

VESPA
AN OPERA IN 4 ACTS
MUSIC AND LIBRETTO BY DON DINICOLA

CAST - CHORUS AND DANCERS

CHORUS - 8 Singers will cover all roles:
3 Sopranos, 2 Mezzo-Sopranos, 2 Tenors, 1 Baritone

VESPA - A 13 year old girl - SOPRANO

RAE - VESPA's little sister - MEZZO SOPRANO

JOEY - A neighborhood boy who befriends VESPA - TENOR

QUEENIE - The Wasp Queen - SOPRANO

OPPYLON - The Spider - BARITONE

BOO - The Purple Mantis - TENOR

THE 2 BOYS - Two neighborhood bullies who are also RAE's
acolytes - 2 TENORS

BABY SPIDERS - 2 babies - 2 SOPRANOS

CHICKADEE - MEZZO SOPRANO

THE SINGING TREE - BARITONE

**ASSORTED BEES, WASPS, MOSQUITOS, DRAGONFLIES, BEETLES,
LADYBUGS AND MANTITEES** - CHORUS and DANCERS (Number of
Dancers-TBD)

THE ORCHESTRA - piano, guitars, banjo, harp, percussion,
flute, oboe, clarinet

PROLOGUE

NARRATION

Welcome to the world of Vespa. Our story unfolds in a vacant lot where children play. Behind the lot is a rundown old factory, separated from the lot by a razor-topped, chain-linked fence. The sign on the fence reads, "DBP INDUSTRIES - NO TRESPASSING - KEEP OUT!"

To one side of the lot there is a road, which separates the lot from the woods. There is a juncture in the road, marked by a tree, and a path into the woods. Beyond the woods, there is a house, a bog, a pond, a meadow, an overgrown swampland and finally The Queen's Island. In the darkness, a voice calls out ...

~ RECIT 1

CHORUS SOPRANO (RECIT)

VESPA! VESPA! VESPA!
 VESPA IS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD.
 SHE LIVES IN A BAD NEIGHBORHOOD,
 WHERE SHE'S OFTEN
 BULLIED BY THE BOYS.
 ASTUTE SHARP, SHE LOVES THE
 OUTDOORS ...
 VESPA! VESPA! VESPA!
 ONE DAY ...

NARRATION

ACT 1 - SCENE 1 Lights up on the vacant lot. Vespa is being taunted by two boys. Her sister Rae is hiding behind a tree, listening.

~BUSY BUZZY VESPA ~

THE BOYS (SUNG)

BUSY BUZZY VESPA
 TALKIN' TO THE BEES
 WRITIN' SILLY STORIES
 HIDIN' IN THE TREES
 HAVING CONVERSATIONS
 WITH SPIDERS IN THE AIR
 AIN'T NOBODY LISTENIN'
 AIN'T NOBODY THERE!

LAUGHTER, HOOTS AND GUFFAWS.

BOY 1

I Guess ya just tooo good fa us
 Vespa!

BOY 2

Yeahhh, Teacha's pet, haha teacha's
 pet!

BOY 1

Where's ya made up friend? Ha!

BOY 2

I betcha she don't even haaave a
 real friend.

RAE

Puh! She's talking to her made up
friends again.

NARRATION

We see Joey, a boy about Vespa's age, approach.

~ I DON'T UNDERSTAND ~

VESPA (RECIT)
**I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEIR
 PROBLEM IS ...**

The rest of her sentence is drowned out by a bus that whizzes past. Joey chimes in ...

JOEY (RECIT)
**I DON'T LET ANYONE PUT WORDS IN MY
 MOUTH ... SOMETIMES THOSE GUYS
 AREN'T VERY NICE.**

Vespa nods,

VESPA (RECIT)
**I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN ... AND I
 AGREE.**

She smiles,

VESPA (RECIT)
WANNA COME OVER AND HANG OUT SOME?

JOEY (RECIT)
SURE. SOUNDS LIKE FUN!

Cut back to Rae ...

RAE (RECIT)
**WELL I'M GLAD. AT LEAST VESPA HAS
 ONE REAL FRIEND, HMPH!**

She walks away muttering,

RAE (RECIT)
**MAYBE HE'LL TEACH HER SOME SENSE!
 RIGHT!**

VESPA (RECIT)
**... I CAN SHOW YOU, BUT IT HAS TO
 BE A SECRET JUST BETWEEN US TWO.**

JOEY (RECIT)
NOT A PROBLEM FOR ME,

He chuckles,

JOEY (RECIT)
**NOBODY PAYS MUCH ATTENTION TO ME
 ANYWAY. THEY ALL THINK I JUST MAKE
 STUFF UP TOO!**

They both laugh

NARRATION

ACT 1 - SCENE 2

Later that day in what looks to be a backyard ... Vespa and Joey are standing next to a large tarantula wasp, with Joey gently petting the wasp's head. The wasp is humming softly. Rae is on the other side of the yard, watching the scene from behind another hedge. Vespa is cooing gently,

VESPA
 You need to be super gentle with her.

JOEY
 I see what you mean ... Can I touch her if I'm very gentle and careful?

Rae is clearly horrified yet transfixed. She leans forward, straining to hear a little better. Vespa whispers,

VESPA
 Yes, but very gently.

JOEY
 Does she have a name?

Vespa replies in a soft whisper,

VESPA
 I call her Queenie ... just remember, no sudden moves.

JOEY
 Of course, of course. She's a real beauty. I can see why she's so special.

Mysterious music begins.

Queenie quivers ever so slightly and emits a soft faint humming sound as Vespa softly rubs the underside of her chin.

VESPA
Pet her right here.

JOEY
Ooooh, that's a good girl.

VESPA
Very nicely done Joey.

NARRATION

Vespa and Joey marvel as Queenie rises up in splendor and performs a slow ceremonial dance.

- QUEENIE -

CHORUS (SUNG)
QUEENIE QUEEN-AY
IN YOUR DREAM-AY
BUZZ DOO WAS YOU
IN HER DREE-AH-MAY?
YOU SHOULD BE TOO.

- I DIDN'T KNOW -

JOEY (RECIT)
I DIDN'T KNOW SHE COULD SING.

VESPA (RECIT)
OH YES ... AND SO MUCH MORE. WATCH
... AND FOLLOW US.

JOEY (RECIT)
WOW. SO STRANGE ... WHAT LANGUAGE
IS THAT? IT SOUNDS KINDA FAMILIAR
BUT ...

VESPA (RECIT)
YES ... IT'S SO WONDERFUL! DON'T
YOU JUST LOVE THE SOUND OF IT?

Rae is clearly disturbed but intrigued.

RAE
I'm gonna need some help with this.

NARRATION

Vespa and Joey follow Queenie as she slowly flies along the path into woods. As they proceed Vespa and Joey float up off the ground, as if lighter than air, following Queenie's lead.

ACT 1 - SCENE 3

The lights come up as Vespa, Queenie and Joey slowly emerge from the woods into a clearing.

- RECIT 2 -

CHORUS (RECIT)

VESPA AND JOEY
 FOLLOW THE QUEEN
 DOWN A MEANDERING PATH
 BRINGING THEM TO A SWAMP LIKE POND
 FERTILE AND FECUND
 FULL OF LIFE
 ENERGY
 QUEENIE FLIES AHEAD
 AND JOINS WITH A COUPLE OF
 LIKE-MINDED WASPS
 WHO APPEAR TO BE FRIENDS.

NARRATION

As the Wasps mingle, we see the reflection of a giant tree in the pond. The tree starts coughing and clearing its throat in a way that conveys that it would like our attention. The Wasps continue to hover.

TREE

Ahem, ahem . . .

JOEY

Who is that?

VESPA

That's the welcoming tree. He sounds a little scary but he's a good egg ... just veeery old.

JOEY

I can see that.

NARRATION

The Welcoming tree is huge and gnarly and magical. The Wasps start to circle the tree and join in with the tree on a very buzzy sounding song.

~ IN THE COVER OF MY SHADE ~

TREE (SUNG)
 GOOD DAY TO YA
 BARELY KNEW YA
 DO YA DO YA
 GOT IT MADE?

VESPA (WHISPERED)
 He always sings to newcomers.

