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The Bugs

A Greek comedy by

Don Zolidis

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Full-Length Comedy

8w, 1m, 19 any gender

When a couple of disgruntled honeybees discover their habitat is going to be destroyed to make way for a swimming pool, there's only one thing for them to do: forge an alliance with the other bugs who live in the yard and stop it. With the help of a swashbuckling cockroach, a pessimistic pill bug, a cicada who loves to party, and a couple of smitten fireflies, can the honeybees do the impossible and ruin human construction plans? Or will they have to resort to asking their ancient enemies, the spiders, for help? What can a group of bugs actually do when their ecosystem is threatened? A hilarious satire about ecological disaster and labor issues, with a smattering of Greek Gods thrown in for fun.

Cast of Characters

PORTHIS, a honeybee (she/her)
XANTHIA, a honeybee (she/her)
MINDY, a honeybee on her first day (she/her)

The Bugs:
CHARLIE, a Cicada (any gender)
BRINDLE, a pillbug/potato bug/roly-poly – a grizzled veteran (any gender)
ALEX, a Firefly (any gender)
SAM, a Firefly (any gender)
MAY, a Mayfly (any gender)
DIANA, a Monarch Butterfly (any gender)
GROK, a Stag Beetle (may also play Queen Bee or a soldier bee)
DAVE, a Luna Moth (he/him)
BRIANT, an ant (any gender)
GRANT, an ant (any gender)
MARINA, a mosquito (she/her)
BLACKWING, the cockroach, the bug who lived (any gender)
VELMA, a termite
DRISKEL, a termite

Other BUGS, BEES, MOTHS, BUTTERFLIES, etc…

QUEEN BEE, the queen of the hive (she/her)
SOLDIER BEES, her warriors

ARACHNE, goddess of spiders (she/her)

DEMETER, goddess of the harvest (she/her)
IRIS, messenger of the gods (she/her)

MOCHI, the unrealistic spider, a common house spider (any gender)
JORO SPIDER
CRAB SPIDER
Other SPIDERS

HUMAN (any gender)
PIZZA DELIVERY HUMAN (any gender)

The bugs: I've written this play to be in the style of ancient Greek comedy, so masks are encouraged for the bugs. Feel free to be as elaborate as you want with the costumes, but it's probably simpler to have the bugs simply have 2 arms instead of having 6.

Gender of the bugs: Any bugs or humans may be any gender. Please feel free to adjust pronouns accordingly. Iris, Demeter, and Arachne should be played as their traditional genders. All worker bees, in reality, are female, but I have no problem with an actor of any gender playing the role. You may change pronouns if you wish.

Act One

A big, beautiful garden.
Many flowers.
Blazing sun.

PORTHIS, a honeybee, is gathering pollen from the flowers. She works.
XANTHIA, another honeybee, is gathering pollen from the flowers as well.

PORTHIS
I can't do it. I can't go on. All day long. Pollen pollen pollen nectar nectar nectar.

XANTHIA
Come on Porthis. We're worker bees. We work.

PORTHIS
I ain't working no more. Go on without me. I'm done. I need to rest.

XANTHIA
You can't rest!

PORTHIS
I'm working too hard! You know how fast I gotta flap my wings just to keep aloft? Look at me! I'm not meant to fly all day.

XANTHIA
That's what we do. We work all day.

PORTHIS
For what? The nectar goes to the queen. Then it goes to the human. We ain't never gonna see none of it. Aw beez – I ain't asking for a lot. A nice little place somewhere. A flower or two and a soft breeze. Maybe some little grandbees playin' nearby. Nothin' fancy.

XANTHIA
That sounds nice. When I retire I'm gonna find a nice pond somewhere, with little daffodils, I always like daffodils.

PORTHIS
Retire?! That's what I'm talking about. We never get to retire.

XANTHIA
After you put in your time as a worker, you get to retire. That's the deal.

PORTHIS

You honestly think worker bees retire? Is your head made out of sawdust?

XANTHIA

What happens to old bees?

PORTHIS

We die. On the job. And then we're replaced by new workers. Over and over again. That's the cycle.

XANTHIA

That doesn't seem fair.

PORTHIS

Fair? You know what's not fair? Look around you. Ever see any males out here workin? Nope. Drones. All of `em. Bunch of deadbeats sitting around tryin' to mate with the queen all day. Do they get out here and gather nectar? Nope. I'm sick of it. Count me out.

MINDY, a new honeybee, enters and sets down a lunchpail.
She takes a deep sigh and takes in the sight.

MINDY

First day on the job! Hello fellow workers! I'm Mindy.

PORTHIS

Oh great a new girl. See what I mean? She's replacing Marjorie.

XANTHIA

Marjorie is dead?

PORTHIS

Heart attack. One minute she's loaded down with pollen, next minute…

Porthis makes a dying sound.

Splat. No funeral. No ceremony. No nothing. Just throw in a new temp – what's your name again?

MINDY

Mindy! Oh boy these flowers smell wonderful! Ooh! I'm gonna bring home so much nectar today! Maybe I'll get promoted!

PORTHIS

Hey. Hey you. Mindy.

MINDY

Yes?

PORTHIS

What happens to the nectar after you collect it?

MINDY

Um… well, according to the instructional video, the nectar is stuffed into a cell in the honeycomb to await transformation into honey.

PORTHIS

Uh huh. You make honey. Who eats the honey?

MINDY

Um… we do?

PORTHIS *(to Xanthia)*

She ain't never heard of the human neither.

XANTHIA

Leave her alone, Porthis. It's nice to have illusions in the beginning before you become a cynical old bee.

MINDY

What's the human?

XANTHIA

Don't worry about it. The human will leave you alone if you don't bother it.

Porthis snorts

PORTHIS

Ha!

XANTHIS

Porthis, I mean it.

PORTHIS

The human TAKES the honeycomb whenever it feels like it. We're being farmed, Mindy. Wake up. We're in a backyard FARM.

XANTHIA

It's not that bad.

PORTHIS

You see that giant house over there? That's where the human lives. Amateur apiarist. That's what they call `em. Beekeeper. A human stole our queen and plopped us down here and now we work for IT. We get just enough food to keep us alive and the human gets everything else.

XANTHIA

Porthis makes it sound worse than it is.

PORTHIS

We're all a bunch of suckers.

MINDY

This is awful! Who set up this system!

XANTHIA

The Gods.

PORTHIS

The human's Gods.

XANTHIA

What other gods are there?

PORTHIS

There's a god of spiders. That's another thing. We ain't even got no Gods. And don't even get me started on the gender inequities of the system.

MINDY

None of this seems fair.

PORTHIS

Welcome to life. You're gonna hate it here. Nobody gets paid. We work and we work and we work and all the profits go to the big boss in the house.

MINDY

Can we sting the human?

PORTHIS

Aw beez you are fresh outta the hive, ain't ya? What happens when you sting somebody?

MINDY

I don't know.

PORTHIS

She don't know.

XANTHIA

Sweetie, if you sting somebody you die. They told you that right? In orientation?

MINDY

I wasn't paying too much attention in orientation.

XANTHIA
You sting somebody, your stinger gets ripped out. You die a horrible death. That's how it works. You get one shot. At least you get a stinger. Males don't even get those.

PORTHIS
Because having a stinger means you've got responsibility. That's why the boys don't want `em. They just want to bask in the presence of the queen and do nothing all day.

XANTHIA
All right, all right, we get it. We better get back to work.

PORTHIS
You want some advice? Do the absolute minimum. Stay away from the human. Take frequent water breaks. But if I was running the show…

XANTHIA
You ain't.

PORTHIS
There'd be some changes around here.

XANTHIA
Oh sure you talk big but you're just a little honeybee like the rest of us.

PORTHIS
And you know all this is wrong but you don't have the guts to stand up for yourself –

XANTHIA
Against what? The gods? No thank you. They made the system. Who am I to question it?

MINDY
It's been really informative listening to you guys argue, but I guess we should do our jobs. I don't want to disappoint anyone on my first day.
ALEX, a firefly, struggles in, wounded.

ALEX
Help! Help me! I'm wounded!
Alex staggers to the ground, bloody.

XANTHIA
Aw beez.

PORTHIS
Ain't my job.

MINDY

Oh dear!

ALEX

Oh it hurts! It hurts so much! Can you see if I'm bleeding! I'm oozing out all over the place!

XANTHIA

Your blood is glowing.

ALEX

I'm a firefly. It's what I do.

PORTHIS

Sorry, firefly. We're bees. We got our own problems.

MINDY

What happened to you?

PORTHIS

Mindy. Leave `em for the ants.

ALEX

I was in the tall grass, minding my own business, and then I heard it… a sound! Thunder. Coming towards me. And then… *The lawnmower!* I tried to fly away but it was on me like lightning! The blades were as large as tree branches! It got me. I barely escaped with my life! It was the most horrible thing I ever imagined!

Mindy tries to help Alex.

MINDY

Oh no!

PORTHIS

What were you doin' in the tall grass?

XANTHIA

Porthis, have a heart.

ALEX

I was thinking of my true love. She's the most beautiful firefly in the world – she dances and –

PORTHIS

This is what I'm talkin' about. That's ALL you fireflies do. Free love every night. Never work at nothin. No wonder the lawnmower got ya.

XANTHIA

The lawnmower could get anyone.

PORTHIS

All night long I can't sleep because these lovebirds are out here dancing and lighting up their butts – hey sweetie hey mama hey baby – Settle down. All their brains go in their glow-in-the-dark butts. Concentrate on something else, lover-boy. Get a job. You guys are as bad as the drones.

XANTHIA

She's having a rough day.

MINDY

Can you fly? It looks like you just got nicked.

She helps Alex get to their feet.

XANTHIA

If it makes you feel any better, I hate the lawnmower too. That and the weed whacker.

PORTHIS

Oh don't get me started on the weed whacker.

XANTHIA

And you hate the lawnmower too, Porthis. Remember that time you were collecting from dandelions?

