

Once after a boar had sliced Toggas's leg. Another time she'd picked out the arrow a young squire had accidentally shot his way.

The more memorable time was when he'd gone to the rescue of some of Thade's squires, too young and inexperienced for the bravado of digging up ground bees. It had been a stupid stunt, and Toggas had gotten there late. As good as the comb and larvae might be, even peasants who could do it didn't dig bees on a lark, even if it were on their property and all that wild honey was available for the asking. They rather kept to honey bees, catching them when they swarmed when they could. Yellow bees were nasty creatures. They'd attack anything just for the temerity of walking past their hidden hole the wrong way.

Toggas had come, stung himself, carrying one of the boys. For an hour she pulled out stingers, applied poultices to the angry wounds, as well as herb tea for the boy's shock. She then working on Toggas. He was also thoroughly dosed on tea while he waited his turn. He had not been stung quite as badly, but the bee's poison and the tea had made him quite loopy.

Thumbing his nose at the boys, he'd thanked her by bringing her the whole hive of ground bee nectar and comb, thick with larvae. Dark and wilder than the manor's honey, they ate it on bread she'd baked that day. A treat that had lasted months.