TREE
 DID YA GIVE YA
 BE YA SEE YA
 DON-YA TEE-YA
 GOT IT MADE?
 IN THE COVER OF MY SHADE.

~TREE DANCE~

CHORUS ALL INSECTS (SUNG)
 IMPOSSIBLE ...
 IT'S SO ...
 IMPROBABLE ...
 ALTHOUGH ...
 UNSTOPPABLE ...
 IT'S ...
 INEVITABLE.
 WILLKOMM, WILLKOMMEN,
 ACHRAMACHAMARI.
 SEE HOW THEY FLY!
 CIRCLES OF LIGHT,
 THEY RUN THROUGH THE NIGHT.
 HERE ARE THREE.
 LET THEM BE.
 TROUBLED ARE THESE.
 NOT OFTEN SEEN,
 IN THE LAND OF THE QUEEN.
 BUT, BEWARE OF MANTEEZ
 AND MEPHITIDAE.

The dance ends. Joey and Vespa sings.

~DO YOU LIVE HERE? ~

JOEY (RECIT)

WOW, THIS IS A SUPER INTERESTING PLACE. DO YOU LIVE HERE OR ... BACK THERE?

VESPA (RECIT)

MY 'PARENTS' HAVE A HOUSE BACK THERE ... AND I'M EXPECTED TO 'ADJUST' TO LIFE THERE. MY FATHER WORKS BOTH NIGHT AND DAY, AND HAS NO TIME FOR ME OR RAE, TO HIM WE'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A DISTRACTION. AND MOTHER, TAKES WHISKEY IN HER MORNING TEA, EXPECTS US TO BE QUIET AND LOOK PRETTY ... AND OBEY ALL OF THEIR 'RULES'. BUT QUEENIE, IS MY REAL MOM THOUGH, AND THIS IS MY TRUE HOME.

JOEY (RECIT CONTINUES)

DO THE BEES GET ALONG WITH WASPS?

VESPA (RECIT CONTINUES)

NOT REALLY ... THE WASPS ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO GET THE BEE'S HONEY ... WE ... I MEAN, THE WASPS NEED THE PROTEIN.

NARRATION

In the near distance, we hear a faint march-like rhythm. We can see a swarm of bees heading towards them. Vespa starts to suddenly display wasp-like characteristics. As soon as we become aware of it, so does she, and quickly moves to shake off the manifestation. Joey sees this and dismisses it without comment. Meanwhile the bees and wasps gather, then approach each other in a kind of standoff.

-BEE WASP STANDOFF -

CHORUS - 2 SOPRANOS, 2 TENORS (SUNG)

WASPS

OUT! GET OUT! BAD BEES BE GONE!
POLISTES WILL NOT BACK DOWN! FLY!

BEEES

NOT A CHANCE! BEEES WILL FIGHT! BEEES
ENDURE!

WASPS

VESPULA NEVER GIVE GROUND! OUT! GET
OUT! BAD BEES BE GONE!

(MORE)

WASPS (CONT'D)

OUT, BE GONE AND NEVER RETURN!
 BEES, WE'LL TEAR YOU APART! BEES
 GET THEE HENCE, NEVERMORE TO RETURN
 NOT EVER MORE!

BEEES

APIDAE NEVER GIVE GROUND! WE WILL
 NOT PLAY NICE! BASTA! FLEE! BE GONE
 OR PAY THE PRICE! NEVER RETURN!

WASPS

SCAT AND FLY, YOU TAKE OUR ADVISE!
 BEES BE GONE, WE'LL NOT SAY IT
 TWICE.

BEEES

VESPULA, YOU'LL PAY THE PRICE. SO
 DEAD! FLEE BE GONE AND NEVER
 RETURN!

WASPS

TOO MANY APIS!

BEEES

MORE BEES, MORE BEES! THERE WILL BE
 MORE NEXT TIME! MAKE IT HURT! DON'T
 LET THEM OFF! MAKE IT STING!

WASPS

WE RETREAT, DAB NAB IT! SOUND
 RETREAT, OUR ONLY OPTION. LIVE TO
 FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

NARRATION

The wasps back down as they are clearly out-numbered. The bees leave toward one side, and the wasps to the other. They are interrupted by a voice in the distance . . .

RAE

Vespa ... Joey ... Where are you
 guys!

NARRATION

Two lovely Dragonflies float into the scene.

VESPA

Oh, hello Draggies!

JOEY
Are they friendly?

VESPA
Oh yes! Just a little single minded. They're probably on their way to Mexico for the winter.

JOEY
Oh.

Joey responds, clearly clueless as to the life cycle of Dragonflies. He scratches his head, thinking, and posits a question.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Maybe we could hitch a ride with them for a while. What do you think?

VESPA
Excellent idea!

NARRATION

Vespa and Joey are invited to climb aboard the backs of the Dragonflies.

~ THE JOURNEY ~

CHORUS (SUNG)
TAKE ME ON A JOURNEY
TO THE BURNEY SUNSHINE
SLIGHTLY FLICKERS
THICKER ... QUICKER
BE MY PICKER ...
FLY BY NIGHT THE DAY BE
YOU CAN SEE NIGHT THROUGH ME
ENCANTADO
VOLA PRONTO
FLY TO SHE WHO
SINGS!
SING RING FLING DING
BING MING WING LING.

NARRATION

They fly off ... fade to black.

ACT 2 - SCENE 1

Deep in the bog, Rae and the boys inch their way through the muck, following the trail of where Vespa and Joey entered the woods earlier. The 2 boys stick very close to Rae as if attached to her.

RAE

Vespa! Vespa! I have no idea what Vespa is thinking.

THE BOYS

No idea ... no idea.

RAE

Vespa!!!

~ BEYOND BELIEF ~

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)

VESPA IS REALLY BEYOND BELIEF!
I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT SHE'S
THINKING.
ISN'T IT BAD ENOUGH THAT SHE BARELY
PARTICIPATES IN SCHOOL.
AND HAS NO INTEREST IN PLAYING WITH
ANYBODY ELSE.
IS SHE THINKING, SHE'S BETTER THAN
US IN SOME WAY?
SHE NEEDS TO GET WITH THE PROGRAM!
AND NOW, MAKING MATTERS WORSE,
SHE'S TAKEN WITH THAT STRANGE BOY,
JOEY. HE'S JUST LIKE HER.
THINGS ARE GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE!

RAE (CONT'D)

We have to get her and bring her
back to reality before it's too
late and we lose her forever!

THE BOYS

Forever . . . forever.

RAE

Vespa!!!

NARRATION

As if in response, an over-sized purple mantis leaps up and lands beside them. He is dressed nattily in a top hat, tails and shiny boots replete with black spats.

~ RAE AND THE MANTIS MEET ~

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (RECIT)
GOODLY MARNIN'!
WHERE IS YOUR CARE?

He nods toward the woods,

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (RECIT) (CONT'D)
IN THERE?
IZZIT, IZZIT, IZZIT IZZIT.

Rae responds in an imperious tone,

RAE (RECIT)
AND JUST WHO MIGHT YOU BE?

Aside to herself,

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
THIS IS JUST THE KIND OF CREATURE
THAT VESPA WOULD BEFRIEND ... THIS
IS REALLY THE LIMIT!

Rae is jolted back to the moment by the chirping mantis,

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (RECIT)
WHATZIT, WHATZIT WHATZIT?
NAME'S BOO.
YOU?

RAE (RECIT)
NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF YOUR
BUSINESS...
I'M RAE ...
AND THIS IS DICKY AND RICKY.
I'M PROBABLY THE PRETTIEST GIRL
YOU'VE EVER SEEN.

Rae continues with increasing irritation,

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
DICKY AND RICKY ARE ON THE TEAM ...
TEAM LEADERS IN FACT. NOT THAT IT
WOULD MATTER TO YOU ... AND ... ALL
OF THIS.

She nods toward the woods. In response, Boo dips down by bending his legs and utters a quick,

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (RECIT)
SKEWZIT, SKEWZIT SKEWZIT!

RAE (RECIT)

CRIMINY.

THE BOYS

Harumph . . . harumph.

NARRATION

And in a single leap, Boo disappears into the bushes.

ACT 2 - SCENE 2

Joey and Vespa fly, riding aboard the dragonflies.

JOEY

Yeowch!!

VESPA

What's wrong Joey?