MINDY

What happened with the dandelions?

XANTHIA

You see, some flowers the human likes. And some flowers are WEEDS. And nobody can tell the difference except the human.

PORTHIS

Oh beez I hate that human.

ALEX

The tall grass is my habitat. And every week the lawnmower rips it down. All I want to do is dance with my true love beneath the stars in a swirling romance of glorious chivalry.

PORTHIS

One-track mind this bug. What can you do? We're bugs. Something to be crushed underfoot.

ALEX

Skipping Forward

Brindle rolls up into a ball. Doesn't move.

PORTHIS

You're still right there.

BRINDLE

Dang it.

XANTHIA

I know what to do! What if we tried to communicate with the human?

PORTHIS

And say what?

XANTHIA

Explain our situation. Reason with it. Try to stop this swimming pool –

ALEX

And the lawnmower.

XANTHIA

Explain to it how important we are for the ecosystem. It wants fruit from the trees? It wants the soil to grow crops? It wants to watch fireflies dance? It needs us! What if we told it about everything we do?

PORTHIS

You gone nuts.

MINDY

This doesn't sound like a good idea.

PORTHIS

And how you gonna call all the bugs in the yard anyway? Ain't nobody listening to a honeybee.

XANTHIA

Maybe not. But I know somebody who can make a lot of noise.

Xanthia calls off-stage

Hey Charlie!

CHARLIE, a cicada, walks in, stretching.

CHARLIE

Aw dude oh man just woke up. That was a righteous sleep. Thirteen years in the ground. Nothing like it, my dudes. What did I miss?

XANTHIA

Nothing.

PORTHIS

A cicada?! These guys are worse than the drones! Sleep for thirteen years, then wake up and party, then go back to sleep for another thirteen years! What a life.

CHARLIE

No important newsworthy events or extreme weather to talk about?

PORTHIS

No. You didn't miss nothing, Charlie. Just the rest of us busting our thoraxes while you *nap*.

CHARLIE

Good. Who wants to party? Cause I am looking TO MAKE SOME NOIIIIISEEE!

PORTHIS

No one wants to party! We're workers!

ALEX

Ooh I'll party.

XANTHIA

Hey. Let's focus. Charlie.

CHARLIE

How do you know my name?

XANTHIA

All cicadas are named Charlie.

CHARLIE

Seriously. I guess that makes it easier. That way we can't forget each other's names. Oh dude I AM FEELING SOME NOISE COMIN' ON!

XANTHIA

Charlie, Charlie, Charlie hold on. Can you make a noise that summons other bugs?

CHARLIE

Oh yeah. For the party?

XANTHIA

Sure. For the party.

CHARLIE

Cause I am *ready*.

XANTHIA

Yeah I gathered that.

CHARLIE

All right time for an open invitation. This goes out to all the bugs in the yard. Charlie is back, dudes! Back and ready to GET DOWN and MAKE IT LOUD!

ALEX

Will there be other fireflies coming? because I need to stretch out for my dancing –

PORTHIS

Keep your butt off, Firefly. I thought you already had a true love anyway.

ALEX

Yes but I forget what she looks like.

XANTHIA

I just need everybody here. Can you do that, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Of course.

Charlie takes a deep breath.

singing

MY BEEFCAKE BRINGS ALL THE BUGS TO THE YARD
DARN RIGHT, IT'S BETTER THAN YOURS,
I COULD TEACH YOU –

XANTHIA

Really?

CHARLIE

Sorry. Ahem.
mmmmmmmmMMMMMMMRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEE

Charlie takes a microphone out – makes their noise into it

MRRRRRREEEEEEEEEE

Turns up the volume, or turns to the sound booth to turn the volume up

MRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEE

All the other bugs cover their ears, if they have ears.

PORTHIS

Aw beez do you have to be so loud –

CHARLIE *(cutting him off)*

MMMMRREEEEEEEEEE

From all parts of the stage, other BUGS begin to emerge – chattering amongst themselves.

BUGS *(overlapping)*

What's this about
I was just having my beauty sleep
What gives
I hope there's food at this thing

Another Firefly, SAM, spots Alex.

SAM

Hey there, Firefly. You look nice.

Sam starts lighting up their butt.

ALEX

Hello there.

Alex lights up their butt.

What's happening? Uh oh. There's a little of this happening.

Does a little move

SAM

Oh I see you. I see what you're working with. What about this?

Sam lights up their butt, does a little move, adds a sound effect.

PORTHIS

Keep it dark, fireflies!

They both go dark.

CHARLIE

Hey dudes! I am back in town and I ready to get down! Woooo!

MARINA

It's not even dusk yet but sure as long as the humidity is high enough –

XANTHIA

Hold on hold on! Hi! Hello everyone! Hi! It's not a party we're having a meeting. Come on in, come on in, room for everybody.

Bugs continue to grumble amongst themselves.

MAY

Ah wow this is a new experience I've never been in a meeting before!

DAVE, a Luna Moth, enters gracefully.

MINDY

Wow. Hey. You look pretty cool.

DAVE

Hi.

MINDY

What are you? I don't mean to be rude or anything, that was probably a rude question, ignore it – I've just never seen anybody like –

DAVE

Luna moth. I usually come out at night.

MINDY

Sweet. Night. Yeah I don't know anything about night. But I'm willing to learn!

DIANA, a Monarch butterfly, swoops in majestically.

DIANA

This had best be good, honeybee. I have royal duties to attend to. I don't intend to spend my day associating with the common rabble.

GROK, a stag beetle, snorts.

GROK

Rabble?! Why you stuck up fancy pants narcissist!

DIANA

I do not respond to insults –

GROK

I know where you came from! You were a caterpillar! Acting all superior – you had fifty feet, binge-ate and pooped all over! I know you from way back!

DIANA

I can't imagine what you are talking about. Ha ha. More slurs from the tabloids I see.

GROK

You were nothing but a worm with fancy colors!

DIANA

Sir, you insult me. Cease your slander or I shall be forced to thrash you.

GROK

Thrash me? With what? Look at my horn! I can fight all day.

They're about to fight.

XANTHIA

Bugs, bugs, please! Quiet!

It's not quiet

Charlie?

CHARLIE

MREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

Everyone is quiet.

XANTHIA

Hello. Some of you know me and know my work. I'm Xanthia – I'm a honeybee.

DIANA

Where is your Queen? I demand to speak only to those in authority.

XANTHIA

Our queen doesn't really leave the hive, to be honest.

PORTHIS

She mostly just sits around and has babies, it's a whole thing. I mean I ain't gonna say nothing bad about our queen, but, between you and me, she don't do a whole lot. "Bring me more royal jelly! I can't move I'm too big!" That sorta thing.

XANTHIA

Porthis, please. I've called everyone here today to talk about… the Human.

Hubbub from all the bugs

GROK

Where is the human!? I'll fight it! I got a horn!

XANTHIA

As we all know, the human is terrible.

MARINA

Is the human around? Because I'd really like a drink.

XANTHIA

Quiet, mosquito.

MARINA

My name's Marina. I'm a bloodsucker. Totally not named after the playwright's ex-wife.

XANTHIA

Noted. Now we know the human is a problem -

DIANA

It tore down my milkweeds! Do you know how special milkweeds are?! Ripped down with the weed whacker! An outrage!

MARINA

The human murdered my friends who weren't doing anything except maybe slightly drinking its blood!

XANTHIA

The human has been terrorizing all of us for years!

BRIANT

I've been there. In the human's house.

Everyone turns to look at Briant.

What? You have? How did you manage that?

Ants are liars!

XANTHIA

Shh! Let the ant speak!

BRIANT

Hi everybody. My name's Briant. I may not be the biggest or the toughest bug, but I can lift forty times my body weight.

GROK

You don't weigh anything. That's not even a flex.

MINDY

What was it like in the human's house? I'd like to go there some day.

BRIANT

It was a palace. You can't even imagine. Sugar – a thousand ants high –

Gasps from the other bugs –

Enough food to feed my colony for a month – just sitting there on the counter. Oh my friends, riches beyond imagining. Wealth beyond measure. Mountains of sugar – a doughnut so large a million ants couldn't lift it.

GROK

Again, you don't weigh nothing. You ain't that strong.

BRIANT

We would never go hungry again. The Promised Land.

The bugs all sigh

GROK

My mouth is watering just thinking about it. All that food.

BRIANT

I told all my friends. We go there sometimes now.

Grant, another ant, speaks up.

GRANT

I've been there too! It's magical. An entire soda can left near the sink, they didn't even rinse it out! An ocean of sugar water! You can *bathe* in it, my friends!

GROK

That's it, let's go.

DIANA

Please, I wouldn't be caught dead in the human's house.

DAVE

You don't know the truth! None of you know.

XANTHIA

What are you talking about?

DAVE

You don't understand! My mother – she used to fly in this yard at night, under the full moon – like a green angel.

It's hard to speak
The human caught her in a net!

Gasps from the other bugs

I saw what happened through the window! The human put her in a jar! Waited for her to die! She was begging me, let me out! Let me out! And then… the human came… with a forceps –

MINDY

I'm so sorry, Dave.

DAVE

The human dunked her in ethyl acetate, stuck pins through her beautiful wings, and hung her body like a trophy. Ever since… I have sworn revenge. If it's the last thing I do, I will make the human pay.

XANTHIA

Okay, we're a little off-topic.

DAVE

There were other Monarchs there, butterfly.

DIANA

What?!

XANTHIA

That's not our only problem with the human.

PORTHIS

While it's killing us, we work and we work we work, pollinating so it can get fat and rich off us! You do it, Monarch butterfly! You too, Luna Moth! You say you hate the human, but you're doing its dirty work for it!

DAVE

I know, I just can't help myself from pollinating. I just – I want to stop, I just keep doing it.

GROK

It ain't right!

The other bugs agree

BUGS

Yeah!

PORTHIS

Without us, there wouldn't be honey!

