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JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

by Roald Dahl

Adapted for the stage by
David Wood

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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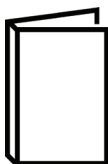
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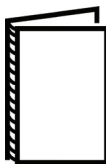


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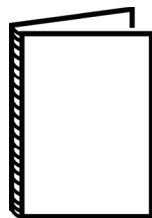
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Wood is often referred to as “the national children’s dramatist” (*The Times*). His plays are performed worldwide, and include *The Gingerbread Man*, *The Plotters of Cabbage Patch Corner*, *Save the Human* and *The Ideal Gnome Expedition*. Among his adaptations are eight Roald Dahl stories (*The BFG*, *The Twits*, *The Witches*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Danny the Champion of the World*, *George’s Marvellous Medicine* and *The Magic Finger*), Dick King-Smith’s *Babe*, *The Sheep-Pig*, Eric Hill’s *Spot’s Birthday Party*, HRH The Prince of Wales’s *The Old Man of Lochnagar*, Philip Pullman’s *Clockwork*, Judith Kerr’s *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* (Olivier Award nomination in 2012), Sam McBratney’s *Guess How Much I Love You*, the award-winning *Tom’s Midnight Garden* (from Philippa Pearce’s novel) and Michelle Magorian’s *Goodnight Mister Tom*, which opened at Chichester, toured twice, played seasons at the Phoenix Theatre and the Duke of York’s in the West End and won the Olivier Award in 2013 for Best Entertainment and Family.

His book, *Theatre for Children* (Faber & Faber, 1999), is a set text on both sides of the Atlantic. Film screenplays include *Swallows and Amazons* and the award-winning *Back Home* (from Michelle Magorian’s novel). For The Queen’s eightieth birthday, he wrote *The Queen’s Handbag*, broadcast live from Buckingham Palace Gardens to 8 million BBC1 viewers. With composer Richard Taylor, he adapted L. P. Hartley’s *The Go-Between*, which won Best Musical Production at the Theatre UK Awards 2012, and played a West End season at the Apollo Theatre, starring Michael Crawford, in 2016.

His children’s books, many created with illustrator Richard Fowler, include *Mole’s Bedtime Story*, *Funny Bunny’s Magic Show* and *A Present for Father Christmas*, and he regularly visits schools with the message “Books Are Fun!”. He also performs *The David Wood Magic and Music Show* in theatres all over the UK. As an actor, David played on stage opposite Sir Michael Redgrave in John Mortimer’s *A Voyage Round My Father*, on the big screen with Malcolm McDowell in Lindsay Anderson’s *If...* and, on the small screen, starring opposite Shelley Winters in *The Vamp*.

He is President (and former Chair) of Action for Children's Arts and a trustee of The Story Museum. In 2004, he was awarded the OBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours.

Visit his website at www.davidwood.org.uk

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JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

First performed by the Birmingham Stage Company at the Old Rep. on 21 November 2001, and on tour; and by the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff, on 16 November 2001. The casts were as follows:

BIRMINGHAM

JAMES	Joel Chalfen
OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER	Shaun Glanville
MISS SPIDER	Laura McFall
CENTIPEDE	Timothy Speyer
LADYBIRD	Claire Jeater
EARTHWORM	Benedict Martin
TV REPORTER	Leigh Palmer
TOUR GUIDE	Nansi Hywel-Davies

CHILDREN'S CAST (several teams):

Dominic Allen	Charlotte Raybould
Adam Bristo	Sam Bennett
Ricky Poppett	Lauren Clarke
Charlotte Pearson	Joshua Stanley
Phillipa Pearson	Ben Griffin
Ailsa Carr	Colette Farrelly
Kate Evans	Mark Robinson
Kaley Green	Melissa Knight
Charlotte Tarbuck	Natalie Waterson
Rebecca Malcolm	James Houlbrooke
Nico Spencer	Khale Twomey
Todd Cooper	Jenny Peters
Joe Smallman	Harriet Easton
Lauren Walker	Richard Easton
Charlotte Gethin	Anna Fox
Luke Russell	Richard Haddock
Producer Neal Foster	Lighting Designer Brian Harris
Director Graeme Messer	Music Mary McAdam
Designer Jackie Trousdale	

