

BUGZZZ

By Michael Soetaert

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CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance, more or less)

- (E) Grandfather/Grandmother Bug *(can be doubled with soldier bugs)*
- (E) Child Bug *(can be doubled with soldier bugs)*
- (M) Singer, the Prince of Stovia
- (F) Elaine, the Princess of Frigistan
- (E) The Senator
- (E) Bugs with Kazoos *(4; can double for R.A.I.D. Squad Commandoes)*
- (E) Bugs with Trumpets *(2; can double for soldiers)*
- (M) King Kyle, King of Frigistan
- (E) The General
- (E) The Colonel
- (E) Guard Bugs *(4; can double for soldiers 7,8, 9, & 10)*
- (E) Chorus Leader
- (E) Chorus Member #1
- (E) Chorus Member #2
- (E) Chorus Member #3
- (E) Royal Anthem Writer
- (E) New Royal Anthem Writer
- (F) The Queen
- (E) The Captain
- (E) The Sergeant
- (E) Unlucky Soldier
- (E) Soldier #1
- (E) Soldier #2
- (E) Intelligent Soldier
- (E) Soldier #3
- (E) Soldier #4
- (E) The Bishop
- (E) The Professor
- (E) Soldier #5
- (E) Soldier #6
- (E) Soldier #7
- (E) Soldier #8
- (E) Soldier #9
- (E) Soldier #10
- (E) Commando #1
- (E) Commando #2
- (E) Commando #3
- (E) Commando #4
- (E) Soldiers & Citizens *(all extras, and truly not necessary)*

DOUBLING

Full casting calls for 41 (or more) cast members. The following is the bare minimum for casting (18), although if you're really creative you might be able to do it with less. Some lines will need to be modified.

SINGLE ROLE

Singer, the Prince of Stovia
Elaine, the Princess of Frigistan
The Senator
King Kyle, King of Frigistan
The General
The Colonel
The Queen
The Captain
The Bishop
The Professor
Commando #2

DOUBLE ROLES

Soldier #1 / Commando #4
Soldier #2 / Child Bug
Soldier #3 / Commando #3
Soldier #4 / Grandfather Bug
Royal Anthem Writer / Commando #1
Chorus Leader (*assumes duties of Guard bug as well*)
Chorus Member #2 (*assumes duties of Guard bug as well*)

COSTUMES AND PROPS

Costuming: All of the characters are bugs, and they're all basically the same species, even Singer. Whatever costumes they have on, it still needs to be conveyed that they are bugs underneath. I'd go with a simple brown sweat suit—tops and bottoms. Brown socks would work for their feet. I would not try to give them an extra set of arms, or legs, or whatever. And I'd keep their hands as hands. For wings I'd simply attach two large, overlapping oval pieces of material to their shoulders. For antennae I'd use a head band with the antennae sticking straight up with little balls on the end. Singer's antennae will droop down. As far as the rest of the costumes go, it would be easy to imply what they are with a few key pieces of costume. For instance, all a soldier would need is an

plastic army helmet with his or her antennae sticking out. More specific costuming is listed with the characters below.

ALL BUGS

Antennae
Brown sweat pants, shirts, and socks
Wings on back

GRANDFATHER BUG

Round Wire Frame Glasses
Night Gown
Large “Bug Time Stories” Book

CHILD BUG

Long Night Gown
Stuffed Bug Toy

SINGER, THE PRINCE OF STOVIA

Antennae that point downward
Dark Sweats
Wings
Crown

ELAINE, THE PRINCESS OF FRIGISTAN

Tiara
A very nice, frilly white dress

THE SENATOR

3 Piece Suit
Top Hat
Scroll

CHORUS LEADER

Tuning Whistle
Everything else a Chorus Member has

CHORUS MEMBERS

Kazoos
Trumpets
White tunic with coat of arms in front

KING KYLE, KING OF FRIGISTAN

King's Robe
Crown

A large stick match for a septer

Do Not Copy

THE GENERAL

Epaulets
General Stars
Military Campaign Ribbons and Medals
Military Hat
Sash for metals and ribbons
Sticky secret plans
Plastic tongs

THE COLONEL

Colonel Eagle
Tan Military Hat

GUARD BUGS

Spanish Morion Helmets
Very large Q-tips

ROYAL ANTHEM WRITER

Dressed as regular bug
Glasses
Feathery Pen
Scroll

NEW ROYAL ANTHEM WRITER

A whole lot like the old anthem writer

THE QUEEN

Crown
Cape
Two paper airplanes (see Appencix Four)
Large skeleton key to dungeon

THE CAPTAIN

Silver Captain Bars

THE SERGEANT

Sergeant stripes on his arms

ALL SOLDIERS

Green army helmets
One stripe on their arms

THE BISHOP

Pope Mitre Hate

White robe

THE PROFESSOR

Thick Lens Glasses

White Lab Coat

Several rolled and tied large papers

COMMANDOES

Dark green sweats

No insignia

Each will have a different letter on the front of his or her shirt (RAID)

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ACT I

At the opening, the curtain is closed. There is a large “matchbox” with blankets and pillows in it and a small stool next to it on the R apron. When the lights go down in the auditorium, have CHILD BUG and GRANDFATHER BUG enter, hopefully unseen. The CHILD BUG will lie in the “bed” with the covers pulled up, and the GRANDFATHER BUG will sit on the stool. HE will be wearing old dude pajamas . . . slippers and all, and be holding a very large children’s book entitled Bug Time Stories. They will begin their lines as the tight spot hits them.