BUGS

Yeah!

BRIANT

Without us the soil wouldn't even get aerated!

BUGS

Yeah!

PORTHIS

I'm out there, busting my thorax every day until I die and what do I get from the human?! NOTHING.

BUGS

Boooooo!

PORTHIS

Well I say, we strike back! I say, we take back what's ours! I say we fly and crawl into that house and make the human come out here and aerate the soil and pollinate these flowers by hand!

MARINA

And I say the human does it in the evening time in a tank top with lots of exposed skin! And no more citronella candles! And no more bug spray! And no more DEET!

BUGS

NO DEET!

XANTHIA

QUIET! That's not what we're here for. That's madness.

PORTHIS

Sorry I got caught up in the moment.

XANTHIA

Today we heard something else. From a brave roly-poly named Brindle. The human is planning on putting in… a swimming pool. With a patio.

Gasps. Shrieks. Maybe a bug faints.

MARINA

What is a pool?

XANTHIA

Hey Brindle what is a pool.

BRINDLE

I'm not here. Just a piece of spherical poop.

XANTHIA

We all know you're there.

BRINDLE

Fine.

Brindle uncoils.

Ta-Da! Completely undetectable, I have been amongst you. I have been listening, as pillbugs are wont to do. You want to know what a swimming pool is? Can you handle it? The truth? I think not.

XANTHIA

Just tell them what it is please.

BRINDLE

Sorry I am a natural showman. May I have a volunteer from the audience?

PORTHIS

You don't need a volunteer!

BRINDLE

Fine. Imagine water. As far as the eye can see. Maybe some floaties in it. One of those inner tubes. Something shaped like a dolphin.

MARINA

That sounds great! I'll put my babies in there.

BRINDLE

Filled with poison.

DIANA

That's madness! Why would the human do that?!

BRINDLE

To kill *us*. To keep us out. And the human, once it has its pool, is gonna *sit* in it and do *nothing*. That's what they do. Kill everything. Put some of us to work pollinating flowers and such, and slaughter the rest. That's what your comin' your way, bugs. Chew on that, whippersnappers.

XANTHIA

We're not going to fight our way out of this.

GROK

Sez who?!

MAY

I'm ready to die for the cause! I mean I only live for one day, so it's not much of a sacrifice, but still.

DAVE

I have no weapons. I'm delicate. I'm pretty. But I will do everything I can to make that human suffer. Maybe I'll just flap my wings in its face really fast or something, or maybe fly up its nose.

XANTHIA

There's another way. We communicate.

Disagreement amongst the bugs.

Think about it: we use logic. We explain why we're so important. How the pollinators make everything grow. How the ants aerate the soil. How the cicada's corpse provides valuable nutrients for other creatures.

CHARLIE

It does what now?

MARINA

And how the mosquitoes are also extremely important!

Skipping Forward

XANTHIA

It's working! Cue first letter!

MINDY

Cue first letter!

SAM

I wanted to let you know that it's so beautiful to see you flying again…

XANTHIA

Just make the letters we don't have time for romance!

HUMAN

Impatience Hot Dog Chili Dog Chili Dog with Cheese Football.

Human starts to understand as Sam and Alex dance.

H? Question H?

XANTHIA

Yes! It's working! Second letter!

Sam and Alex dance again.

HUMAN

E letter E funny brain wrinkle E.

They keep spelling.

L? H E L – Weirdness pet Dog football time. Anger mouse.

The fireflies spell another L.

L again? H E L L – Bobzooks! Threats! Hoppity Toad!

The human reacts badly –

XANTHIA

Abort abort!

They try to roll up the white cloth but it's too late. The human is upset.

HUMAN

Death! Fire Death! Kill all football dog bugs corn chips! Death! Fire!

The Human attacks.

XANTHIA

GET OUT OF THERE!

CHARLIE

FLLLLLEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

The human attacks and starts swatting like a giant. Lights flash.

The human moves in slow motion, but is still immense and difficult to dodge.

SAM

Fly for your lives!

ALEX

I'm not leaving you behind!

The human mimes swatting at the bugs.
Sam is hit.

SAM

Aaaaaaaaaaaaah!

ALEX

You monster! I'll fight you!

XANTHIA

Get out Alex! Get out now!

SAM

I'm a goner…

ALEX

Noooooooooo!

Grok charges in.

GROK

I am a terrifying beast! You don't scare me! I am a big strong insect! Chaaaaaarrrrrrge!

The human lifts a foot in slow motion – starts bringing it down…

I havvvvve a maaaaade a poooooor decisiiiiion.

HUMAN

SQUISH.

Grok falls.
All the bugs are horrified.
Human goes back inside.
Alex holds Sam.

SAM

The horror. The horror.

Bugs come out to examine Grok's body.

XANTHIA

Grok…

They all gather around him.

MINDY

You poor dumb fool. You beautiful brave idiot.

BRIANT

What was he thinking?

DAVE

He thought he could fight the human.

MARINA

I think a lot his brain development went into that horn.

DIANA

Return him to the earth. As he was meant to be.

BRIANT

Hey um… question. Are we doing anything with Grok's body?

MINDY

He's still warm you savages.

BRIANT

We could use his nutrients! Like Xanthia said.

XANTHIA

For some of us, our purpose in life is to provide nutrients for others. Like the cicada.

MINDY

Take him.

BRIANT

Hey check it out I can lift YOU.

Briant drags off Grok.
Mindy sniffles.

XANTHIA

Are you okay, Sam?

SAM

Just a bent wing. I'll be all right. I think.

ALEX

You were so brave. So brave. I love you. I'll dance for you.

MARINA

Nobody dance right now. We gotta keep quiet. That human could be back any minute.

DAVE

Let them come! I'm tired of running from that monster! Mama, I will bring you back if it's the last thing I do!

MINDY

Dave! You can't let anger consume you!

DAVE

I know one thing, if I had a stinger I'd use it.

PORTHIS

The Luna Moth is right! There ain't no communicating with the human. And if we sit back and do nothing we're as good as dead. It only knows one thing: killin. And exploiting the workers.

MARINA

That's two things.

XANTHIA

I thought you didn't care about this.

PORTHIS

I'm tired of being pushed around. Tired of not caring about nothing. I say we fight.

DAVE

Yeah!

DIANA

Fight?! How can we fight? You saw what happened to Grok, and he had a chitinous exoskeleton and a horn! He was the strongest among us!

PORTHIS

The ants are strong.

DIANA

The ants are tiny! That's it! I'm outta here! I'm going to Mexico for the winter.

PORTHIS

Oh sure run away.

DIANA

I'm *migrating!* And if any of the rest of you had any sense, you'd migrate too!

MAY

I can't migrate. I only live one day.

MARINA

I can't fly that far!

BRINDLE

I don't even have wings!

DAVE

I'm not sure if I migrate or not I need to check my Wikipedia entry!

Dave checks his Wikipedia entry on his phone.

Nope.

PORTHIS

This garden is our home! Are we gonna let it get turned into a big lake of poisonous water so the human can *sit in it?!* No! Are we gonna let the human pave over everything to make a patio?! No! Are we gonna let the human stomp on us like *bugs?!* No! We gotta do something! We gotta fight!

DIANA

Says the girl with a stinger. I'm *delicate*.

MAY

I'm the most delicate bug here and I'm willing to fight! I'm not afraid to die! Anything you want!

DIANA

That human wouldn't even notice you attacking it, May.

MAY

I'd make it notice! You watch!

XANTHIA

No! We already lost Grok! Our lives are precious. It's the human that thinks we're not worth anything, not us.

MINDY

Maybe we should ask the wasps for help.

Reaction from the other bugs.

MARINA

Oh man I hate the wasps. Attitude.

MAY

I've had difficult encounters with them.

ALEX

They are *mean*.

MINDY

They can sting multiple times! We might need them.

BLACKWING the cockroach swashbuckles in. Maybe poses like Captain Morgan.

She's dressed like a pirate, all flash, with a long black trench coat – black boots. Antennae.

BLACKWING

Sounds like you insects could use some advice.

PORTHIS

The cockroach…

MAY *(whispering, in awe)*

The bug who lived…

SAM

I thought you were a myth.

BLACKWING

Oh I'm real all right. Larger than life. Name's Blackwing. Corsair of the kitchen sink, scourge of the bathroom, fastest scuttler in the living room! And I've heard about your little problem.

ALEX

A lake filled with poison!

BLACKWING

Oh gee. Oh no. Not poison.

Blackwing takes out a water bottle.

You know what this is? One hundred percent pure DEET. Uncut.

Blackwing chugs it, wipes her mouth on the back of her sleeve.

No problem.

The bugs are impressed.

MARINA

How do you do that?

BLACKWING

Survival is a matter of attitude. And style. That human tries to kill me every day. And guess what? I'm still here. I was here before it, and I'm gonna be here after it. It's called *adaptation*.

PORTHIS

We don't have time to adapt to this!

BLACKWING

Silly little insects. You don't know anything. I live in the human's house.

More shock from the bugs.

MARINA

That's impossible!

ALEX

You can't even get in there!

BLACKWING

Oh can't I? Please. Maybe I just have friends in high places. Or maybe you don't try hard enough.

DIANA

I would never live *inside* the house. It's beneath me. Give me a fresh milkweed and a light breeze -

BLACKWING

You're too picky. And you're stuck-up. And all of you are suckers!

MARINA

You say that like it's a bad thing.

Blackwing strides among them.

BLACKWING

(to the bees) – Tools for the man.
(to the fireflies) – you guys are so obvious.
(to Brindle) – you curl up into a ball? Oh that'll work.
(to Charlie) – If they hear you, they can find you.
(to May) – pathetic.
(to the others) – loser, loser, loser. You play by your little rules. You live your little lives. You never taste true adventure.

XANTHIA

We're just trying to survive.

BLACKWING

Survival? Anyone can survive. I'll survive a nuclear holocaust. But to live, to truly live, that takes daring. Let me tell you a story about my adventures.