CARDIFF

JAMES

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER

MISS SPIDER

CENTIPEDE

LADYBIRD

EARTHWORM

Ryland Teifi

Matthew Bailey

Bethan Morgan

Simon Thorne

Lucy Rivers

Mark O'Connor

YELLOW TEAM

Sejal Bhatt

Jeni Calnan

Jennifer Drage

Laura Drage

Williams Evans

Lucy Evans

Sarah Glover

Adam King

Tess Lewis

Claudia Medina

Madeleine Morgan

Louise Poolman

BLUE TEAM

Branwen Bennell

Stephen Colbourne

Sophie Gamlin

Daisy-Alys Langrish

Penny Lloyd-Williams

Adele MacGregor

Natasha Peets

Ian Rawle

Kathryn Richards

Elisha Robinson

Hannah Stoate

Director **Phil Clark**

Assistant Director **Carri Munn**

Designer **Sean Crowley**

Lighting Designer **Ceri James**

Music **Paula Gardiner**

CHARACTERS

JAMES, our young hero; from a downtrodden, lonely child, he develops into a brave “captain” of the insect band; he acts as narrator, too

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER, elderly, genial, courteous, avuncular, musical (he plays the violin); he helps narrate

MISS SPIDER, occasionally sharp, even a little sinister, but ultimately kind; her marathon thread-spinning to help save the peach is truly heroic

CENTIPEDE, a sparky, cocky, warm-hearted Jack-the-lad

LADYBIRD, posh though not prissy, pretty though not vain, volatile though level-headed

EARTHWORM, not only blind, but a pessimist, a doom merchant whose standing in the group and whose self-esteem improves no end, thanks to James

The other characters they play within the storytelling framework are (with suggested doubling in brackets):

NEW YORK TOUR GUIDE (Miss Spider)

MR TROTTER (Centipede)

MRS TROTTER (Ladybird)

RHINOCEROS (Miss Spider, Earthworm)

AUNT SPONGE (Ladybird)

AUNT SPIKER (Centipede)

OLD MAN (Earthworm)

TV REPORTER (Old-Green-Grasshopper)

CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN MARY (Centipede)

FIRST OFFICER (Miss Spider)

SECOND OFFICER (Ladybird)

TOURISTS, VISITORS, SHARKS, SEAGULLS, FISHES, OCTOPUS, NEW YORK CITIZENS and other roles could be played by a children’s chorus, puppets or members of the audience.

GENERAL THOUGHTS ON CONCEPT AND STYLE

The brief was to adapt this much-loved story for performance by six actors and to retain as much of the magic of the story as possible. The fantasy events and problems of scale had to be presented in an acceptable and believable manner, using theatrical devices when it was impossible to tell the story naturalistically.

The solution was to show James and his Insect friends in their New York home, described at the very end of the book. This happy community, having introduced themselves to the audience, could then tell the story as a play within a play. The Insects could then play all the other characters in the story and also help James to narrate. Using a combination of doubling and the use of a range of improvised dressing-up clothes and props, plus shadow-puppets and/or rod puppets and the basic setting of their New York home (the stone of the giant peach), the problems of cast numbers and staging could be kept under control. There would be opportunities for lighting, sound and staging effects to enhance the magical nature of the story. There would be optional opportunities to involve a “chorus” of children.

Another advantage of this approach was that the gender of individual characters in the story need not prove problematic. Indeed the audience should find it fun to see two of the Insects, whether male or female (or one of each), playing the two nasty Aunt characters. Furthermore, seeing the Insect actors help James to create the story would provide extra interest for the audience. Many of them would already know the story and would be wondering how it would be presented. They would have seen the movie, with all its sophisticated special effects. The stage adaptation should not try to emulate the movie, rather find novel and imaginative ways of making the story happen.