Joey shouts back,

JOEY

There's a bug in my ear!!

NARRATION

A swarm of mosquitos are rapidly approaching. Vespa and Joey madly slap at themselves to deter the biting frenzy. The dragonflies suddenly turn and reverse course heading straight into the swarm of mosquitos.

JOEY

Why are they turning around?

Vespa winks.

VESPA

Dinner time!

NARRATION

The dragonflies become like small vacuum cleaners sucking, chomping and swallowing as they eat their way through the swarm.

~ CHOMP CHOMP ~

CHORUS/MOSQUITOS (SUNG)

WE'RE HUNGRY

WE'RE HUNGRY

CHOMP CHOMP SLURP SLURP!

(MORE)

CHORUS/MOSQUITOS (SUNG) (CONT'D)
**MIZZUM BIZZUM BUZZUM WUZZUM!
 SWALLOW SALIVATE, REPEAT ENERVATE!
 WE'RE THE TOP, WE'RE THE MAIN,
 OF THE BOTTOM OF THE CHAIN!
 YUM YUM YUM YUMPA,
 PEE-LUMP FLAT FLOODLE.**

As the swarm starts to disperse, Joey looks over at Vespa and they share a moment.

JOEY
 Is that a usual occurrence?

Vespa shrugs,

VESPA
 It happens ...

NARRATION

The dragonflies speed up leaving the mosquitos behind.

- THE QUEEN'S ISLAND -

CHORUS SOPRANO (SUNG)
**FLYING ABOVE AN OVERGROWN SWAMPLAND
 THE DRAGONFLIES VEER TO THE LEFT.
 DUCKWEED, CATTAILS AND ROSE-MALLOW
 MINGLE WITH HORSETAIL BULLRUSH AND
 SEDGE. THEIR REFLECTION IN THE
 WATER REVEALS INSECT CHANGES,
 WASPISH IN VESPA'S ASPECT. JOEY
 ESPIES THE DARK CHANGES AND
 QUESTIONS THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THEIR
 TREK. VESPA LOOKS DOWN AT THE
 MIRRORED REFLECTION AND JOEY'S
 REACTION UNHIDDEN. SHE SHAKES OFF
 THE ASPECT BECAUSE IT'S HER CODE TO
 REVEAL TRUE SELF IS FORBIDDEN. OVER
 THE POND BY A DENSE STAND OF
 POPLARS, IN A CIRCLE OF STONES
 STANDS THE QUEEN. IN ALL OF HER
 GLORY, BY ALL MANNER OF SPECIES,
 SHE SURROUNDED BY GREAT EXPECTANCY.
 THEY AWAIT HER EVERY ORDER WITH
 EAGER ABANDON AND HANG ON HER EVERY
 THOUGHT. FOR ALL OF THEM KNOW THAT
 TOGETHER IN THIS WORLD, SURVIVAL
 AND UNCERTAINTY WALK.**

NARRATION

As they land on the island, Queenie is at the center of the frenetic activity. She turns to and fro, giving instructions to the different species around her.

~ QUEEN'S ISLAND HIVE ~

CHORUS INSECTS - 2 SOPRANOS, 2 TENORS
(SUNG)

SMALL WASPS

QUEEN BE SWEETLY
NESTLE OF TRICKLE
SHE'S FREE FROM SEA BREAM
FUNNEL, FLICKLE!

DRAGONFLIES

DREAMY FREE ME
MOVING MENU
FREE TO SEE ME
BUT OH-NLY IF YOU
CAN DO ME DO SHE
DO WE? WE DO!

KATYDIDS

ONTO CONDO, TONTO TRONTO
MONDO BONDO
FRONTO
ELANTRO!

BEETLES

CAN YOU TRY TO MAKE MORE FENCES?
I CAN'T SEE JUST WHAT YOU MEAN
GIVE SOME MEANING
TO YOUR SEEMING
FLEEING SCREAMING
SENSE OF BEING.

LADYBUGS

TWIDDLE TWADDLE DIDDLE DAWDLE
TWIDDLE TWADDLE DIDDLE DAWDLE
FIDDLE ME DIDDLE ME WATTLE ME BLUE
YOU AND ME SEEM TO BE HAPPILY FLEW

ALL

WE CAN'T BELIEVE YOU
IF YOU CAN'T BE TRUE!

BEEES
**BE A LITTLE TITTLE TATTLE
 LITTLE BOY BLUE
 ON BY SETTLE FIE
 WINDOW CRY TOO
 IN AN OLD SILO FROM TIMBUKTU
 CAN YOU BE BUZZY
 CAN YOU BE TRUE?**

The spritely waltz continues as Vespa greets the Queen. Joey watches from the sidelines. Queenie lifts her head slightly in acknowledgement of Vespa's approach. She hums and thrums gently. Vespa says to Joey with admiration,

VESPA
 Isn't she magnificent?

Joey demurs, as Vespa is welcomed by the Queen. Their conversation is a bit unusual in that neither Vespa or the Queen are actually speaking. Joey responds although neither of them seem to be listening.

JOEY
 She certainly is something.

NARRATION

A pair of Mantises catch his attention. They are enchanted with each other, both in prayer while each rubbing their legs against the other's.

- CANOODLING MANTISES -

MANTISES (SUNG)
**WHY TELL ME WHY?
 DO DO IT, DON'T DO IT
 DON'T CRY DON'T CRY
 FLAH-HA-HY BUT DON'T CRY
 MAY TIE ME FLY
 TRA-HA-HA HIGH
 MAY TAI ME FLY
 UNDER BRAY-AILLE EYES
 WHISPER TO ME
 BE ONTO BE ONTO TIES
 WISE EYES WISE EYES
 A BIENTOT
 HEAR WHAT WE SAY
 LISTEN DON'T LISTEN TO ME
 HEAR US BE US
 TAY-HAY-HAKE THE PRIZE**

Joey is increasingly mesmerized by their song and it takes Vespa, grabbing him by the hand and pulling him toward her, to break the Mantises' spell.

- WATCH YOURSELF -

VESPA (RECIT)
**YOU REALLY HAVE TO WATCH YOURSELF
 HERE, JOEY. IF YOU DON'T ...**

NARRATION

The female mantis rips the head of the male mantis clean off.

JOEY (RECIT)
YIKES!

VESPA (RECIT)
THAT'S THE WAY IT BEES SOMETIMES!

JOEY (RECIT)
GOOD GRAVY!

VESPA (RECIT)
YUMMY YUMMY!

Vespa laughs. She is still holding Joey's hand and he suddenly becomes aware of it. They exchange a meaningful glance.

JOEY (RECIT)
**WANNA SEE SOMETHING? I'D LIKE TO
 SHOW YOU ...**

VESPA (RECIT)
DEFINITELY!

Joey lets go of her hand and takes several steps back. Then he takes a deep breath.

JOEY (RECIT)
**I'VE NEVER SHARED THIS WITH ANYONE
 BEFORE.**

VESPA (RECIT)
I'M INTRIGUED.

NARRATION

Joey claps his hands twice ... and vanishes from sight.

VESPA (RECIT) (CONT'D)
NEAT TRICK!

JOEY (RECIT)

**I INVENTED IT AT HOME. SOMETIMES,
 WHEN THINGS GET CRAZY AT HOME, THIS
 REALLY HELPS. NOT THAT I WOULD SHOW
 THEM! I JUST MAKE SURE, WHEN THE
 FUR FLIES, I'M NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.**

Although Joey is no longer visible, Vespa keeps talking to him as if nothing has changed.

VESPA (RECIT)
WE SEE EYE TO EYE ON THAT!

She throws back her head and laughs.

VESPA (RECIT) (CONT'D)
AND NOW?

JOEY (RECIT)
OVER HERE!

NARRATION

HIS voice is coming from behind a bush. Vespa heads toward the voice, and is followed by a tribe of Katydids.

~KNOCK KNOCK ~

KATYDIDS (SUNG)
**KNOCK KNOCK - WHO'S NOT THERE?
 KNOCK KNOCK - WHO'S NOT THERE?
 WHERE OR WHERE HAS HE GONE TO HIDE?
 CHANGES COLOR, VERY SHY
 TONE AND TIMBRE, CLAPPING GAME.
 KNOCK KNOCK WHO'S NOT THERE?
 KNOCK KNOCK - WHO'S NOT THERE?
 WILLY NILLY, I LOVE BILLY
 FROM THE HILLY VALLEY OF
 SILLY SALLY DILLY DALLY
 BE MY FRIEND
 KNOCK KNOCK - WHO'S NOT THERE?**

NARRATION

Black out. End Of Act 2.

