

BEE IN YOUR BONNET
By Carole L. Cooney

In the 16th century, the expression was “to have a head full of bees.” It changed to “bee in your bonnet” in 1648 because of a line in Robert Herrick’s poem, “Mad Maiden’s Song.” If you get a crazy idea and can’t talk about anything else, it’s like having a bee stuck in your hat or “a bee in your bonnet.”

Setting: A fancy English Garden Tea party

Characters:
Narrator
Lady Alice
Lady Marilyn
Lady Norma
Maid Anne

Narrator: It was a bright summer day when the Ladies Club met at Lady Alice’s summer cottage.

Lady Alice: Welcome, dear friends! Please come into the garden and sit comfortably. I’ve had Maid Anne arrange the chairs in the shade of our blooming tulip tree.

Lady Marilyn: How exquisite the blooms are!

Lady Norma: (looking around) Are we all here? I have something secret to share. (smiles broadly)

Lady Alice: Oh, do tell! Let’s pull our chairs closer so no one else hears what Lady Norma has to say.

Narrator: Just then, Maid Anne enters the garden but stops, hides behind a pillar and listens.

Lady Marilyn: (excited) This is going to be divine – sharing a secret. Do tell!

Lady Norma: Well...yesterday, when my driver turned the bend at Bridgewater Street, I saw Maid Anne whispering into the ear of Mr. Draper.

All: (aghast) Oh!!!

Lady Marilyn: And then what happened?

Lady Norma: Well, I couldn’t tell because as we drove on, they went out of sight.

All: (disappointed) Oh...

Lady Alice: (calling) Maid Anne, bring the tea refreshments.

Narrator: All of the ladies look at each other and nod knowingly. Maid Anne, who has heard the conversation, is stunned.

Lady Alice: Maid Anne, bring the tea refreshments.

Maid Anne: (rushing to the cottage) Yes! m’lady. (stops and turns) What may I do for you, m’lady?

Lady Alice: Must I *always* repeat myself. *Bring* the tea refreshments!

Maid Anne: No, m'lady... oh, yes, m'lady.

Narrator: Maid Anne rushes into the cottage and returns with the tray.

Lady Norma: (very excited) Well, what do think happened between Maid Anne and Mr. Draper?

Lady Marilyn: Can't you tell us anymore than she whispered into his ear?

Lady Alice: Perhaps we might stop this chatter and turn to something else.

Lady Norma: But isn't it exciting to think of what could be going on between Maid Anne and Mr. Draper?

Lady Marilyn: It's not very exciting if we don't have anymore facts.

Lady Norma: Then let's make up some!

Maid Anne: (serving the tea) Tea, m'lady?

Lady Alice: Just leave the tray and I'll do the serving. You may go.

Maid Anne: (stands, looking upset) M'lady, I...I...

Lady Alice: Have you something you wish to say, Maid Anne?

Maid Anne: May I speak to you in private, m'lady?

Narrator: Lady Alice rises and leads Maid Anne into the cottage. Maid Anne speaks with tears in her eyes.

Maid Anne: I couldn't help overhearing the ladies conversation and I'd like you to know that Mr. Draper is the cousin of my best friend. We're planning a surprise party for her and I had some important information to tell Mr. Draper. That's all, m'lady.

Lady Alice: Not to worry, Maid Anne. You know, Lady Norma must have a "bee in her bonnet" this morning. I'll see that this conversation ends shortly.

Maid Anne: Oh, thank you, m'lady. I'm most grateful.