PORTHIS

Is this gonna help us?

BLACKWING

If you listen. Gather round, insects! Time to hear a tale of swashbuckling adventure!

The bugs settle in to listen.

The human –

Blackwing points at the human appears elsewhere on stage, scratching themselves.

Is massive, it's true. A giant. Almost unstoppable. And that might scare some of you.

The bugs nod and mutter amongst themselves.

But at night, under the cover of darkness, I emerge. It can't see at night. I taunt it.

Blackwing runs up to the human and waves her antennae in the human's face.

For fun, I run over its face while it's sleeping.

Human mimes being asleep. Blackwing runs her fingers over the human's face. The human brushes them away, still sleeping.

Maybe it's having a pleasant dream. Cuddling a loved one. But it's me. It's always me. Sometimes I wait by its eyes, just watching it, waiting for it to wake up.

The other bugs are impressed.

Blackwing puts her face right in front of the human's face. Then she darts away.

But mostly I visit the kitchen!

BRIANT

I've been there. It's glorious.

BLACKWING

Oh yes! An open soda can here. A dirty dish in the sink. A magnificent feast!

GRANT

That's what I was saying!

BLACKWING

In the night, I am like one of the gods. You ants lay a trail for your friends and run. Not me. I *linger.* I *savor* the bounty before me. I make sure to touch it all – slip into the pantry, find an open box of cereal – go for a swim. You live like beggars, my friends. I live like a king.

DIANA

This is insulting.

BLACKWING

Have you ever eaten an entire muffin, butterfly? I think not.

Then one night, the human awoke for a midnight snack.

Blackwing eats something as the human wakes up and walks towards the kitchen. The human scratches themselves and flips on the light.

MINDY

Look out!

MAY

I'm scared!

BLACKWING

Fast as lighting, I scuttled to the refrigerator! I scaled the sheer face of it. Almost unclimbable, except for a hundred magnets – word art poetry and Christmas cards providing me with footholds.

Blackwing mimes scuttling up the refrigerator.

I held still. Very still. Until –

The Human spots the cockroach. Freaks out in slow motion.

It was huge and slow – monstrous eyes as wide as beetles. And then…

The human takes off their shoe.

The bugs react in fear and horror.

CICADA

The shoe!

MINDY

I can't watch!

BRIANT

Not the shoe!

BLACKWING

I said to myself, *I will not die this day*. The human raised its shoe of rubbery death. It aimed. It reared back. And I sprang. And while I sprang my wings spread wide –

Blackwing spreads out her trenchcoat like wings.

And I aimed straight for the monster.

The human, reacting in slow motion, recoils, eyes wide in horror.

Right for its face.

Humans always react badly when you fly at them. They think we can't fly. But we can fly. Oh how we fly.

I aimed for its giant, dumb nose. But the human was moving. And I missed.

The human continues to rear in slow motion, mouth open.

Its mouth was open, it sucked in its breath like a great whirlpool – and I landed –

Blackwing points inside the human's mouth –

Three of my feet touched the glistening swamp of the beast's tongue – I thought I was a goner!

The human sputters in horror and tries to get the cockroach out of their mouth.

But I realized something. The human was afraid! It couldn't bear to eat me! It cried out in fear – great tears of water sprang from its eyes! It fell backwards into a cabinet like a toppled colossus – WHAM! Its melon-head struck the cabinet behind it with the force of a nuclear explosion – which I would still survive.

The human does all this, hits their head, knocks themselves out.

The bugs all applaud and cheer.

Victory. Freedom. I crawled inside a chocolate bar's wrapper and ate until I could eat no more.

Blackwing takes a bow.

MINDY

Was the human… squished?

BLACKWING

No, it recovered. But by then I was long gone.

PORTHIS

So what does that have to do with us?

BLACKWING

Direct frontal assault. It's the only way.

XANTHIA

Direct assault?! We'll be slaughtered!

BLACKWING

The human is *scared* of you.

BRINDLE

Of me?

BLACKWING

Not you.

MAY

Of me?!

BLACKWING

Not you either.

ALEX

How about me?

BLACKWING

All right the human is scared of some of you. Use their fear. Manipulate them. You can do it.

Blackwing heads off.

XANTHIA

You're not going to help us?

BLACKWING

I already helped you. But I don't care if the human puts in a pool or a patio or a parking garage. I'll still be here. It can't stop me.

Skipping Forward

CRAB SPIDER

I hates the human!

JORO SPIDER

The human does not enjoy my presence! It keeps trying to kill me!

ARACHNE

I do not care for the human either. But it does not scare me. I am beyond fear. I am fear.

PORTHIS

Of course, right, yeah. I know you're not scared of the human. You're all big tough spiders. You don't even have natural predators. Except for birds.

The spiders react badly.

XANTHIA

And I'm sure it doesn't bother you that the human put in those bird-feeders.

The spiders react again.

PORTHIS

But we got a bigger problem than birds. It's called a swimming pool. A lake filled with poison!

ARACHNE

I know what a swimming pool is little bee. It does not concern me.

PORTHIS

It doesn't? What about a patio?

ARACHNE

Spiders can live on the patio as well. We are not scared.

PORTHIS

And what happens when all the bugs are gone? What happens when the human sprays fertilizer on the lawn? What will you eat when the bugs are dead? You ever seen what happens in a basement? A spider gets in. Makes a web. And then… nothin. They starve to death. You need us.

ARACHNE

To eat.

PORTHIS

That's right. You need to eat us. So what happens when we're all dead? When there ain't no more moths or butterflies or fireflies? You die too.

ARACHNE

Little bee, I am a goddess. I am immortal.

PORTHIS
But your children ain't. We're all a part of the same ecosystem.

JORO SPIDER
Well technically I'm an invasive species.

PORTHIS
You're here now. So you got the same problems as us. That human don't care about us, and it certainly don't care about you!

XANTHIA
We wouldn't a come here if it wasn't desperate. We tried to talk to the human –
The spiders chuckle

ARACHNE
Is that why you come to me? You seek my help in speaking with the human? I was human once. Long ago. I have no desire to go back.

XANTHIA
We don't need you to help talk to the human.

PORTHIS
We're gonna trick the human. Scare it so bad it runs away. Leave the garden once and for all.

ARACHNE
With spiders?

PORTHIS
You put enough spiders some place, humans will leave. It's a fact. Especially big ones.

JORO SPIDER
Thank you.

ARACHNE
You know nothing about humans, little bee. Humans don't run. Not when they've built a home. They'll come with fire and poison – with boots and fists – Challenge them and they'll slaughter you. Which will be such a shame, since you won't be able to feed my children. Do you know how I became a spider?

XANTHIA
Uh… no.

ARACHNE
I was a weaver once. The greatest in the world. A goddess challenged me to a contest – her skill against mine. You see, I believed in myself. My art. What I didn't believe was that there was an

order to things – a hierarchy – the gods were above the humans, forever and always. Who do you suppose won the contest?

XANTHIA

The goddess?

ARACHNE

No. I won. Indisputably. My art was superior. And just to rub it in, I wove into my tapestry images of the gods tormenting humans, terrorizing them. Squashing them underfoot. And what did I win for my art? She taught me my place. Cursed me, and transformed me into a spider. `If you are so good at weaving, you will weave forever,' she gloated. And here we are.

PORTHIS

Well then this is your chance!

ARACHNE

Humans were nothing to the Gods. Do you know what's nothing to humans? Bugs. This is the order. The food chain. Top –

She points up

To bottom.

She points to them.

PORTHIS

It don't have to be that way!

ARACHNE

Of course it does. That's the way they designed it. Bosses on top. Workers on the bottom.

PORTHIS

We can rise up. We can band together!

ARACHNE

Or… we can eat you.

The spiders approach menacingly.

XANTHIA

Let's go, Porthis.

PORTHIS

Yer yellow!

JORO SPIDER

Yes, actually. It's part of my fantastic markings.

PORTHIS

If we die, you die!

ARACHNE

Not if we kill you first.

XANTHIA

Let's go!

They escape to another part of the stage.

PORTHIS

Aw beez. Now what are we gonna do?

XANTHIA

I don't know.

MOCHI, a little spider, drops in.

MOCHI

Excuse me, bees?

PORTHIS

What?

MOCHI

I heard what you said. About the swimming pool? And all the bugs dying? I want to help.

PORTHIS

You gotta be the littlest spider there. The human ain't gonna be scared of you. They're gonna squish you like the rest of us.

MOCHI

That's why I want to help.

XANTHIA

Maybe she can help us, Porthis?

PORTHIS

What can she do?

MOCHI

I can build a web.

PORTHIS

Oh great. A little web. You know how big that human is?

MOCHI

A big web. Around the whole house. We trap the human inside the house.

PORTHIS

You're gonna weave a web around the entire house?

MOCHI

Sure.

Mochi stares off into the distance.

All my life people have been telling me that was I was too small. When I was little, I used to watch the rabbit in the yard and think, what if I could eat that rabbit? The other spiders laughed at me. `You're too small! That rabbit's gonna go right through your web! What are you gonna do with that rabbit anyway if you catch him?' But there was a little voice inside of me that said, `you can do it. That rabbit will be delicious.' So I spun a web. And I spun and I spun and I spun. I made the biggest web I could, and when that rabbit bounded through the yard…

He went right through the web.

So I built a bigger web.

He went right that one too.

So I built an even bigger web. I spent a week on it.

Also destroyed by the rabbit.

PORTHIS

All right what is the point of this?

XANTHIA

You are a seriously unrealistic spider.

MOCHI

If you put your mind to it, you can do anything. Trap a rabbit. Trap a human. Build a web to snare the moon.

XANTHIA

Some things you just can't do no matter how much you want to.

MOCHI

Wrong. Not if you believe in yourself.

XANTHIA

No you can't. You physically can't.

MOCHI

I will wrap that house in a giant web.

XANTHIA

All right this is pointless. One spider. The littlest one is gonna help us. Great.

