

Garden Folk

A musical about life, friendship, kindness and, yes, cruelty



A musical play by Cenarth Fox
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Orchestrations and Backing CD

Garden Folk is scored for piano, guitar, bass, percussion, drum-kit, flutes, clarinets, saxophones, trumpets and trombones. The band parts are for hire and will really boost your show! The backing CD has both a rehearse and a perform version of the score.

Production Package

Groups staging every Fox musical or play receive support in the form of free production notes (set-design, costumes, lighting, props, etc) plus with musicals, a free set of lyrics for chorus members plus an activity booklet with material specific to each show.

First Performance

The first production of *Garden Folk* was staged by students and staff of the St Kilda Park Primary School (Melbourne Australia) in September 1984.

Reviews of this popular musical staged by primary and middle schools

The Seymour Junior School production of Garden Folk was an outstanding success.

The musical itself is humorous yet thought-provoking and with its emphasis on community relationships and ecological issues fits in well in a contemporary primary program. The structure of the play enables whole school participation, which is an important aspect. Chorus parts allow for mass participation, while not placing too onerous a demand on students whose talents in performance might not be the strongest.

On the other hand, the individual roles of Ant, Bee, Spider, etc. give scope for particular students to demonstrate and hone their singing and acting skills. The touches of cynicism and egocentricity displayed by some of the characters give the play a sharper point than is often evident in children's plays, and certainly provided an additional element in the audience's enjoyment of the piece. Garden Folk has considerable contemporary appeal and has been a most valuable experience for all who were involved in it.

Seymour College, Adelaide

The analogy to the insect kingdom and the tragic end to Ant in the dramatic musical Garden Folk lifts the work from a collection of nice songs with appropriate story, to a complex play, well written, rich in ideas, and therefore a challenge to young actors and actresses. Ant's good deeds open up interesting discussion and debate possibilities of the sympathetic gene [akin to salmon who die in the cycle] and I felt that perhaps Ant, after his help and kindness to the garden folk, knew his time had come. Maybe heroes are a product of the human mind, while the survival of the fittest is delicately balanced with the sympathetic gene in the natural world. I would like to compliment the company on their performance which amply illustrated the power of the play **Robert Clarke Spensley Street PS**

Our children thoroughly enjoyed performing in Garden Folk. Parents were delighted with the play. Our cast included the whole school - 440 students **Fairhills PS**

Thanks for a great show. The kids enjoyed it and the audience reaction was great **Belgrave South PS**

Very successful, very colourful and a great deal of fun **Emerald PS**

More reviews

Garden Folk explores many facets of "living together", making realistic comparisons with human existence. It's all done with large doses of wit and some excellent songs

Victorian Schools Music Association

A fabulous show - no hesitation in recommending Garden Folk to other groups
Quarry Hill PS

Thank you for your wonderful musical Garden Folk. The children on stage and in making sets and props got totally involved and the production became a truly community based effort with numerous parents and teachers chipping in. The support material you sent us was invaluable for the children. We all really appreciate your support and congratulate you on such a fabulous musical. It made us look really good! **Eastbourne PS**

Thank you for Garden Folk. Everybody loved it **Mt Martha PS**

A charming enactment, catchy songs, humourous lines with many wise comments on life. An enchanting play with bright and happy songs. **Ouyen PS**

Once again one of your shows was a resounding success. We had to put on an extra night to accomodate all those who wanted to see Garden Folk **Fish Creek PS**

On behalf of the 3rd year Early Childhood students, I would like to express our appreciation for the privilege of performing Garden Folk. All students have thoroughly enjoyed performing the musical. The performances were before about 800 children from Sturt and Koorinal Public Schools. The response was extremely favourable and in several instances used as a basis for further learning experiences for the children **Charles Sturt University**

This year we produced Garden Folk. In total we had 180 children involved. The children enjoyed the challenge of characterising insects and the choir found the songs demanding but attainable. Garden Folk was easy to manage on stage as it required no scene changes – a real bonus. With the use of lighting, changes were very easy. In general we found Garden Folk well suited to primary students. It enabled us to perform a very worthwhile and beneficial musical
Inverell Public School

More reviews

Garden Folk is 75 friendly, feeble, fierce and philosophical minutes in the life of an ant trying to fit into a new community **Deniliquin North PS**

Garden Folk was just as wonderful the second time around **Ferny Creek PS**

The first night was great and the second was bonzer. Garden Folk wasn't just for kids, it was for people of all ages

Kew East PS

Support for Garden Folk has been overwhelming. Parents and the school community have risen to the occasion. Schools in the district have booked over 1000 tickets **Elizabeth St PS**



St Kilda Park PS

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Synopsis

Our story takes place in a small part of a garden - an insect village. Ant arrives looking for somewhere to live. Some residents dislike newcomers but eventually Ant is allowed to stay. Now life is not always smooth sailing and the insects have to deal with new humans and their pets, deadly sprays and an applequake with giant apples falling from above. Of course the worst danger can sometimes come from within - some of us may "white-ant" each other. But that's for later. Let's see what happens.

Some Notes for the Director

The gender of many insects is not specific. *Ladybird* (female) and *Spider* (male) are definite but all the others could be male or female. Simply change the he and him etc if you choose to have a female character/s. There are set-design ideas and many more suggestions in the free *Production Notes*.

Set Design

The stage can and should be cluttered in some parts - it's a busy, crowded village - but there must be room for business downstage and plenty of exits. Hidden exits make for more surprises! Here's a sketch of how your set could look and where the main characters might be placed. The set may need different levels.

Trees *Bushes* *Flowers*

LADYBIRD

CATERPILLAR

MANTIS

BEE

SPIDER

SNAIL

GRASSHOPPER

FLY

AUDIENCE

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Musical Items

1.	Overture	Orchestra
2.	No Place Like Home	Company
3.	Perfect Neighbours	Mantis, Bee, G'hopper & Company
4.	Look Within	Caterpillar & Ant
5.	F F F Famous	Fly and Company
6.	Stick Together	Ant and Company
7.	One, Two, One More	Ant, Spider and Company
8.	Insurance	Mantis and Company
9.	Butterfly's Awakening	Orchestra
10.	Social Butterfly	Butterfly and Company
11.	No Place Like Home Reprise	Company
12.	Curtain Calls	Company
13.	Playout	Orchestra

Characters

Ant - on stage almost entire play, intelligent, means well, wants to help others

Mantis - preys on anyone, nice to your face, deadly when your back is turned, a smarmy, evil, hypocritical liar

Ladybird - fusspot, vague at times, friendly but very protective of her numerous children, worries a lot, fastidious about cleanliness

Grasshopper - fitness fanatic, perfectionist in personal hygiene and appearance, not a leader but willing to have a say

Fly - simpleton, buffoon, has grandiose ideas and schemes but little talent or class or style, a dreamer, tolerated by others

Bee - busy, bossy, runs a prosperous but small business, middle-class with aspirations for elevation, conservative, tends to take over

Spider - pathetic, a failed petty criminal, a failed everything, same evil intent as Mantis but lacks the killer instinct, basically a softie

Snail - older, wiser, quiet, keeps-to-oneself, observes, sees folly in others, pithy comments, the play's commentator on life

Caterpillar - happy on the outside, sad on the inside, fat and frightened, ignored by others, treated badly, keeps battling on

Butterfly - bubbling, bright and beautiful, trendy, excited, happy, full of the joy of being alive, loves company and making others happy

Ant 2 - identical twin of Ant [can be played by Ant or usually by a member of the Company]

Chorus - different insects, Ladybird's children, beetles, bugs etc. Perhaps have chorus in groups of similar, less colourful costumes so as not to distract from the principals

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(After the Overture [or during if you wish] the curtain rises/lights come up on our beautiful garden. The grass is tall, the trees high above. It's a tiny section of someone's garden where the insects have built their village. Detailed ideas are provided in the free Production Notes. The lights are not bright. It's evening. MANTIS is camouflaged on a raised section UL. SPIDER is motionless on his web and is also difficult to see. Everything/one is still. You could use recorded sounds of the night e.g. the wind, an owl, dogs barking etc. But these are far away. Establish the scene. Allow the audience to see all that is there before ANT calls from off-stage DR. He's new to the area and is out looking for a new homesite. ANT is not scared but is a little uncertain)

Ant Hello ... hello. *(Enters DR calls again) Is anyone here? (No answer. ANT moves DC, takes map from rucksack, thinks aloud) Let's see. Turn left at giant apple tree. (Looks DR and up) Correct. (Back to map) Forty-five centimetres due south. (Looks back) Correct. (Looks around) This must be it.*