CHILD BUG: Grandpa . . . do you know any really good stories?

GRANDFATHER BUG: Would you like to hear a story about two bugs who came from two different Appliances and fell in love?

CHILD BUG: No! I wanted a really good story. You tell that same, stupid story every time!

GRANDFATHER BUG: Well, it’s the only one I know. Take it or leave it.

(The CHILD BUG will roll her eyes and slump down in bed in surrender.)

GRANDFATHER BUG: *(putting on his reading glasses)* Once upon a time there was a Kingdom of Bugs that lived beneath a refrigerator in a land not too far away . . .

(The auditorium goes to black for a few moments, during which time the GRANDFATHER BUG and the CHILD BUG exit. Once they’re clear, the curtains open and lights come up, revealing the throne room of Frigistan, the Kingdom Beneath the Refrigerator. There is a throne UC made out of a matchbook and a bottle cap (see Set Notes). To the right of the throne is the Frigistani flag, and to the left is a large tapestry with the Frigistani coat of arms (see Appendices One & Two). The stage is empty. After a beat, PRINCE SINGER steps from behind the throne and looks around.)

SINGER: *(in a loud whisper)* Elaine! *(there is no answer, so HE calls again)* Elaine!

(ELAINE timidly enters Left, to SINGER's back. HE hears something behind him and quickly turns around. When THEY see each other THEY run together and embrace, which THEY will hold for a few lines.)

SINGER: Oh, Elaine! I was beginning to think I wasn't going to find you!

ELAINE: Oh, Singer! It's so good to see you. The Queen dropped by just as I was leaving. I didn't think she'd ever shut up. She kept yammering on about following my heart. Sometimes I don't think mothers have a clue. Especially about being in love.

SINGER: *(breaking the embrace, but still holding her hands)* You didn't tell her about us, did you Elaine?

ELAINE: Of course not, Singer. If she knew, she'd certainly tell my father, and if the King knew . . .

(ELAINE pulls completely away from SINGER; turns her back.)

ELAINE: *(with her back still to SINGER; complete with Shakespearian hand gestures)* O Singer, Singer! Wherefore art thou Singer? *(turns to face SINGER)*

SINGER: *(puzzled)* What does that mean?

ELAINE: *(shrugging)* Beats me. It's something we had to read in school. I think it's supposed to be romantic.

SINGER: I didn't come here for romance . . . at least, not completely.

ELAINE: Then what are you doing here? Why did you insist on having to see me . . . tonight of all times? Are you out of your mind? The War Council is about to meet. There are guards all over the place. The General has my father convinced there are spies everywhere. He even has the Bishop on his side. You've got to be crazy to come here now. If they catch you, they're sure to think you're a spy. Do you know what they do to spies?

SINGER: I don't care. If spying would help to stop the war between Frigistan and Stovia, I'd do it in a minute.

ELAINE: We may only have a minute. The King and his court were getting ready to come here when I left. You can't stay.

SINGER: *(takes her hands again)* Do you really want me to go?

ELAINE: *(hesitates)* No. But if they catch you here . . . Imagine them catching the Prince of Stovia!

SINGER: *(hugging her)* Imagine catching the Prince of Stovia *with* the Princess of Frigistan.

ELAINE: *(pulling away)* No. No, you can't be here.

SINGER: *(turning away)* Then I'll go . . .

ELAINE: Yes . . . No . . . I don't know. With the spy scare, no one in the Kingdom is safe. Someone's been slipping notes to the enemy . . . *(immediately realizes faux faux)* I'm sorry. You know what I mean.

SINGER: (*somewhat hurt*) Unfortunately, I do.

ELAINE: They don't even need to think you're the spy to kill you. Simply because . . . because you're from another Appliance. And . . .

SINGER: (*finishing the thought*) And because I don't look like you.

ELAINE: (*lovingly stroking his antennae*) Oh, I love your antennae.

SINGER: I'm not worried. If they catch me, what are they going to do? Kill me twice?

ELAINE: I wouldn't put it past them. But I don't want them to catch you at all. You can't be here!

SINGER: I'm sorry. I couldn't stay away. I had to come warn you. Our scientists have created a horrible weapon. They've mounted a can of bug spray on wheels. And tomorrow morning, under the cover of daylight, the Stovian army is going to attack. I don't know how they're going to pull the bug spray over here, but they are. Half the troops are going to come in from the front, and the other half is going to cut you off from behind. There'll be no escape. Then they're going to gas everybody!

