

The Itsy Bitsy Spider Knows

By Sarah Congress

1st Honorable Mention

Characters:

The below characters can be played by an actor of any race or ethnicity.

Red: 38. The Mom. Government medical worker.

Purple: 38. The Father. Government intelligence officer.

Orange: 70. The Grandmother. Retired nurse...from the unspoken ways...

Magenta: 11. The Daughter. Government student.

Time:

The not so distant future.

The Place:

A barren room.

Lights up on a barren room.

A single lightbulb swings from the ceiling.

There are several smoke detectors attached to the cold wooden floor.

Magenta sits cross-legged on the floor.

Magenta: *(Singing)* The itsy spider she knows when you go out.

Orange enters holding a basket of laundry.

Magenta: *(Singing)* Up through the floorboards, she hears it all don't shout.

Orange: Don't sing that song.

Magenta: *(Singing)* You won't get any water, you won't get any food—

Orange: Magenta. Stop singing that song.

Magenta: *(Singing)* and the itsy bitsy spider will send you to your doom.

Orange throws the basket to the floor.

Orange: Don't ever sing that.

Magenta: Why not, Grandma Orange?

Orange: It's not a *good* song.

Magenta: Then why did they make us learn it at school?

Orange looks down at the floorboards.

Orange communicates something in sign language.

Magenta: Daddy says you shouldn't sign.

Orange throws her hands up in frustration.

Magenta: Daddy said that Uncle Black signed something in sign language at the water store and the government guard saw it on the security camera and now Uncle Black lives in the no water place.

Purple enters carrying a liter of water.

Purple: Whose thirsty?

Magenta: Mom!

Magenta runs over to Purple and hugs her. She grabs the water.

Purple: Easy now, easy. This is all we have till Wednesday.

Purple pours her daughter a small cup of water.

Magenta gulps it down.

Orange: Thieves.

Silence.

Purple glares at Orange. She points to the smoke detectors.

Orange: How much do they have? While the rest of us wither up like tumbleweed?

Purple: Mommy Orange, did you forget to take your medicine? Is that why you're speaking such crazy talk? Yes. You must have forgotten to take your medicine.

Orange signs something to Purple.

Purple: Here, Mommy Orange. Take your pills.

Magenta: We learned a song today in school.

Purple: Let's hear it baby.

Magenta: *(Singing)* The itsy spider she knows when you go out.

Orange sulks in a corner.

Magenta/Purple: *(Singing)* Up through the floorboards, she hears it all don't shout.

Magenta: Mom, you know the song too?

Purple: Of course, baby, I learned it in middle school.

Orange lets out a grunt.

Magenta/Purple: *(Singing)* You won't get any water, you won't get any food—

Red enters carrying a liter of clear liquid.

Red: *(Singing)* and the itsy bitsy spider will send you to your doom.

Purple: Extra rations?

Red: Synthetic.

Purple: *(To the floorboards)* How generous.

Red: *(To the floorboards)* So generous.

Magenta: *(To the floorboards)* Yummy!

Purple: Say thank you, baby.

Magenta: *(To the floorboards)* Thank you!

Orange: Can't take it anymore.

Orange staggers to her feet.

Red: Mom. Did you forget to take your medicine?

Purple: Magenta, are you hungry?

Orange signs something to Red. Red signs something back.

Purple: Who wants cactus casserole?

Orange: AGAIN?

Orange kicks the wall.

Magenta: Can't we have yucca?

Red: Mom. Calm down.

Purple: Sorry baby, they didn't have any yucca today at the government store...but Mommy made you a yummy cactus casserole.

Magenta: Agave pudding for dessert?

Purple: Agave pudding for dessert.

Orange grabs Magenta.

Orange: They did this, they did this Magenta.

Purple: Mom.

Red: Do you want to be taken away?

Orange: Honey, there used to be *green*.

Purple: Don't say that word. / **Red:** Illegal word!

Orange: Forests, oceans, animals, birds—

Red: Given me no choice. I have to report her. (*Quietly*) Or they'll take us all away.

Purple: Oh Red. I'm so sorry.

Red drops to his knees. He dials a code on the fire alarm.

Orange: Magenta. It used to be beautiful.

Red: Code G. Repeat: code G.

Orange: Then they ruined it. With gas. With wars. With greed.

Red: Orange. Aged 70. Vaccine passport number 45671.

Orange: Magenta the rich took what was left of the water— **Red:**

Violation of Code G.

Purple puts her hands over her daughter's ears.

Purple: Don't listen, baby, don't listen.

Orange: Left the rest of us to rot.

Purple: Your grandmother is unwell.

A pair of handcuffs falls from the sky.

Red: You've done it now.

Red puts them on Orange.

Red: (*Quietly*) I'm so sorry, Mom.

Orange: It's alright son. I'd rather die of thirst than pretend "this" is life.

Red ushers Orange to the door.

Orange: Green, Magenta.

Silence.

Orange: There used to be green.

Red and Orange exit.

Silence.

Purple wipes her eyes. She looks at Magenta.

Purple: Come help Mommy set the table.

Purple and Magenta pantomime setting a dinner table.

Magenta/Purple: (*Singing*) The itsy spider she knows when you go out. Up through the floorboards, she hears it all don't shout. You won't get any water, you won't get any food—

Magenta: Mommy, is Grandma Orange going to the same place as Uncle Black?

Purple: Yes, baby.

Purple wipes her eyes.

Magenta/Purple: (*Singing*) and the itsy bitsy spider will send you to your doom.

Lights out.

End of play.