(ANT replaces map and moves towards the camouflaged MANTIS. Pause. Suddenly MANTIS opens his arms to reveal a frightening creature. Perhaps a quick light on the fearsome creature. MANTIS gives a blood-curdling roar and the sudden sight and sound of MANTIS gives ANT [and the audience] a terrific fright. MANTIS uses his long arms to grab ANT who screams and struggles. ANT breaks free, falls to the ground. MANTIS makes one more lunge but ANT scrambles DC. MANTIS retires, defeated. Dim lighting resumes. ANT'S rucksack was dislodged during the struggle. ANT realises and slowly creeps back to retrieve it. Just as he does so, MANTIS [with appropriate evil light] again rears up. ANT grabs the rucksack and scampers DC. Silence. ANT breathes heavily. Phew! ANT recovers. ANT slowly replaces rucksack and moves towards SPIDER. ANT looks back towards MANTIS. Soft lighting comes up on SPIDER. We see him. ANT doesn't. SPIDER prepares to attack. We can see ANT'S predicament. Unsuspecting, ANT backs into a place below SPIDER. Pause. SPIDER starts to lower a cage/net made out of his web. Suddenly ANT looks up and sees the net. Too late. Cage lands on ANT and SPIDER jumps down full of excitement and glee at having caught his supper. There need not be a real net, the whole business could be mimed. However, the attack is very real. ANT calls and struggles. "Help! Let me out! Save me!" etc and SPIDER mutters things like "Hello breakfast" and "Good evening supper", etc. The fight continues. Suddenly a light comes on in LADYBIRD'S house. Her front door opens and she appears silhouetted in the doorway)

Ladybird *(Annoyed) What's all that noise? Is that you Spider?
(SPIDER immediately stops attacking ANT and stands between LADYBIRD, who peers through the gloom, and ANT who also is momentarily quiet. SPIDER protects his pudding!)*

Spider *(Covering up) Oh, good evening, Ladybird. Beautiful night?*

Ladybird We agreed. No noise near my bungalow.

Spider *(Oh so innocent) Noise? What noise? You must be mistaken.
(ANT begins to struggle. SPIDER is forced to half-gag the active entree)*

Ladybird *(Not convinced) Yes, well ... see it stays that way.
(LADYBIRD retreats, closes door and her light is extinguished. SPIDER is relieved and un-gags ANT who immediately kicks up a furious stink. "Help! Help!" and more "Help!". SPIDER tries desperately to stop the noise. "Shut up!" etc. LADYBIRD'S porch-light comes on, her door swings open and this time she emerges adjusting a shawl or dressing-gown over her nightie. She storms towards SPIDER who has his back to her)*

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- Ladybird** No noise hey? (*SPIDER nearly dies, is completely flustered*) Some of us work day-shift, Spider. My kids need all the sleep they ... (*L'BIRD sees ANT*) What's going on? Who's this?
- Spider** Gee I'm glad you're here, Ladybird. This poor Ant accidentally got caught in my web. (*L'BIRD is suspicious*)
- Ladybird** And don't tell me, you're trying to set him free?
- Spider** How did you guess?
- Ladybird** (*Helping ANT*) Just lend a hand. (*SPIDER helps L'BIRD*)
- Spider** Sorry Ant. Accidents do happen.
- Ant** (*Getting up*) That was an accident?
- Spider** [*Shocked*] Of course. You don't think I did that deliberately. (*ANT looks at SPIDER who looks a picture of innocence.*)
- Ladybird** (*Helping ANT*) There now, all's well that ends well. (*To SPIDER*) You, (*Pointing*) back on your web.
- Spider** Certainly. (*Starts re-climbing then stops*) Oh there's no need for Ant to thank me because ...
- Ant** (*Explodes*) Thank you! (*L'BIRD intervenes. She's angry*)
- Ladybird** Spider! Don't push your luck! (*She points. SPIDER climbs back to original position. L'BIRD assists ANT towards DC.*) Sorry about that. Some of us tend to eat first and greet later.
- Ant** So I noticed. And thanks for saving my skin.
- Ladybird** Forget it. But take my advice. Don't go out on your own at night. It's not always safe.
- Ant** Okay. But I thought this was a friendly village.
- Ladybird** Depends who you meet.
- Ant** I need a friendly village. I'm looking for accommodation.
- Ladybird** (*Suddenly interested*) Oh really! Single or double?
- Ant** Ah, would you believe, triple?
- Ladybird** Big family, huh? (*ANT nods*) Me too. But listen, you can't just barge in and build. You can't stay unless the others vote for you.
- Ant** (*Confused*) What should I do?
- Ladybird** (*Moving to bell/buzzer/triangle by BEE'S home*) Nothing. I'll fetch the others. They'll check you out and vote. But be warned. They're snobbish, selfish and, as you've already discovered, pretty stupid. Still, you never know your luck in a big garden.
(L'BIRD sounds the device. Lights come on in different houses which is the excuse to light the stage at night. Doors and windows open, curtains are pulled back and the VILLAGERS gradually appear - the principals and the chorus. L'BIRD'S children, beetles and whomever else you choose. Most are just waking up so rub their eyes, complain and ask one another what's going on. No-one knows except L'BIRD. ANT wanders DL)
- Ladybird** A bit of quiet please. (*They settle*) We have a visitor.
(Hubbub. L'BIRD points. Everyone looks at ANT who is now self-conscious DL)

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Mantis Friend or foe? (*Remark ignored*)

Ladybird (*Bringing ANT C*) We have an Ant. (*Hubbub from COMPANY - "An Ant!"*)

Mantis Friend or foe? (*Again remark ignored. The others are used to MANTIS*)

Ladybird Ant wants accommodation. (*Company murmur "Accommodation"*)

Bee We're crowded already and we all know what that means.

Fly Has Ant got any f f f famous relations?
(*"f" is pronounced as "fur". OTHERS look hard at ANT for answer. Pause*)

Ladybird (*To ANT*) Well? (*ANT shakes head. COMPANY groan and fall back a little*)

Mantis Can Ant spell insecticide? (*COMPANY lean forward again. Pause*)

Ladybird (*To ANT*) Well? (*ANT shakes head. COMPANY again groan and fall back*)

Grasshopper Has Ant ever won a medal for the high or long jump?
(*COMPANY lean forward. This time they hope, this time. Pause*)

Ladybird (*To ANT*) Well? (*ANT shakes head. Bigger disappointment. L'BIRD addresses COMPANY*) Any more questions or do we vote?

Company Vote ... let's vote ...

Ladybird Right, those who think Ant should look elsewhere, raise your ...

Ant (*Worried. Interrupts*) Wait! Please ... wait. (*OTHERS stare at nervous ANT*)
Before you vote there's something you should know. (*Pause*) I understand your right to vote on my suitability. This is your village. You decide.

Mantis (*Sarcastic*) Oh how very big of you.

Ant But please remember it works both ways. (*COMPANY murmur*) I'm a scout. My job is to find a suitable home for my family. It's your village up against quite a few others. (*COMPANY upset. Hostile murmurings*)

Bee (*Peeved*) What others?

Spider (*Indignant*) This is prime real estate. (*EVERYONE agrees*)

Ant There's the village by the roses. (*EVERYONE scoffs*) And the Compost Estate is very upmarket. (*Scoffing suddenly silenced. ANT speaks the truth*)

Ladybird Let's get this straight. If we vote to send you away, you'll spread the word this is not a classy neighbourhood.

Bee (*Worried*) Land prices'll crash. (*COMPANY worried*)

Ant (*Raising voice over hubbub*) I didn't say that.

Snail You didn't have to. (*Meaning "We know what you mean"*)

Ant How can I judge when I know nothing. This could be a terrible place full of nasty, spiteful creatures.

Bee We're not spiteful. Are we?

Insects (*Forceful*) No!

Spider And we ain't nasty.