ELAINE: But won't they gas themselves, too?

SINGER: They've given the troops gas masks. Look, I know the masks won't work, the generals know they won't work, but our troops don't, and by the time they find out, it will be too late – for them and for you. For us. (*downcast*) For everybody.

ELAINE: That's awful!

SINGER: They don't care. They don't care how many of our bugs have to die, just as long as they beat you . . . as long as they beat Frigistan. And the truth be known, most of the bugs would be happy to die, just as long as they took someone with them. The more the better. They hate your kind.

ELAINE: (*offended*) My kind?

SINGER: (*remorseful*) Oh, Elaine. I don't think that way.

(*SINGER tries to touch ELAINE's arm, but SHE turns away.*)

SINGER: You know I don't, Elaine. You know I love you. But just because your antennae go up . . .

ELAINE: (*sharply*) Because yours go down . . .

SINGER: (*taking her hands*) Just because everybody else is crazy doesn't mean we have to be.

ELAINE: Oh, you're right. (*THEY embrace*) I love you, too, Singer, but what can we do?

SINGER: We've got to get out of here.

ELAINE: But where can we go?

SINGER: (*with the hope of a dream*) I've heard of a place. It's up in the Highlands – on the Counter Top. In an Appliance called the Toaster.

We could live there forever. In peace. Everybug shares, but there's no need, because there is always plenty of crumbs, and no People ever cleans out the bottom tray. And no one – no bug at all – cares which directions your antennae go . . . or even if you have antennae at all.

ELAINE: That's just a myth. Every pupa's heard that fairy tale.

SINGER: I know it's probably not true, but chasing a dream is better than accepting reality. And the reality is, if we stay here, we're both going to die, and it won't matter how much we love each other. There's no hope if you're dead.

ELAINE: But what about my home? My family? My friends?

SINGER: Don't you understand? After tonight, they won't be here anyway.

ELAINE: But couldn't we warn them, too?

SINGER: Who's going to believe us? Who's going to believe *me*? After all, I'm one of them. They would just think it was a trick, or a trap. Leave with me. Now.

ELAINE: But I couldn't go without saying goodbye to my mother . . . and my father.

SINGER: Your father? The King?

ELAINE: He may be a horrible King . . .

SINGER: And a horrible bug . . .

ELAINE: . . .but he's still my father.

SINGER: What would you tell him? You're running off with the Prince of Stovia before they attack us and kill everybody?

ELAINE: I don't know. But I just can't leave without seeing them at least one more time.

SINGER: Take a picture.

ELAINE: No!

(There is fanfare off stage Right –kazoos should be used – followed by:)

SENATOR: *(loudly, from off stage Right)* All hail King Kyle, King of Frigistan!

ELAINE: Oh, no! They're here! You've got to go!

(SINGER starts to head Left, but stops and turns back when HE hears more fanfare off stage Left.)

ELAINE: You've got to hide!

(SINGER starts to hide behind the throne, but . . .)

ELAINE: No. That's no good. They'll see you.

(There is more louder and closer fanfare from both Right and Left. Frantically, ELAINE sees the large tapestry to the Left of the throne. SHE runs over and lifts up an edge.)

ELAINE: Quick! Hide behind here!

(SINGER ducks behind the tapestry and then sticks his head back out.)

SINGER: Wait!

ELAINE: *(still frantic)* What? Wait for what?

(SINGER puts his free arm around ELAINE, draws her close, and kisses her. SHE pulls away – eventually – and HE hides himself behind the tapestry (it's not a very good hide; you can see his feet and it's obvious someone is behind there, but I never said THEY were smart bugs . . . I mean, after all, THEY are bugs) just as the CHORUS LEADER and CHORUS MEMBER #1, both with Kazoos and those big plastic stadium trumpets enter both from Left and the two other CHORUS MEMBERS enter from Right . THEY are all dressed in open-sided tunics that have the coat of arms on them – basically over the top. THEY will all march to DC where, on cue, THEY will ALL blow a "Ta-ta-Taa-taaaa!" on their Kazoos, followed by an obnoxious blast on the trumpets. It's really not necessary for them to all be on key or really with each other. THEY will ALL then march to USL where THEY will stand in a line. The SENATOR enters.)

SENATOR: *(loudly, reading from a scroll)* Announcing His Majesty, The Royal King of Frigistan!

(Flourish. Of course, that really says nothing, but it was good enough for Shakespeare. First enter RIGHT GUARD BUGS #1 & #2 and LEFT GUARD BUGS #3 & 4. THEY are wearing Conquistador helmets and are holding very large Q-tips. THEY will all march to the center of the stage, do a present-arms with their Q-tips, and then #1 & #2 will march to the right of the throne while #3 & #4 will go to the left. Enter Right the KING, and his entourage: The SENATOR, the GENERAL, the COLONEL, the CAPTAIN, the SERGEANT, the BISHOP, and SOLDIERS #1 & #2. Enter Left: The ROYAL ANTHEM WRITERS, SOLDIERS #3 & #4, and finally the QUEEN. ELAINE will blend with those entering Left, always staying near the tapestry. The KING will take the throne and the QUEEN will end up standing behind him to his left. The trick is not to make them looked bunched up and to get plenty of movement while not blocking each other out.)

