

Matron Nurse Sides:

the LADYBUG (puppet)

some - one wait - ing for you? — May I hold

Molto rall.

on - to your wings and come too? On your way

(JAMES releases the LADYBUG (puppet) into the air. She flies gorgeously offstage, leaving JAMES alone and back in bed.)

Rall.

home. —

STORY+

Lights up full and bright quite suddenly. The MATRON NURSE enters. She has pulled her hair back in a too-tight bun or a snood. She wears black, cat-eye glasses and black orthopedic shoes with a small heel. Her ruby red lipstick matches the red cross prominent on her uniform.

MATRON NURSE

(entering)

James Henry Trotter! Get up! Get up at once!

JAMES

But why?

MATRON NURSE

(dry, cold and uncaring)

You're leaving the orphanage, effective immediately.

The MATRON NURSE spits a loogie into her hand, rubs her hands together and then attempts to calm JAMES' wild hair with her hands and fresh loogie gel.

JAMES

But where am I to go?

MATRON NURSE

They've found family to take you in.

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JAMES
But, I don't have any family.

MATRON NURSE
You've got two aunts. They live in Dover.

The MATRON NURSE puts a tie around JAMES' neck.

JAMES
Dover? But, that's where I lived with my Mum and Dad—

MATRON NURSE
(impatiently)
And now it's where you're gonna live with your aunties. Pack your things in 'ere.

The MATRON NURSE hands JAMES a small suitcase.

JAMES
Yes, Mum.

JAMES folds his father's glasses inside his mother's scarf carefully and places them inside the suitcase.

MATRON NURSE
(picking up the scarf and glasses)
That's all you've got? No clothes? No toothbrush?

JAMES
(taking the glasses and scarf back)
These belonged to my parents, and they are the most important things in the entire world to me.

MATRON NURSE
The most important thing from here on is your aunties. You do everything they ask of you. Don't talk back, or be a nuisance. You can't ever come back here James. You've got a family to take care of you now.

JAMES
Yes, Mum.

MATRON NURSE
Come along. We're gonna have to 'urry if we're gonna make the train to Dover.

#6 – RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES (REPRISE #1)
begins

END

Ladahlord Sides:

The formerly fearless CENTIPEDE (puppet) is now terrified by the possibility of being captured by JAMES.

CENTIPEDE (puppet) dashes past JAMES and into the underbrush.

JAMES chases after him.

(JAMES)

You're a fast one! But I think I'm faster. Stay right there...

JAMES tries to capture CENTIPEDE (puppet) but instead drags an old man (LADAHLORD) onto the stage by his shirt.

(JAMES)

(staring at LADAHLORD and afraid)

Who are you?

LADAHLORD

Unimportant! Who. Are. You? James Henry Trotter—

LADAHLORD stands and begins to cross slowly towards JAMES.

JAMES

If you come any closer, I'll scream for my aunts.

LADAHLORD

And what makes you think those two hideous creatures would come running to your rescue?

JAMES

They're my family.

LADAHLORD

Ha! Says who?

JAMES

That's what I've been told.

LADAHLORD

Ah! But do YOU think so?

JAMES

I... ? I...

LADAHLORD

(passionately with enthusiasm)

And there it is! The very first primordial ooze of an inkling that has the potential to lead to so many other fan-tas-ma-rific things! Ha! James! That bag, right over there, contains something remark-u-lous! Are you willing to reach into the great unknown and find out what's inside?

JAMES

I... I don't know.

LADAHLORD

Come on, James! Only you have the power to change the course of your wretched little life. What's it gonna be? Victim? Or hero?

JAMES looks at LADAHLORD and then at the bag. And then JAMES thrusts his hand deep inside the bag.

(LADAHLORD)

(screaming at the top of his lungs)

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

JAMES

(screaming in reaction)

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

JAMES removes a dusty old book from the bag.

It's okay! It's okay! It's just a book! Why were you screaming?

LADAHLORD

To get your undivided attention.

(whispering)

What's inside the book, James?

JAMES

(reading)

It's full of recipes... with very strange ingredients.

LADAHLORD

Not recipes— No! Potions, tonics, spells! Now, you must pick a spell from the book, devour the potion, and fabulous, unbelievable things will happen to you!

#13 – SHAKE IT UP begins.

Spiker and Sponge Sides:

The setting transitions with the music to the overgrown garden in front of Spiker and Sponge's cottage.

SCENE THREE:
Spiker & Sponge's Decrepit Garden

SPIKER and SPONGE, followed by JAMES, enter.