Company (*Strong*) Right! (*L'BIRD leads ANT DL. COMPANY scurry to positions*)

Ladybird In fact Ant, you may well have discovered ... paradise. (*MUSIC BEGINS*)

No Place Like Home

Bee *You can search, start a quest and compare us with the rest
But you'll never find a better place than this.*

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- Ladybird** *You can sift, you can pry, in the end you'll verify
This is def'nitely the spot you mustn't miss.*
- Grasshopper** *You can question, make an audit, it'll finish in a plaudit
For this venue isn't far from being bliss.*
- Trio** *So look around this piece of ground
As we state our own analysis.*
- Company** *There's no place like this place like our place our home
No fighting, back-biting, it's one happy honeycomb.
There's no nest like this nest, it's our little hippodrome
There's no place like this place like our place our home.*
- Mantis** *You can travel, you can trek from Kwinana to Quebec
But you'll never find a better place than here.*
- Snail** *You can slither, you can slide, fly along or float the tide
But the answer to your question's very near.*
- Spider** *You can creep and you can crawl, form a cavalcade 'n all
But you'll still find nothing like this atmosphere.*
- Trio** *So hang about, remove the doubt
As some good advice we volunteer.*
- Company** *There's no piazza, no place or parade
No parish, province or long promenade
And certainly no pig-pen that has ever been made
Is like no place, like this place
Like our place, our home. Our place, our home.*
- (COMPANY is happy and proud and waits expectantly for ANT to respond)*
- Ladybird** *Admit it, Ant, this place is pretty good.*
- Bee** *Pretty good! It's beetiful! (OTHERS excited and laugh)*
- Ant** *No doubt about it. You've won me. (COMPANY delighted)*
- Ladybird** *Okay, voting time. Ant has applied for a building site. Those who approve,
please indicate. (EVERYONE approves/votes) Carried unanimously. (Shakes
claws/paws with ANT) Welcome Ant. Hope you like it. (OTHERS swarm
around and welcome ANT)*
- Spider** *(Near/on web) I don't wish to spoil the party. (EVERYONE stops and turns to
SPIDER) But where is Ant going to live? (Hubbub from COMPANY)*
- Ant** *I don't understand.*
- Bee** *You must choose your homesite.*
- Fly** *But you can't just f f f fly in anywhere. (The "f" is pronounced "fur")*
- Ladybird** *If the truth be known, Ant, the homesites are okay, it's the neighbours
you've got to consider. (Obvious reference to SPIDER) Some of them are
very noisy, 'specially at night. (SPIDER fumes. OTHERS laugh)*
- Ant** *I'd like to know what's available.*
- Bee** *(Excited) I've got a vacancy next to me.*
- Grasshopper** *(Also excited) Me too. And it's a beautie!*

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Mantis *(Terribly excited)* There's a ton of room near me.
Spider *(Looking down his nose)* I'm not surprised.
Ladybird Well Ant, what's your fancy. Bee, Grasshopper or Mantis?
Ant I'm not sure. I hardly know you.
(Pause. ANT undecided. Suddenly L'BIRD chants and points at the trio)
Ladybird Eeny, meenie, minee, mo, if he hollows, let ...
Grasshopper *(Upset)* Hang on. What's with the raffle?
Ladybird Okay. Your suggestion. *(G'HOPPER hasn't one. BEE does)*
Bee I know. Let's sell ourselves!
(MUSIC BEGINS immediately and the COMPANY moves to listening positions. It's entertainment time)

Perfect Neighbours

Bee/Mantis/G'hopper *Perfect neighbours, perfect neighbours
Inclined with a mind to unwind all your labours
Perfect neighbours, perfect neighbours
The type that you must live next door to. Polite.*

Company *Po - lite*
Trio *Wouldn't know how to fight*
Company *To fight*
Trio *Not a skerrick of spite*
Company *No spite*
Trio *In our neighbourly features. Delight.*
Company *De - light*
Trio *Knowing we're in your sight*
Company *Your sight*
Trio *It just has to be right*
Company *So right*
Trio *We're hospitable creatures
Perfect neighbours, perfect neighbours
Inclined with a mind to unwind all your labours
Perfect neighbours, perfect neighbours
The type that you must live next door to.*

Bee *My deeds and vocation, my fine reputation
Suggest that you live next to me
I'm in perfect health with quite reasonable wealth
And the brain of a real Ph. D.
I've many a hobby, I'm not a bit snobby
Your privacy I'll guarantee.
In short if you're chasing a life that is bracing
I wouldn't look further than me.*

Grasshopper *I'd like you to witness that I'm into fitness
I swim, ski and jog to name three*

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- With painstaking care, I wash here and wash there
I've got cleanliness off to a tee
I'm quiet when cheering, from rules never veering
Would loathe to use skulduggery
This isn't a hustle but if you like muscle
I wouldn't look further than me.*
- Mantis** *Now things may seem tasty but don't be too hasty
Remember the spider and flea
If you like things meaty or maybe a sweetie
I make a superb cup of tea.
It's simply a matter of sharing a platter
To you I say "bon appetit"
If you fancy eating and don't want repeating
I wouldn't look further than me.*
- (ANT and COMPANY enjoy the selling business although ANT is a bit concerned during the solo by MANTIS. Song over, EVERYONE turns to ANT)*
- Ant** *I'm sorry, I still can't decide. You're all interesting and in fact ... perfect neighbours. (Smiles all round)*
- Ladybird** *Not to worry. You can decide tomorrow. I vote we all turn in.
(COMPANY agree)*
- Spider** *(Grumpy) Some of us don't turn in till morning.*
- Ladybird** *We know that, Spider. (From her door) Everyone knows that.
(SPIDER fumes. EVERYONE laughs as they exit. The lights dim. They bid goodnight to ANT who collects his belongings and acknowledges the good wishes. SPIDER is back on his web)*
- Spider** *Over here, Ant. Let's have a chat.*
- Grasshopper** *(Retiring) Nice meeting you, Ant.*
- Bee** *(Retiring) See you later, Ant. (ANT waves)*
- Ladybird** *(From her door) Goodnight Ant. Nice to have you around.
(L'BIRD exits. Her interior light goes out. Other house lights are out or go out. Return to original lighting. ANT DC, back to audience, waves/calls to the retiring COMPANY)*
- Ant** *Thank you ... goodnight ... thanks for everything.*
- Spider** *(Never gives up) Come on Ant. I won't bite you. Look, I'm just like the others - a perfect neighbour. (ANT thinks about it then agrees to join SPIDER)*
- Ant** *(Moving RC) Okay, but no more games. Besides, (yawns) I'm very tired.
(ANT forms pillow from his rucksack and lies down to sleep. SPIDER again lowers net or mimes the business of trapping ANT)*
- Spider** *You'll love it here, Ant. Lots of friendly faces ...*
- Caterpillar** *(Feeble voice) Food! Food!
(SPIDER stops dead. He's furious. He whispers in threatening voice)*
- Spider** *Shut up! This is mine. So tough tarantula!
(SPIDER returns to attacking ANT who is asleep. C'PILLAR is desperate)*
- Caterpillar** *Please, I need food ... food! (SPIDER fumes and moves C)*

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Spider I'm warning you. (*Emphatic*) I saw him first.
Ant (*Stirs and SPIDER is furious*) What was that?
Spider (*Fussing over ANT*) Nothing, nothing. Go back to sleep.
Ant Someone's calling.
Spider Don't be silly. We're alone.
Caterpillar Food ... food.
Ant (*Sits up*) There it is. Someone's starving.
Spider You can say that again.
Caterpillar I need food.
Ant They need food.
Spider Don't we all?
Ant (*Trying to get up*) Hey! You've tied me up. You promised.
Spider (*Reluctantly untying ANT*) All right, all right. Don't get your legs in a labyrinth.
Ant You said I'd be safe.
Spider You don't understand. I tied you up to stop you falling down.
Ant But I'm on the ground.
Spider (*Stops. Mock surprise*) So you are. Now aren't I a silly spider?
Caterpillar Food ... food.
Ant Hurry. We must help that creature.
Spider (*ANT is free*) We? I can't leave my web.
Ant (*Annoyed with SPIDER*) Perfect neighbour, hey?
Spider No hard feelings? Shake.
(SPIDER extends a leg. ANT looks at SPIDER, refuses to shake then moves LC to C'PILLAR. SPIDER is furious he missed out - again. He returns to his web and lights dim on him and come up on C'PILLAR. It's hard to see him. He is well camouflaged lying off the ground amongst the foliage. ANT treks towards the cries for food. ANT climbs hidden steps and stops close to C'PILLAR but doesn't realise. C'PILLAR has his head down making it difficult to see him. ANT puffs, rests, looks around then calls)
Ant (*Fairly loud call*) Hello.
(Suddenly C'PILLAR lifts his head and ANT gets a fright as C'PILLAR is so close. C'PILLAR eats throughout the conversation)
Caterpillar Good evening. (*ANT jumps with fright*)
Ant Oh, gee willerkers. (*Clutching his heart*) You scared me.
Caterpillar Thanks awfully for popping in. I'm Caterpillar. (*They shake paws*) Don't think we've met.
Ant (*Recovering*) No, I'm new.
Caterpillar New! That's a funny name.
Ant No, my name's *Ant* and I'm *new* to this village.
Caterpillar Splendid. Splendid. Now do pull up a leaf. (*ANT goes to sit*) Not there. (*ANT stops*) That's my dessert. Over there's fine.
Ant (*Finally sits*) Sorry.

