

No Bees Please

Are you there bee? I'm sure I saw you come back in. But stay hidden in the flowers. You're safe there. It's strange. They're all afraid you're going to sting them but they don't think how frightened they make you when they chase you, jump around trying to swat you and then put you out of church like you've done something terrible. I'm sure you don't really want to sting anybody.



Well, I'm glad you're here. After all it is a flower festival Sunday. It seems right to me having you among the flowers. Someone put a bee picture in one of the flower jars and yet they don't like a real one. I think you're lovely - all brown and yellow fluffy and buzzy. I sing a

buzzing song when I'm happy and I used to think you were singing about flowers and honey, but the professor told us its really your wings flapping very fast. I expect the professor knows how many times a minute, or even second. It doesn't matter, it's a good sunny-day sound and I like it.

I'll stay and keep looking out for you, bee. If I'm here long enough perhaps Mum will have calmed down a bit. When she went out with the choir she gave me such a cross, *we'll talk later* look. Does the queen bee give you cross looks bee, when you don't collect enough pollen? It's because I sat with cousin Gill and we giggled so much, but over in the choir she couldn't see what was happening and why we were laughing. I'll try to explain - if I can get a word in. She just thinks Gill's not good company for me in church. I was going to say it's really all your fault bee, but that's not fair. It was Mrs. Barnet really. She doesn't usually come when its harvest or flower festival because of her hay-fever, she says. I've never seen any hay in church except when we have the crib at Christmas and that doesn't bother her. She had a big scarf pulled right up over her nose today. She kept making snorting noises like she was trying to sneeze.

You seemed to like Mrs. Barnet, bee. Were you trying to say *it's good to see you here among the flowers. I think pollen is lovely. You should take a big sniff of pollen and try it. I can't get enough of it.* Mrs. Barnet was on the other side of the aisle, just in front of us, but behind the pulpit so Mum couldn't see.

The speaker this morning was a lady from the Rosebank Garden Centre and she talked on and on about flowers in the Bible. She told us Jesus said we must be like flowers - just growing and blooming - not worrying about anything except being what we are and living fragrant lives. I think that word means smelly. Someone at school said Ben Bradshaw's fragrant. He smells a bit like those awful daisies down our lane.

I know you're there bee. I heard you buzz. I expect that's why you liked Mrs. Barnet - she uses a lot of perfume. Mum says its geranium flavour and very expensive and it's no wonder she gets hay-fever!

The speaker kept saying a verse from the Bible about the flowers blooming and it being the time for singing. So then we sang that long song, *Think of a world without any flowers.* I imagine Mrs. Barnet wanted to sing *Think of a world without any bees* - especially when they like the smell of geraniums. You kept buzzing her and she started waving you away. I don't think you liked that. Maybe you thought she was trying to make her arms buzz like you do your wings. In the second verse I'm sure she didn't want to sing thanks to God for all living creatures - only some. Then she started getting all panicky. Not many people noticed, except Mum noticed me and Gill. But when Mrs. Barnet moved out of the pew to wave at you, Danny Smith, who works with Dad, got up and Jean, his wife tried to calm Mrs. Barnet while Danny dropped his big handkerchief right over you. As he did, Jean swung Mrs. Barnet round straight into Danny who couldn't help putting his arms right round her to save himself and you, bee. Mrs. Barnet opened her mouth the scream but then had to shut it quickly so she could sneeze. When we all sat down, Jean stayed with her while Danny took you outside. We heard the door close but Danny didn't come back. Gill whispered to me, *I think he's putting up a notice - no bees in church.* That's when we both collapsed with giggles and Mum looked cross.

I think the speaker must have seen what was happening because then she started talking about bees. You missed that bee. You would have like it. We were still giggling, Gill and me, when the Garden Centre lady asked in her posh voice, *What's the loveliest thing about bees?* I expected Mrs. Barnet to shout out, *nothing - they're horrible.* Someone called out *honey.* And then the professor - that's Mark Watson spoke. He was sitting at the front with his Mum and Dad who always look very proud of him. Mark's in my year and I fancy him a bit, but he hasn't noticed. We call him professor because he wears dark rimmed glasses and knows everything about everything. He's not proud about it

though. He said - *bees pollinate the flowers*, he said in his laid-back *everyone knows that*, voice

That's right, said June. I've remembered her name now. I felt really proud of Mark too. June said you bees make honey but while you're working hard doing it, you brush the pollen in the flowers and help them make seeds for new flowers. She said that by just being bees, you all help to make the world beautiful at the same time. She said that's how we should live. As we get to know Jesus better our lives make a beautiful world of love and kindness for him. I think that's what she meant.

You must have come back in after the service bee. People all round us wondered if you hadn't really gone out. They kept feeling their hair to see if you were there. I did. I was sure I heard a bee-buzz. I'm glad you came back though. I don't blame you for hiding, but a flower festival wouldn't be right without you.

Oh dear, here comes Mum. I think my ears will be buzzing soon. Good-bye bee. Don't worry about Mrs. Barnet. and please don't stop coming to church just because some people don't like bees in here. I do and I'm sure Jesus does.