Their cottage is in the background, sitting high on a hill. It is quite broken and run down.

JAMES

Is this where you live?

SPIKER

You see that cottage up on the top of the hill? That's where me and Sponge live.

JAMES

And where will I stay?

SPONGE

You see that door? The one at the bottom of those stairs? The ones that lead down and into the dirt cellar?

JAMES

Yes, Mum.

SPONGE

That's where you'll live with the rest of the creepy-crawlies.

SPIKER

Whatcha got in the suitcase?

JAMES

It's nothing, really.

SPIKER

I'd like to see what's inside, wouldn't you Spongers?

SPONGE

I would. Show us what's in the case.

JAMES

I'd—

SPIKER

Show us what's in the case.

But—

JAMES

SPONGE

(quite violently)
Show us what's in the case!

JAMES opens his suitcase and removes the horn-rimmed, tortoiseshell glasses and the red-and-black, polka-dot silk scarf.

SPIKER

That's it? That's all you've got?

SPONGE

A pair of glasses and a scarf?

SPIKER swipes the scarf from JAMES and places it around her neck.

SPIKER

I rather like this scarf.

SPONGE swipes the glasses and puts them on.

SPONGE

Hey Spikes! Do these glasses make me look smart?

SPIKER

That's unlikely, dear.

JAMES

May I have them back, please? They belonged to my parents.

JAMES takes back the scarf and glasses.

SPIKER

Careful!

SPONGE

Not so grabby! Not so grabby!

JAMES carefully wraps the glasses in the scarf and returns them to the suitcase.

SPIKER

Listen here, beast. The only reason we claimed you was 'cause we need some help around here.

SCENE FIVE:

Many Weeks Later. Spiker & Sponge in Decrepit Garden

SPIKER

Nothin' more to do now but count our money.

SPONGE

How many contracts do you think we signed?

SPIKER

Hundreds my dear. Maybe thousands. And them contracts pay us big time money in advance. All we've gotta do is deliver that peach.

JAMES

Do you think we could move to the seashore? Or maybe take a trip?

SPONGE and SPIKER look incredulously at JAMES.

SPONGE

We ain't doin' nothin'.

JAMES

But, it was me that made the peach grow.

SPIKER

Liar.

JAMES

But, I did make the peach grow.

SPONGE

You couldn't make my toenails grow.

JAMES

But—

SPIKER

(smiling broadly)

James, my dear, dear foolish boy. Raise your right hand and repeat after me: I, James whatever Trotter, am a worthless, lying little boy. And nobody will ever be interested in anything I have to say. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever, ever, ever.

SPONGE

So keep your comments and your clever little lies to yourself.

SPIKER

Hey Sponge, what do you think of my new scarf?

SPIKER holds the scarf that was James' mother's high in the air.

SPONGE

It's not nearly as lovely as my new glasses!

SPONGE holds James' father's glasses high in the air.

SPIKER

Oh, dear. Look what I've done.

SPIKER holds up the scarf and then tears it in half. #21 – SCARF TEAR.

JAMES

Stop, please don't.

SPONGE snaps the glasses in half. #22 – GLASSES BREAK.

SPONGE

Now, you listen to me, James. Lying little nippers must be punished. So from now on, you will sleep outside.

SPIKER

And should you think of running away, just remember: you can run, you can hide, but we're the only family you've got.

SPONGE and SPIKER exit laughing. #23 – ON YOUR WAY HOME (ELTRISE) begins.

End

Insect Sides:

(JAMES)

It's rather sticky... Oh, dear, my arm... it's stuck. Auntie Sponge!
Auntie Spiker!

JAMES tries to free his arm by using his other hand.

*Unfortunately for JAMES, this only causes both arms to
become stuck inside the peach.*

Help! Anyone! Help!!!

*JAMES' entire body is lifted from the ground as he is
drawn inside the peach. He kicks his legs in panic, but it's
of no use. The peach completely consumes him. JAMES
journeys through the peach by stopping in a series of
three peach-colored pools of light, each growing bigger in
size.*

SCENE SIX:

Inside the Peach

*#25 – INSECT-RODUCTIONS begins. JAMES hears
scurrying in the darkness as creatures move towards him
from all directions.*

JAMES

Hello?

(a beat)

Hello?

SPIDER

Why, 'ello.

JAMES

Who said that?

SPIDER

Aren't you the delicious little bite!

JAMES

Keep away from me!

GRASSHOPPER

Who are you talking to, Spider?

