

GARDEN STATE

-

Sam Hamashima



Dramatists Guild of America

samhamashima.com

POLLY
A bumblebee lost in the forest.

WATTSON
An idealistic firefly.

JOULIE
Wattson work partner. Tough.

ROLY-POLICE
In search for Queen Beatrice. Can be as many
as you want!

4 humans. Genders are interchangeable. They are bugs after all ☺

GARDEN STATE was commissioned by Lyric Stage Company of Boston as part of the Play at Home Project.

Light trickles like soft candlewax onto a forest's clearing. Pouring in through the canopy above created from Oak, Magnolia, and Dogwood. Perhaps it is a nectarine sky, the color of 10 minutes till sundown. Perhaps it is the blue 30 minutes till.

*The wind whispers.
The trees spread rumors.
Nimbus Clouds of Pollen create
a spring fog.*

The clearing has oil lamps hanging from tree limbs.

A bumblebee named POLLY walks into the clearing. The bumblebee, is a bumblebee. SHE wears those aviation goggles from the old times and an aviator pilot's cap. SHE has a backpack (black and yellow I'm sure) over her shoulders. A canteen for water in one hand. A jar of glittering pollen in the other. Maybe this glittering pollen cakes the bumblebee's legs and arms, a mark of the bee's hard work.

Is POLLY limping? Breathing heavily?

POLLY
(loudly)

Hello?

POLLY looks side to side.

POLLY
(loudly)

Is anybody there? I seem to have lost my way.

POLLY droops to the ground tirelessly. Perhaps wiping sweat from her Bumblebrow.

SHE opens her backpack and pulls out a map.

SHE inspects the map closely. Can she find her way home?

Suddenly.

A disturbance.

A rustling from the Magnolia Groves.

POLLY

Who's there!?

POLLY jolts from her sitting. SHE brings out a stinger from her backpack. POLLY's hands shake.

POLLY

I'm warning you! I know how to defend myself!

Suspense as the MANGOLIA GROVES continue to shake. A figure emerges carrying a large flashlight and a ladder. It is a FIREFLY.

THE FIREFLY is a nocturnal fellow. HE is dressed in clothing of a Victorian Lamplighter.

WATTSON

Huh?

POLLY

Who are you?

WATTSON
(curiously)

A bumblebee?

POLLY

Stay where you are!

WATTSON does not follow orders. WATTSON circles about.

WATTSON

Why, I's always told that you Bumblebees were creatures of the day.

WATTSON inspects his pocketwatch.

WATTSON

And my watch says here that it's close to nightfall...

POLLY

Yes. This is true.

WATTSON leans the ladder against one of the tree trunks begins to climb it to light the lamps.

WATTSON turns around to see POLLY still holding the stinger in defense.

WATTSON

Don't trouble yourself. You can put that away.

POLLY is not sure WATTSON can be trusted.

POLLY

How do I know I can trust you?

WATTSON

You want to see my credentials?

WATTSON slips out of his pocket, his wallet. From his wallet, HE takes out an identification card. Throws it to POLLY.

As POLLY examines the card, WATTSON explains.

WATTSON

My name is Wattson. I'm a fed. Forest Electrical Director. Light the way at night.

*POLLY continues to inspect the ID card.
WATTSON holds up his flashlight.*

WATTSON

See this? Fed specific. Engraved with the Forest Seal on it. I'm a good guy. Promise.

POLLY lowers the stinger.

POLLY

Sorry. Just can't be too careful.

WATTSON

It's good to be careful. Especially a day creature like you. You day creatures, you don't know much of the night's danger...what're you doing here? This time of day?

POLLY

I was. Erm. I was just pollinating you know.

WATTSON

Don't look to me like a worker bee...

POLLY

And then this glass jar. just appeared. out of nowhere!

WATTSON

Ah. Been there.

POLLY

Yeah. I just. Got so turned around. I barely escaped.

WATTSON

Must've had a run in with Madison.

POLLY

...Madison?

POLLY staggers to the ground again holding her head.

WATTSON

Whoa there! You alright, Miss?

POLLY

I've got a really bad headache.

WATTSON runs to POLLY

WATTSON

Must just be dehydrated is all. Let's get you some water.

WATTSON gets POLLY's canteen and unscrews the cap.