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- Caterpillar** One can't be too careful about one's grub. Oops, sorry. Little family joke. My cousin's a grub.
- Ant** I see. *(Suddenly afraid)* Oh no, you're not a ...
- Caterpillar** Good heavens, no. Strictly vegetarian.
- Ant** *(Relieved)* That's close. I've already met two of your neighbours who think antburger's flavour of the month.
- Caterpillar** *(Laughing and eating)* Antburger. Very good. Not my cup of tea though. Salads for me. *(Emphatic)* I'm starving. *(The eating can be mimed)*
- Ant** Starving?!
- Caterpillar** Pass me that leaf will you? *(ANT does so. C'PILLAR continues chomping and chatting)* Ah, beautiful. Great year for evergreens. Now, where were we?
- Ant** Why are you turning gluttony into an art form?
- Caterpillar** *(Laughs)* Very good, I like that. Gluttony into an art form. *(Serious)* Seriously Ant, before you lies someone who's fat and jolly on the outside but desperately sad within. *(Melodramatic gesture, back of hand to forehead)*
- Ant** *(Not convinced in the slightest)* Oh yeah, pull the other one.
- Caterpillar** I would only I can't reach. *(Indicates inability to move)*
- Ant** Okay, cut the baloney. What's your game?
- Caterpillar** Game? You call this a game? Soon the sun appears and *(Frightened whisper)* that means birds! *(ANT is stunned and looks around)* I'm a sitting duck, er Caterpillar. Lying here tomorrow, I'll lose half my weight through fear - that's if I'm still alive.
- Ant** So why stay? And why make yourself so fat?
- Caterpillar** *(Shocked)* You think I enjoy this? Enjoy waiting for a giant bird to tear me to pieces? Enjoy listening to the whole village talking about me but never to me? I don't enjoy it. I hate it. *(Pause. Softer)* You know, Ant, you're the first visitor I've ever had.
- Ant** *(Genuinely moved by C'PILLAR'S plight)* Your life sounds really horrible.
- Caterpillar** You're not wrong. Believe me, Ant, it's not easy being like this. Especially when no-one cares. *(Pause)* I know it sounds crazy, but I think I'm right. *(MUSIC BEGINS)* Sometimes the way we look or the things we do are not so bad at all. Sometimes we need a closer look.

Look Within

- Caterpillar** *It's not the shape or size of you
It's not the clothes they drape on you
Still there are folk who ape at you
Because you're different.
It's not the colour of your skin
It matters not your origin
Still there are folk who'll hate your kin
Because you're different.*

GARDEN FOLK 12

*They label someone different as a freak.
They judge them on the way they look or speak.
Underneath the accent, in behind the clothes
There's another someone, often no-one knows.
Don't be only looking for that outward skin
To find the key identity try just a look within.*

Caterpillar *(Dialogue in song)* Most of us are a certain shape or size. These we label regular or normal. Along comes someone different and immediately they become irregular or abnormal. It ain't right. Being different's not a crime. Take me. A trifle large but I still have needs and feelings. I want to be friendly and have friends and I hate being laughed at.

Ant I won't laugh at you.

Caterpillar *(Smiles)* You know, Ant, *(Emphatic)* I think we're friends.
(They both grin and shake paws/claws then sing the chorus together)

Duet *Underneath the accent, in behind the clothes
There's another someone often no-one knows.
Don't be only looking for that outward skin
To find the key identity try just a look within.
Try just a look within.*

(They're both happy but ANT must be on his way. He prepares to leave)

Ant Been nice meeting you, Caterpillar. *(They shake "hands")*

Caterpillar Likewise.

Ant I wish you a bird-free life.

Caterpillar *(Don't forget now)* With lots of lovely food.

Ant *(Enjoys the joke)* With lots of lovely food. Good luck and take care with those strange ideas. *(ANT starts to re-trace his steps)*

Caterpillar Oh Ant. *(ANT stops)* Pass us another leaf, old chap. *(ANT shakes his head, mimes picking a leaf and hands it to C'PILLAR)* Thanks. Bye. *(ANT moves off again)* Oh and make sure you catch the sunrise. Over by the daisies. Absolutely stunning.

Ant *(Moving C/DC)* Will do. Thanks again. Bye.

Caterpillar Cheerio.

(Lights dim on C'PILLAR as he chomps away. This is the last we see of him. In the darkness, C'PILLAR exits into the cocoon and prepares to start life in a new way. The lights or follow-spot trace ANT back to ground level. ANT finds a vantage spot by a rock DR. He stands or half-stands on the rock to watch the sunrise. Warm, soft lights come up slowly perhaps with sound effects of a rooster crowing. ANT enjoys the sunrise. It's beautiful)

Ant Gee, Caterpillar was right. This is superb. *(Lights brighten even more. Suddenly the rock moves a little and ANT starts to lose balance)* Hey! *(ANT falls or jumps clear to stop falling. The rock is SNAIL in his shell and SNAIL has started to move - slowly - away)* Hey stop! Stop!

GARDEN FOLK 13

(SNAIL stops and slowly appears from inside shell. By making the shell solid but portable, SNAIL can hide without moving if necessary)

Snail I ain't no horse and besides, you're too big for a jockey.

Ant *(Angry)* Well, pardon me for breathing.

(SNAIL slides away or retreats into his shell. Dawn breaks in all its glory. Beautiful warm lights come up. A new day begins. SPIDER becomes inactive on his web. The principals enter [except BEE]. A milk-delivery insect enters and delivers tiny bottles of milk. The COMPANY insects come on in dribs and drabs with little bits of business but should not distract from four important activities which happen more or less simultaneously, viz.

1. *L'BIRD sweeps her porch and fusses over her children leaving for school.*
2. *MANTIS invites almost everyone for a meal - his meal!*
3. *G'HOPPER does his daily get-fit routine DL.*
4. *FLY acts out his daily fantasy of being a super-star C/LC.*

(Details of these activities are listed below. They are finally interrupted when BEE'S telephone rings. Rehearse carefully so that each item is complete or almost so before BEE'S phone interjects. Some will take longer than others. All are continuous. The secret is to show lots of activity yet still manage to feature each of the four items now described in detail. Use lighting to highlight one activity at a time.

1. *L'BIRD enters her porch, collects her milk, [aphis yogurt], sweeps, shakes the mat and calls to her children to get ready. This is an ongoing activity)*

Ladybird Hurry up Edwina ... eat your breakfast Shamus ... Adrianna, stop fighting! ... clean your claws, Rufus ... where's your handkerchief, Sniddleypip?
(L'BIRD could perhaps go inside to further supervise)

2. *MANTIS begins his day in a religious mood. He prays.*

Mantis Thank you Lord for another day and another chance to be nice to my fellow creatures. May they enjoy their time with me and where possible, stay for breakfast ... and lunch ... and tea. Amen.
(MANTIS approaches various insects all of whom give him the cold or lukewarm shoulder)

Mantis Morning Grasshopper. Lovely day. *(G'HOPPER keeps on pumping iron)* Doing anything for coffee? Ah, how about lunch? You look so tasty, fit, I mean fit. Oh well, guess you're busy. *(MANTIS moves to the ham-acting FLY)* Morning Fly. Ripper day. Sharpens the old appetite. I'm starving. Could eat a horse ... fly. Only joking of course. Oh and speaking of course, how do you fancy being, ah sharing a main course? You'll love it. Come on. Don't be a fly on the wall. *(No response from FLY who is admiring himself so MANTIS moves DR to ANT)* Ant, dear Ant. How are we this morning? Sleep well? Excellent. Listen. I've got a great idea for your first day. Why not be my lunch ... er guest. You'll love it. Nothing formal, I'll take you as you are. Shall we say twelve for twelve-thirty? Splendid. Bye.

GARDEN FOLK 14

(MANTIS returns to his home/location and prayer while ANT simply shakes his head in disbelief at MANTIS and all the other activity going on around him)

3. G'HOPPER is a fitness fanatic. He has some twigs fashioned into weight-lifting gear. He wears fashionable clothes [tracksuit, sweatbands, etc] and could even have headphones on his head. He performs a series of get-fit exercises and aerobic activities.

