

Shine a Light

By
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Commissioned by Plan-B Theatre for Play At Home

CHARACTERS

Dev- a boy or girl. 9-11

Dilli- A roly polly

7 and 8- Ant sisters

Tulip and Daisy- Bee sisters

Terra- an old worm

O.V- offstage voice

Scene 1

A backyard, Fall. The stage is covered in grass and flanked with big shade trees of various colors. There are various types of fall flowers growing downstage right and left. Upstage center is a garden box with vegetables and fruit growing inside, including tomatoes, pumpkins, and strawberries. There is a dirt path curving up to the garden box from stage right. Squatting down in the dirt with a strawberry in one hand and a magnifying glass in another is Dev.

Dev

Where are you? I know you're here somewhere! (*sing songy*) I'm gonna find you and I'm gonna burn you.

O.V

Deeeev? What're you doing?

Dev

...nothing.

O.V

Dev?

Dev

Nothing!

O.V

So if I walk out there I won't find you trying to burn more bugs with that magnifying glass?

Dev

(*hiding the magnifying glass*)...no.

O.V

Dev?

Dev

Ugh! They're just stupid ants!

V.O

Not to me they're not. Inside. Now.

Dev

Ughhhhhh! (*standing up and begrudgingly exiting stage right*)

Scene 2

The stage is now Dev's bedroom. Toys of all sorts are scattered around the room, clothes on the floor, posters on the walls, etc. There is a window upstage center, with his bed underneath it. Dev enters.

V.O

And don't come out until you've had a change of heart.

Dev

Fine! (*slams the door*) So stupid. Bugs don't even do anything good!

(During the next few minutes Dev meanders around his room and distracts himself with his toys before throwing himself onto his bed. He reaches up and opens his window, looking out at freedom for a few seconds before flinging himself back onto his bed and falling asleep. After five seconds of sleep, the lights in the room begin to flicker and swirl. Cue Wagner's "Flight of the Valkyries" song. The lights then change colors making the room look like a massive laser light show. At 22 seconds into the song the lights go out. Only light from the window is streaming into the room. A silhouette of a dragonfly in the distance is seen rising up from the bottom of the window. As the song progresses it gets larger and larger flying towards the window until the giant dragonfly is in the room. It lifts Dev, still asleep, out of bed. As Dev is lifted out of bed, the entire room begins to change. Grass begins to grow up from the ground, growing taller and taller until it's at the height of the ceiling. A few flowers sprout up from the ground the size of cars, giant rocks roll onto the stage, and from the ceiling in the upstage left corner of the room a giant strawberry grows. By the end of the transformation the bedroom is completely gone and Dev and the dragonfly have flown into the distance and have all but disappeared. Blackout.)

Scene 3

In the grass. Dev is on the floor, stage left, still asleep. 7 and 8 enter as lights up.

7

I can't believe you lost the sugar, 8. Now what are we going to bring back to the colony? The queen is going to be so disappointed.

8

I know! I'm sorry, 7! But that starling was bouncing around right in front of me and I got scared!

7

Ugh! Starlings! They're the worst!

8

They really are! Anyway, I'm sure it'll all be fine. There's gotta be something around here we can take back to the colony. Maybe a dead fly or something.

7

You really think we're just gonna find a dead fly around here? Just lying around unclaimed?

8

Well maybe, I don't k- (*crossing in front of Dev*) What is that?

7

Oh...I don't know. It looks awful though.

8

Is it alive?

7

(*Kneeling down and sniffing Dev*) Whoa! Nope! Definitely dead. Ugh, that's terrible!

8

Well, should we take it back? It looks like it would be some good protein.

7

I don't know...

8

Well, we can't go back empty-handed, and this is better than nothing.

7

Yeah...I guess you're right. Okay, let's lift it up and get it out of here. *(They lift up Dev)*

(Enter Dilli)

Dilli

Oh hey ladies! Whatchya got there?

8

Hi!

7

Hey Dilli.

8

Look what we found!

7

We have no idea what it is. All we know is that it's dead...and rotting.