Both original productions, though different in style, successfully embraced this concept, and the enthusiastic audiences quickly responded to James’s telling of his own story. Involvement was increased by this style of storytelling.

Future productions may be able to employ a larger cast and avoid the Insects having to double and treble the smaller roles. This will be perfectly acceptable as long as James is still our

main storyteller. One idea is for him to involve the tourists seen at the start of the play – they could “help” the Insects act out the story.

MUSIC

Although the adaptation is not really a musical, music plays a vital part, particularly as underscoring. Also, it may be appropriate to set some of Dahl’s rhymes to music, to become songs. Some of the musical accompaniment should be provided by the Old-Green-Grasshopper, who, in the book, is respected as a violinist. Alternatively, or in addition, there could be other members of the company who might play a variety of musical instruments.

But Dahl’s rhymes are also particularly suited to speaking, in chorus or divided into solos and groups. Percussion could provide accompaniment. Songs are not essential. In the San Diego Junior Theatre production, rap rhythms were successfully used to accompany the rhymes.

SET

The basic setting represents the home of James and the Insects in New York. The centrepiece is the stone of the giant peach. This is a permanent revolving structure. On one side is the exterior, which has been converted to look like a house or cottage, complete with a door and windows, climbing plants, etc. But the basic shape and colour should make it recognisably still the stone. When revolved, the interior is revealed. The play is constructed so that we do not see inside the stone until the scene in the story in which James first meets the Insects. However, it would be appealing if it is furnished and looks attractive. Steps or a staircase should lead up to a balcony area, which can be used when we need to see the characters on top of the peach (at sea). This could be achieved with the peach stone exterior in view to the audience, covered up to the roof by a cloth or screen representing all or part of the peach exterior. This could be flown in or brought in from the side.

A sky cloth backs the set, with lighting for the sky and projection for the New York skyline and the rainbow. A flown cloth downstage could be used for shadow or rod puppetry and the undersea sequence. A strip of silk could represent the sea.

Surrounding the stone is James's New York garden with a stylised tree or a street lamp to "become" the peach tree. A garden table and chairs.

The peach stone exterior would also be used as the Aunts' cottage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

David Wood wishes to thank Neal Foster (Birmingham) and Phil Clark (Cardiff) for commissioning this play, and Graeme Messer and Phil Clark for directing such successful premiere productions.

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ACT I

In front of a New York skyline is a small corner of Central Park. It is dominated by a giant peach stone, converted to an attractive dwelling, complete with front door and windows. Smoke spirals from a small chimney. The yard, or garden, has the occasional bush and a tree or contemporary street light. There is a garden table with chairs, and an area for chopping logs. A mixture of the homespun, the charmingly rural and, because we are in New York, the metallic hi-tech.

As the audience arrives, distant New York traffic noises are heard, and perhaps the sound of open-air musicians entertaining the passers-by. Perhaps New York kids rollerblade or skateboard in front of the giant peach stone.

*The house lights stay up as the **TOUR GUIDE** arrives, perhaps through the auditorium. She might be accompanied by a group of children, who eventually sit on stage. But when she talks, she includes the whole audience, who thus become tourists.*

TOUR GUIDE OK, guys, this way! All find a place to sit. That's great. Can you all hear me? Cool. This is the last, and I guess the wildest, the wackiest stop on our tour of New York, the most exciting city in the entire universe! We've been wowed by the Statue of Liberty holding high her torch of freedom. We've taken the elevator up the one hundred and two storeys of the Empire State Building. We've strolled down Broadway and shopped in Bloomingdales. But now, guys, here we are in Central Park, outside a most famous house, a kinda crazy house made of stone. Not stone as

in rock, stone as in... Let me tell you, we call New York the Big Apple, but this is the stone of a big, a giant... (*She encourages the AUDIENCE to answer.*)

AUDIENCE Peach!

TOUR GUIDE You got it! A giant peach. It's the home of a real cool guy I know you'd like to meet. His name is...

