

ACT ONE

SCENE 4

Monty / Rev D'Ysquith

A very old country Church in the Village of Lye, in Lincolnshire.

#6a - Meet Lord Ezekiel

MONTY (Recorded V-O)

Perhaps emboldened by my visit to Highhurst, I was compelled to make one more attempt to connect with my Mother's kin. The Reverend Lord Ezekial D'Ysquith was the one Parson in the family and I envisioned that he, more than anyone, might receive me with sympathy.

SCENE 4A

(MONTY stands in the church courtyard with the REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL D'YSQUITH, a man of limited intellect, rather too fond of his port. MUSIC fades out.)

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

Why yes, of course I remember Isabel. Charming girl. Broke her father's heart. He and I spent our childhood summers together at Highhurst, you know. Glorious days, glorious days.

MONTY

I'm afraid there's a great deal of family history I haven't been privy to.

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

The chancel was added in 1621 by the first Earl himself. It contains three late twelfth century windows depicting the Martyrdom of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins.

MONTY

Ah, yes.

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

Notice how the attenuated shafts sweep unbroken from floor to ceiling. Perpendicular period, of course.

MONTY

Of course.

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

I must show you the tower!

(LORD EZEKIEL waves his hand upwards as HE leads MONTY up the steps of the bell tower.)

MONTY

So then I may count on you, Lord Reverend? To put in a good word for me, with the D'Ysquiths? Perhaps with the Earl, himself?

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

Oh, I really couldn't. No, no. I make it my business to stay out of family intrigue. Much better that way, for everyone concerned.

MONTY

(Taken aback:)

Oh.

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

The Carolingian arches of my groin vault are pointed instead of round, recalling Palladio's Palazzo della Ragione in Vincenza.

(THEY have reached the top now, high up on the belfry.)

You will note that our belfry is early Romanesque, which retains a bit of the Byzantine influence.

MONTY

What a marvelous view, your lordship. Are you certain you couldn't make an exception, in this one case? For the sake of my charming Mother, your cousin? Or perhaps out of loyalty to my Grandfather, your childhood playmate?

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

Well, that's it, isn't it? If Isabel's own father saw fit to disinherit her for her sins, who am I to deny his wishes?

(Gesturing to MONTY:)

You'll have to move closer to the edge to truly appreciate the architectural significance of the flying buttresses. They're said to be influenced by the cathedral at Chartres...

MONTY

Have you no... Christian charity, then?

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

Pardon?!

MONTY

What was her great sin, after all? Only love!

(At the edge of the tower, LORD EZEKIAL leans back with an alarming lack of concern for his safety.)

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REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

Yes... Now, lean backward, as I do! There—have you ever seen such horizontal thrust?! Isn't it splendid—

(LORD EZEKIAL loses his balance.)

Oh... ah... I'm... I'm afraid I shall need your hand, please...

MONTY

Yes, of course, my Lord!

(MONTY takes his hand. Then a light goes on in MONTY'S head and, suddenly, time stands still. LORD EZEKIAL freezes in a precarious position. MONTY'S hand appears to be the only obstacle between the Parson and certain death.)

#7 - Foolish to Think (Reprise)

(Singing:)

FOOLISH TO THINK
I COULD LET HIM FALL.
HE'S ON THE BRINK,
IT SEEMS.

BUT WHY SHOULD I PAUSE
WHEN I KNOW THE CAUSE
OF MOTHER'S...
SHATTERED DREAMS?

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

Help me, you presumptuous climber!

MONTY

WHAT CAN I DO FOR THE D'YSQUITHS
TO REPAY THEIR WARM EMBRACE?!
WHAT CAN I TAKE FROM THE D'YSQUITHS...

(A beat.)

EXCEPT, PERHAPS, THEIR PLACE?

BUT WITH EIGHT OTHER D'YSQUITHS AHEAD OF ME,
THEIR FOOLISH PRIDE SURVIVES.

REVEREND LORD EZEKIAL

I beg you!