PORTHIS
Hold on. Hold on. Wait a minute. The human is scared of spiders.

XANTHIA
It ain't gonna be scared of this guy.

PORTHIS
But that doesn't matter. All we need is the human to *think* there are spiders everywhere. Hey, little guy, what's your name?

MOCHI
Mochi.

PORTHIS
Mochi. The webs come outta your butt, right?

MOCHI
My spinneret, which is basically my butt.

XANTHIA
What are you thinking, Porthis?

PORTHIS
How big a web you think you could build if you had assistants? Like a whole bunch of bugs?

MOCHI
I could catch starlight, I could reach from the tallest tree to the humblest mushroom, I could snatch the sun from the sky and suck the juice from it like an orange.

XANTHIA
Okay, we need you to be a little more realistic.

PORTHIS
Could you build a web over the door?

MOCHI
Of course! And it will be as strong as iron! The human could fire a bullet into it and it wouldn't break.

PORTHIS
We don't need that. We just need it to look like a web. If the human thinks there are spiders everywhere, it ain't gonna try it.

XANTHIA
I'm not sure this spider is a very good judge of their own abilities.

MOCHI

They told me I couldn't do it. They told me I'd never catch a brown bear. But I will.

PORTHIS

What's our strength? Numbers. Working together. A whole colony. All the bugs together. If we help this little spider, it'll work. Come on!

Porthis flies off.

MOCHI

It's rare to be above average at everything you try, but I am.

Lights change to the gathering of the bugs.
Everyone is there.
Dancing, flitting, enjoying themselves.

CHARLIE

MRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEE!
PARTY!

Alex and Sam dance. Their butts light up.

ALEX

You look amazing.

SAM

Thank you.

Porthis and Xanthia return.

PORTHIS

We're back! And we brought a friend!

The bugs cheer.

MARINA

Yes! The blood will flow!

Mochi enters.

MAY

That's it?

ALEX

I thought you were bringing an army of spiders?

PORTHIS

Well, yeah, the whole army of terrifying spiders thing didn't work out. But we got this guy instead!

MOCHI

Hi. I'm Mochi.

BRINDLE

That spider's adorable.

MAY

He couldn't hurt a fly.

MOCHI

I'll eat you all.

PORTHIS

No no no we're not making threats right now.

MOCHI

It's a promise.

XANTHIA

Mochi. Shhh. We're doing something else right now.

ALEX

This is ridiculous! That spider is barely bigger than the ants!

BRIANT

Hey!

ALEX

Ants aren't scaring anybody!

GRANT

If there are enough of us, we're scary.

ALEX

Well it's just you two.

PORTHIS

All right shush.

CHARLIE

MReeeeep.

PORTHIS

We don't need an army of spiders. We need *workers*.

DIANA

I am royalty. I do not *work.*

PORTHIS

You're gonna need to get over that attitude.

DAVE

I'll do it. Whatever you need.

MINDY

Thanks, Dave.

DAVE

Of course.

MINDY

A lot of guys I know don't do anything, it's nice to meet a man who's got a job. And who keeps himself looking nice. Like really nice. Pretty.

DAVE

My eyes are up here.

MINDY

Sorry.

There's a flash of rainbow light.
Angelic humming.
All the bugs react. What is that? What's happening? Ooh look at the light. Step into it.
IRIS, dressed in black, but with little rainbow butterfly wings, enters.

IRIS

Hey.

PORTHIS

Who are you?

IRIS

You don't know who I am?

She rolls her eyes.

Great.

She speaks up to the sky.

I told them they weren't gonna know! Whatever. All right look shut up.

XANTHIA

I didn't say anything –

IRIS

Nobody wants to hear you talk, all right? In case you've been living under a rock, my name is Iris.

BRINDLE

I've been living under a rock. That's my natural habitat.

DIANA

Are you a butterfly?

DAVE

I think she's a moth.

IRIS

Gross. *No.* I knew these wings were a problem. I didn't want to have the wings but they were like `oh you need to have the wings to fly, let's make them pretty or whatever, and I was like, can I have bat wings, like terrifying bat wings, and they were like, no, let's give you butterfly wings.' Which is stupid, because nobody takes you seriously when you look like you're some kind of fairy **reject**. Like I'm not twelve, all right?

PORTHIS

Um –

IRIS

Shut up. I'm Iris. I am the messenger of the Gods.

She raises her arms into the air and hums angelically.

Or whatever.

XANTHIA

The gods?

IRIS

Yeah. Like Demeter. Athena. The Big Guy.

MINDY

Wow.

IRIS

Yeah you can all kneel now or whatever. On your various knees. If you have knees. I don't even know. Do it. Okay? Do it.

The bugs reluctantly get to their various knees.

Ugh. All right look. The gods have heard about your like little plans and they have sent me to warn y'all. You are *bugs.* You don't make decisions. You don't get a say. You don't get to like *team up* and accomplish things. All right? Know. Your. Role. Got it? Ugh. Make the honey. Pollinate the flowers. Fertilize the fields. Shut your little mouths.

PORTHIS

The human's putting in a swimming pool!

IRIS

Oh. Oh no. It's a tragedy. You'll all die. Oh gosh. That's how the system works. You are an expendable workforce.

CHARLIE

Me too?

IRIS

No you're just food for other, better things. Like, I have better things to do than sit here and spell everything out for you, okay? Personally, I feel like it's an insult to come down and have to communicate with insects. Ew. But *nobody* else wants to come to talk to y'all because it's beneath their dignity as immortal beings or whatever, so they send me. Fine. This is how the world works. You don't get a say. Do I get a say that I have little butterfly wings and come in on a rainbow? No. Even though rainbows are super cliched and that's not even what I'm into anymore. Do I get a say that basically nobody worships me, and the people who do worship me are total creepers? No. Do you know what it's like to have a whole bunch of randos who live in their basements making little altars to you and sending you like DM prayers all time like "you're so beautiful I worship you Iris Iris"

Iris makes a gagging sound.

Gross. Like, get a life creeper. Find a different goddess to worship with lower standards. And they're all like, `let me sacrifice a goat for you' and I'm like, *goat*, you want to sacrifice a *goat* for me? What am I gonna do with a goat?

XANTHIA

Um, this doesn't appear to be about us anymore.

IRIS

I didn't make the world. You didn't make the world. Suck it up. Deal with it. Go back to work. Ugh. I'm outta here.

DIANA

Do you actually flap your wings to fly?

Iris flaps her wings and gives Diana a death stare.

IRIS

We are not the same you and me, okay? I was never a caterpillar. Don't make me come down here again or I'm gonna smite y'all.

She flies off.

MOCHI

Okay, let's get to work!

Protests from the bugs

ALEX

You heard Iris! The gods will punish us if we do anything!

SAM

Yeah!

MARINA

Maybe we should just stop what we're doing!

MAY

Hey! Hey! What are they gonna do?!

ALEX

Kill us?

CHARLIE

Turn us into other bugs?

MAY

So what. When this day ends, I'm dead anyway. If the human builds a swimming pool, it won't matter to me, because I'll never be alive to see it. There's nothing the gods can do to me that they didn't already do when they made me. But I know something about life: It's precious. And I don't think anyone should throw away theirs. What kind of a life is running and hiding all the time? What kind of a life is migrating to Mexico and then never coming back to our home? We need to fight. And die, if we die. The gods sent their messenger to us because they're scared. They're scared of bugs. Well let's give them a reason to be scared!

Cheers.

Do we need the gods? What have they ever done for us?

BUGS

Nothing!

MAY

They need us more than we need them!

Bugs cheer.

So let's do the thing we were planning on doing!

More cheers.

Um… what exactly is it we're doing again?

PORTHIS

Mochi, you want to tell `em?

MOCHI

Skipping Forward

Briant approaches.

BRIANT

Heyyyy – not to bother you, but, small problem, the spider only eats… us.

XANTHIA

Make it work.

BRIANT

Right.

BRINDLE

I know some aphids that are expendable.

BRIANT

If we start sacrificing little bugs just to save bigger bugs, then we're no better than the human.

MAY

I have a solution: Me.

BRIANT

What do you mean?

MAY

Eat me. Use my calories.

BRIANT

No, May, you have so much to live for!

MAY

It's time. I'm an old mayfly. I've lived a good life. I've seen more today than most mayflys ever see. It's okay.

BRIANT

Are you sure?

MAY

I'm more sure of this than anything in my whole life. You heard the bees. For some of us, our role in the ecosystem is to provide nutrients for others. This is my role.

BRIANT

You're beautiful.

MAY

Thank you.

MOCHI

Thank you, May.

MAY

Goodbye everyone!

BUGS

Goodbye May!
Thank you!
We'll miss you!

MOCHI

We should probably do this off-stage. There are children in the audience.

MAY

Right. Which reminds me – be nice to my several thousand children everyone!

Mochi takes May's hand and walks off-stage.

He returns momentarily.
Starts producing webs. (these are probably best as ropes or lengths of twine)

CHARLIE

Oh I know what's gonna help with this! A groove!