SENATOR: *(after everyone has settled into their places)* All rise for the first order of business: The Frigistani National Anthem!

(Of course, there is NOBODY sitting except the KING, but HE will not rise. The CHORUS LEADER steps forward and blows a note on a tuning whistle before they ALL sing. During the anthem, the KING's court will join in. You're on your own for the tune.)

Chorus: We work at night,
and we sleep by day.
The People give us crumbs,
and to them we pray
for more!
for more!
We will always ask for more.
More! More! More! More!

Come and see our land.
(see our land)

It is Frigistan.
(It is Frigistan)

We do what we can
(do what we can)

Here in Frigistan.
(in Frigistan)

We'll live in peace
and harmony,
Just as long as you
look a lot like me.

Here in Frigistan.
(Here in Frigistan)

Here in Frigistan.
(Here in Frigistan)

Come and see our land.
(see our land)

It is Frigistan.
(It is Frigistan)

Where life is grand
(life is grand)

Here in Frigistan.
(in Frigistan)

Here in Frig-i-stan!

ALL: (*shouting*) Frigistan!

KING: (*has not joined in; annoyed*) First order of business: Take the Royal Anthem Writer out back and have him shot!

(*SOLDIER #1 crosses and grabs the ROYAL ANTHEM WRITER.*)

ROYAL ANTHEM WRITER: You didn't like it, huh?

KING: Absolutely not! There was nothing in there about how kind I am.

(*THEY slowly start to move off R, but won't exit until . . .*)

KING: Bring me the New Royal Anthem Writer!

NEW ROYAL ANTHEM WRITER: Wow, I'm surprised you didn't like that. I thought it was great!

KING: (*to SOLDIER #1*) Wait! (*THEY do*) I've got another one for you.

(*The NEW ROYAL ANTHEM WRITER shrugs his shoulders and walks over to join them. THEY will not exit until after the KING's following lines.*)

KING: Bring me the Even Newer Royal Anthem Writer.

SENATOR: Sire, that's all there is.

KING: What?

SENATOR: That's all there is. There are no more anthem writers. If you shoot them, then we're stuck with our anthem.

KING: Who are you to tell me who I can and cannot shoot?

SENATOR: (*with obstinate pride*) I am the Senator of Frigistan! The Representative of the Insect. The unbiased Voice of the Common Bug. Don't you remember? You appointed me.

KING: A Senator, you say?

SENATOR: Yes, sire. You appointed me six years ago. I work with you every day.

KING: A Senator? What do I need with a Senator?

SENATOR: I announce you, sire. If you weren't announced, then nobody would know you were here.

KING: Well, so be it. We're stuck with our anthem. And our Senator. But shoot the Royal Anthem Writers anyway. That will teach them to not say I'm kind.

(*SOLDIER #1 and both ANTHEM WRITERS exit.*)

SENATOR: The next order of business is spies.

KING: Spies?

GENERAL: Yes, sire. Spies.

COLONEL: I'm sorry, but wouldn't that be the third order of business? I thought the singing of the national anthem was the first order of business. And shooting the Anthem Writers was the second order of business.

GENERAL: Have you ever seen the Shoe up close, Colonel?

COLONEL: Umm . . . No.

GENERAL: Would you like to keep it that way?

(The COLONEL takes a nervous step backwards.)

GENERAL: Where was I?

SENATOR: Spies.

KING: *(standing, in alarm)* Where?!

SENATOR: Not here.

GENERAL: Oh, but they are.

CHORUS MEMBER #4: All Praise to the spies!

CHORUS LEADER: We don't praise spies, you idiot!

CHORUS MEMBER #4: Why not?

CHORUS LEADER: Because spies are bad.

CHORUS MEMBER #2: Unless they're our spies.

CHORUS MEMBER #3: Then they're good.

CHORUS MEMBER #2: Unless they're double spies.

CHORUS MEMBER #3: Then they're double bad.

CHORUS MEMBER #2: Or double good.

CHORUS MEMBER #4: *(to CHORUS LEADER)* Will this all make sense later, or should I just give up now?

CHORUS LEADER: Just smile and nod your head from time to time. It's easier that way.

SENATOR: Sire, someone in Frigistan has been leaking secrets to the enemy.

KING: How can that be?!

SENATOR: *(matter-of-factly)* Well, you see, they get a hold of our secrets, and then they sneak them out, and then . . .

KING: I know how it works, you idiot. But how could we let that happen? Who's responsible for this?

GENERAL: That would be the spy, your Highness.

KING: I know that, General! What I was wanting to know . . . Oh, never mind. I hereby proclaim . . .

CHORUS: All praise the Royal Proclamation!