Dilli

Oh! Is that what I'm smelling? Smells awful! Can I eat it?

7

We're taking it back to the colony.

8

Sorry Dilli.

(Dev wakes up)

Dev

AHHHHHHHHHHH!!

(7 and 8 drop him and run around)

7 and 8

AHHHHHHHHHHH!

Dilli

AHHHHHHHHHHH! *(rolls into a ball)*

Dev

(Standing) Where am I?! What is happening?! Who are you?!

7

Who are YOU?! You're supposed to be dead!

8

It's a living dead thing!

Dev

Dead?! I'm not dead!

7

There is no way anything alive could smell that bad!

Dev

I don't smell! Now tell me what is happening. Who are...wait...are you ants?

(Dilli starts to unroll)

8

Of course we're ants. And you were supposed to be our lunch.

Dev

Your lunch? You were gonna eat me?!

7

Duh. We're ants, we literally eat almost everything.

Dev

Well you're not gonna eat me!

(Tulip and Daisy fly in from above)

Tulip

What is happening? We heard screaming.

Daisy

Is everyone ok?

(Dev sees the bees, screams, which causes Dilli to scream and ball up, and then Dev hides)

What was that?

8

A zombie creature.

Tulip

A zombie creature?

Daisy

What are you talking about?

7

Well we thought that it was dead because it smells like it's dead, but apparently it's not dead and now here we are.

(Enter Terra from the ground near to Dev causing Dev to come running out screaming)

Terra

What is all the commotion? So much screaming, and in the middle of the day.

Dilli

(From inside his ball) Sorry, Terra. *(Opening up)* We just had a very frightening experience with this zombie creature and...

Dev

I am not a zombie!

8

That's exactly what a zombie would say!

Terra

Oh 8, really. That thing is not a zombie, zombie's aren't real. *(sliding over to Dev)* Now tell me, who are you? And what are you doing here?

Dev

I'm...I'm Dev. And I don't know. I don't even know where this is.

Daisy

Hey...wait a buzz. *(flying over to Dev)* I recognize you. You're that little boy that's always hurting insects!

Tulip

(Gasp) That's right!

7

What are you two talking about?

Tulip

He's the light!

8

The light?

Tulip & Daisy

THE LIGHT!

8

Oh, the light! (Gasps)

Dilli

Oh dear!

7

Hold on! You mean to tell me that THIS little thing is the light? How is that even possible? And how do you know that?

Daisy

Because when we fly around we see him. All you ants see is a giant light coming down from the sky and then boom. You're dead. And normally, he's not this little, and he isn't exactly the light, he holds this...this round, glass thing that shines the light.

Dev

It's called a magnifying glass.

Terra

Well, whatever it's called, are you guilty of using it on us?

Dev

I...I...look, I just want to get back home! How is this even happening?

Dilli

Well, if you really are the light then it was probably Anax.

Dev

Anax?

Tulip
Come on Dilli, Anax? That's a myth.

Dilli
Well, how else do you explain it?

Terra
Anax is no myth. And this creature proves it.

Dev
Who is Anax?

Terra
She's an ancient creature who protects our kind from things that would needlessly harm us.

Dilli
Anax is latin for dragonfly. Why do I know that?

7
But she's not real. And even if she were, why would she come back now?

Daisy
Uhh...hello? (*Gesturing to Dev*) He likes to burn ants for fun. And step on us when we're just collecting pollen from clover.

Terra
And pull us apart from both ends, and no, we do not grow back from that.

Dilli
And flick us so hard we go flying into the air, and when we land we explode like little tiny bombs. Poor Jerry.

(*They all stare at Dev*)

Dev
But...but...you're just bugs. And you eat each other all the time, anyway! What's the difference?

Terra
The difference is we are not taking life simply to take life.

7

Yeah. Sometimes we need to do things like that to survive. But it does not include burning, or stepping on, or tearing apart, or flicking other insects for fun.

Tulip

Exactly. We don't ever needlessly hurt another. That would disrupt the balance we've achieved. We all serve a purpose here, and we all respect each other and the jobs we do in order for all of us to live harmoniously together.

