

# tell it to the bees

Tell It to the Bees: Exploring the Heartfelt Story and Its Deeper Meanings

**tell it to the bees** is a phrase that immediately evokes curiosity, warmth, and a hint of mystery. Beyond being a quaint idiom, it has become the title of a poignant story that touches on themes of love, loss, and human connection. Whether you came across this phrase in literature, film, or casual conversation, there's much to uncover about its origins, cultural significance, and why it resonates so deeply with many people today.

## The Origins and Meaning Behind "Tell It to the Bees"

The phrase "tell it to the bees" originates from a traditional folk belief that bees hold the souls of the departed or act as silent witnesses to secrets. In many cultures, bees were thought to be messengers between the living and the spiritual world. People would confide their troubles, secrets, or grief to their beehives, trusting that the bees would keep their stories safe or carry them to the afterlife.

This charming superstition reflects humanity's deep need for trust and expression, even when no one else is listening. The bees symbolize a form of silent empathy—an audience that never judges, only hears and carries on.

## "Tell It to the Bees" as a Film and Novel

In recent years, "Tell It to the Bees" gained wider recognition as both a novel and a film adaptation. The story, written by Fiona Shaw and later adapted into a 2018 film directed by Annabel Jankel, explores complex emotional landscapes set in 1950s rural Scotland.

## Plot Overview

At its heart, the story follows Lydia, a young mother grappling with the loss of her husband and the challenges of raising her son in a tightly knit, conservative community. When she befriends a local doctor, Jean, their relationship blossoms into something deeply intimate but fraught with societal pressures. The bees, maintained by Lydia's son, become a metaphor for the secrets and emotions that the characters harbor.

## Why This Story Matters

"Tell It to the Bees" is much more than a period drama; it's a narrative about courage, acceptance, and the quiet revolution of personal truth. It tackles themes of LGBTQ+ identity, grief, and the power of unlikely friendships in a time when such topics were often taboo.

The story's emphasis on nature, particularly the bees, adds layers of symbolism about communication and the natural cycle of life and death. It invites viewers and readers alike to consider how we share our most vulnerable feelings and who we trust with them.

## The Symbolism of Bees in Cultural and Literary Contexts

Bees have long been rich symbols in folklore, mythology, and literature. They represent community, diligence, and the sweetness of life, but also mystery and the unseen.

- **Ancient Mythology:** In ancient Egypt and Greece, bees were seen as messengers between worlds, symbolizing the soul and immortality.
- **Literature:** Writers have often used bees to symbolize communication, secrets, and the delicate balance of nature.
- **Modern Symbolism:** Today, bees are also emblematic of environmental health, reminding us of the importance of caring for our planet.

In "Tell It to the Bees," these layers of meaning enrich the narrative, offering a beautiful metaphor for the characters' internal lives and unspoken truths.

## Why "Tell It to the Bees" Resonates Today

The story's themes are timeless, but they feel especially relevant in today's world, where conversations about identity, acceptance, and mental health are becoming more open and vital. The gentle reminder that sometimes, our feelings need a safe space to be expressed—even if that space is a quiet beehive—strikes a chord with many.

Moreover, the environmental symbolism of bees connects with current concerns about biodiversity and climate change, adding a contemporary layer to the

story's emotional landscape.

## Tips for Engaging with the Story

If you're inspired to dive into "Tell It to the Bees," here are some ways to deepen your experience:

1. **Read the Novel First:** Fiona Shaw's writing offers rich internal dialogue and detailed descriptions that enhance understanding of the characters' motivations.
2. **Watch the Film Adaptation:** The visual storytelling captures the mood and setting beautifully, bringing the rural Scottish landscape and subtle emotional cues to life.
3. **Explore Bee Symbolism:** Learn about the cultural significance of bees to appreciate the story's metaphorical depth.
4. **Reflect on Personal Connections:** Consider how the themes of secrecy, acceptance, and grief resonate with your own experiences or those of people you know.

## Beekeeping and Emotional Healing: A Real-Life Connection

Interestingly, beekeeping itself has been linked to therapeutic benefits. The calming nature of tending to bees, along with the responsibility and connection to nature, can aid emotional healing and mindfulness.