AUDIENCE James!

TOUR GUIDE You got it again! James. James Henry Trotter. Let's see if he's home. (*to one of the children*) Please, go knock on the door! (*Alternatively she knocks herself.*)

The child knocks.

After an expectant pause, the door opens and JAMES emerges. He carries a book.

It's James! (*She encourages the AUDIENCE to applaud.*) Hi, James!

JAMES (*a little shy at first*) Good afternoon. (*to the AUDIENCE*) Hallo!

AUDIENCE Hallo!

JAMES Welcome!

TOUR GUIDE I leave you in good hands! OK, James, take it away. So long, guys!

TOUR GUIDE *exits.*

Perhaps the house lights go down at this point.

JAMES (*to the AUDIENCE*) Thank you for coming. It's good to see you. Now, some of you may be wondering why a boy, an ordinary boy from England, should be living in this funny, this amazing house in Central Park, New York, America. Well, I've written all about my adventures in a book, (*He holds it up.*) *this* book. Today I'd like to tell you my story, with the help of my friends – they're part of the story – who live here with me. Would you like to meet them?

AUDIENCE (*hopefully*) Yes!

The sound of a violin is heard. JAMES reacts. The introductions are in rhyme.

JAMES First there's the Old-Green-Grasshopper,

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER *enters, acknowledging the audience as he plays his violin.*

His music is a tonic!

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Now I play the violin
In the New York Philharmonic!

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER *continues to play music as the others arrive.*

JAMES Next here comes the Ladybird,

LADYBIRD *enters, looking chic.*

Clothes are now her passion.

LADYBIRD I work on Fifth Avenue,
I'm very big in fashion!

JAMES Now please meet the Earthworm,

EARTHWORM *enters. He is blind, carrying a stick.*

LADYBIRD *meets and guides him.*

His skin's so soft that he

Advertises face creams

EARTHWORM In commercials on TV!

JAMES It's time to greet Miss Spider,

MISS SPIDER *enters, carrying a hank of rope.*

She spins the finest thread.

MISS SPIDER Now I run a factory

Making rope for ships instead!

JAMES Finally, here's Centipede,

CENTIPEDE *enters, looking successful.*

A business tycoon who's

CENTIPEDE Vice-president-in-charge-of-sales

Of high-class boots and shoes!

JAMES It won't have escaped your attention that all my friends are insects! But you may be wondering why they are such...

ALL INSECTS (*advancing*) Very large insects!

JAMES *Giant* insects! All will become clear as we tell you our story. (*He holds up the book, showing the title for the first time.*) It's called...

ALL James and the Giant Peach!

Music as all prepare for the storytelling. Props and costumes are perhaps brought on. Some characters perhaps disappear to get ready. Others perhaps get ready in view of the audience. OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER plays music as appropriate, but it may be impractical for him to play all the music. JAMES opens the book to begin the story. The book should always remain on stage, to be occasionally referred to.

JAMES Until I was four years old, I lived happily with my mother and father.

MR AND MRS TROTTER *join him – a contented family unit.*

MRS TROTTER *hands JAMES his teddy bear.*

We had a beautiful house beside the sea. There were children to play with...

Children get up and throw a ball. JAMES joins in or perhaps he plays ball with children in the AUDIENCE.

...a sandy beach to run on, and the ocean to paddle in. (*He mimes paddling.*)

Perhaps we hear seagull cries.

Then one day...

MR TROTTER James! Mummy and I are going to London!

MRS TROTTER (*pleased*) To do some shopping. Bye, darling!

JAMES (*occupied with his play*) Bye! (*He waves happily and carries on playing*)

JAMES *runs off with his friends.*

MR AND MRS TROTTER *walk, as though idly looking in shop windows. Traffic noises.*

MR TROTTER As we strolled down a crowded Regent Street, imagine our surprise, when, suddenly...

They react. Horrified.

MRS TROTTER Aaaaah! We saw an enormous...

MR TROTTER ...angry...

