

COT #2

ACT ONE

SCENE 9

- MONTY -
- HENRY D'YSQUITH
(COUNTRY SQUIRE)

At the end of the song, we find HENRY and MONTY on the Grounds of Henry's Country Estate.

START
→

MONTY —

I think perhaps you ought to know who I am.

HENRY

You're not a criminal, I suppose?

MONTY

Not exactly, but I am a cousin of yours.

(HENRY looks at him blankly.)

HENRY

A cousin?

MONTY

Yes, we had a mutual great-great-grandfather — Danforth D'Ysquith. My mother was a D'Ysquith. My father was... Castilian. And worse, a musician.

HENRY

Oh, I say, that doesn't matter. Noblesse oblige and all that.

MONTY

All the same, it's just as well you should know. And perhaps your sister may not care to entertain me.

HENRY

My sister? Oh, she'll be civil. Come on, will you. I say, it's quite a relief to have someone to talk to. I've got one or two fellows coming down in a fortnight, but at present it's deadly.

MONTY

Perhaps you ought to move to town.

HENRY

Oh, I've a place in London. But I'm here, Saturday to Monday. My sister keeps the estate going for me.

SCENE 9A

(THEY come upon a small wooden Shack.)

Here is the honey shack. I look forward to you meeting my Queen and her drones.

MONTY

I shall be delighted to meet your wife.

HENRY

Oh, no... my wife is in London and rarely comes to Salisbury. I was speaking of my bees.

(Outside the shack are several trays containing thousands of bees.)

I've developed a bit of a compulsion for beekeeping. I find it endlessly fascinating. And deeply moving.

MONTY

I should be afraid of being stung.

HENRY

Oh, it's nothing to be afraid of, I assure you. Watch me.

(HENRY dons a pair of large beekeeper's gloves and puts a hood on his head. HE opens a flap to reveal his face.)

One little sting won't kill you.

MONTY

I should think, over time, you might build up a resistance.

HENRY

Quite. I dare say, it would take a *hundred* bees to kill me now.

(MONTY looks at the AUDIENCE for a moment.)

#10a - A Hundred Bees (Underscore)

MONTY

Could one really perish... from a surfeit of bee stings?

HENRY —

Happened just last year to a man in Surrey. It was all over the papers. Come on, then!

(HENRY disappears into the shack and MONTY turns to the AUDIENCE. MUSIC under.)

MONTY (Recorded V-O)

(To AUDIENCE:)

I had so ingratiated myself to the beekeeper that I was soon invited back as a weekend guest. Just enough time for me to educate myself as to the extraordinary attraction of English lavender to your average honeybee.

(MONTY sprays some lavender.)

Upon my return to Salisbury, I paid a discreet visit to the honey shack as soon as I saw an opportunity.

END. →