KING: *(looking at the CHORUS sternly; THEY're oblivious, as a good chorus should be)* I hereby proclaim that should the spy be caught, we should ask him to stop. And then, The Shoe!

VOICES: *(in shock)* The Shoe!

CHORUS: All praise the Shoe!

(After the above line, EVERYONE on stage, except the KING, who is too bored, the QUEEN, which will be obvious later, and ELAINE will stomp their right foot as one.)

GENERAL: I can assure you, sire, we have an ultra-top-secret plan in place to catch the spy.

(HE moves closer to the KING, but is still speaking loudly enough for everyone else in the throne room to hear him. They ALL lean in just the same.)

GENERAL: *(using plastic bread tongs to hold up a large white folder with Really Top Secret printed on it in bold, red letters)* We have devised a trap. These plans are printed on fly paper. We'll leave them lying out in the open where the spy is certain to see them. When he does, he won't be able to resist taking them. And when he picks them up, they'll stick to his hand, and then we'll know who the spy is.

(The COLONEL reaches over and takes the plans. THEY stick to his hand, even though HE tries to shake them off.)

CAPTAIN: *(to the COLONEL)* Oh my People! It's you! You're the spy!
The Colonel's the spy!

COLONEL: I'm not the spy, you idiot!

CAPTAIN: Then why do you have the plans?

(The CAPTAIN reaches over and takes the plans from the COLONEL. Like the COLONEL, HE tries to shake them off, but also in vain.)

SERGEANT: Oh my People! The Captain is the spy!

(Like the CAPTAIN and the COLONEL, the SERGEANT takes the plans, and THEY become stuck to him. There are numerous gasps and then . . .)

SEVERAL VOICES: It's the Sergeant! He's the spy!

SERGEANT: You! Soldier!

(The SERGEANT points at SOLDIER #3, who, puzzled, points at himself as if to say, "Me?")

SERGEANT: Yes, you! Take these plans, Private.

(SOLDIER #3 hesitates while EVERYBODY else moves away from him.)

SERGEANT: That's an order, Private!

(SOLDIER #3 moves forward apprehensively and gingerly takes the plans.)

SERGEANT: *(pointing at the SOLDIER #3)* The spy! I've captured the spy! Take him out back and have him shot!

(The UNLUCKY SOLDIER lowers his head in submission as SOLDIER #2 steps forward and escorts him off stage. SOLDIER #2 will remain off stage until HE comes back later pushing the bug bomb.)

GENERAL: *(to the KING)* See, your Majesty. I told you it was a brilliant plan.

SENATOR: Our next order of business is the War!

CHORUS: All praise the war!

ALL: All praise the death of Stovia! *(EVERYONE stomps.)*

SENATOR: *(striking an old-time oratorical stance)* Since our ancestors first made their way across the Great Linoleum Plains, we have called Frigistan our home. Now our way of life, yea, our very existence, is threatened by the Appliance of Stovia. Why, one look at these bugs and you can tell they are inferior. Our antennae point up, towards the heavens. And theirs . . . *(with disgust)* theirs point down. Need I say more?

OTHERS: No!

SENATOR: In truth, some would not even call them bugs at all. And there is Wisdom in that argument. Yet, we could live in peace with these . . . pseudo-bugs. We could even accept that they live with an abundance of resources – far more than they will ever need. And People knows, we would never stoop to ask them to share, even though our bugs go without.

COLONEL: We do?

SEVERAL OTHERS: Shhhh!

SENATOR: *(continuing as if never interrupted)* But Stovia's greed knows no boundaries. They cast their wanton eyes upon what little we have, and they want that, too! Our only hope for survival is to attack them first, before they have a chance to amass their forces against ours.

KING: What?

SENATOR: Which what, Sire? There was a lot of information there.

KING: That part about amassing their forces against ours.

GENERAL: Sire, Advanced Intelligence reports that the enemy – Stovia – is planning on attacking us before we can attack them.

KING: Why would they do that? Didn't we both sign an anti-aggression treaty?

SENATOR: Yes, sire. But they don't trust us not to break it.

KING: What? They don't trust us? How dare they! Why wouldn't we break the treaty against an enemy who refuses to trust us?

SENATOR: Exactly, sire.

GENERAL: In addition, your Majesty, Stovia has discovered that we *are* planning on attacking them.

KING: But how do we know that they know that?

GENERAL: Spies, sire.

KING: Spies? I thought we got rid of the spy.

SENATOR: Apparently, there are more.

GENERAL: I tried to warn you, sire, that trusting our own citizens was a mistake. Besides, these are our spies.

KING: Our spies?

GENERAL: Yes, sire.

KING: Is that good?

GENERAL: Yes, sire.

KING: And how do we know that?

GENERAL: Spies, sire.

KING: Our spies told us that?

GENERAL: No, sire. Their spies.

KING: How do we know which is which?

GENERAL: They wear name tags.

KING: Oh, how I despise spies!

GENERAL: Regardless, sire, we know that Stovia is planning on attacking us. This is nothing but an unmitigated act of aggression!