Charlie starts a groove.
Has the microphone.
Starts singing

WELL YOU CAN TELL BY THE WAY I SING MY SONG
I'M A CICADA, SO BIG AND STRONG
THIRTEEN YEARS NOW UP ALL NIGHT,
I'VE BEEN KICKED AROUND SINCE MORNING LIGHT
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, IT'S OKAY
I MAKE LOUD NOISE NIGHT AND DAY
YOU CAN TRY TO SHUT ME UP
BUT YOU WON'T WIN I'LL KEEP IT UP

WHETHER YOU'RE A CREEPY OR WHETHER YOU'RE A CRAWLY
WE'RE STAYIN ALIVE
STAYIN ALIVE
SEE THE HUMAN SHRIEKIN' AND EVERYBODY FREAKIN'
STAYIN ALIVE
STAYIN ALIVE

ALL BUGS

AH-AH-AH-AH

STAYIN ALIVE
STAYIN ALIVE
AH-AH-AH-AH
STAYING ALIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE

CHARLIE

OH WHEN WE WORK

Alex (and Sam) take the microphone from Charlie

ALEX

WELL NOW I FLY LOW AND I FLY HIGH
ALL OVER THE YARD AND IN THE SKY
GOT MY WINGS AND LIGHT-UP REAR
I'M A DANCIN' BUG, NOTHING TO FEAR
I KNOW IT'S ALL RIGHT, IT'S OKAY
YOU CAN'T CATCH ME ANYWAY
YOU CAN TRY TO BLOCK MY LIGHT
BUT I'M GONNA GLOW MY BUTT ALL NIGHT

WHETHER YOU'RE A CREEPY OR WHETHER YOU'RE A CRAWLY
WE'RE STAYIN ALIVE
STAYIN ALIVE
THE HUMAN STARTS SHRIEKIN AND EVERYBODY FREAKIN
STAYIN ALIVE
STAYIN ALIVE
AH-AH-AH-AH
STAYIN ALIVE
STAYIN ALIVE
AH-AH-AH-AH
STAYLIN ALIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE

ALL BUGS

NOT GOIN NOWHERE, SOMEBODY HELP ME
HELP ME BUILD THE WEB
NOT GOIN NOWHERE, HELP ME BUILD THE WEB

CHARLIE

STAYIN' ALIIIIIIIIIIIIVE

ALL BUGS

NOT GOIN NOWHERE, SOMEBODY HELP ME
HELP ME BUILD THE WEB

CHARLIE

AAAAAAHHHHHHH

ALL BUGS
NOT GOIN NOWHERE, HELP ME BUILD THE WEB

CHARLIE
STAYIN ALIIIIIIIIIIIIVE
The song fades out.
The web is done.

PORTHIS
We did it!
Thunder.
Lightning.
Doom.

XANTHIA
Now what?

PORTHIS
Now we wait.

Lights down.

Act Two

The web has only increased in size and strength. It drapes over the side of the stage.

The Human enters. Looks at the web.

HUMAN

Aaaah! Goobely Snap! Frankfurter! Bitey things! Shoes! Shoes and socks! Emergency!

The human tentatively touches the web. Looks around for spiders.

Fear Snot? Bites? Plan? Helpings! Helpings! Television football!

The human goes back inside.

PIZZA DELIVERY HUMAN enters, carrying a pizza.
Pizza Delivery Human spots the webs. Is confused and scared.

PIZZA DELIVERY HUMAN

Fear! Minimum wage job! Tingly feets. Pizza puzzle problem! Fear fear spider fear! Minimum wage. Run.

Pizza Delivery Human leaves without delivering any pizza.

Porthis, Mindy, and Xanthia buzz in.

PORTHIS

Ahh listen to that. The sweet sound of nothing happening at all. No construction. No human demanding things. Just sweet, sweet silence.

XANTHIA

That's the third human today that has fled in terror of the webs.

PORTHIS

It's all comin' together. Any minute now the human's gonna surrender. My friends, we are on the brink of a glorious victory. This is the life, bees. Sitting around doing nothing. Smelling the flowers instead of working them. No more existential dread about impending death.

MINDY

Day two is a lot better than day one, I have to admit.

XANTHIA

What are you gonna do with your free time?

PORTHIS

Catch up on a little reading. Maybe take a nap. Watch some sunsets and listen to the gentle sounds of the garden.

CHARLIE

MRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

PORTHIS

Ack.

CHARLIE

IT IS TIME TO PARTY, DUDES!!!!
Bugs begin emerging to party.
LET'S MAKE POOR CHOICES!
MREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
Alex and Sam start flirting.

ALEX

Want to dance?

SAM

I thought you'd never ask.
Alex and Sam dance, lighting up their butts.

ALEX

Is that a new move?

SAM

Is it? Uh oh.

ALEX

That should be illegal.

SAM

Well if I'm breaking the law, someone needs to bring me in for questioning. Officer.

ALEX

You have the right to remain foxy.

SAM

I choose to exercise that right.

ALEX

I'm gonna exercise your rights all over this yard.
Diana and Marina flit about it.

MARINA

I feel a bit awkward out here, with nothing to eat.

DIANA

You must refine your tastes, Marina.

MARINA

I know, it's just the humans are so much easier to feast on. All the other animals have fur and tough hides and the human is just soft and smooth, full of sweet, sweet blood. You know what it does sometimes? The human? It lays out. To get a tan. Like a big ol' picnic spread. Defenseless. Delicious.

Marina snaps out of it.

But I understand why we have to lock it in its house. Still… A bug's gotta eat.

Mindy finds Dave, by himself.

DAVE

Those fireflies are so thirsty it's embarrassing.

MINDY

Oh let `em have a little fun. That's how we get more fireflies.

DAVE

I'm glad we're not like that.

MINDY

Of course not. We're dignified. You're so pretty.

DAVE

Oh.

MINDY

I'm sorry that just slipped out. You probably think I'm weird. I mean I'm just a honeybee and you've got all this amazing decoration on you, which is cool, I mean you were born like that –

DAVE

I wasn't always like this –

MINDY

No I get it, you went through a chrysalis and did a lot of work on yourself, and the work you did was great. I'm sorry I'm just saying things. It's not going to work out – I know that, we're from two different worlds – you're active at night, I'm active during the day… you're a loner, I have a big family.

DAVE

Well you do have a big family –

MINDY

My family is everything to me. The hive. The colony. All my brothers and sisters. My queen. But – when I look into your eyes –

DAVE

Those aren't my eyes –

MINDY

Right. Oh my gosh I'm sorry –

DAVE

My eyes are up here.

MINDY

Ha ha ha you fooled me again oh my gods! It must be difficult being beautiful.

DAVE

Sometimes people don't see me for me. They see what they want to see.

MINDY

I see you.

DAVE

Mindy –

MINDY

I'm being stupid! I'm sorry.

DAVE

Mindy, thank you.

MINDY

For what?

DAVE

For helping me on my quest.

MINDY

It's everyone's quest.

DAVE

But you didn't have to help. The other bees could've just gone about their business. You're the only insects the human likes.

MINDY

The human likes you –

DAVE

The human likes me dead and on display. There's a difference. Thank you.

MINDY

Of course.

DAVE

And there's one other thing… You're the cutest honeybee I've ever met…

MINDY

But you're not into honeybees. It's cool.

DAVE

I could learn. As long as you don't sting me.

MINDY

That's a stereotype. We don't really sting unless our lives are threatened.

DAVE

I don't think I'm threatening your life.

MINDY

No, you're making it better.

DAVE

Would you like to dance with me?

MINDY

Oh gosh. Um. You're so graceful and I'm just going to buzz along like a little flying worm –

DAVE

Mindy. I like you for you.

MINDY

You do know I'm not going to go into a chrysalis and emerge as something more beautiful, right?

DAVE

You're beautiful right now.

Briant enters, holding a big 2-liter bottle of liquid with the words TERRO on it.

BRIANT

Hey everybody! I think the human is giving up! Look what it's handing out!

Grant enters with another TERRO bottle.

GRANT

I got one too! They're all over the place! Free drinks!

XANTHIA

What is that?

BRIANT

Smells like sugar water!

GRANT

Oh man I love this stuff!

BRIANT

Anyone else want some? Let's all share!

XANTHIA

Wait wait wait hold on!

BRINDLE

That ain't water you idiots.
Grant drinks his.

GRANT

Oh my goodness it tastes so good! Oh yeah. Mmmm…
Grant keeps drinking it. Looks a little disoriented.
Wooooooooo. PARTY!

CHARLIE

PARTY!
MRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

BRINDLE

Stop that!

GRANT

Wooo! Drinks for everybody! Woooooo!
Grant gets sloppy. Celebrates.

DIANA

I can't be seen here. This is all going to end up in the tabloids.
Grant goes up to Briant.

GRANT

I love you, Briant. I don't say it enough. I love you. We came up together, ant. We go way back. I remember digging tunnels with you when we were barely out of our larval stage. We thought

we were awesome! We are awesome! You. You're special. I'm special. People think we're just ants. I mean we are ants. But we are gi-ants. Wow. I just invented that. Gi-Ant.

Grant is amazed by his own ingenuity.

I love all you bugs!

The other bugs have stopped to watch him now.

They said we couldn't do it! They were WRONG! We're all one colony, bugs. ONE COLONY. Like this. Like big hugs. I'm gonna hug everybody.

PORTHIS

That ant ain't right.

XANTHIA

Something's wrong with him.

GRANT

Don't ever change, mosquito. People think you're awful, but I don't. I love you, mosquito. You drink all the blood you want, lady. You are amazing and special and beautiful. Luna Moth.

DAVE

My name is Dave.

GRANT

Dave. Look at you, Dave. I mean look at these markings. Are these beautiful or what?! You should be a model. I mean that. Most bugs can't be models you could make it. I love you. I love everybody! I love –

Grant keels over.

Urk.

Shock.

XANTHIA

It's the drinks! The human poisoned the drinks!

Everyone drops their drinks.

BRINDLE

Told you the human was a killer.

BRIANT

Grant! Grant wake up!

GRANT

Briant is that you? It's going dark, man. I'm regretting my actions now…

BRIANT

You're going to be okay!

GRANT

Shouldn't have drunk so much… Oh it burns… it burns… in my tummy… maybe if I had some more of the stuff to wash it down…

BRIANT

We're gonna pump your stomach just hold on!

GRANT

I'm not gonna make it, Briant. Remember what I said. You're a gi-ant.

Grant dies.

BRIANT

Nooooo.

Briant weeps.

The other bugs come over to comfort him.

MINDY

I'm so sorry, Briant. Maybe he's in a better place now – a better garden.

BRINDLE

Ain't no better place. He's dead. And he ain't gonna be the last.

BRIANT *(yelling towards the house)*

Human! You coward! Stop playing tricks!

A light turns on.