But there's not a drop of water left.

POLLY

Ran out. A. A while ago.

WATTSON

Hold on.

WATTSON runs towards the clearing he came from.

WATTSON

Ay! Joulie! Joulie, get over here!

JOULIE

What do you want now, ay?

Another firefly, JOULIE, stands at the clearing with a flashlight.

JOULIE

Who's this?

WATTSON

Bumblebee. Lost on her way home. Got any water left?

JOULIE

Wattson, this isn't part of the job. Let the Roly-Police deal with it.

WATTSON

Oy, come on Joulie.

JOULIE

Fine.

JOULIE brings out a bottle of water. Flings it over towards WATTSON and the BUMBLEBEE.

POLLY

Thank you.

WATTSON unscrews the cap and gives it to POLLY..

POLLY, weak, takes a drink.

JOULIE pockets her flashlight and begins to climb the ladder WATTSON laid against the tree. SHE begins to light the lamps with matches from her pocket.

JOULIE

Just ridiculous aint it?

JOULIE lights a lamp. Climbs, lights another lamp.

JOULIE

You'd think with these fancy new electrical flashlights, these lanterns'd be running on electricity now.

WATTSON

Progress is slow, Joulie.

JOULIE

Just sayin. Seems a bit archaic having to light these lamps with matches while I got a flashlight in my back pocket.

JOULIE jumps down from the ladder. Turns to face POLLY.

JOULIE

What's your deal anyway? It's about nightfall. Ain't a world for a creature like you past sundown.

POLLY

My name's Polly. Worker Bee.

JOULIE and WATTSON share a look.

WATTSON

You're from The Hive.

POLLY

No I'm not.

JOULIE

Oh, come on, Polly. With that equipment you got? Those goggles have been out of regulation for ages. You ain't no worker bee. You're from The Hive.

JOULIE gives a mocking bow.

JOULIE

How lucky are us lowly lamplighters to be graced with such esteemed presence.

WATTSON

Hey, knock it off Joulie.

JOULIE chuckles.

JOULIE

Why should I? You know what The Hive thinks about us

JOULIE changes to a mocking bumblebee tone.

JOULIE

"Oh those poor pathetic lamplighters! So bad with their money. I'd give them some help, but they just can't be trusted. bzzz"

POLLY

Okay. Fine. I'm from The Hive.

JOULIE

"Bee-ngo"

POLLY

But I came out here cause I...cause I wanted to see what it was like. Out here. And then. I. um. I got stuck in a glass jar.

JOULIE

Oy, been there.

JOULIE winces. Perhaps JOULIE rubs her shoulder or leg from a previous glass jar experience.

JOULIE

Hm. Let's take a look at that map.

JOULIE comes over to WATTSON and POLLY. All three look at the map together.

The sky has grown darker by this point.

JOULIE

Well. This is where we are.

JOULIE points.

JOULIE

Just a few wingbeats from Thyme Square and Madison's Square Garden.

WATTSON

Bleh. *Madison.*

JOULIE

She's the girl with the glass jar.

POLLY

Brown hair? Wear's pink bow in her hair?

JOULE

That's the one.

WATTSON

She's a menace.

POLLY

We need to tell The Hive about her. She's dangerous.

WATTSON and JOULIE laugh.

WATTSON

We have. *For Months*. I keep telling Lady Bug to do something, but no movement on it.

JOULIE

What you think Lady Bug can do, eh? She can't even even get Queen Beatrice to listen to our complaints.

POLLY

What are your complaints?

WATTSON and JOULIE share a look.

WATTSON

No offense, Polly, but a bee wouldn't understand.

POLLY

Why not?

JOULIE

He's right, Polly.

POLLY

Well why don't I try?

WATTSON

Queen Beatrice really only cares about issues pertaining to the bees. I mean, have you read any of *The Garden's* articles lately?

POLLY

I don't really read *The Garden*.

JOULIE

Bet you only get your news from the BeeBeeCee.

POLLY

I mean, I listen to Nature Public Radio as well.

JOULIE scoffs.

WATTSON

(listing)

The Mothia is out of control, the Roly-Police are in another corruption scandal—

JOULIE

And tell her about the Mantises.

POLLY

The Mantises?

WATTSON lets out a sigh.

WATTSON

The Mantises insist on praying in school.