4. FLY thinks he's destined to become famous. He is wrong. He plays out his dreams. Using simple props [perhaps only hat changes] he begins as a waiter [he could wear an apron] and sets up a small table C/LC. He offers chair to imaginary celebrity. He of course is the celebrity. He suddenly switches roles. Perhaps donning dark glasses and a trendy hat, FLY as the celebrity accepts the seat and tucks into his breakfast of grilled fleas on toast washed down with Perrier dew [1927]. Very grand eating style. Suddenly another change of character. FLY becomes a press photographer [perhaps turn hat around with PRESS card in front and use camera with working flash]. He photographs the celebrity [no longer there of course] and makes a big fuss. [Just one more, Your Magnificence]. What an act.

It's important to have all four activities overlapping whilst at the same time giving each their moment of glory. When the four items have run their course [don't overdo it] the telephone rings outside's BEE'S place)

Grasshopper(Still exercising) The phone's ringing.

Fly (Still acting) If that's my agent, I'm busy.
(No-one answers the phone until BEE suddenly rushes out [perhaps still eating breakfast and wiping face with napkin] and picks up the phone)

Bee Hello, Beehive and Co. Bee speaking. Can I help you? ... Oh good morning. What would you like? (Reaching for writing implement) Hang on, I'll get a stalk and jot this down. Okay, fire away ... three shots of nectar from the daffodils ... right ... take the pollen where? ... I did that yesterday ... No I don't want to argue but ... oh all right but daisy to daisy costs extra ... well don't blame me, we're all union members and work strictly to award rates ... You can shout till the bees come home but ... (BEE furious)
And the same to you with honey on top!

(Angry, BEE slams down receiver and exits inside. Pause. The phone rings again. An angry BEE enters and snatches the phone)

Bee Now listen Petal-brain, you can take your pollen and stick it ... (Instant character change) Ah, hold the line please, I'll see if he's in. (BEE pauses looking sheepish then speaks with a deep voice) Bee-hive, Bee-sting and Bee-utiful - Bee speaking. ... I see. ... Yes, of course. I'll tell them right away. Thank you for calling.

(BEE hangs up. This is serious. BEE sounds village alarm rung earlier by L'BIRD. OTHERS stop. G'HOPPER doesn't hear because of headphones and needs a gentle prod)

Bee Listen, all of you. I've got important news.

Ladybird Not another visitor.

Bee We need a meeting. (OTHERS protest. SPIDER wakes up)

Spider What's going on?

Bee Meeting, Spider. Won't take long.

GARDEN FOLK 15

- Spider** *(Protests)* Hang on. I'm on shift work. I'm trying to sleep.
(BEE ignores SPIDER and addresses OTHERS perhaps with a megaphone)
- Bee** I'd like a meeting of the Insect Corporate tonight.
- Spider** *(Over hubbub from insects, still protesting)* I'm working tonight.
- Bee** It seems there's trouble with the plants. *(More hubbub)*
- Snail** Can't think why. We only eat them.
- Bee** Some new spray's being used and it could be harmful to insects. *(Fear from EVERYONE except BEE, ANT and SNAIL. "We'll all be killed" etc)* Now don't panic. *(They settle)* It may be a false alarm. I'll get more details on my rounds today. Let's meet again on the couch grass at sunset. Agreed?
(Agreement) Well I'm off. Have a good day.
(BEE and most of the OTHERS exit in different directions all chatting about the news. MANTIS and SPIDER freeze in their original positions. ANT is alone DR watching L'BIRD fuss over her children outside her home. ANT is tired)
- Ladybird** Angelica! Take care of your little brother. *(She watches her brood exit to school and mutters as she tidies her porch)* Children. *(She sighs and is about to close her door when she sees ANT alone)* Ant.
- Ant** Oh, good morning.
- Ladybird** *(Coming out)* Indeed, but not for lazing about in the sun. Have you chosen your homesite?
- Ant** No, not yet. I've been ...
- Ladybird** Great galloping geraniums, why not?
- Ant** *(Genuinely tired)* I'm very tired and haven't ...
- Ladybird** Tired!? You've had all night to sleep. On your bike, Sunshine and start choosing. *(She exits inside and ANT slumps with exhaustion. Suddenly L'BIRD re-appears and ANT snaps back to life)* And don't forget there's a meeting tonight.
(She exits and closes her door. ANT, very tired, slowly settles using his rucksack as a pillow)
- Ant** *(Settling down)* Who cares about a meeting? After Mantis and Spider and *(yawns)* Caterpillar and Snail and ... I need sleep. *(Resting, going to sleep)* Oh this is heaven. No more interruptions ... no more ... *(Yawns, falls asleep, maybe a slight snore. ANT has barely fallen asleep when the peace and quiet is shattered by a ferocious cry from off-stage. It's FLY dressed as Famous Fly. Swinging (?) in like a poor man's Tarzan, FLY enters LC, screaming en route, and crash lands near ANT. Oh no! ANT is rudely woken and nearly dies when beside him is a badly-dressed, over-acting, would-be film-star. No star. Just a monster. ANT cannot believe it)* I don't believe it. *(Buries face in claws and almost sobs)* I just don't believe it.
(FLY quickly settles, begins a tirade of excruciating ham-acting - at its worst!)
- Fly** Greetings friend. This is your lucky day.
- Ant** *(Peeks out at FLY)* Tell me it's not happening.

GARDEN FOLK 16

Fly Let me reduce myself. I'll paint you a drawing. (*FLY struts as he speaks. ANT looks on in dismay*) The world has millions of creatures. Maybe more than millions. Maybe ... thousands. (*ANT looks to heaven for help*) Most of us reckon we're ordinary. (*Intimate*) But some of us is special.

Ant (*Matter-of-fact, mutters*) Are special.

Fly (*Doesn't understand*) Pardon?

Ant (*How boring*) Are special. Some of us are special.
(*Pause. FLY then agrees. He thinks he's been paid a compliment*)

Fly Thank you, most kind. (*Continues speech and striding. ANT despairs*) You know what I mean by special? (*ANT slowly shakes head in disbelief*) Good. Allow me to deform you. (*FLY addresses the world*) When someone like me are [*sic*] special, it means they're ... they're ... (*Doesn't know*)

Ant (*Mutters*) Special.

Fly Pardon?

Ant (*Louder, annoyed*) Special. *Special!* (*FLY thrilled*)

Fly That's it. Special. Now immediately you ask, "Why is this creature special?" (*ANT looks tired and sad. FLY summons all his pathetic acting skills and speaks with pride*) I have a destiny. (*Pause. FLY looks smugly at ANT*) You know what "destiny" means? (*ANT rolls his eyes. Fly oozes confidence*) Allow me to reform you. (*More despair from ANT*) I offer you the chance to be a-quainged with an *inter-garden star!*

Ant (*Mock joy*) Inter-garden! Wow!

Fly The time will come when trees, worms, plants, this whole village will see me in my true colours.

Ant You mean that's not just a crummy costume?

Fly Aha! Spray and rod may squash my bod but jeers will never taunt me!
(*ANT claps - for once is genuinely impressed.*)

Ant Very good, very good.

Fly (*Building to crescendo*) I wear the uniform of ... a genius!
(*FLY strikes dramatic pose. Ant fires a quick question*)

Ant Three twos? (*FLY doesn't know. He is flustered for a moment then recovers*)

Fly One day my name, F F F Frank will be on everyone's lips, nose, cheek, back, ear, leg, thigh, shoulder ... (*Pronounce "F" as "fur"*)

Ant Did you say F F F Frank?

Fly One day they'll write songs about me, invent sweet-smelling sprays for me, build coloured-lights in shops for me - salute (*Brushes a pretend-fly from his face*) pollute and dilute - just for me! (*Builds his Churchill/Sinatra-type address*) And through it all when there are doubts, I'll eat it up and spit it out ... (*Stops. Pause. He's got the wrong speech. Back into stride*) One day I'll change this world f f f forever. I'll be f f f famous!

Ant F F F Fantastic!

Fly Because of me ... (*Deadly serious*) the word will spread.

GARDEN FOLK 17

(FLY freezes in dramatic pose. This is the punch-line. ANT is kept in suspense. Surely this can't be the end of the speech)

Ant What word?

(Another pause. Suddenly FLY shrieks and runs to a raised place DL. Arms outstretched, FLY shouts his joy to the world)

Fly Aveagoodweegend!