XANTHIA

What's that?

ALEX

Ooh it's a light. So pretty.

DAVE

So beautiful.

Dave is entranced. He begins to wander towards the light.

MINDY

What are you doing?

DAVE

It's calling to me. Can't you hear it?

Sam and Alex fight against it.

BRIANT

It's another trick!

MARINA

Maybe it's food…

Marina starts drifting towards it.

BRIANT

It's affecting all the flyers! Xanthia, Porthis, do something!

SAM

Must… resist… turn away from the light

Sam turns away

ALEX

It wants us to go to it.

SAM

Fight it, Alex!

DAVE

Is it my mother? Is it a God?

BRINDLE

Hold them back!

DAVE

I must fly into it.

Mindy grabs Dave.

MINDY

Help! Help me! He's been hypnotized!

DAVE

You don't understand, Mindy. The light. The light calls to us. The light promises us eternal joy. I can be one with the light.

ALEX

I can't stop myself, Sam! I can't stop!

Sam grabs Alex.

SAM

Alex! It's me! It's your Sam!

ALEX

Sam?

SAM

Yes! Don't look at that. Look at me.

ALEX

The light is so beautiful, Sam. It holds all the mysteries of the universe.

SAM

No! Stay here with me, Alex! Watch. Look. Look at me.

Sam lights up their butt.

ALEX

Oooh.

SAM

Concentrate on my butt! Do it! Focus.

Sam slowly wiggles their butt to draw Alex away from the light.
Alex focuses on Sam's butt, following.

ALEX

Arrrrrrrgh.

Alex breaks free of the influence of the light.

Thank you!

MINDY

Help! Help me with him!

DAVE

You'll see, Mindy. The light is the truth. The light is the –

Xanthia rushes over and puts sunglasses on Dave.
Dave snaps out of it.

Oh. Thank you. I wasn't myself.

MARINA

I'm coming for you, light!

Mochi swoops in and catches Marina in a web.

MOCHI

Gotcha!

MARINA

Ack! I'm caught!

MOCHI

It's for your own good.

Mochi looks at Marina.

Sometimes mosquitoes don't know what's best for them. They don't look where they're going. And they fly right into a spider's web. A hungry spider's web.

PORTHIS

Mochi, let her go.

MOCHI

Sorry. Instincts.

Mochi lets Marina go.

XANTHIA

What is that thing?

BRINDLE

Bug-zapper. I seen it before.

ALEX

What does it do?

BRINDLE

Kills you. Same as everything as the human makes. At my last yard, the humans used to sit outside and watch. Entertainment. A moth or a butterfly would get in their head that they were about to find love – zap. Burned to death.

SAM

Oh gods that's horrible.

BRINDLE

They watch and laugh as we die. And they'll do the same to us. They won't stop with the poison or the electricity. This is war, my friends.

PORTHIS

It's a war we'll win.

BRIANT

Tell that to Grant.

PORTHIS

You want him to die in vain? We honor Grant's memory by holding the line.

CHARLIE

What if we truly honor Grant's memory by partying? Dude. That's deep.

XANTHIA

The human is getting desperate. That's why it's lashing out. We keep up the blockade. Mochi?

Skipping Forward

Why is there no nectar being brought to the hive?!

XANTHIA

Right. Hi. I'm Xanthia. You might know me.

QUEEN BEE

My workers have names?

XANTHIA

Yes, I know, we give ourselves names. Little thing we do.

QUEEN BEE

You are a worker. You have no name.

XANTHIA

Okay sure but how do we talk to each other?

QUEEN BEE

You have no need to talk to each other. Your role is to deliver nectar and pollen to the hive. The honey must flow.

XANTHIA

Right of course yes but we were thinking –

QUEEN BEE

Who told you to think? We are the queen. We are the mind. We are the hive. What is this web?! A blockade?!

MOCHI

I made it! They said I couldn't do it. But I believe, if you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything.

QUEEN BEE

You are working with *spiders*?!

MOCHI

Just one. Me. Mochi. I'm a pretty incredible spider actually.

QUEEN BEE

Spiders are our enemies!

XANTHIA

Right. Yes. But in this circumstance, the spiders are helping us defeat the human.

QUEEN BEE

The human?! We work FOR THE HUMAN!

PORTHIS

Okay, maybe I can explain this.

QUEEN BEE

The human provides us with a home! The human makes sure the royal jelly flows!

PORTHIS

The human also takes the honey and gives us nothing.

QUEEN BEE

These are not your concerns, *worker*. Pull down this barricade at once!

XANTHIA

You have to understand, your majesty. The human is going to put in a swimming pool –

QUEEN BEE

And a patio. We KNOW! The human will move the hive to a safe location. There will be new flowering shrubs planted. We will endure!

PORTHIS

But the other bugs…

QUEEN BEE

We care NOT for other bugs!

PORTHIS

The moths, and the fireflies and the mosquitoes will die.

QUEEN BEE

They are not bees!

XANTHIA

They're part of the ecosystem!

MINDY

And they're our friends!

QUEEN BEE

Workers do not have friends. Workers *work*. Their role is not to plan or make choices or think for themselves.

PORTHIS

That's just what Iris said.

QUEEN BEE
Our obligation is to the hive and to the bees. Let the other bugs fend for themselves.

MINDY
But they'll die!

QUEEN BEE
So be it. Tear down this web. NOW.

The bees are downtrodden. They're about to do it.
Porthis stops.

PORTHIS *(quietly)*
No.

QUEEN BEE
No?!

PORTHIS
No.

QUEEN BEE
You dare?!

PORTHIS
You only care about yourself. You're just like the human. You don't have any respect for us workers, so long as we keep working. You don't care if we die. You don't care if any of us die. You don't care if the whole ecosystem comes crashing down as long as you still get yours. Well that ain't how this works no more.

QUEEN BEE
Have you forgotten your role?! I will have your head, little bee.

XANTHIA
Then you'll have to fight through me.

MINDY
And me, even though, once again, I'd like to point out that I'm a super huge fan and please don't judge me too harshly because you're awesome and everything but also I'm kind of in love with a moth please don't tell anybody, but if I have to choose sides I'm going to choose my friends!

DAVE
And us.

The other bugs gather.
Except Brindle, who turns into a ball.

BRINDLE

I am a piece of spherical poop.

QUEEN BEE

You dare stand against the hive?! Kill them all. Bring me the heads of the traitors so that I might feast on royal jelly.

Two BEE SOLDIERS advance and draw swords.
Mindy, Porthis, and Xanthia draw their own swords.

MARINA

Oh that's right the bees have weapons. Unlike… all of the rest of us.

MINDY

Stay back, Dave! I can handle this!

DAVE

But if you sting one of them, you'll die!

MINDY

That's a chance I'm willing to take!

Swordfight.
Bees attack bees. The other bugs try to cheer them on.

ALEX

I'm a lover, not a fighter!

SAM

I am also a lover, not a fighter!

BRIANT

I'm an ant!

BRINDLE

I'm a piece of spherical poop!

DAVE

I love you, Mindy!

MINDY

What?!

DAVE

Though our love be forbidden, I confess that I love you!

MINDY

I'm busy right now, Dave!

More sword-fighting.

QUEEN BEE

Sting them my warriors! Sting them all!

XANTHIA

Don't sting! You'll die!

WARRIOR BEE 1

You're the one who's gonna die!

WARRIOR BEE 2

Yeah!

PORTHIS

No actually if you sting us you'll die. Don't you know about the stinger thing?

Warrior Bee 1 stops.

WARRIOR BEE 1

What stinger thing?

WARRIOR BEE 2

They're just trying to confuse you, Jessica!

WARRIOR BEE 1

What about the stinger?

XANTHIA

If you sting something, you die a horrible death.

PORTHIS

That's why we only sting in self-defense.

WARRIOR BEE 1

No foolin?

PORTHIS

Check out our Wikipedia entry.

Warrior Bee 1 takes out phone.

WARRIOR BEE 2

Don't listen to the internet, Jessica! It's all lies!

WARRIOR BEE 1

Says here we die if we sting something.

Warrior Bee 2 checks it out.

WARRIOR BEE 2

For real?

PORTHIS

The Queen don't care about you! She's using you! Just like she uses all of us! She's just like the human!

The warrior bees stop fighting. Turn towards the queen.

QUEEN BEE

I command you! Slay the traitors!

WARRIOR BEE 1

But… if we do that, then we die.

PORTHIS

She don't even know your names.

WARRIOR BEE 1

What's my name?

QUEEN BEE

I don't care.

WARRIOR BEE 1

Why am I fighting for you? You don't know my name is Jessica. You don't know my favorite flower is a rhododendron. Or my favorite food is nectar from a rhododendron. Or my favorite time of day is sunrise. Or that someday I want to ride a caterpillar like a rodeo cowboy with a little hat and say yee-haw? You don't know nothing about me.

QUEEN BEE

I know you are my warrior! Kill!

WARRIOR BEE 1

What's my name?

QUEEN BEE

Um…

WARRIOR BEE 1

I just said it like four seconds ago. Like I just told you. This could not be easier.

QUEEN BEE
I zoned out during that part I have to be honest.

WARRIOR BEE 1
All right I'm done here. Let's go, Rose.

WARRIOR BEE 2
Disappointed. Not surprised. Disappointed.
The warrior bees walk off the job.

QUEEN BEE
This isn't over, workers! Mark my scent!
Queen Bee storms off.

XANTHIA
Power comes from the consent of the governed! Wooo!

MINDY
Hey um… the queen is the only one who can make babies, right?

XANTHIA
Yeah we'll worry about that later.
Brindle uncoils.

BRINDLE
Is it over? How many of you killed each other?

PORTHIS
None of us.

BRINDLE
Hmph.

DIANA
I find your conduct shameful, to be honest. If a queen is not respected –

DAVE
Who exactly are you queen of?

DIANA
Every monarch butterfly is a queen. I rule the skies. I am queen of all I survey.

