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F R O D E & M A R C U S
— B E E K E E P E R
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Frode & Marcus
B E E K E E P E R
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In the backwoods of a deserted landscape a man is busy conducting bizarre experiments on bees. He views himself as their protector and caretaker. But there's something unnerving about his methods. His intentions are literally veiled as we never see his face. A faint post-apocalyptic aura hangs over it all. Everything is marked by slow decay. Between sudden fits of anger and excitement lethargy seems to come over him. Long lost in his own universe, the man goes about his business oblivious to the outside world. If such a world even exists.

It's impossible to say who the man we meet in Marcus&Frode's photo novel >Beekeeper< actually is. This is one of many enigmas that the novel won't give away. In all its ambiguity this carefully constructed tale of isolation, disorder and new becomings asks us to descend into the deepest layers of our subconscious.

Thus, any possible explanation as to the identity of the story's anti-hero is perpetually kept on hold. He could be part of a shady military experiment gone wrong or an outcast from a strange tribe of woodsmen. And if this is an interior journey through a muddled mind that we've embarked on, well it's very hard to say, since the only thing to go on is the visual manifestations of the beekeeper's state of mind.

Despite the omnipresence of an almost romantic sunlight reminiscent of Aleksandr Sukorov's hallucinatory 1987 film >Days of Eclipse<, >Beekeeper< is touched by an undercurrent of catastrophe that

gradually contaminates everything. Most of all, it appears to have taken hold of the man's mind. The secret of bees seems to have given his existence an unclear purpose in this beautiful but isolated sun-tinged universe.

And this is crucial. Because in the end the big question raised here is existential. Every human being strives to establish some purpose in life. But what if purpose becomes an obsession that overtakes life? Determined to crack whatever the code of bees may be, the anti-hero of >Beekeeper< leaves chaos in his wake.

The allure of the highly organized life of bees is, in a sense, understandable. Bees serve a greater purpose that the beekeeper seems to lack. They live, they play their part in reproduction with predictable monotony, they die. Clean and simple. The beekeeper, on the other hand, is an incarnation of the darkest forces of human nature. He is fallible, confused and lonely. He can never be sure that he has found his nirvana. In the end, to paraphrase Samuel Beckett, he can at the most hope to fail better the next time he tries to solve the mystery of the bees.



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