ACT 3 - SCENE 1

Rae and the boys, are slogging through an endless swamp.

~ BACK AT THE BOG ~

CHORUS (SUNG)

BACK AT THE BOG, A THICK DRIZZLE
HAS STARTED. IT'S STICKY AND
STEAMY. RAE'S HAIR HANGS DOWN IN
SEAWEED-LIKE STRANDS, HER FACE
CAKED IN SMEARS OF MUD AND GUCK.
THE BOYS ARE STILL AT HER SIDE,
THEY ARE ALL WAIST-DEEP IN SLIME.
RAE LOOKS UP AND THEN AHEAD.
JUST A FEW METERS AWAY, SHE SEES
WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SPIT OF DRY
LAND. WITH MUCH GRUNTING AND
GRUMBLING AND MUMBLING AND
FUMBLING, THEY SLUG THEIR WAY
THROUGH THE MUCK TO THE SPIT OF DRY
LAND. AFTER WHAT SEEMS A SUPER-
HUMAN EFFORT, THEY HURL THEMSELVES
ONTO THE SHORE.

Rae's eyes begin to droop and as she drifts off to sleep she starts to dream.

~ RAE MANTIS AND THE BOYS ~

RAE (RECIT)

I'M GONNA KILL VESPA! YAWN.

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)

WELL, MAYBE VESPA IS FINE WHERE SHE
IS. JOEY'S NOT THE WORST SHE COULD
DO.

Boo, the purple mantis strides up to Rae and intones in his fashion,

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (RECIT)

SURE IS THE THE WAY WE SEEEZ IT!
SHEE-ZA SHEE-ZA, SHEE-ZA SHEE-ZA,
SHEE-ZA SHEE-ZA, SHEEZ ALRIGHT WIT'
WEEZ. WHY ZO MUCH TROUBLEZ FOR YOU?

He launches into song, crooning,

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (SUNG) (CONT'D)

WHY'Z IT BLUE? BLUE FOR YOU.
ZIM ZIMMA DOO BOBBA DOO BOBBA DOO.
NO NEED TO CRY, SHEEZ ON THE FLY!
(MORE)

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (SUNG) (CONT'D)
 QUEENIE EYE, QUEENIE EYE, ZIM ZIMMA
 DOO, QUEENIE EYE, QUEENIE EYE, ZIM
 ZIMMA DOO.

THE BOYS (RECIT)
 THIS IS SO TOTALLY NUTSO! WHAT ARE
 YOU THINKING? THERE'S NO SENSE HERE
 AT ALL ... AND ... YOU'RE TALKING
 TO A BUG!!!!

NARRATION

Rae wakes up from her dream with a start.

RAE
 Did you guys actually say something
 to me?

THE BOYS
 Harumph . . . harumph.

RAE
 This place is really starting to
 get to me ...

She shakes her head.

RAE (CONT'D)
 ... and honestly, I'm not sure if
 that is a good thing, or a bad
 thing.

A profound silence falls on the scene as Rae picks a couple
 gnats out of her tangled hair.

~ HOUSE ~

CHORUS (SUNG)
 AFTER THE RAIN, RAE SPIES AN OLD
 HOUSE, NO WINDOWPANES, ONLY BLACK
 SPACES. AND WHERE THE DOOR SHOULD
 BE, THERE'S NO DOOR, ONLY DARKNESS
 AND MISTY OPAQUENESS.

RAE (RECIT)
 I BET, EVEN VESPA WOULD HAVE SECOND
 THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS PLACE. PEE-YOO!
 WHAT A STINK!

CHORUS (SUNG)

THE CHIMNEY CONSISTS OF CRUMBLING
BRICKS, STREWN IN COLLAPSED
DISARRAY, ALONG OPPOSITE SECTIONS
OF SLANTED ROOF, SPLAYING DOWNWARD,
RUNNING AWAY FROM ITS PEAK TO WHERE
THE GUTTER SHOULD BE ... WHERE THE
GUTTER SHOULD BE, BUT ... IS NOT.
AND YET, EVEN THOUGH IN SO MUCH
DISTRESS, THE HOUSE HAS SUBSTANCE
AND PRIDE. SOME KIND OF LIFE IS
PRESENT, WE SENSE IT, SKULKING
AMIDST THE DARKNESS INSIDE.

NARRATION

Rae picks herself up, dusts herself off and heads towards the house.

RAE

Let's have a little look-see over there.

NARRATION

As Rae and The 2 Boys approach, a 1 meter hole becomes visible in the ground about 2 meters from what clearly used to be a porch but is now a pile of rotting planks and rusted nails. As she reaches the hole, she stops, stoops and stares into the darkness.

RAE

Whew!! That is nasty!!

NARRATION

A smokey presence slowly drifts upward from the hole and hovers in a gently quivering state just above it. We hear a creaking sound coming from inside the house, as if something is walking across the floor toward the door. Rae stops at the threshold.

RAE

Is anyone at home?

Very politely ...

RAE (CONT'D)

I'm afraid that we've lost our way and could use some guidance if you have any to give.

She selects her words very carefully so as not to offend whatever it may be that is approaching the door.

NARRATION

A long-legged spider wearing an orangey colored hat and matching waist-coat, with 2 little baby spiders trailing in his wake, steps into the light.

- OPPYLON NEW 2 -

OPPYLON (SUNG)

OPPYLON! THAT'S MY NAME, IT'S
OPPYLON! WELCOME TO OUR HOME.
PLEASE EXCUSE THE MESS. WE WEREN'T
EXPECTING GUESTS.

BABY SPIDERS (SUNG)

WE'RE SO HUNGRY, WE'RE SO HUNGRY.
WE'RE SO HUNGRY, WE'RE SO HUNGRY.

OPPYLON (SUNG)

DON'T CRY ... DON'T CRY. WE'RE SO
SORRY BUT WE HAVEN'T TIME TO HELP.
RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT, AFTER THE
RAIN, IS WHEN WE GATHER FOOD. ONCE
WE'VE ACHIEVED OUR QUEST, THEN WE'D
BE DELIGHTED TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR
WAY, SO VERY DELIGHTED TO HELP YOU
FIND YOUR WAY!

Rae thinks aloud,

RAE

Well ... this isn't the way I'm
used to doing things, but ... it
doesn't *seem* unreasonable. Given
the circumstances ... this looks to
be the best course of action.

She turns back to the spiders, curtsies ... and says,

RAE (CONT'D)

We accept your more than generous
offer, thank you. Perhaps we can be
of some service as well?

OPPYLON

Umhum.

NARRATION

Oppylon wriggles toward the woods with the babies in tow. Rae and the boys fall in line behind them.

~ OPPYLON AND RAE ~

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 IF IT ISN'T TOO MUCH TROUBLE, WE
 WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ITS NAME,
 PLEASE?

Without thinking ...

RAE (RECIT)
 RAE - SAN - DETRA - BEEPERSON.

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 SO PLEASED TO MAKE YOUR
 ACQUAINTANCE RAE - SAN - DETRA -
 BEEPERSON.

She beams,

RAE (RECIT)
 YOU CAN CALL ME RAE - SAN, IF YOU
 LIKE.

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 IT PLEASES US GREATLY MS RAE - SAN.

It seems to Rae that the spider is smiling. To herself,

RAE (RECIT)
 I DIDN'T KNOW THAT SPIDERS WERE
 CAPABLE OF SMILING.

Oppylon stops at the edge of the woods and turns to Rae,

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 PLEASE EXCUUSE US FOR A MOMENT IF
 YOU WOULD. I NEED TO ATTEND TO THE
 LITTLE ONES. I'M SURE YOOOU
 UNDERSTAND. WE WILL CALL YOU WHEN
 WE'VE COMPLETED OUR ABLUTIONS.

RAE (RECIT)
 BUT OF COURSE.

NARRATION

Oppylon and the babies scurry into the woods.

THE BOYS
 Grumble, grumble . . .