JOULIE

In school! I mean. This is *the Garden State*. We were founded on the separation of—

POLLY

I had no idea.

WATTSON

I'm sure you're not alone in not knowing. BeeBeeCee and Nature Public Radio don't report these things.

JOULIE

It's Bee Media. Bee Media wouldn't ever critique the Bee Queen.

POLLY is embarrassed by her lack of knowledge on the subjects.

JOULIE

The Hive is 10 wingbeats north of here. Next time you masquerade as one of the working bugs, at least know how to read a map.

POLLY begins to get her things together, preparing for flight.

WATTSON

You'll never make it before nightfall.

POLLY

I can make it.

WATTSON

Would be taking a huge risk.

POLLY

I *said* I can make it.

UNKNOWN VOICES

Freeze! In the name of the Queen!

THE ROLY-POLICE, with weapons, appear out of nowhere. Surrounding POLLY, WATTSON, and JOULIE.

JOULIE

What?

WATTSON

Oh buzz off! We're just doing our jobs.

ROLY-POLICE OFFICER 1

Then who is that?

ROLY-POLICE OFFICER 1 points to POLLY.

ROLY- POLICE OFFICER 2

You stealing from an innocent bee?

JOULIE

Not at all! She needed help getting home.

BUMBLEBEE GUARDS begin to close in on WATTSON, JOULIE, and POLLY.

ROLY-POLICE OFFICER 1

Take them into custody.

THE ROLY-POLICE begin to handcuff WATTSON and JOULIE. Reading them Miranda Rights.

JOULIE

Polly, do something!

POLLY is frozen. Should she defy the Roly-Police?

POLLY makes up her mind.

POLLY

By order of Queen Beatrice I demand you to stop!

The Roly-Police freeze.

POLLY takes off her aviator pilot's cap revealing a crown. SHE is QUEEN BEATRICE!

JOULIE, WATTSON, and the ROLY-POLICE are stunned.

POLLY

Free these fireflies. They have done nothing wrong.

ROLY-POLICE OFFICER 1

But. But.

POLLY

Do as I say. I am Queen. Or shall we have a talk on the corruption these fine lamplighters have been telling me about?

ROLY-POLICE OFFICERS look at each other uncomfortably.

The ROLY-POLICE free WATTSON and JOULIE.

ROLY-POLICE OFFICER 2

It is important you come with me now, Queen Beatrice. You must get back to The Hive immediately. Everyone is concerned.

POLLY

You will escort me. But first, I must speak.

WATTSON

Queen Beatrice I—

POLLY

Please. Call me Polly.

WATTSON

...Polly. I. I am so sorry for what we said. We didn't know. We had no idea—

POLLY

No. *I* had no idea.

POLLY walks to JOULIE and WATTSON. SHE puts an arm on JOULIE's shoulder.

POLLY

You're right. About it all. I had no idea about the Mothia or the Roli-Police. My advisors, the Hive Five, they told me just of the good things. Told me what to listen to and what news to watch. I knew Lady Bug was trying to meet with me, but the Hive Five kept telling me how little importance it was.

I took a flight tonight just to clear my head. I disguised myself

Then that girl, Madison, trapped me. A threat that it sounds has not reached my ears *for months*. Does the Roly-Police have an explanation for this? That this threat to the Garden State had not reached my ears?

The ROLY-POLICE look down ashamed.

POLLY

If I had just looked beyond what my Hive Five were saying. Looked beyond the news I was being shown, I probably would've known to stay away from Madison's Square Garden...but I had no idea. I have been left in the dark this whole time.

JOULIE

Queen Beatrice it's alright—

POLLY

Please, join me in The Hive?

WATTSON

The Hive?

POLLY

The Hive Five. They are all bees. I see now how wrong that is. How much I need more bugs across the Garden State to be heard. I can only do this if they're in my council. Please. I have failed you a leader, but maybe this can be the remedy.

WATTSON and JOULIE look at each other. WATTSON nods at JOULIE.

JOULIE

We accept!

WATTSON and JOULIE bow to POLLY.

POLLY

Let us go to The Hive. My fellow Bees have some learning to do.

WATTSON, JOULIE, POLLY follow the ROLY-POLICE out of the Forest thicket. The group heads for THE HIVE.

END OF PLAY