DAVE
So literally there are like millions of queens flying around?

DIANA

Of course.

BRINDLE

Doesn't matter. That human's gonna keep comin. They can just wait us out and pick us off one by one.

XANTHIA

Your negativity is a real problem.

BRIANT

Brindle is right! I've been inside that house! There's enough food to last for weeks! Even for a monster like the human.

ALEX

What if we stole its food?

BRINDLE

What are you talking about?

ALEX

The human can outlast us because it's got food in storage. But what if we stole its food? It'd have to try to escape the house. And that's where we get it.

SAM

That's brilliant.

ALEX

Thank you.

SAM

You're so smart. Smart and attractive.

ALEX

I know. As are you.

SAM

My soul aches for you.

ALEX

Oh yeah. Let me show you something.

SAM

I want to see it.

Alex lights up their butt.

PORTHIS

Can anyone hose these bugs down?

XANTHIA

I like this idea. We break in. We steal all the food. We force a confrontation.

PORTHIS

How do we get inside? We can't all sneak in like the ant!

BRIANT

I know a guy. Several guys.

XANTHIA

All right we need a strikeforce of the stealthiest, quietest, most undetectable insects –

CHARLIE

MRRRREEEEEEEE

XANTHIA

No.

ALEX

Ooh!

XANTHIA

No.

Marina makes a high-pitched whirring noise.

No.

DIANA

I would volunteer but I can't carry anything.

XANTHIA

You'll learn. Your majesty, Dave, Brindle, you go with Briant. The rest of us – we guard the doors.

BRIANT

All right, follow me. Just to warn you: these guys are a problem.

Lights change.

Everyone exits.

VELMA and DRISKEL enter, dressed in all white with little yellow hardhats. They're termites. They are chewing on pieces of wood.

DRISKEL

Oh what is that? Is that birch?

VELMA

Cedar.

DRISKEL

Nice. Can I have some?

VELMA

Sure.

Velma hands over the stick. Driskel starts chewing on it. Briant enters, followed by Diana, Dave, and Brindle.

BRIANT

Termites.

DRISKEL

Oh look if it isn't our pathetic cousin, the ant?

VELMA

Look at him, digging in the dirt like a common ant.

DRISKEL

It's okay, not everyone can be as amazing as we are.

VELMA

That is right.

BRIANT

I got a job for you. Big job.

DRISKEL

Everybody's got a job.

BRIANT

We need you to eat a tunnel into the human's house.

DRISKEL

We don't take orders from you. You got any maple over there, Velma?

VELMA

That's my favorite I'm saving that for myself.

BRINDLE

Hello termites. Tell your queen Brindle's here to see her.

DIANA

Another queen? Perhaps I should be the one to communicate.

BRINDLE

Trust me. I got this. Just say that word: Brindle.

The termites scoff.

VELMA

Yeah, queen's busy.

DRISKEL

She gives birth to a thousand babies a day.

BRINDLE

Oh I think she'll make time for me. Brindle. Or you could just mention "the roly-poly with the holy schmoly."

DIANA

Ew.

Velma and Driskel shrug, then walk off.

DAVE

You know the queen?

BRINDLE

In my younger days, I was quite the bug about town.

DAVE

You *dated* the queen?

DIANA

Impossible.

BRINDLE

In those days she was known as Brenda. Brenda and Brindle. Fire and Earth. We were quite the pair. Her family hated me. That was part of the appeal I suppose. Didn't want their precious princess dating a pillbug. `That bug ain't got no future! He lives under a rock! You flip him over he can't even move!' None of it mattered. When we got together… hooo… there was heat. We each had eight hands so you can only imagine what we could do.

DIANA

Fewer details please.

BRINDLE
Course then she met a king and settled down. Had a family. Thirteen million children. You know. Same old story. I hear she's like nine times the size she used to be.

DIANA
Must you body-shame her?

BRINDLE
It's a fact. Termite queens get huge. She'd eat me now.
Driskel and Velma return.

DRISKEL
You got yourselves a workforce.
Velma lays out some plans.

VELMA
We're gonna bring in about two hundred thousand workers – we'll approach this joist here, eating our way through the outer layer of the house –

DIANA
How fast can you make a tunnel?

VELMA
You can get it done fast or you can get it done right. You can't have both.

BRIANT
They're professionals. Don't rush them.

DRISKEL
Once we get into the wall, we'll have a better idea what we're working with.

BRIANT
You don't know?

VELMA
All these old houses are different. Built from different materials. Different codes.

DRISKEL
There could be oak in there.

VELMA
If we find oak, it's gonna lead to some cost overruns.

DIANA
How long do you think it's going to take?

DRISKEL

Depends. How long are you gonna ask us dumb questions?

DAVE

I think we're done asking dumb questions.

VELMA

Then it will take less time.

Velma blows a whistle.

All right nobody's payin' ya to sit on your abdomens! Let's go!

Lights change.

Back to the house.

Porthis, Xanthia, and Mindy are watching. Xanthia has a pair of binoculars.

XANTHIA

They're in.

PORTHIS

They're in?

XANTHIA

That's what I said.

MINDY

Let me see.

She takes the binoculars from Xanthia.

There goes Dave! Go honey!

PORTHIS

Honey?

MINDY

It's my little nickname for him.

PORTHIS

That's gonna get real confusin. Let me see.

MINDY

No I'm watching! They're gonna do it! They're pulling out food! Doughnuts! A box of Captain Crunch cereal! Cookies! Ice cream!

XANTHIA

That human only eats garbage.

MINDY

They're coming!

Porthis hops up.

PORTHIS

All right everybody out here!

CHARLIE

MRRRREEEEEEEEEE

PORTHIS

Charlie, we got it.

The other bugs gather.

Operation Pantry Raid is a success. Any minute now that human's gonna realize its food is gone and it's gonna get real angry.

MARINA

It's been angry.

PORTHIS

Angrier. And when a human is angry, it starts lashing out. I want everyone to be prepared.

Brindle, Dave, Briant, and Diana rush in, dragging giant pieces of food.

DAVE

Wooo!

MINDY

I was so worried about you!

DAVE

No need. We were in and then we were out!

MINDY

But your markings are so distinctive.

DAVE

It's okay the human was staring at its phone. It never saw a thing.

PORTHIS

And now… we wait.

Loud noises from off-stage

Oop. I think it found out.

XANTHIA

Time for the human to surrender.

PORTHIS

Or go completely insane, whichever comes first.

Human stomps out. Tearing at its hair.

Okay it looks like insane has come first.

HUMAN

Hot sauce Taco gumdrops! Barn owl! Ferocious confusion! Hungry face belly empty! No pizza sadness! Angry hippo! ANGRY HIPPO!

The human continues to mutter to itself, then goes back inside.

PORTHIS

I don't like the sound of that.

XANTHIA

Looks like the human's going to try something stupid.

MARINA

Let it come. I'm thirsty.

BRINDLE

You idiots. Careful what you wish for. That human's gonna snap through those webs like nothing!

PORTHIS

Mochi! Will the webs hold?

MOCHI

The web's'll hold against anything!

The human returns, with a lighter.

Except for fire. Not against fire.

HUMAN

Burn death murder bunnies! BURN DEATH MURDER BUNNIES! FIRE! FIRE!

The bugs get scared.

PORTHIS

If that human gets through the web, we need to drive it back.

ALEX

How are we going to do that?!

SAM

It's going to kill us all!

BRINDLE

Prepare to flee!

Other bugs voice their agreement.

Run away! Run! Let's get out of here! The cause is lost!

MINDY

No. We fight.

DIANA

But how?

MINDY

I sting it. Right between the eyes.

DAVE

Mindy, no!

MINDY

It's the only way, Dave.

HUMAN

FUZZY BUNNIES! APOCALYPSE COW! METEOR DEATH SLIPPERS! BURN! BURN!

The human starts flicking fire at the webs.

MOCHI

The webs won't hold much longer!

DAVE

Mindy, you can't do this. You have a whole life in front of you.

MINDY

Not if that human gets through the webs, I don't.

DAVE

You heard the queen! The human is preserving the bees!

MINDY

But not the rest of you. Not my friends. You'll all die if the human puts in a swimming pool. Where will we go if there's a patio? Your habitat shrinks every day, Dave. Every day. Someone has to stand up and say, "no more!" You can push us and push us and push us but today WE FIGHT BACK. And if that means I have to sacrifice myself, then it's a life well-lived. I love you. I love all of you. But I have the weapon to stop that human. And I'm going to use it.

DAVE

There has to be another way!

MINDY

No one else here has stingers. No one else here has venom. You're all defenseless against that thing.

BRINDLE

I can roll into a ball.

MINDY

It has to be me. This is what I was born for. Defend the colony. You're all my colony now.

DAVE

You're the bravest honeybee I've ever met.

MINDY

Don't ever change, Luna Moth.

DAVE

My eyes are up here.

MINDY

I know they are.

She kisses him.

Porthis and Xanthia stand next to Mindy.

PORTHIS

You ain't doing this alone, kid.

XANTHIA

Three stings ain't much, but it ought to be enough to stop it.

MINDY

Go for the eyes. That's where it's the weakest.

They ready their swords.

The human is almost through the webs.

HUMAN

Tarnation Dagnabbit Hootenanny Brouhaha!

CHARLIE

MRRREEEEEEEEE ALARRRRRRM HERE IT COMES!

HUMAN

Rarrrrrgggh!

A distant horn sounds.
Then again.
The bugs stop to listen.

MARINA

What is that?

DIANA

A horn?

Blackwing appears in the distance, sounding a trumpet.

DAVE

It's the bug who lived!

BLACKWING

And I'm not alone!

More horns in the distance.
The SPIDERS arrive.

XANTHIA

IT'S THE SPIDERS! THE SPIDERS HAVE COME!

Joro Spider and Crab Spider enter, along with other spiders.

ARACHNE

Terrify them, my babies! Let them know fear!

End of Excerpt.
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