For those who find solace in nature or practice eco-therapy, the metaphor of "telling it to the bees" can be a powerful reminder of the healing potential in quiet companionship—whether human or insect.

## The Cultural Impact and Continued Relevance

"Tell it to the bees" as a phrase and story continues to inspire artists, activists, and audiences. Its gentle exploration of marginalized voices and the healing power of friendship and nature encourages empathy and open-heartedness.

As conversations around mental health, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental

stewardship evolve, stories like "Tell It to the Bees" offer a tender, nuanced space for reflection.

The narrative invites us to consider the ways we communicate our pain and joy, and who we trust to hold our truths. In a world often noisy and judgmental, sometimes the best listener is, indeed, the humble bee.

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Whether you encounter "tell it to the bees" as a phrase steeped in folklore or as a moving story about human connection, it reminds us of the quiet places where healing begins. It's a testament to the power of listening—without words, without judgment, simply with presence and care.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the plot of 'Tell It to the Bees'?**

The film 'Tell It to the Bees' follows the story of a young boy named Charlie and his mother Lydia, who form a bond with Dr. Jean Markham, a local female doctor, in 1950s Scotland. As their friendship grows into a romantic relationship, they face societal prejudice and personal challenges.

### **Who are the main actors in 'Tell It to the Bees'?**

The main actors in 'Tell It to the Bees' include Anna Paquin as Dr. Jean Markham, Holliday Grainger as Lydia, and Gregor Selkirk as Charlie.

### **What themes does 'Tell It to the Bees' explore?**

The film explores themes such as love, acceptance, societal norms, prejudice, and the struggles of LGBTQ+ relationships in a conservative community during the 1950s.

### **Is 'Tell It to the Bees' based on a true story or a book?**

'Tell It to the Bees' is based on the novel of the same name by Fiona Shaw, which is a fictional story inspired by real societal attitudes and challenges faced by queer individuals in the mid-20th century.

### **Where was 'Tell It to the Bees' filmed?**

'Tell It to the Bees' was filmed in Scotland, with locations that reflect the rural and small-town setting of the story.

## How has 'Tell It to the Bees' been received by critics?

The film has received generally positive reviews, with critics praising its sensitive portrayal of a same-sex relationship, strong performances by the lead actors, and its atmospheric depiction of 1950s Scotland.

## What is the significance of bees in the film 'Tell It to the Bees'?

In the film, bees symbolize communication, community, and the natural world. They also represent the bond between the characters, especially as Dr. Jean Markham is a beekeeper, and the bees serve as a metaphor for the fragility and resilience of their relationships.

## Additional Resources

Tell It to the Bees: A Profound Exploration of Love, Loss, and Social Boundaries

**tell it to the bees** is more than just a phrase; it is the title of a compelling British drama film that delves into themes of forbidden love, societal norms, and emotional healing. Released in 2018 and directed by Annabel Jankel, the film is an adaptation of Fiona Shaw's novel of the same name. Set in 1950s rural Scotland, it tells a poignant story that intertwines personal grief with the rigid conventions of the time, making it a significant piece for audiences interested in historical drama and LGBTQ+ narratives.

## Overview of Tell It to the Bees

Tell It to the Bees centers around the unlikely friendship and eventual romantic relationship between Lydia, a young mother grieving the loss of her husband, and Jean, the local town doctor. The story unfolds in a small, tight-knit community where deviation from social expectations is met with suspicion and hostility. The film's narrative is grounded in its exploration of love against the backdrop of repression and fear, highlighting the struggles faced by those who dare to defy societal norms.

The title itself is symbolic, referring to an old folk belief that bees are keepers of secrets and messengers of emotions. This metaphor runs throughout the film, emphasizing the importance of communication, trust, and the consequences of silence.