RAE

Ooh? What is it that's troubling you two now? Hmm? Oppylon seems to be the perfect gentleman. Snappy dresser too if I do say so. You two could take a few pointers from him.

THE BOYS (RECIT)

BUG, BUG, BUG, BUG!!!

NARRATION

Rae is taking on very peculiar aspect. Her legs slowly start to lengthen and her eyes begin to narrow. Ricky and Dicky's eyes grow larger as her's grow smaller, and it's starting to look like Rae is sprouting some extra legs.

RAE

You two aren't very much *fun* I think. *Maybe*, it's time we parted company? But, just now, I think I could do with another short nap.

NARRATION

She folds up her legs, crouches down and quickly nods off to sleep. She dreams. This time in her dream, she sees Vespa in a tiny clearing, adjacent to a small village, bustling with activity, centered around a tall wasp-like figure, giving out instructions to a colorful array of various insects. Vespa is seated alone, cross-legged on the ground as if waiting for someone. Joey suddenly appears sitting across from her as the buzz of activity from the village increases in intensity. The wasp seems to be speaking, without speaking, and Rae hears a voice in her mind.

~ RAE'S DREAM PART TWO ~

QUEENIE (RECIT)

ATTENTION BEEPERSONS! ATTENTION PLEASE! A MEPHITIDAE HAS BEEN DETECTED IN THE GENERAL AREA. PLEASE TAKE ALL NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS!

Rae wonders aloud,

RAE (RECIT)

WHAT IS A MEPHITIDAE?

CHORUS (MALE) (RECIT)
**A SKUNK! IT IS THE ANCIENT ENEMY OF
 THE BEEPERSONS NATION!**

RAE (RECIT)
**WELL, MAYBE THAT WAS THE SMELL
 OUTSIDE THE HOUSE ... WAIT A
 MINUTE, I WONDER WHERE OPPYLON AND
 THE BABIES HAVE GOTTEN OFF TOO.**

From a distance, a gentle voice,

VESPA (RECIT)
**HOW ARE YOU FEELING? I KNOW THIS IS
 A LOT TO DIGEST. STILL ... IT'S
 BETTER THAN SCHOOL WITH ALL OF THE
 BULLIES!**

RAE (RECIT)
IS SHE SPEAKING TO ME ... OR JOEY?

JOEY (RECIT)
**FOR SURE ... DID QUEENIE JUST SAY
 SKUNK? I WAS JUST THINKING THAT
 SOMETHING IS NOT QUITE RIGHT.**

NARRATION

At that moment, Boo, the purple mantis springs into the clearing, and begins to sing and dance.

BOO THE PURPLE MANTIS (SUNG)
**STRIPEY WHITE DUZZY,
 FUZZY NIGHT BUZZIES,
 DIZZIT DIZZIT DIZZIT DIZZIT
 OR IZZIT NOSING?
 IZZIT CLOSING?
 OOZY OOZY OOZY
 SNOOZY SNOOZY SNOOZY.**

As the mantis repeats the oozy-snoozy refrain, Rae stirs from her slumber, but remains in-between the waking and dreaming worlds ... In the distance we hear ...

VESPA (RECIT)
**RAE - SAN? RAE - SAN - DETRA? IS
 THAT YOU? ARE YOU HERE? HAVE YOU
 ENTERED THE HIVE-MIND?**

All of this happens in an instant. Rae is flushed with excitement along with a sense of infinite possibility. Her mind is racing as she queries herself excitedly.

- I MUST HAVE BEEN A BIRD -

RAE (SUNG)

I MUST HAVE BEEN A BIRD
 OR A LARGE FLYING INSECT
 MUST? BECAUSE, IN THE WOODS
 I SEE NATURAL PATHWAYS
 THROUGH THE TREES AND BUSHES
 AND I THRILL
 I WANT TO SOAR THROUGH THEM
 I SEE THE PERFECT SPOT
 WHERE I COULD SWOOP IN
 ACCELERATE DOWN THE PATHS
 SOMETIMES SPILLING OUT
 INTO NATURAL CLEARINGS
 HAVE BEEN? BECAUSE,
 SOMETHING IN MY MEMORY
 POSITS THAT
 I HAVE FLOWN
 THROUGH THESE WOODS BEFORE
 AT SOME POINT IN MY LIFE
 PAST LIFE? PRESENT LIFE?
 WHO'S TO SAY?

CHORUS (SUNG)

THOUSANDS OF TINY VOICES
 SPEAKING ALL AT ONCE
 FORM A BACKGROUND SOUNDSCAPE
 OF OCCASIONAL NOISE
 SURGING TO THE SURFACE
 OF DISTINGUISHABILITY
 MUCH HOW, WHITE CAPS
 APPEAR AMIDST TURBULENT WATERS
 THE INDIVIDUAL VOICES SEEM TO BE
 IN DISCUSSION WITH EACH OTHER
 AS DIFFERENT DISCUSSIONS
 EBB AND FLOW DYNAMICALLY
 ECHOING EACH OTHER
 IN JOINT ANTIPATHY
 EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE CONNECTED
 AS IF BY A MATRIX
 OF FINE DELICATE THREADS
 LIKE A SPIDERS GOSSAMER FILAMENTS
 THE IDEA OF A WEB
 IS APPROPRIATE IN THIS WORLD
 HERE, THE USUAL SENSE OF
 INDIVIDUALITY
 TAKES A BACK SEAT AS IT WERE
 TO AN INTERCONNECTIVITY
 A MASSIVELY DENSE PHENOMENON
 OF THE COLLECTIVE ...
 HIVE MIND.

- THE WEB -

VESPA (RECIT)

**RAE? IS THAT YOU? WHERE ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT DO
YOU WANT?**

RAE (RECIT)

**VESPA? IS THAT YOU? WHAT IS THIS
PLACE?**

VESPA (RECIT)

IT'S NOT SAFE HERE, FOR YOU.

OPPYLON (RECIT)

AHEM!

NARRATION

**Oppylon wakes Rae from her dream and leads Rae and the Boys
right into the web.**

Rae is jarred back into the waking world. Reality shifts
again. We are back in the woods as Oppylon and his babies
step out into the clearing.

OPPYLON (RECIT)

**COME AN'ZEE, COME AN'ZEE! IZZ VERY
EGGZITING! YOUZ LIKEN IT, YOUZ
LIKEN IT, EYEZ KNOW! YOUZ LIKEN IT,
YOUZ LIKEN IT, EYEZ KNOW!**

He leads the way into the woods.

Having just awakened, Rae is still tingling from her dream
experience and pokes the boys awake,

RAE (RECIT)

**COME ON YOU GUYS! I THINK WE'RE IN
FOR A REAL TREAT!**

As they veer off the path and make their way past the bushes,
they are gently pushed forward by the babies, and stumble,
falling into a soft spongey web.

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)

OH MY. THIS IS ODD.

Rae tries to peel the web off herself. The boys grumble and
fumble around, also trying to free themselves. The more they
try to extract themselves from the web, the more tangled they
become.

Oppyton pops forward and stands in front of them while spraying them with a soft silky cover,

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 PLEEZE EXCUZE IT, PLEEZE. PLEEZE
 EXCUZE IT, PLEEZE! NEEDZ BE FEEDZ
 FOR BEEBZ! ZOH ZORRY FOR THE
 INCONVENIONS! NICE FOR YOU TO HELP
 US SURVIVALZ. PLEEZE EXCUZE IT,
 NEEDZ!!

Rae, to herself,

RAE (RECIT)
 OH DEAR. I THINK THAT I HAVE PUT MY
 FOOT IN IT NOW.

To Oppyton,

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
 MY GOOD SIR. I'M AFRAID THAT THIS
 IS UNACCEPTABLE FOR US, AND, FOR
 YOU.

She scrambles to devise a plausible ruse.

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
 YOU SEE, I'M NOT SURE THAT YOU ARE
 ENTIRELY AWARE OF IT, BUT, *SOME*
 HUMANS ARE POISONOUS TO *SOME*
 SPIDERS. DEPENDING ON THE HUMANS,
 AND/OR THE SPIDERS, INGESTING HUMAN
 FLESH, COULD BE, TOXIC, FOR YOU.
 WHILE I HAVE THE GREATEST RESPECT
 FOR YOUR REQUIREMENTS, I DO THINK,
 YOU MAY NEED TO RECONSIDER YOUR
 POSITION!