(This word means "Have a good weekend". It's used to promote the sale of a well-known fly-spray. Don't forget brand X and "aveagoodweegend". If this ad is not known in your area you could substitute some other word/s of a well-known fly-spray. Alternatively, FLY could shout, "There's no flies on me!" Blackout. Solo spot on FLY who acts out his dream of being famous. The COMPANY or part thereof enters in the blackout and are lit when they start to sing)

F F F Famous

Fly *Oh why can't the world see my greatness?
Oh why can't the world see my style?
I've got what it takes, I don't make mistakes
And move like a crazy crocodile.
Oh why can't the world see my talent?
My routine it can now observe.
Oh why can't the world see my natural gifts
And give me the recognition I deserve?
Every day and every night
I still suffer from stage-fright
And it simply can't be right
Cos I've never been on the stage.
When I sleep I have these dreams.
F F F Fans give out their screams.
I'm a star or so it seems
Then I fall right out of bed.*

Fly *My appearance is so grand. [Lights up on company]*

Company *Oh yes it is, yes it is grand.*

Fly *Natural is how it's planned.*

Company *Oh natural is how it's planned*

Fly *Both my cheeks are nicely tanned.*

Company *Oh yes they are yes they are tanned.*

Fly *But my agent never calls.*

Company *No never calls.*

Fly *In the shower hear me sing*

Company *Oh hear him oh hear him just sing!*

Fly *All the drips accompanying.*

Company *A-ccompanying, 'ccompanying sing!*

Fly *Will there be an opening?*

GARDEN FOLK 18

Company *Oh will there be one opening?*
Fly *I look great without a towel.*
Company *A towel! Oh why can't the world see my greatness?*
Fly* *My greatness.*
Company *Oh why can't the world see my style?*
Fly *My style!*
Company *I've got what it takes. Fly It takes!*
I don't make mistakes Mistakes!
And move like a crazy crocodile. A crocodile!
Oh why can't the world see my talent?
Fly *My talent!*
Company *My routine it can now observe.*
Fly *Take a look!*
Company *Oh why can't the world see my natural gifts*
And give me the recognition I deserve?
Fly *And away we go! (EVERYONE dances!)*
Tutti *Oh why can't the world see my talent?*
My routine it can now observe.
Ant *Oh why can't the world see my natural gifts and give me*
Company *Give him oh give him*
Ant *The recognition*
Company *The 'nition, the 'nition*
Tutti *That I deserve! Oh yeah!*

(* FLY'S comments are spoken in his usual over-the-top fashion.)

(The COMPANY in this song could be all the CHORUS or preferably a small group of say eight. They enter in darkness in time to start singing i.e. "Oh yes it is, yes it is grand". [Bring up lights just as they start to sing] They are a backing group. It's all over-the-top stuff with FLY giving big gestures. The song is FLY'S fantasy, his dream. Immediately the number ends - blackout. The COMPANY beats a silent and hasty exit. 2.9 seconds later the lights slowly return to normal. FLY is still standing in his triumphant end-of-song pose, arms outstretched. ANT is asleep and could give a gentle snore. FLY finally realises he's all alone and that ANT is asleep. FLY bounces over to ANT and prods/gently kicks him awake)

Ant *(Being "attacked") Hey ... watch it! (Mutters)*
Fly *So wot'cha reckon? Am I a star or am I a star?*
Ant *(Annoyed) I was asleep. Do you mind?!*
Fly *Don't stay here, kid. Stick with me. I'm goin' places. I'm gonna be f f f famous.*
Ant *(Not impressed. Curling up again) Terrific.*
Fly *(Strides about boasting) They're no-bodies. Jealous cos I'm senshay ... senshoo ... sen ... cos I'm great. I've got what it takes. (Defiant) I'm gonna make it. (FLY sees ANT asleep and goes and prods/gently kicks again) Hey!*

GARDEN FOLK 19

- Wake up! (*ANT groans. Not again!*) This is your big chance. I'm gonna be f f f famous.
- (*ANT can't take much more. He props on one elbow and stares at FLY*)
- Ant** Will you do me a f f f favour?
- Fly** (*Delighted*) Absolutely. Just name it.
- Ant** F F F Fly away.
- (*FLY is so stupid he takes this as a compliment. He gives the thumbs up signal*)
- Fly** My pleasure f f f friend. (*Big voice*) F F F Farewell.
- (*FLY exits LC with style - badly. He could swing off or run and take a flying leap into the wings. Once off, a terrible crashing noise is heard - drum-kit cymbal crash or simply bang/drop some pots and pans. ANT can't believe it. The final noise is the last straw. ANT returns to sleeping-position and goes to sleep*)
- Ant** All I want is ... sleeeeeep.
- (*Last word fades into a snore. The lights change. Day is passing and night approaching. Perhaps add some night sound effects e.g. frogs croaking. SPIDER comes alive on his web. The VILLAGERS arrive back from their work. They chat about their day. L'BIRD fusses over her children and sweeps her verandah. BEE rushes in from UL, puffing*)
- Bee** Sorry I'm late. Got held up by a pansy. (*Enters his home*) Must spend a penny. (*BEE'S light comes on and we could hear flushing loo*)
- Ladybird** (*Calling her children*) Cecilia. Fortescue. Supper's ready. (*CHILDREN return home*) Come on Flapdoodle. I can see you. Now!
- (*CHILDREN return home, FLAPDOODLE last to arrive. ANT is woken by all this activity. BEE re-enters bustling and all systems a go*)
- Bee** Meeting time! Meeting! (*COMPANY chatters and gathers around*) Quiet please. (*Chatter stops*) I'm afraid I've got bad news.
- Ladybird** (*From inside cottage*) Turn that telly off and go to bed. Now! (*L'BIRD enters, slams door and joins meeting*) Confounded kids. Sorry Bee. What's up?
- Bee** I'm afraid it's bad news. Mister Perkins is leaving. (*Shock*)
- Grasshopper** Are you sure?
- Bee** Two mosquitoes went up for a feed and he's packed his belongings. (*Lots of chatter from the COMPANY. This is serious*)
- Ladybird** It's terrible. He was a nice human.
- Snail** He grew luscious lettuce.
- Bee** And *beautiful* flowers.
- Fly** Even had a hole in his rubbish bin. (*COMPANY dejected*)
- Spider** Doesn't worry me. Who wants flowers and vegies?
- Bee** You'll worry about the replacements.
- Mantis** (*Worried as is everyone*) Replacements?! What replacements?
- Bee** New owners - *plural*. (*COMPANY stunned*) Saw them today - with their children. (*This causes shock waves through the COMPANY*)
- Spider** (*Petrified*) Children! They smash spiders!
- Snail** (*Equally concerned*) They squash snails!
- Ladybird** (*Panics*) My children! What about my children?! (*Panic spreads*)

GARDEN FOLK 20

- Bee** *(Calling over the noise)* Please, I'm not finished.
- Grasshopper** You mean there's more?
- Bee** They've also got ... pets. *("Pets" is spoken in solemn, hushed tones. It means death. The INSECTS are pole-axed)* One dog ... *(Groans)* two cats ... *(More groans)* and seven chickens.
(This is the last straw. Chickens are deadly killers. Everyone except ANT is resigned to a horrible death. ANT is puzzled and concerned)
- Spider** I always wanted a quiet death, turn me web into a rocking-chair.
- Snail** No more lettuce. I've loved me last leaf.
- Ladybird** *(Almost sobbing)* My children, my children. *(Wailing continues)*
- Grasshopper** *(Voice cracking)* We're ... *finished.*
(ALL wail. Don't stint on emotion. COMPANY sobs, comforts one another - some collapse)
- Bee** There's something else. *(INSECTS don't really care)*
- Spider** *(Pleading)* Good news. *Please* make it good news.
- Bee** The plants are being sprayed with something new. It's dangerous. Killed an entire village yesterday. *(Stunned silence)*
- Grasshopper** *(Heavy sarcasm)* At last! The good news.
- Ladybird** *(Sobbing and being comforted)* My children, my children.
- Ant** *(Softly)* Excuse me. *(No-one hears/heeds ANT)*
- Spider** What have I done to deserve a poisonous spray?
- Ant** *(A little louder)* May I say something? *(Still unheeded)*
- Bee** It's crazy. Some tiny flaw appears on their precious bloom and wham! In they rush spraying toxic fumes. And what happens? They kill us, the very creatures who help make their garden beautiful. *(More sorrow)*
- Ant** *(Louder still)* Excuse me. *(ANT is noticed at last)*
- Bee** Who are you?
- Ant** I'm Ant. I arrived last night. *(BEE remembers and nods)*
- Snail** Seems you chose the wrong village, Ant.
- Ant** No I didn't. *(OTHERS now pay attention. Sobbing stops)*
- Grasshopper** We're about to be decimated, Antie. The bomb's about to drop.
- Ant** It's not that bad. *(COMPANY sadness turns to scoffing. ANT is jeered)*
- Mantis** *(Takes over a la boxing announcer)* Ladies and gentleflies. In the rose-red corner weighing half a gram and wearing a bite-proof body it's ... Ant! *(COMPANY laughs)* While in the bantam-blue corner with razor-sharp claws, brutal beak and looks which can kill from twenty paces, it's ... seven chickens!
(Huge laugh from COMPANY (a) to relieve the tension and (b) at the ridiculous mis-match described by MANTIS)
- Ant** *(Calling over din)* Wait! Listen! *(Louder)* Listen! *(COMPANY settles)* I know people and pets are much bigger and stronger than insects. But size and strength aren't everything. *(COMPANY scoffs)*
- Spider** One swipe from them would kill ten of us. *(OTHERS agree)*