SPIDER

I'm not quite sure, Grasshopper.

GRASSHOPPER

Glowworm, a little light, if you please?

An unseen glowworm lights the room from above, emitting the sound of a neon tube warming up. The strange light reveals JAMES standing face-to-face with human-sized INSECTS, dressed in appropriately pithy British finery. It's quite a startling sight to behold.

The INSECTS stare at JAMES in silence.

LADYBUG

Look who's here!

GRASSHOPPER

My good boy, we've been waiting for you!

CENTIPEDE

The only thing I'm waitin' for is dinner. I'm starving—

SPIDER

But, whatever are we to eat?

The INSECTS all look to JAMES for advice. JAMES misinterprets their gaze, thinking they mean to eat him.

JAMES

You're NOT going to eat ME!

JAMES goes into attack mode, flinging himself onto EARTHWORM.

Ahhhhhhh!

EARTHWORM

(JAMES wallops EARTHWORM)

Ahhh! Help! I'm being attacked! Help!

The INSECTS pull JAMES off of EARTHWORM.

GRASSHOPPER

Hold on everyone, calm down, calm down. I'm afraid there's been a bit of misunderstanding.

EARTHWORM

(covering his eyes in fear)

What was that? Is it gone? Is it gone?!

SPIDER

Nothing to be afraid of, it's just a little boy.

Light out on PIKE, SPINCE and the RHINO (puppet). JAMES sits up from under the peach leaf blanket with a start.

Noooooooooooo!!!

JAMES

LADYBUG, GRASSHOPPER, SPIDER and EARTHWORM cross to JAMES. CENTIPEDE is sleeping on the opposite side of the peach.

LADYBUG

James! James dear, it's alright.

GRASSHOPPER

Glowworm, could we have a little illumination, if you please?

#33 – GLOWWORM GLOWS begins. The glowworm lights a bit of the stage, like a green campfire.

Thanks, ever so!

SPIDER

You were having a bad dream.

JAMES

I have it all the time.

EARTHWORM

I don't like scary dreams either, James.

LADYBUG

Here, have a bit of peach. I've warmed it under my wing and add drizzle of honey that I found in my purse.

LADYBUG removes from her purse a small hunk of peach resembling peach crumble and a cup of tea in a lovely tea cup and saucer. She hands them to JAMES and then places a napkin beneath his chin.

JAMES

Thank you.

EARTHWORM looks at the food longingly and then at JAMES, like an adorable puppy begging for food.

EARTHWORM

Please?

JAMES breaks the peach crumble in half and gives EARTHWORM the larger piece.

JAMES

Here you go.

EARTHWORM smiles broadly. It's clear EARTHWORM and JAMES are becoming good friends.

EARTHWORM

Thanks.

LADYBUG

It feels quite wonderful to be free of that wretched hillside.

EARTHWORM

And Spiker and Sponge.

SPIDER

Did you know they killed my fiancé?

LADYBUG

No!

SPIDER

Yes! And then the gigantic one... she ate him.

LADYBUG

Horrible!

CENTIPEDE snores loudly.

EARTHWORM

(afraid)

What was that?! What WAS THAT?!

JAMES

It was just Centipede snoring.

CENTIPEDE

(waking)

What? What's going on? Why did the human say my name?

SPIDER

Tell them what happened to you, Centipede.

CENTIPEDE

Blah, who cares.

SPIDER

We're sharing!

CENTIPEDE

Fine! My family was in the sock and shoe racket. We're pretty famous in the bug world. 'Til Spiker and Sponge sprayed everyone with insecticide in the great raid of fifty-nine.

LADYBUG

Those two monsters hated everything. Even ladybugs. Who doesn't like ladybugs?

GRASSHOPPER

I like ladybugs.

Awkward silence as LADYBUG and GRASSHOPPER share coy glances.

JAMES

(a realization)

Spiker and Sponge were horrible to everyone.

CENTIPEDE

Spiker and Sponge were no different than any of you humans.

GRASSHOPPER

Centipede, James is one of us.

CENTIPEDE

That is a human boy. His kind pulls off our legs, or burns us with magnifying glasses! He is NOT one of us! He will NEVER be one of us!

CENTIPEDE climbs up to the crow's nest, alone.

LADYBUG

Ignore him, James. His type are pests.

CENTIPEDE

(calling from the ladder)

And your type are snobs!

LADYBUG

James, you haven't said anything about your parents. Where are they?

GRASSHOPPER

They must be very worried about you.