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 OH? DO TELLZ.

RAE (RECIT)
 WELL ... WHILE IT'S ONE THING TO
 PUT ONE'S SELF INTO A RISKY
 POSITION, IT IS AN ENTIRELY
 DIFFERENT MATTER, WHEN IT COMES TO
 THE WELFARE OF ONE'S OFFSPRING.
 WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 HMM, MS RAE - SAN, ME-THINGZ THAT
 YOU HAVE SOME GOOD LOGIC THERE.
 (MORE)

OPPYLON (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**PERHAPS YOUZ MIGHT BE, AMENABLE TO
 HELPING US FIND A MORE APPROPRIATE
 ALTERNATIVE TO YOURSELVEZ! NEEDZ!**

RAE (RECIT)
I'D BE DELIGHTED, THANK YOU.

To herself,

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**HMM. THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT ARE
 DIFFERENT IN HERE. HMM. ALTHOUGH I
 HAVE ONLY LIMITED EXPERIENCE HERE,
 I'M STARTING TO THINK THAT VESPA
 MAY REALLY BE ONTO SOMETHING!**

Meanwhile, the boys are still fumbling to disentangle themselves from the web. Oppylon addresses their situation,

OPPYLON (RECIT)
**ALLZ ONE NEEDZ TO DO ... IS, STEP
 AWAY FROM THE WEBZ.**

To herself,

RAE (RECIT)
**HMM. THE LESS I RESIST, THE EASIER
 THE EXTRACTION!**

To the boys,

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**JUST DO WHAT I DO FELLAS! EASY
 PEASY LEMON SQUEEZY!**

THE BOYS
 Uhum.

RAE (RECIT)
AWESOME SAUCE!

To herself,

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**BESIDES US, I WONDER WHAT ELSE
 THESE SPIDERS MIGHT LIKE TO MUNCH
 ON?**

To Oppylon,

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
 PLEASE ... GOOD SIR, IF YOU WOULD
 BE SO KIND AS TO INFORM US AS TO
 WHAT ELSE MIGHT BE YOUR PREFERRED
 CHOICE OF REPAST?

Oppylon starts into a six-legged song and dance performance.
 The babies follow in step.

~ WE BE HARVESTMEN ~

OPPYLON (SUNG)
 WE BE HARVESTMEN
 WE EATS WHAT WE DEFEATS
 GNATZEES AND FLYZEES
 BE SPECIAL PRIZEES
 FALSE WIDDERS AND SKEETERS
 WE'RE DEAD INSECT EATERS
 WE BE HARVESTMEN
 WE EATS WHAT WE DEFEATS
 BUT OF ALL THE FOODEEZ
 METHINKS OUR FAVORITE BLOOMS
 ARE FAT AND JUICY MUSHY-ROOMS
 WE LOVE TO SNIFF THEM
 LICK THEM EAT THEM
 LOVE TO SNIFF THEM
 LICK THEM EAT THEM
 RED-BACK SPIDERS IN OUR BELLIES
 ALSO FILL THE BILL OF SMELLIES
 WE BE HARVESTMEN
 WE EATS WHAT WE DEFEATS

He breaks into a short dance,

OPPYLON (SUNG) (CONT'D)
 ROTTED FRUIT AND HOBO-SPIDERS
 THANKS BE THANKS YE
 YOUZ GOOD YEGGS
 AND DON'T FORGET
 LOVES SPIDER'S EGGS!!

NARRATION

Blackout. End of Act 3

ACT 4 - SCENE 1

Vespa and Joey sit cross-legged, close and facing each other.
 They are behind a cluster of bushes that shield them from the
 sight of the Queen's Hub. We encounter them, mid kiss. As the
 song ends, they disengage and share a long tender gaze.

~ THE LAND OF THE QUEEN ~

CHORUS - 1 SOPRANO, 1 TENOR

TWO MISFIT TOYS
ALONE IN THE WORLD
INVISIBLE BOY
VESPULA GIRL.

INTO THE WOODS, INTO THE TREES
NARY A THOUGHT NOR EVEN A BREEZE
UNTO THEMSELVES
YOUNG LIVES INTERVENE
EACH WITH THE OTHER
IN THE LAND OF THE QUEEN.

IS THERE A KIND OR QUIET APPLAUSE
GIVING CONSENT, CHANGING IN AWE
OF WHAT'S TO COME
PROMISES EVERGREEN
SOFT WORDS EXCHANGED
IN THE LAND OF THE QUEEN.

SETTING THE STAGE
WHAT WILL THEY DO?
WHERE WILL THEY GO
WITH ONLY ONE SHOE?
WHAT IS THE NEED?
WHAT WILL IT MEAN?
NOTHING'S REVEALED
IN THE LAND OF THE QUEEN.

NARRATOR

They are interrupted by a Katydid who signals that Vespa is summoned by the Queen.

KATYDIDS
Katydid katydid katydid katydid!

Urgently chirped.

VESPA
I'll be right back!

She quickly stands up and begins to follow the Katydid toward the Queen's Hub.

JOEY

Be careful ... I sense that there
is something ... something very out
of balance.

VESPA

I agree!

She replies over her shoulder.

VESPA (CONT'D)

Don't worry about me though,

She smiles.

VESPA (CONT'D)

I can take care of myself.

JOEY

I don't doubt it.

He stands up and surveys the immediate surroundings.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I could use a little walk.

NARRATION

Joey heads off down the path away from the Hub.

ACT 4 - SCENE 2

Vespa has reached The Hub. Something is amiss. An increasingly heightened sense of unease prevails. Vespa hears cries of alarm in the hive-mind. Queenie is frantically gesturing to the other tribes. Vespa begins to display Waspish characteristics.

~ FASTER FASTER! ~

CHORUS (SUNG)

DANGER, DANGER!
DANGER, DANGER!
WE NEED TO ACT IMMEDIATELY.
DANGER, DANGER!
DANGER, DANGER!
ALL NON HYMENOPTERA,
PLEASE DISBURSE RIGHT NOW!
THE REST PLEASE JOIN THE CIRCLE,
IMMEDIATELY. WE NEED VESPA,
TO ADDRESS THIS NOW!
IT IS HUMAN BASED.
WE NEED VESPA!

VESPA (SUNG)
YES MY QUEEN!

QUEENIE (SUNG)
FLY! FLY! KILL THEM ALL!!!

CHORUS (SUNG)
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA.
 FASTER FASTER!
 FASTER FASTER!
 YES QUEEN YES QUEEN,
 HEED THE QUEEN!
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA
 HEAR OUR DECREE, HEAR OUR DECREE!
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA.
 MUST FOR SURVIVAL,
 MUST FOR SURVIVAL,
 HURT THEM BITE THEM,
 KILL KILL KILL!!
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA,
 LEAVE NO TRACE!
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA!
 SEARCH AND DESTROY THEM,
 SEARCH AND DESTROY!
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA,
 ERADICATE ALL NON HYMENOPTERA!
 MANDATE OF BATTLE ON
 EVERY DEPLETER!
 PRESERVE THE WAY OF,
 PRESERVE THE WAY OF
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA
 HYMENOPTERA HYMENOPTERA.

NARRATION

Vespa whirls about on her heels and sprints toward the forest. As the shrieks of the colonies recede, Vespa resumes her usual form.

~ WHAT NEXT? ~

VESPA (RECIT)
 WHEW! WHAT IS NEXT? THIS IS
 PROBLEMATIC. HMM. IS IT RAE THAT'S
 THE DISTURBANCE? WAS THAT HER VOICE
 I HEARD? IF SO ... HOW DID SHE
 ENTER THE HIVE MIND?
 (MORE)

VESPA (RECIT) (CONT'D)
 I THOUGHT SHE'D NEVER CHANGE HER
 WAYS, HER TEASING AND CRITICISM.
 AND THOSE STUPID BOYS, SCHOOL ...
 AND ALL THE REST. I THOUGHT THAT I
 HAD LEFT ALL OF THAT BEHIND ME.

EW!! WHAT'S THAT STENCH?

A soft, light cloud of mist drifts across the space.

As the cloud drifts past, Vespa, in stealth mode, creeps toward the direction it came from.

