

BEN: Oh. Hello. Are you um... Mr. Bickers?  
 GAIL: No!  
 EARL: I live across the road there. That's my home farm, but I work this land too.  
 BEN: Oh, um, nice to meet you.  
 EARL: So you're counting the little bastards, eh?  
 GAIL: Earl.  
 BEN: Um, I'm observing them, their behaviour. I'm doing my master's — in biology? With a specialization in entomology — the study of insects. I'll use this field research to write my thesis.  
 EARL: A lot of jobs in the insect sector these days?  
 BEN: Ummm...  
 EARL: So what're ya finding out?  
 GAIL: (*Looking at her watch.*) You know what? I've got to get to town.  
 EARL: No no no, real quick. Tell me: what's the buzz? What do you think of these wind turbines?  
 BEN: Um... I think they're good?  
 EARL: Of course you do. You think they're what's doing it? I saw a piece on TV, said that's maybe what it is. Wind turbines, screw in 'em up, makin' 'em drop like flies. Ha! We should change that, eh? Drop like flies, drop like bees.  
 BEN: I don't think there's any evidence to support that.  
 EARL: What do you make of these mites?

ADDITION  
 #2

EARL, BEN, GAIL

GAIL: Earl, let him do his work.  
 EARL: I got a right to know.  
 GAIL: Well you don't need to know right now... in my bedroom.  
 BEN: No, it's OK. Do you mean varroa mites or tracheal mites? They're definitely part of what I'm looking for. I mean, they're a real concern. Mrs. — um Ms., sorry —  
 GAIL: You can call me Gail.  
 BEN: Sorry — Gail — is no stranger to varroa infestation.  
 GAIL: No no no, I dealt with that. Remember, I told you? I used the spray, that took care of it.  
 EARL: Oh, so you're allowed to use pesticides, but I'm not?  
 BEN: Well, some studies indicate that depending on their individual use of the miticides, beekeepers might have actually contributed to bee deaths.  
 EARL: Oh! How interesting. So at least part of the blame is on the beekeepers.  
 BEN: Well, blame is a loaded term.  
 EARL: What do you think of this neonics ban?  
 GAIL: It's not a ban, Earl. Stop saying they've been banned.  
 EARL: Eighty percent cut back, Gail. That's a ban. (*To BEN.*) You wanna know what I think? I think it's a bunch of bull.  
 GAIL: Earl! There is extensive science to back it up.

#2  
 START

AUDITION SCENE #2  
continued

EARL: And there's also extensive science that says it's all a crock of shit.

GAIL: Throughout Europe —

EARL: Oh, Europe can kiss my hairy ass. I stopped using them all last year, the neotnickotinoctinoids. Part of a pilot project, eh? This one convinced me it'd be fine. Know what happened? My yields went down twenty-five percent and now she's telling me her bees are still dropping dead.

GAIL: It takes more than a year for things to turn around. Isn't that right?

BEN: Not really. If neonics were the reason for what's happening in your colonies — and you didn't use them last year — then these specific bee deaths are likely caused by something else.

EARL: Aha!

GAIL: But Benjamin, knowing what we know internationally, these policies have been put in place to protect the pollinators.

BEN: Here's the thing: umm...anything can be harmful in high enough doses. I mean, wheat grass juice is amazing for you, but you drink too much and...*(He makes a fart noise)*...watch out!

*He laughs. GAIL does not. EARL looks to the washroom. Beat.*

BEN: I mean, one key chemical in neonics is nicotine and we all know that nicotine is bad for you. But let's say a smoker dies because he...he gets run over by a bus. Technically, we can't really say he died because he smoked. Unless he was crossing the street to buy cigarettes...*(He laughs.)* Right...?

GAIL: What are you talking about?

BEN: Um... I think what I mean is... It's really complicated, you know? Everybody's got a theory. But a lot of people want to point a finger at just one thing — especially people like yourself — not necessarily commercial beekeepers, but more...hobbyists.

EARL: Oooooo shit.

BEN: No, sorry, no. I think what I mean is: I don't know. I'm just doing my best to begin this research by admitting that. I just really, honestly, I don't know!

GAIL: *(Beat.)* When you leave today, please ensure you return the lids to their appropriate hives.

BEN: Oh. Of course. I didn't realize I wasn't —

GAIL: And you can provide your own fuel for the smoker from now on. A little hobbyist like me shouldn't have to pay for yours.

BEN: Sure. Sorry. I didn't mean —

GAIL: And in future, if you've had too much juice and you need to relieve yourself, there are plenty of trees out back.

BEN: Oh. Yeah. Sorry. I mean... Thank you.

*BEN exits.*

EARL: Nice chatting with ya. Careful out on this road! *(To GAIL.)* I see what ya mean: he's a smart kid.

GAIL: He's an idiot. **AUDITION #2 END**

*EARL goes for the window screen again.*

~~Just leave it. I need to get to town to set this thing up. Can I get that cheque?~~