GARDEN FOLK 21

- Ant** Only if they find us.
Snail I'm easy to find.
Bee Me too.
Ant My family build huge underground houses. Thousands of us can hide there.
Bee (*Indignant*) Are you suggesting we share *your* house?
Grasshopper (*A trifle nasty*) He hasn't built it yet.
Ant Ants work together. Some collect food, some care for the young, others build new houses, fight our enemies or scout for new villages. Lots of different jobs but we work as a team.
Ladybird So? (*MUSIC BEGINS*)
Ant We could do the same. We could build a shelter and warn each other when danger threatens. Helping each other is very smart. (*COMPANY not convinced*) Come on, it works. It really works.

Stick Together

- Ant** *Many great achievements have been made by just one
And it's quite remarkable to see what's been done.
But results are better and there's so much more fun.
If and when each citizen includes everyone.
Stick together, work as a team.
Stick together, make it your theme.
Stick together, aim for the sky.
Stick together, a great way to fly!*
- Ant** (*Spoken*) That's it folks - simple, sensible, straightforward. Stick together and look out world - here we come! (*COMPANY cheers*)
- Company** *Stick together, work as a team.
Stick together, make it your theme.
Stick together, aim for the sky.
Stick together, a great way to fly.*
- Ant** *You'll find what was heavy can soon become light.
You'll find what was doubtful will turn out all right.
You'll find what was quite steep is really quite slight.
You'll find many problems just vanish from sight.*
- Company** *Stick, stick, stick together. Stick, stick, stick together.
Stick, stick, stick together. Stick, stick, stick together.
Just stick together.*
- (*The song has inspired the entire COMPANY to face their fear and danger*)
- Ant** (*Calling*) Got the message?
Company (*Enthusiastic*) Yes!
Ant Well let's get started. (*Excited hubbub from COMPANY*)
Bee (*Shocked*) What? Now?!

GARDEN FOLK 22

Ant Yes, Bee. Strike while the pollen's hot!

Mantis *(Not sure)* But it's night. Some of us should be asleep.
(OTHERS agree. The new enthusiasm rapidly fades from sight. COMPANY switches sides)

Ladybird The new owners aren't here yet.

Bee And no children or pets until they do.

Grasshopper We could all submit designs for our new bomb-shelter.
(COMPANY agrees. That would be nice. Don't rock the boat. ANT is deflated)

Ant I guess we could start tomorrow.

Ladybird Indeed. *(Starts to exit to her house)* As soon as my children go to school, we'll make a start. Good idea, Ant. Well done. Goodnight.
(L'BIRD exits. OTHERS congratulate ANT, bid goodnight and exit. ANT calls "Goodnight" and "Thanks" but is dejected and alone. ANT sits/leans on SNAIL DR. SNAIL moves)

Snail Hey! *(ANT shocked and moves)* That's the second time you've done that.

Ant Sorry. *(Recovers, makes a weak joke)* Third time lucky, hey?

Snail Lucky's right. This is my last chance for *Fillet of Lettuce*.

Ant Can I ask what you thought of my speech?

Snail Very professional. *(ANT pleased)*

Ant Thank you.

Snail Very professional but a complete waste of time. *(ANT dismayed)*

Ant Waste of time! *(Shattered)* I don't understand.

Snail But it's so nice to meet an optimist. Thought you were all dead.

Ant What I said is true. I'm sincere.

Snail Of course you are. Sincere ... and stupid.

Ant *(Angry)* Stupid!

Snail Sticking together's a good idea, a great idea but what could and should happen, seldom ever does.

Ant You're jealous. You're jealous because I stole the limelight.

Snail *(Calmly continues)* Lime is not my favourite word. But no matter. *(Tactfully)* Look, your theory's fine but in practice, no-one wants it to work.

Ant I do.

Snail Generally speaking, we're all selfish. We help each other provided it doesn't cost anything or interrupt our comfortable lifestyles.

Ant It's really sad meeting someone so cynical.

Snail *(Starts to exit DR)* Maybe I am cynical. But life's not always wonderful and tonight's sweet dreams could be tomorrow's nightmares. *(Just before exiting or disappearing into shell)* Sleep well.

Ant *(Annoyed, calls)* Thanks a lot, Snail. *(Angry)* Thanks for nothing. *(ANT furious, kicks ground, thinks aloud)* Why can't we work together? It can work. *(More determined)* It does work. *(SPIDER sobs without moving)* Caterpillar, be quiet. *(Pause. More sobs)* It won't work, Caterpillar, now shut up!

GARDEN FOLK 23

(Sobbing louder. ANT furious and moves UL/LC. Sobbing from SPIDER who wipes his eyes with a tissue - recently attached to some or all of his legs. ANT realises who is crying)

Ant *(Spins round, shocked)* Spider! What's wrong? *(ANT crosses to SPIDER)*

Spider *(Covering up)* Oh. Hello Ant. Beautiful evening.

Ant You're crying.

Spider Me? Crying? Don't be stupid.

Ant You are. Your eyes are all red.

Spider *(Dabbing eyes)* Hay fever. It's terrible right now.

Ant *(Getting serious)* Spider.

Spider *(Annoyed)* What?

Ant Look at me. *(Pause. Slowly SPIDER looks at ANT)*

Spider Well? *(Pause)* Satisfied?

Ant *(SPIDER has been crying and ANT is ashamed. Pause)* Sorry.

Spider There is such a thing as privacy. Sticking together doesn't mean sticking your snout in someone's sitting-room.

Ant *(Genuinely concerned)* I'd like to help.

Spider *(Still a bit angry)* I don't need your help.

Ant *(Pause. Starts to move DL)* Suit yourself.

Spider *(Desperate)* No, wait! *(ANT stops)* Don't go. *(Pause)* Please.

Ant *(Returning, serious)* You've played some dirty tricks on me, Spider.

Spider *(Keen to defend himself and tell the truth)* It's no trick. *(Pause)* I promise.

Ant Better not be. *(More friendly)* Now, what's up? New pets and children, hey?

Spider Much worse than that. Much, much worse.

Ant Well as I said, if I can help, you only have to ask.

Spider *(Back to his self-pity)* You wouldn't understand.

Ant Try me. At least give me a chance.

Spider *(Not sure)* It's kinda ... personal. You see ... I want to get married.

Ant *(Thrilled)* Married! But that's fantastic. Who's the lucky spider?

Spider *(Still sad)* Lucky my legs. She gets the pick of the garden.

Ant *(Confused)* I don't follow.

Spider *(Explaining)* In my family, the male proposes to the female. But it's no ordinary proposal. You see ... *(SPIDER breaks down and sobs)*

Ant *(Comforts SPIDER)* Hey, come on, it's okay. *(SPIDER improves)* Do you want to talk about it? *(SPIDER nods)* Well, when you're ready.

Spider *(Taking his time)* A female spider is very big.

Ant *(Joking/Teasing)* All the more to cuddle, hey? Hey?.

Spider *(Not impressed)* Please don't interrupt, it's very serious.

Ant *(Suitably chastised)* Sorry. Please continue. *(Pause. SPIDER continues)*

Spider She's also short-sighted with a huge appetite. It's very dangerous when I propose. She might think I'm her enemy.

Ant *(Aghast)* You mean she'll marry your worst enemy!?

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Spider No. (*Wail about to burst*) It means she'll have me for lunch.
(*Breaks down sobbing*)

Ant (*Distressed*) That's terrible. You open your heart and she has it for entree.

Spider I have to do a dance to make sure she knows who I am.

Ant A special dance! (*Pause*) So where's the problem?

Spider (*About to cry*) I can't dance. (*Does cry. Slobber, slobber!*)

Ant (*Serious*) Only one solution, Spider.

Spider (*Distress building*) Yes, get eaten! (*More sobbing*)

Ant Learn to dance. (*SPIDER sobs then stops suddenly*)

Spider (*Stunned*) What?!