SENATOR: I told you we were justified in attacking them first. In the meantime, Your Highness, I suggest that we move to the safety of the Royal Fallout Shelter.

KING: We have a Royal Fallout Shelter?

PRIEST: It is a sausage can that rolled into our kingdom yesterday, sent by the divine providence of the People.

CHORUS: All praise the Divine Providence of the People.

SENATOR: We have no time to lose!

KING: We must take the Royal Throne!

GENERAL: No, sire. I'm sorry, but it will not fit.

KING: Then what will I sit on?

GENERAL: Just grab a soldier.

KING: Won't that be awfully uncomfortable?

GENERAL: He won't complain.

KING: I was thinking of me.

SENATOR: (*picking up the cushion off the throne*) We'll take the Royal Cushion.

CHORUS: All praise the Royal Cushion!

KING: We must take the Royal Flag and the Royal Tapestry.

ELAINE: (*stepping forward; alarmed*) No! No! We can't take the Royal Tapestry.

SENATOR: Why not?

ELAINE: Because.

SENATOR: (*shrugs shoulders*) Well, that's good enough for me.

(*Almost unanimously, EVERYBODY in the room nods and mumbles in agreement.*)

KING: That's not good enough for me. I demand a reason.

ELAINE: *Because* is a reason.

SOLDIER #4: (*stepping forward*) Actually, *because* is an adverb, which makes it a modifier. Only *what* it modifies would be a reason.

Because, by itself, tells you nothing. (*looking at the PRINCESS*)

Sorry.

ELAINE: (*under her breath*) I think we took the wrong soldier out back to be shot.

KING: Take the tapestry!

(*SOLDIER #4 steps forward to take the tapestry, and ELAINE jumps between the soldier and the tapestry.*)

ELAINE: No! If we take the tapestry . . . it will be . . . it will be a sign of weakness!

KING: Nonsense!

(*SOLDIER #4 takes another step toward the tapestry, and ELAINE moves her back against the tapestry with her arms outstretched.*)

ELAINE: If we take the tapestry, then the enemy will know we're in retreat and that they have won.

GENERAL: How will they know that?

ELAINE: Spies! You yourself said they were everywhere!

GENERAL: We have captured the spy.

ELAINE: But there could be others!

GENERAL: Nonsense! (*to SOLDIER #4*) Private, remove the tapestry.

ELAINE: (*to SOLDIER #4; vicious*) If you touch this tapestry, you'll never have to be worried about being called private again.

KING: Princess Elaine, move out of the way.

ELAINE: But . . .

QUEEN: Dear, do as your father says.

(The PRINCESS, dejected, steps out of the way. SOLDIER #4 takes the tapestry off the wall and begins to walk away with it. It should be obvious that SINGER is moving with the tapestry. The PRINCESS notices and says . . .)

ELAINE: Wait!

(SOLDIER #4 stops.)

ELAINE: Wait! I'll take the tapestry to the shelter.

(SOLDIER #4 looks to the GENERAL who shrugs unknowingly and looks to the SENATOR, who shrugs unknowingly and looks to the KING, who in turn looks to the QUEEN.)

QUEEN: *(to KING)* That would be fine, dear.

KING: So be it!

(SOLDIER #4 once again looks at the GENERAL, who motions that it would be acceptable to hand it to the PRINCESS. HE does. ELAINE will cross R with the banner, get to mid stage, and then change her mind, and head back left. SINGER, his eyes now closed, will continue to move R, well past center stage. There will be a collective gasp from those on stage, at which point SINGER will gingerly open his eyes and give a sheepish smile and half wave. During the following lines, ELAINE will give the tapestry back to SOLDIER #4, who will take it back to where it was.)

SINGER: Hi. How ya all doin'?

GENERAL: Who are you?

SINGER: *(proudly)* I am the Royal Prince of Stovia. *(takes out a short crown from beneath his shirt and puts it on)*

(There is once again a collective gasp.)

CAPTAIN: *(stepping forward)* No you're not! I know you. Your name is Singer. You're just a bug.

COLONEL: What kind of name is Singer?

SINGER: The name my parents gave me.

COLONEL: They don't remember the '70s, do they?

SINGER: It doesn't matter. My name is no longer Singer. I was adopted by the King of Stovia. I am now the Prince. I am the Prince of Stovia.

COLONEL: So now you're the Prince formerly known as Singer . . .

GENERAL: (*under his breath*) Wow. Somebody ought to be shot for that. (*to the KING*) Sire, we have captured the Prince of Stovia. We have captured the Spy!

SINGER: I'm not a spy!

GENERAL: Then what are you doing here? I say you're a spy!

ELAINE: (*stepping forward and taking SINGER by the arm*) He's not a spy. He was here to see me!

KING: (*missing the obvious*) Why would he do that?

ELAINE: Because we're in love.

(*There is a collective "Ugggh" of disgust from ALL but ELAINE, SINGER, and the QUEEN.*)

ELAINE: And we're going to be married.

