morally reprehensible, going so far as to blackmail Skunk with explicit pictures and deliberately give her food poisoning. Bridget receives warnings regarding her behaviour from both Skunk and Delia – a reminder that her actions will have consequences, but Bridget continues to ignore them. This stops when Bridget's goal goes up in flames – the bees that she wishes to tend to contract a disease and are destroyed.

It becomes evident that this is not a story about what Bridget wants – to tend to bees – but what Bridget needs: self-awareness that can only be realised when one is presented with the truth of their actions. It is at the point that Bridget risks losing her one true ally in Delia that she finally takes a look at herself.

By the end of the script, Bridget acknowledges her mistakes, having become self-aware of her poor behaviour and borderline hubris. She understands that she has abused a position of responsibility by using God as an excuse. Bridget exhibits humility by sacrificing her beloved bees for the sake of Skunk's wellbeing and future and is offered forgiveness in return. Bridget is confronted with reality and in return is forced to learn and grow from her mistakes.

ANTAGONIST: Stephanie 'Skunk' Acres is the primary antagonistic force in *War and Bees*; a cheerful girl who, in Bridget's eyes, is the devil's cabana girl. Only eighteen, Skunk's purpose in life is to become a great beekeeper – having been hired as an apprentice beekeeper under Bridget's tuition, she is more than ready to learn. Outside of her hours as a beekeeper,

Skunk is a sex worker by her own choice and only slightly out of financial need – she clearly enjoys her work. Despite keeping her personal and professional lives separate, her sexual proclivity, skimpy attire, and commitment to 'sinning' earns her disapproval from Bridget, which disadvantages her education.

Ultimately, however, Skunk holds the role that Bridget covets the most – taking care of the bees – and threatens her position as Delia's surrogate daughter. Skunk's idolisation of Bridget is made apparent from the moment that the two meet. Bridget attempts to make Skunk a better person, whilst Skunk simply wants Bridget to make her a better beekeeper. However, the better at beekeeping Skunk becomes, the more defensive Bridget gets until she resorts to committing physical harm.

Skunk, coming from a poor financial situation, earns money primarily from beekeeping and secondarily from sex work – so she can choose her clients when she is otherwise employed. Upon losing her job when the bees are destroyed, this arrangement is no longer feasible and results in Skunk taking on new, riskier clients. Bridget witnesses Skunk's resulting injuries and feels intensely guilty for the way that she has treated her. When Bridget finally apologises for her behaviour, Skunk initially refuses the apology on the basis that Bridget does not genuinely mean her apology. She does not see how her behaviour has negatively impacted on Skunk's life.

Bridget sacrifices her own bees to ensure Skunk need no longer accept risky clients, simultaneously admitting her own faults and sins. In return, Skunk illustrates to Bridget the full cycle of sin, guilt, and forgiveness, as she forgives Bridget for her judgments and helps her in setting up the honey expo. Bridget learns to communicate with people for who they are, not for who she thinks they should, or could be. Without this epiphany as triggered by Skunk, Bridget is without hope of finding herself her own new future.

<u>DRAMATIC QUESTION:</u> The main dramatic question in *War and Bees* regards the relationship between protagonist Bridget and antagonist Skunk. Will they be able to overcome their differences (and conflicts) to be able to work together with the bees?

This is established at the instance of meeting between the two characters. Bridget is situated as Skunk's mentor – teaching her the 'art' of beekeeping – and thus, a position of power and

responsibility. This follows the shift between set-up and story, when Bridget arrives in Mangonui to find the beach house sold and the future in flux.

The midpoint comes when Bridget uses her trump card on Skunk – that she knows that Skunk is dealing drugs, irreversibly changing the power dynamic between them. Skunk becomes passive and retreats from her work and from Delia due to Bridget's blackmailing. Of course, they are both levelled when the bees are burned and destroyed – there is no longer a position as beekeeper or the two of them to argue over. After this, the script moves into the end section of the film.

The dramatic question is answered in two parts. Bridget surrenders her role as beekeeper to Skunk by delivering to her the bees that she had stolen earlier in the film. Ultimately, Bridget gives up her position to Skunk, but they are still at conflict. This changes in the final scenes of the script, in which Skunk shows Bridget compassion and helps her to host a successful honey expo, which opens up a host of opportunities for Bridget to reconnect with those closer to her and secure the same future that Bridget had previously secured for Skunk.

CHARACTER QUESTION: Bridget's character develops significantly over the course of the script from a woman insecure in her place in the world to someone without direction but a stronger sense of self and identity. Bridget has spent the most developmental part of her adolescence under the sheltered wing of Delia with the guarantee of a home, a job, the Church, without having to work for it. This means that Bridget is uneducated in the way that the world functions and how people communicate with one another. She lacks independence and has not truly had the opportunity to grow up due to limited life experience.

This changes when posed with the apparently inexcusable Skunk. Bridget is torn between whether she should save Skunk or deliberately sabotage her in order to reclain control over her bees. A literal angel versus devil argument on her shoulder causes Bridget much consternation throughout the first third of the script before she deliberately gives way to ruining Skunk's life. To some extent, Bridget is conscious of her behaviour, knowing that she is wrong because she goes out of her way to justify her behaviour. In theory, somebody who genuinely believes they are doing the right thing does not have the need to justify their behaviour.

In return, Skunk forces Bridget to analyse her interactions and treatment of people with respect to her prejudicial judgments of them. Bridget views almost everyone through a 'holier than thou' lens and scorns those who do not adhere to the values respected by the Catholic Church. Skunk illustrates to Bridget why this is a disgraceful way to treat people and forces her to do better.

This journey is documented in the following five major turning points:

1. Delia confesses to Bridget she has sold the beach house: Bridget must find a new job and somewhere new to live, thus exposing her to the 'real world'. There is no job or house for her to go back to once Delia has left.
2. Bridget signs up to chair the honey expo: Bridget is determined in herself to see the honey expo through as is to secure herself a chance to retain her bees. Backing out or failing comes with negative socioreligious repercussions.
3. Bridget confronts Skunk with the proof of sex work: Bridget lays her trump card on the table and actively blackmails Skunk. The power dynamic changes from being mutual to Bridget holding all the power and Skunk knows it.
4. Eliza returns to Bridget the stolen hairbrush: Eliza tries to resolve the hostility between herself and her sister by returning a beloved heirloom. There is no longer any reason for Bridget to keep distance or hold anger towards Eliza so she must overcome her issues.
5. Bridget gives Skunk her splinter hive: Bridget offers Skunk her splinter hive and her final chance to keep her own bees. Bridget accepts that they are no longer her bees and she must find her own place in the world without them.

Ultimately, Bridget must decide what is next for her – whether to stay in Mangonui or to move onto somewhere else and start afresh. This comes down to the question of whether she can bring herself to rely and trust in other people, and even whether they can trust her in return, given her previous indiscretions. The result is that she can, and Bridget resolves to stay in Mangonui with her new community. They understand that they can rely on Bridget as she has changed for the better – having sacrificed what she believed to be her one true passion for the sake of someone else's wellbeing.

END OF PART TWO

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