Dev

Oh. I...I didn't know that. Uhm...what jobs do you all do?

Daisy

Well, Tulip and I pollinate flowers of all sorts, including the flowers of everything in that garden, like the tomatoes and the pumpkins and the strawberries you are constantly eating. Without us pollinating those, you would never have any fruit to eat.

8

Oh, and 7 and I, along with all of our sisters, dig tunnels under the ground, which helps aerate the soil and helps water circulate down there.

7

We also collect any decaying food and turn it into good soil.

Terra

Which is also what I do with all the dead leaves and petals and such that fall on the ground. I eat all of that stuff and turn it into nutrient rich dirt. And by doing so, we worms help everything that grows out of the ground to grow big and strong.

Dev

Wow. I mean, that's what my parents told me, but I thought they were lying. That's really cool. Uhm...what do you do?

Dilli

Me? Oh, I do all that stuff too. But I'm a little more hardcore. I eat everything...including poop; sometimes my own.

Dev

...Ew.

Daisy

That's not a big deal, we eat our own vomit.

Dev

You do?! Why?

Tulip

Because it's delicious. Don't you like honey? That's our vomit.

Dev

Uhhh...I used to.

Terra

Well listen Bev-

7

It's Deb.

Tulip

I thought it was Bed.

Dev

Actually, it's Dev.

Terra

Right. Bev. Listen. Anax has brought you here for a reason. And I'm afraid until she is satisfied that you've learned your lesson, you'll be stuck here.

Dilli

And probably eaten...

7

Which would serve you right.

Dev

Eaten?!

Tulip

Oh, most definitely.

Dev

But I have learned my lesson! I'm so, so sorry! I didn't know any of this stuff! I promise I won't ever hurt any of you again! Or any other insect! I swear!

Dilli

Actually, I'm a crustacean.

Daisy

Oh, you can hurt mosquitoes, those things are a menace.

8

She's right.

Terra

Bev. You say you won't hurt us anymore, but how can we believe you? How can she? You've hurt so many of our kind and...

(Before Terra can finish, a huge gust of wind blows through the grass and a dark shadow appears over everything. All the characters onstage freeze and look up. And as the sound of a starling clicking and chirping is heard, an enormous black and orange beak falls from the ceiling. It rises and falls repeatedly in between chirps, as all the characters scream and scatter to hide. Dev falls to the ground near to Terra, who has crawled back into the entrance hole.)

Terra

Bev! Now's your chance! Show Anax that you've changed! That you've learned your lesson!

Dev

How?! What do I do?!

Terra

Lead the starling away from us! Protect us!

Dev

But how?

Terra

Run. Run as fast as you can.

Dev

What?! No way! What if it eats me?!

Terra

If it doesn't eat you, something else will! This is the only way to show Anax that you mean what you said. Now go! Run!

(Dev considers this for a few seconds and then stands up and screams and runs. The beak follows him as he zigzags through the grass and runs off stage. Upon his exit, another gust of wind and the shadow follows him offstage. Blackout.)

Scene 4

Back in the yard. Dev is on the floor, near the strawberries, lying on his back with a starling sitting on his chest, pecking at him. Lights up.

Dev

(Wakes and gasps) Go away...go away bird.

(Shoos the bird away and it flies off stage. He then sits up and immediately looks around on the floor searching for his new friends)

Where are you? Where are you? Come on, come on. *(finds them)* There you are! Oh good! Let's see, is everyone here? There's the roly polly, and the ants, oh, there's the worm. Where're the bees? *(Tulip and Daisy fly up and out of the grass and buzz around Dev a bit before flying off)* Oh good. You're all safe.

O.V

Dev? What're you doing out there?

Dev

Just making sure they're safe.

O.V

Making sure who's safe?

Dev

The bugs.

O.V

Oh really? That's a nice change.

Dev

Yeah. *(picking up Dilli)* Well, actually, one of them is a crusty ocean, whatever that means.

Black out
End of play