(*There is another collective "Ugggh" of disgust.*)

BISHOP: That's . . . that's just not natural.

ELAINE: (*angry defense*) Why not?

BISHOP: Because they're not like us.

ELAINE: Oh yes they are.

BISHOP: Just look at their antennas!

ELAINE: Trust me, I have.

(*Once more, there is a collective "Ugggh" of disgust.*)

BISHOP: If you won't think of yourself, think of your Kingdom!

ELAINE: You're putting me on.

BISHOP: Then think of the larvae.

ELAINE: (*in disbelief*) What?

BISHOP: Think of the larvae. They wouldn't look like the other larvae. And you know how cruel larvae can be.

ELAINE: That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard. You'd use that as an excuse not to bring a bug into the world? A bug who would be raised by two loving parents? Because some mean spirited larva might some day make fun of him? That's insane! Let me see . . . that leaves only mean spirited larvae. (*sarcastically*) That's a sure way to raise the level of the gene pool. No wonder our Appliance is so messed up!

KING: It doesn't matter what you think. (*pointing at SINGER*) That bug is the enemy, and under Article Seven . . .

GENERAL: Article Six . . .

KING: Article Six, he is a traitor!

GENERAL: He can't be a traitor, sire, unless he were on our side to begin with.

KING: I am the King, and if I say he's a traitor, then he's a traitor!

GENERAL: Take this traitor out back and have him shot!

ELAINE: No!

KING: No!

ELAINE: No?

KING: No! Being shot's too good! (*to SINGER*) I sentence you to . . .
The Shoe!

(There is a collective gasp.)

CHORUS: The Shoe!

SINGER: The Shoe? What's the Shoe?

GENERAL: In the morning, when the lights come on . . .

CHORUS: All praise He who brings us the Light!

GENERAL: (*slightly annoyed at being interrupted*) When the light comes on, you will be cast out upon the Linoleum Plain.

CHORUS: All praise He who created the Linoleum Plain!

GENERAL: (*slightly more annoyed*) And upon the Linoleum Plain awaits . . . the Shoe!

CHORUS: All praise He who wears the Shoe!

GENERAL: (*to CHORUS*) Just once, could you let it go? (*continuing*) If you make it across the Plain, then your life is spared.

CHORUS: All praise . . .

GENERAL: (*stopping them*) Don't you dare! (*when HE's sure the CHORUS isn't going to interrupt; with theatrics*) If you can cross the Plain, your life is spared. But beware! For of all those who have tried and dared, among the living, none have faired!

(The CHORUS looks on expectantly.)

GENERAL: (*to CHORUS*) All right. Now you can.

CHORUS: All praise He who shows no mercy!

ELAINE: (*in horror*) No!

CHORUS: Yes!

KING: Take him away!

SINGER: (*stepping forward*) No! First I must warn you all.

SENATOR: Warn us about what? Why would a spy tell us anything?

SINGER: I'm not a spy! I came here to warn Elaine that our Kingdom, Stovia . . .

(There is a collective Sssssss. SINGER looks around with a “Oh, Good Grief” look.)

SINGER: *(continuing)* Our Kingdom, Sto . . .

(EVERYBODY starts to Sssssss again. SINGER stops and so do THEY. SINGER will start with an “S” sound, and THEY will ALL say Sssssss, so . . .)

SINGER: Where I come from they have a secret weapon that they’re planning on using against you at first light. They’ve mounted wheels on a can of bug spray. They’re going to kill you all.

KING: How could they do that!

SINGER: *(matter of fact)* They used a lot of Super Glue . . .

KING: That’s not what I meant! How could they be so barbaric! Why would they plan such a horrible thing?

SINGER: Because you’re planning the same thing against us!

GENERAL: That’s not true!

SINGER: Yes it is. Our sources tell us you have a secret weapon that’s even nastier than ours!

GENERAL: Well . . . It’s not true about having a can of bug spray with wheels on it.

KING: *(to SINGER)* I can assure you, young bug, that we have no such weapon.

GENERAL: *(sheepishly)* Well, actually we do . . .

KING: What!

GENERAL: You told us to prepare for war . . . So we made a secret weapon.

KING: Why was I never told of this secret weapon?

GENERAL: Because then it wouldn’t’ve been a secret. *(calling)* Bring out the Professor!

(The PROFESSOR enters. HE is wearing a lab coat and holding several scrolls of paper awkwardly under his arms, constantly having to shuffle them to keep from dropping them, which HE will do from time to time anyway.)

GENERAL: Sire, this is the Professor. He has created for us the ultimate bomb.

CHORUS: All praise the Ultimate Bomb.

PROFESSOR: It ees a Bowmb. A Bug Bowmb.

ALL: *(with shock and awe, which THEY will continue throughout the following scene)* A Bug Bomb?

PROFESSOR: Yea-es. It ees ze Ultimate Weapon.