# **In-depth Analysis of Themes and Context**

## **Exploring Forbidden Love in a Conservative Era**

One of the film's central themes is the tension between personal desire and societal pressure. Set in the conservative 1950s, the story examines the harsh realities of living as a lesbian woman during a time when homosexuality was widely stigmatized and criminalized in the UK. The relationship between Lydia and Jean is portrayed with sensitivity and nuance, avoiding sensationalism while acknowledging the emotional and social costs involved.

The film's representation of lesbian love is significant because it offers visibility to a marginalized narrative within a historical context. Unlike many contemporary stories that focus on urban settings or more recent times, *Tell It to the Bees* situates its characters in a rural environment where community surveillance is intense and social mobility limited. This setting amplifies the characters' isolation and the bravery required to pursue authenticity.

## **Grief and Healing: Emotional Depth in Tell It to the Bees**

Beyond its exploration of sexuality, the film is also a poignant study of grief and emotional recovery. Lydia's journey from loss and despair to connection and hope is delicately portrayed, with the natural world—especially the bees—serving as a metaphor for life's continuity and resilience. The bees symbolize the silent witnesses to Lydia's pain and transformation, encapsulating the idea that some truths are better shared with nature than with an unforgiving society.

The film's pacing and cinematography emphasize the quiet moments of tenderness and tension, creating an immersive experience that encourages viewers to engage deeply with the characters' inner worlds. This emotional complexity is a key strength of *Tell It to the Bees*, distinguishing it from more formulaic romance or historical dramas.

## **Production and Artistic Merits**

### **Direction and Cinematography**

Annabel Jankel's direction is marked by restraint and focus, allowing the story's emotional core to shine without resorting to melodrama. The film's

visual style complements its narrative themes, using the muted tones of the Scottish countryside to evoke a sense of isolation and melancholy. The natural lighting and close-ups capture subtle expressions, enhancing the intimacy of the story.

Cinematographer Nick Cooke's work deserves special mention, as the framing and movement of the camera contribute significantly to the film's atmosphere. Scenes involving the bees are shot with a poetic quality, reinforcing the motif of communication beyond words.

## Performances

The performances by the lead actors are central to the film's impact. Anna Paquin portrays Lydia with a quiet strength, conveying vulnerability without weakness. Holliday Grainger's Jean is equally compelling, embodying a character who balances professional responsibility with personal courage. Their chemistry is palpable, making the depiction of their relationship believable and affecting.

Supporting cast members add depth to the portrayal of the community, representing various facets of rural life and the social dynamics that challenge the protagonists.

## Comparisons and Cultural Significance

In comparing *Tell It to the Bees* to other films within the LGBTQ+ historical drama genre, it stands out for its rural setting and focus on older, more nuanced characters. While films like *"Carol"* or *"The Handmaiden"* explore similar themes of forbidden love, they often do so in urban or more cosmopolitan contexts. *Tell It to the Bees* offers a fresh perspective by highlighting the intersection of gender, sexuality, and class in a less commonly depicted environment.

Moreover, the film contributes to an ongoing cultural conversation about representation and the importance of telling diverse stories. Its respectful and understated approach contrasts with some more sensationalized portrayals, making it an important piece for both film critics and audiences seeking authentic narratives.

## Pros and Cons of the Film

- **Pros:**

- Strong performances by lead actors.

- Beautiful cinematography capturing the Scottish landscape.
  - Thoughtful exploration of complex themes such as grief and social repression.
  - Unique setting that broadens representation of LGBTQ+ stories.
- **Cons:**
    - Some viewers might find the pacing slow compared to mainstream dramas.
    - The subtle narrative style may not appeal to audiences expecting more overt conflict or resolution.
    - Limited exposure and distribution have restricted its reach.

## Conclusion: The Enduring Relevance of Tell It to the Bees

Tell It to the Bees resonates as a quietly powerful film that sheds light on the intersections of personal identity, societal expectations, and the healing power of connection. Its careful treatment of difficult subjects, combined with strong artistic execution, makes it a noteworthy addition to contemporary British cinema and LGBTQ+ storytelling. As conversations around representation and historical narratives continue to evolve, Tell It to the Bees stands as a reminder of the stories that have often been kept hidden—waiting for someone to tell them, even if only to the bees.

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