SEEMS AS THOUGH THE ENTIRE WORLD IS
 AT RISK! WHAT IS HAPPENING? I MUST
 FIND THE CAUSE OF THIS THREAT!

NARRATION

Vespa disappears into the brush.

ACT 4 SCENE 3

Joey, still under the influence of his tender encounter with Vespa, drifts down the path. A swarm of fireflies are attracted to him. They fall in behind him. Their choreography is aerial based and extraordinary.

~ YELLOW FELLOW ~

CHORUS/FIREFLIES (SUNG)

SAW ME, SEE ME
 TAKE ME, BE ME
 ROOT AND BRANCH AND
 HAUNCH ON STAUNCH ON
 UPSIDE DOWN AND
 INSIDE OUT
 TIED ON BACK
 OF BLACK
 THEN LEAN
 ON GREEN,
 PERHAPS
 TO CATCH
 A MATCH OF
 YELLOW FELLOW
 OFTEN SEEN

Joey muses,

~ I LIKE IT ~

JOEY (RECIT)

I WONDER WHAT COULD BE THE PROBLEM?
EVERYTHING SEEMS JUST PERFECT. I
NEVER DREAMED THAT THERE COULD BE A
WORLD LIKE THIS ONE ...

He smiles to himself.

... ALTHOUGH, THAT QUEEN ... SHE'S
SOMETHING TO WATCH OUT FOR. I DON'T
REALLY UNDERSTAND HER ... ALTHOUGH
THERE'S NO DENYING HER POWER.
YIKES! I WONDER ... BEFORE COMING
HERE, I COULDN'T IMAGINE POWER LIKE
THAT EXISTED. RAW POWER ...
DANGEROUS ... AND SUBVERSIVE.

He starts to become intoxicated with the description.

COME TO THINK OF IT, I LIKE IT! I
LIKE IT!! I LIKE IT A LOT!!

NARRATION

Joey claps his hands twice and vanishes. The fireflies remain, gently flitting about as a grey mist wafts into the space.

MUSIC STARTS Twilight overtakes the scene as if a dark cloud has floated in front of the sun. The fireflies glow brightly for a moment and then their light fades as they all land on the ground. Silence ensues.

Vespa appears. She is radiating light as if she has taken on the light of the fireflies. Her glow illuminates a heap of fireflies lying dead on the ground. A toxic, chemical smell proliferates.

The woods take on an eerie quality, showing signs of decay, brownish leaves and dying grass. Something more awful catches her eye.

A dead anteater is lying beside an anthill, piled with dead ants. The smell is so strong that she has to take off her scarf and wrap it around the lower part of her face like a mask. Her eyes water.

~ SOMETHING WICKED ~

CHORUS - 4 SOPRANOS, VESPA (RECIT)

DAY IS DONE
TWILIGHT FALLS
LAMPYRIDAE

VESPA (RECIT)
 OH NO ... OH NO!
 THIS ... IS NOT ... GOOD!
 EW, THAT SMELL ... PYOO!
 WHAT IS IT?!

VESPA (RECIT) (CONT'D)
 THIS MUST BE THE THREAT
 AND IT'S SPREADING FAST
 OW MY EYES
 UGH THAT SMELL ...
 IT'S GETTING STRONGER, IT'S ...
 IT'S GETTING STRONGER!
 IT'S ... CLOSE!
 IT'S COMING FROM ... OVER THERE.

VESPA (RECIT) (CONT'D)
 WHAT?! WHAT IS THIS?

NARRATION

She enters a clearing where there stands a group of oversized rusted steel tanks. A sign reads, "Exclusive Property of DBP Enterprises". One of the tanks is leaking a viscous, green substance onto the ground. This is clearly where the toxic smell originates.

VESPA (SPOKEN)
 Okay ... problem identified. We're gonna need some serious help here. Either that or ... we'll have to evacuate.

NARRATION

Her train of thought is interrupted by the sound of a snapping twig coming from the opposite side of the tanks. She freezes. Oppylon and the babies shuffle out from behind the tanks. They see Vespa and then slowly inch away from her and the tanks. The babies move closer to Oppylon, trembling. Quite unexpectedly, Rae, steps out from behind the tanks, followed by the boys.

- WHATIZZIT? -

OPPYLON (RECIT)
 WHATIZZIT, WHATIZZIT, WHATIZZIT
 BAYBEEZ? WHATIZZIT WEEZ BE ZEEIN?

BABY SPIDERS (RECIT)
 THIS IS SCARY ... WE'RE SO SCARED.
 THIS IS VERY SCARY.
 (MORE)

BABY SPIDERS (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**WHAT IS HAPPENING? WE'RE SO SCARED.
 THIS IS SCARY ... WE'RE SO SCARED.**

RAE (RECIT)
VESPA?

Vespa, in a loud whisper,

VESPA (RECIT)
**RAE-SAN, WE HAVE AN EPIC PROBLEM
 HERE.**

RAE (RECIT)
I CAN SEE THAT ...

She squinches up her nose.

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**AND SMELL IT! PHEW!! THAT IS
 TOXIC!!**

She starts to walk around the tanks, examining them closely.

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
WAIT A MINUTE ...

She sees something.

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
WHAT IS THIS?

She brushes away some cobwebs and moss, revealing a worn logo with some writing, "EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF DBP ENTERPRISES". She looks up and over at Vespa who sees it.

VESPA (RECIT)
**I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. MOM SAID THAT
 DAD HAD RECYCLED ALL OF THE WASTE
 FROM THE FACTORY.**

RAE (RECIT)
THIS IS SOOO DISAPPOINTING.

VESPA (RECIT)
**WELL ... WE HAVE MORE PRESSING
 PROBLEMS AT THE MOMENT. INSECTS ARE
 DYING IN LARGE NUMBERS AS THE FUMES
 ESCAPE.**

She takes stock of Oppylon and the babies,

VESPA (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**SO ... ARE YOU GOING TO INTRODUCE
 ME TO YOUR FRIENDS?**

For the first time, the boys take more than a passing interest in the conversation. They step forward and begin to speak, as one,

THE BOYS (RECIT)
WE CAN STOP THE LEAKING!

Everyone turns to look at them expectantly.

THE BOYS (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**IN SHOP CLASS, WE LEARNED HOW TO
 MAKE TEMPORARY REPAIRS ON THESE
 KIND OF TANKS JUST IN CASE OF THIS
 VERY TYPE OF SITUATION.**

Proudly,

THE BOYS (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**MR. B'BANGER GAVE US BOTH AN A+ IN
 METALLURGY AND WELDING.**

They await approving glances, which they receive from both Vespa and Rae. They survey the clearing and see a pile of scrap metal off to the side of the tanks.

THE BOYS (RECIT) (CONT'D)
**LOOKS LIKE ENOUGH METAL HERE TO
 FASHION THE NEEDED ELEMENTS. WE'LL
 NEED TO MAKE A FIRE TO HEAT THE
 METAL.**

NARRATION

The boys build a fire and start the process of repairing the tanks. Suddenly, an enormous black-capped Chickadee flies in and lands on one of the tanks. Everyone notices. Oppylon and the babies slowly back away.

VESPA
 Oh dear.

~ CHICKADEE ~

CHICKADEE (SUNG)
**GO TO WHERE
 THEY'RE NOT THERE
 YOU AND I
 TRUE AND TRIED
 FRIEND IS WHERE
 END IS NARE
 TRY IN STEAD
 FLY AND WED**
 (MORE)

CHICKADEE (SUNG) (CONT'D)

SEEK AND HIDE
 TRY AND MEND
 YOU DEVISE
 DO INTEND
 YOUR DEVICE
 LOSE A NAME
 ME OH MY
 GOES THE GAME

NARRATION

Like lightening, the Chickadee swoops down, grabs up Oppylon and flies off into the woods with the wriggling spider in its mouth. The babies run shrieking into the brush.

BABY SPIDERS (SUNG)

OH NO, OH NO, OH NO, OH NO!

RAE (RECIT)

THAT WAS ... UNEXPECTED, AND A BIT
 SAD. WE WERE REALLY STARTING TO
 CONNECT.

She sniffles.