(SOLDIER #2 enters, pushing a very large “bomb” on stage. It looks like a very big cherry bomb with a long fuse coming out of the top. It is painted red with the Jolly Bugger stenciled on the side--See Appendix Three. SOLDIER #2 will then leave so HE can come back with the lighter.)

ALL: The Ultimate Weapon?

PROFESSOR: Yes.

KING: How does it work?

PROFESSOR: *(taking out a pointer from among his papers; HE will hand the papers to a CHORUS MEMBER to hold during the following sequence)* Vee light ze fuse.

ALL: Yes?

PROFESSOR: Ze fuse burns . . . down.

ALL: Yes?

PROFESSOR: And then ze bomb goes . . . *(loudly)* “Boom!”

ALL: *(jumping back)* Yes?

PROFESSOR: When ze bomb goes “Boom!” it releases ze gas.

ALL: Yes!

PROFESSOR: And all who breathe ze gas vheel die!

ALL: No!

PROFESSOR: Yes.

SENATOR: But how are we going to light it?

PROFESSOR: With . . . *(with a flourish HE motions toward stage right; nothing happens)* With . . . *(once again a flourish; once again nothing)* Hey! Bring ze lighter already!

(SOLDIER #2 sticks his head out.)

SOLDIER #2: Sorry.

(SOLDIER #2 then pushes out a very large flip-top lighter that can be decorated any way you like so as not to violate copyright and trademark laws.)

PROFESSOR: Vee light it weeth ze Zeep-po!

SINGER: Where . . . where will you set it off?

PROFESSOR: Een Stovia, of course.

KING: General!

GENERAL: *(nervously)* Yes, sire?

KING: General, this is brilliant!

SINGER: Brilliant? This is insane!

SENATOR: More insane than a can of bug spray with wheels?

KING: *(to them)* Silence! Now, General, how do we plan to deploy this?

GENERAL: *(takes out a whistle and gives it a shrill blow)* R.A.I.D.
Squad! Front and Center!

(FOUR COMMANDOES dressed in black march smartly on stage from Left. Each will have a different letter on her or his chest (R, A, I, or D). THEY will turn in unison and realize THEY don't spell RAID, so THEY will shuffle around, spelling different words -- ARID, DARI...there's a lot to choose from -- until THEY finally spell RAID, then ALL will assume parade rest at DC.)

GENERAL: Detail . . . Hut!

(The COMMANDOES snap to attention, sharply salute, and then stand at rigid attention. If doubling, the following lines can be added:)

COMMANDO #1: *(to COMMANDO #2)* You look awfully familiar. Don't I know you?

COMMANDO #2: Naw. I get that all the time. But you know what they say. We all look alike.

GENERAL: *(to COMMANDOES #1 & 2)* Shhhh! *(to ASSEMBLY)*
Gentlebugs, I give you the crack commandoes of the Bug World, especially trained for Operation Kill Them All . . .

SENATOR: Operation Kill Them All?

GENERAL: Oh, I don't know. I like it better than Operation Take All Their Stuff.

SENATOR: I was hoping for something maybe a little less . . . true.

GENERAL: It doesn't matter. Gentlebugs, I give you the R.A.I.D. Force. The Rapid Attack Insect Division. Tonight, in broad darkness, they will carry the bomb across the Linoleum Plain, light the fuse, and roll it into the Appliance of Stovia. It's a dangerous mission, but they're prepared to die for Frigistan.

(The COMMANDOES, in unison, ALL turn their gaze toward the GENERAL with a "What the hey?" look.)

COMMANDO #1: *(stepping forward; nervous)* General, sir. Permission to speak.

GENERAL: Permission granted.

COMMANDO #1: *(totally losing all military bearing)* Did you say tonight? Because I had other plans. You know, I really need to refold my duffel bag, and the barracks are a mess. *(looking at his wrist, where there is no watch)* Wow! Look at the time! I better be goin' . . .

OTHER COMMANDOES: Yeah. Me too.

GENERAL: Attention!

(THEY, as well as EVERYBODY else, snaps to attention.)

(to all the OTHERS) No . . . only them.

(EVERYBODY but the COMMANDOES relaxes.)

(continuing) Request denied! You have your orders. And you will carry them out. Remember, the penalty for cowardice . . .

SENATOR: The Shoe!

GENERAL: The Shoe!

COMMANDOES: *(totally crest-fallen)* The Shoe.

GENERAL: *(more like a bad high school coach giving a pep talk to a pathetic team)* Look, bugs, I know you're scared. Heck, you wouldn't be a bug if you weren't scared. But think of your Appliance. Think of your families. Think of all the bugs who are counting on you to keep them safe in their beds – or somebody else's beds – during the day. What would be more honorable than giving your life for your Appliance?

COMMANDO #3: *(stepping forward, breaking military bearing)* Umm. . . Going to a parade and honoring someone else who has given his life for our Appliance . . .

GENERAL: Attention!

(EVERYBODY on stage – except SINGER – once again snaps to attention. THEY will hold it until SINGER speaks.)

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