Ant You heard. Learn ... (*Simple step/s*) ... to dance. (*Pause. ANT beckons with finger*)

Spider (*Most reluctant*) No! No, I can't ... I don't know how. ... It's crazy! (*ANT still beckoning*) I can't, Ant. I just can't!

Ant Do you want to get married?

Spider Oh yes. I love her so much.

Ant Must you propose first?

Spider Of course. I just told you. (*MUSIC BEGINS*)

Ant (*Excited*) Then come on down and tap your toes!

One, Two, One More

Ant *One, two, one more, never have to go too far.*
One, two, one more
The step you'd teach your old grandma or grandpa.
One two, one more, don't include a foot faux pas.
Oh! One two, one more, dance a bit and there you are.

(*Spoken*) *Come on Spider, give it a go! (SPIDER repeats ANT'S song)*

Company *If you get a chance to go a-dancing in the dark*
Give it a swirl you'll find it's popular.
And if you get a chance to go romancing in the park
Give it a burl you'll find it's ooh-la-la!
And if you get a chance to go advancing for a lark
Give it a whirl it's oh so wunderbar!
Oh if you get a chance to make a love reconnaissance
You go and dance a bit and there you are.

Ant (*Spoken*) *Come on Spider. Tap those toes! (SPIDER and COMPANY dance)*

Company *Just dance a bit and there you, there you are!*
(*COMPANY is happy and congratulates SPIDER. Note: The COMPANY could include everyone or, like FLY'S song, use only part of the chorus. The COMPANY exits wishing SPIDER well*)

Ant (*Puffed, sits for a rest*) Hey Spider.

Spider (*Also puffed but much happier than before*) What?

Ant How about a honeymoon in the grapevine?

Spider (*Enjoys the joke*) Fantastic. (*They both laugh*)

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- Ant** *(Suddenly serious and goes to SPIDER)* Now hang on. The big day approaches and every bridegroom needs his beauty sleep.
- Spider** You're right. Thanks a million, Ant. *(SPIDER re-mounts his web)*
- Ant** Relax. Oh and best wishes for that dancing proposal.
(ANT wanders DR to find a spot to sleep. SPIDER sings to himself)
- Spider** "One two, one more, never have to go too far." *(Continues fading away)*
- Ant** *(Curling up to sleep against rock)* At last ... sleep.
(The rock is SNAIL who moves and ANT is once again disturbed)
- Snail** Hey, find your own mattress!
- Ant** Not you again. The cynical snail.
- Snail** Changed you mind about your fellow creatures?
- Ant** *(Preparing bed)* No. In fact I've just been helping a colleague. It's called friendship.
- Snail** You mean sticking together?
- Ant** *(Pleased that SNAIL has got it right)* Exactly. I'm glad you remembered.
- Snail** Well don't expect much in return. Goodnight. *(Exits DR/into shell. Lights dim)*
- Ant** *(Furious than retires)* Go away, pessimist. Let me ... sleeeeeeep.
(Last word drawn out and fades as ANT goes to sleep. Pause. All is quiet and dark. Suddenly ANT is jolted awake. A low, rumbling sound is heard. Lights for the new day come up. The village shakes. A strong wind starts to blow. The COMPANY rush out and panic. BEE shouts what everyone fears)
- Bee** Run for your life! It's an applequake!
(Screams and panic as the COMPANY rush around seeking cover. Choreographed chaos. They bump into one another. ANT is bowled over. He gets up. Someone else knocks him down. Houses sway. Rushing wind sounds are heard [perhaps the orchestra play "modern" music ad lib]. ANT is scared. LADYBIRD is desperate. ANT grabs L'BIRD)
- Ant** Ladybird, what's happening?
- Ladybird** *(Pushing ANT aside)* Let go! *(Panics)* I must find my children.
(L'BIRD exits LC calling for her children. ANT looks around)
- Ant** Grasshopper! What is it? *(G'HOPPER'S packing his gym DL)*
- Grasshopper** *(Keeps working)* Take cover, it's an applequake!
- Ant** I don't understand. *(The applequake effects increase)*
- Grasshopper** *(Screaming over the storm)* Overripe apples. They crash down when the wind blows. Kills you like that! *(Snaps fingers then exits with gear DL)* Take cover!
(ANT is scared, alone, He looks around then runs to L'BIRD'S house. Suddenly L'BIRD re-enters with her kids in tow. She grabs ANT pushing him DC. She's angry and scared.)
- Ladybird** Get out! Out! You're not my children!
(L'BIRD and kids enter house. Door slammed on ANT who is stunned and frightened. ANT rushes back towards house, calling)
- Ant** Ladybird, it's me. Ant!

GARDEN FOLK 26

(ANT bangs on door and calls again. No response. He rushes to BEE'S house. No response. He looks for shelter. Nothing. Parts of the set collapse and/or giant leaves fall from above. ANT dives for cover just as a twig/leave crashes where he was standing. The storm unleashes its full fury and a giant apple could crash onto the stage. This could happen off-stage being suggested by sound effects and a shaking set. All falling objects are made of soft materials. Slowly the wind dies. The storm abates and a lull falls over the village. ANT is the first out. Another twig or leaf falls and ANT scampers for cover. BEE comes out. He moves around cautiously checking the scene. Satisfied, he calls)

- Bee** I think it's safe. You can come out now.
(Slowly, cautiously COMPANY enters. Timid/frightened, they survey the damage. They busy themselves repairing homes, clearing debris. ANT appears, amazed)
- Ant** Wow, that was some applequake. *(OTHERS too busy to notice ANT who wanders off-stage or to where the giant apple landed. ANT re-enters or calls excitedly)* Come and look at this - it's a giant apple! *(COMPANY working)*
- Ladybird** *(Snaps at ANT)* Some of us have families to find. *(Calling, looking)* Cuthbertson. Conquistador. Where are you? *(ANT goes after L'BIRD)*
- Ant** Ladybird, I didn't mean to upset you. All I said was ...
- Grasshopper** *(ANT is in his way)* Do you mind?
- Ant** *(Confused, upset)* Oh, sorry. *(ANT backs off DR, dismayed)*
- Snail** *(Near ANT)* Stick together, Ant ... *(Softer)* but look after yourself first. *(SNAIL retreats or exits. ANT frustrated. MANTIS bursts in UL carrying a briefcase and bundle of certificates. He could wear a hat and/or jacket. NOTE: This song is not meant as a comment on the insurance industry. MANTIS is simply a pragmatist)*
- Mantis** Hi everyone. It's your friendly insurance agent. *(MUSIC BEGINS)*

Insurance

- | | | |
|---------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Mantis | <i>If you go and find yourself in trouble.</i> | Ladybird (I am) |
| | <i>If you find your luck has gone away.</i> | Grasshopper (Mine has) |
| | <i>Even if your house is only rubble.</i> | Spider (Rubble) |
| | <i>I can put an end to your dismay.</i> | Bee (I hope so) |
| | <i>If your home is flooded to the ceiling.</i> | Fly (F F Flooded) |
| | <i>If your life is now in disarray.</i> | Snail (Disaster) |
| | <i>Even if your problems set you reeling.</i> | Ant (I'm reeling) |
| | <i>This could be your very lucky day.</i> | Company (How?) |
| | <i>You may not have a thing to call your own.</i> | Company (No!) |
| | <i>You may not have a chance to raise a loan.</i> | (No!) |
| | <i>You may now have to face your life alone</i> | |
| | <i>But you've always got insurance.</i> | |
| | <i>Today you might just crash your brand new car</i> | (Oh!) |
| | <i>Find you have a fever that is gland-u-lar</i> | (Oh!) |
| | <i>Cop a little visit from a burg-u-lar</i> | |
| | <i>But you've always got insurance.</i> | |

PAGE BREAK

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Ant 2 I wondered if anyone could help me.
Bee *(Pause. Uncertain)* Of course. W W W What do you want?
Ant 2 Accommodation. I'm looking for a safe and friendly village.
Mantis *(Claws behind his back)* Ah, well you'll be very safe here.
Spider *(Pathetic cover-up)* And we are just *so* friendly.
Ladybird *(All goodness and light)* Excuse me but do you like children?
Ant 2 Yes I do. I come from a very big family.
Bee Well I'm sure you'll love it here, er ...
Ant 2 Oh sorry. My name's Ant. *(OTHERS gasp)*
Bee *(Shaking paws with ANT 2)* Welcome Ant. This is a great village. *(MUSIC BEGINS. To OTHERS)* Right?
Company Right!

No Place Like Home Reprise

(Opening song is repeated after which the curtain quickly falls. Life goes on!)

Curtain Calls

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