VESPA (RECIT)

INDEED ... THE WORLD CAN BE A
 DANGEROUS PLACE, FOR SURE. I'M GLAD
 YOU'RE OKAY. I THOUGHT I HEARD YOUR
 VOICE SPEAKING IN THE HIVE-MIND.
 WERE YOU AWARE OF ME?

RAE (RECIT)

YES ... I ... REALLY DON'T
 UNDERSTAND HOW THAT WORKS, BUT I
 WAS AWARE OF YOU ... AND THE QUEEN.

Rae seems consternated and a bit confused.

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)

I WAS HALF DREAMING WHEN IT
 HAPPENED. I WAS ... SPEAKING ...
 WITHOUT ... SPEAKING.

VESPA (RECIT)

IT'S KIND OF LIKE A SINGULAR ALL-
 INCLUSIVE MIND. BUT, YOU CAN'T JOIN
 IN BY FORCE. YOU NEED TO BE ...HMMM
 ... HOW TO SAY ... OPEN TO
 POSSIBILITIES, IF THAT MAKES ANY
 SENSE.

NARRATION

The baby spiders cautiously emerge from the brush and gather around Rae.

VESPA

You seem to have made the connection!

Vespa laughs. Rae smiles.

RAE

We need to get these guys some food, they're practically starving!

NARRATION

We hear a loud double handclap as Joey suddenly appears.

JOEY

I know just the place!

He is on cloud nine or even ten ... if that's possible. Rae looks at Vespa quizzically.

VESPA

Joey's got a thing he can do ... everybody's got one.

RAE

I think I get it.

She smiles.

JOEY

Okay everyone, follow me!

NARRATION

As Joey turns toward the woods, the boys step forward bringing the procession to an abrupt halt. They look a bit worse for the wear, their faces smeared with black soot from the welding.

~ THE BOYS FOR NOW ~

THE BOYS (SUNG)

OKAY, OKAY ... THAT SHOULD HOLD THE
TANKS FOR NOW, 'TIL YOU GET SOMEONE
WHO CAN REMOVE THEM. THEY WON'T
LAST MUCH LONGER THOUGH ...

(MORE)

THE BOYS (SUNG) (CONT'D)
**THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN SITTING
 THERE FOR DECADES. SO?**

Vespa and Rae locks eyes for a moment. Vespa nods,

VESPA
 We'll talk.

NARRATION

The procession moves ahead into the woods.

ACT 4 Scene 4

Back on the island, The Queen and her minions perform a ritual dance. The Queen's voice fills the hive mind. While in the meadow, Vespa muses about the future and Joey tends to the babies as they munch on their favorite strain of mushrooms.

~ THE QUEEN'S PLEA ~

QUEENIE (SUNG)
**COUSINS ALL, YOU OF OUR KIND
 YOU SEE, WE ARE ALL RELATED
 MAYHEM AND DESTRUCTION THESE
 CAN BE AMELIORATED**

**TAKE THE WAY, THE PATH OF MAY
 PRAY AND PLEASE REMEMBER
 HOPEFUL AUGUST WILL REMAIN
 IN DARKNESS OF DECEMBER**

BABY SPIDERS
**MUSHROOMS, MUSHROOMS, MUSHROOMS ...
 TINY LITTLE MUSHROOMS.
 MUSHROOMS, MUSHROOMS, MUSHROOMS ...
 TINY LITTLE MUSHROOMS!**

QUEENIE (SUNG)
**UNTO THEE, INTO YOUR HANDS
 THERE LIES OUR SALVATION
 SPARE OUR KIND AND KEEP OUR LANDS
 FROM MISSIVES OF FRUSTRATION**

**BUT BEWARE AND TOUCH US NOT
 APIS HERE ESPOUSES
 JOIN OUR RANKS AND HEAR OUR SONGS
 BUT SLEEP NOT IN OUR HOUSES**

RAE (RECIT)
**WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT ...
 MOM AND DAD?**

VESPA (RECIT)
 HARD TO SAY. MY SENSE IS, THAT THIS
 IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG.

RAE (RECIT)
 CONFRONTATION?

RAE (RECIT) (CONT'D)
 NOT SURE THAT WOULD GET US MUCH OF
 ANYWHERE. TRUTH IS ... WE'RE
 PROBABLY GOING TO HAVE TO WORK THIS
 OUT, ON OUR OWN.

QUEENIE (SUNG)
 FIND OUR STRENGTH, ENJOIN OUR SENSE
 TOGETHER WE PREVAIL
 BE NOT PROUD OR IN DEFENSE
 CHANGE YOUR WAYS OR FAIL

VESPA (RECIT)
 I AGREE ... SOMETIMES, THEY ARE THE
 NEXT BEST THING TO USELESS!

RAE (RECIT)
 YES ... THEY CERTAINLY CAN'T BE
 COUNTED ON FOR *HONESTY*. THIS
 PARTICULAR *UNTRUTH* ... IS NOT A
 HARBINGER OF GOOD TIDINGS, FOR ANY
 OF US ... ESPECIALLY THE HIVE.

VESPA (RECIT)
 WELL ... WINTER IS JUST AROUND THE
 CORNER, AND THE QUEEN WILL DIE
 SOON. THE SPIDERS WILL BE OKAY, AS
 LONG AS THEY STAY AWAY FROM THE
 POLLUTED AREAS.

RAE (RECIT)
 WE CAN HELP WITH THAT!

VESPA (RECIT)
 YES.

THE BEES WILL ALSO SURVIVE WITHOUT
 MUCH IMPACT. IT'S THE FOOD SUPPLY
 THAT WILL BE HIT HARDEST.

QUEENIE (SUNG)
 HEAR OUR PLEA, MERCY BE
 WITH SANITY UNBENT
 WORK WE DO, WORK FOR YOU
 NO MORE CAN SHE PREVENT

(MORE)

QUEENIE (SUNG) (CONT'D)

JOIN OUR MIND AND MAKE AMENDS
 REMOVE THE POISONS THAT
 DESTROY OUR FRIENDS
 SISTER SPIRITS, KEEP US FREE
 IMBUE WITH TRUE,
 AND TO YOU WILL WE.

NARRATION

She stops moving ... as she sings her final line, the Queens slowly dies.

RAE

Hmm ... what are we going to do now?

VESPA

We're going to have to speak with the folks. I think I can get them where we need them to be ...

RAE

I'm starting to see things in an entirely different light.

VESPA

We can regroup in the spring. In the meantime, we should start back.

JOEY

The babies will be fine for a while. We'll find a good spot where they can enter their diapause phase. We can leave them there.

All gather, as they slowly start to make their way home. As they exit, the chorus enters, pushing an old style flat wagon with a covered mass on a slab. They start what appears to be a funereal song.

- THE NEWBORN QUEEN -

CHORUS (SUNG)

ONE MOMENT MORE
 SALUTE THE QUEEN
 AND HERE THE SEASONS' CHANGES
 FERTILIZE THE GRAVES
 OF THE FIREFLIES AND APIS
 WITH THEIR ARDENT RAVES

DEEP WITHIN THE BOSOM
 OF THE HIDDEN NEST UNSEEN
 BARES WITNESS TO THE BIRTH
 OF THE NEW BORN QUEEN!

NARRATION

The mass under the sheet starts to wriggle, gently pushing the sheet aside to reveal a fledgeling wasp, the new Queen. She slowly gathers herself and calls out to the insect kingdom. They gather around her and join her in song.

- HER PARADE -

QUEENIE

Eyes of amber, wings of teal,
Open to the sky!
Line up éntoma, join our team,
And prepare to fly!
Yellow green and fen and mien,
The Prominent in tangerine!

Tribes of leaves varieties
of trees and bees that no one sees.
Disperse, bring joy, alas to these
and fly now fly, you're free,
You're free!

Come all you bees, come all to
sweet, Where moist and pale ensues.
And fireflies emit your light and
Shimmer in shades of pink and blue.

Kaydids and Katydoos
Eschew the mantis manticules
She brings to life a life of life
Her light is light the light of
true!

Shantala a star,
Watch over the fields
We'll make it so!
Keep the hive from harm and woe
We'll make it so!
Help Our hive to thrive and grow
We'll make it so!
Spread the seeds, make it grow!
Shantala A star
Guardian of light
Stay ever close at hand
May our future pathways lie neath
smiling skies
Evermore

THE END