MRS TROTTER } (*together*) ...RHINOCEROS!
MR TROTTER }

The RHINOCEROS enters, or two actors become the RHINOCEROS, perhaps picking up an improvised prop to suggest the horn.

Aaaaaah!

VOICE Look out! It's escaped from the zoo!

The RHINOCEROS treads the ground, then charges.

MR TROTTER Quick, dear! Run!

Music as the RHINOCEROS chases MR AND MRS TROTTER round the peach stone. Shouts and screams. All three emerge the other side and run round again. This time they remain behind the peach stone.

We hear a roar, then a crunching and munching noise, followed by a huge, satisfied belch. Silence.

JAMES *sadly arrives centre, carrying a small suitcase and his teddy bear.*

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER *takes up the narration.*

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Now this, as you can well imagine, was a rather nasty experience for two such gentle parents. But at least it was quick. They were dead and gone in thirty-five seconds flat.

JAMES But I was still very much alive. And very much alone. Our lovely home was sold and I was sent away to live miles away in a queer, ramshackle house on top of a high hill. *(He knocks on the door of the peach stone.)*

The door opens and out comes AUNT SPONGE.

Good day, Auntie Sponge.

AUNT SPONGE What's good about it, you disgusting little beast? Your parents selfishly get eaten, leaving us to bring up their brat and you call it a good day? It's a bad day, a revolting day. *(She calls.)* Spiker! Look what the cat's sicked up!

AUNT SPIKER *enters. She wears spectacles.*

AUNT SPIKER What cat? We haven't got a cat! *(She sees JAMES.)* Oh, it's you, you little toad.

JAMES Hallo, Auntie Spiker.

AUNT SPIKER Shut your face! Speak when you're spoken to. *(She sees JAMES's teddy bear.)* And what's this?

JAMES My teddy.

AUNT SPIKER *(grabbing it)* Well, you won't need *that*! No teddies, no toys, no treats from now on. Get inside and get to work!

AUNT SPONGE Yes! Peel the floor and polish the spuds!

AUNT SPIKER Make the dishes and wash the beds!

AUNT SPONGE }
AUNT SPIKER } (*together*) Now!

They push JAMES indoors and smugly shake hands.

They freeze for a few lines, but as the rhymes progress they go and sit on the garden chairs. OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER plays music as two characters (possibly EARTHWORM and MISS SPIDER) approach and look at the AUNTS. Their rhymes are either spoken or sung.

EARTHWORM Aunt Sponge was terrifically fat,

MISS SPIDER And tremendously flabby at that.

EARTHWORM Her tummy and waist

MISS SPIDER Were as soggy as paste—

As AUNT SPONGE sits down...

EARTHWORM } (*together*) It was worse on the place where she
MISS SPIDER } sat!

MISS SPIDER Aunt Spiker was thin as a wire,

EARTHWORM And dry as a bone, only drier.

MISS SPIDER She was so long and thin

EARTHWORM If you carried her in

MISS SPIDER }
EARTHWORM } (*together*) You could use her for poking the fire!

AUNT SPIKER *looks daggers at EARTHWORM and MISS SPIDER, then sits with AUNT SPONGE.*

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER (*narrating*) Three whole years went by.

JAMES *enters from the peach stone, carrying two large, exotic cocktails. He delivers them to his AUNTS.*

It is bright and sunny.

James worked and worked and waited hand and foot on his aunts, who never said please and never said thank you. He had no friends, he played no games.

JAMES Aunts, can I climb the old peach tree?

AUNTS No!

JAMES Aunts, can I go on a picnic?

AUNTS Certainly not!

JAMES Aunts, can I have a book to look at?

AUNT SPONGE Of course you can't!

AUNT SPIKER Books only give you ideas!

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER One hot summer's day, James was down the garden, gazing wistfully at the lovely but forbidden world of woods and fields and ocean that was spread out below him like a magic carpet...

AUNT SPONGE James, what are you doing?

JAMES Nothing, Aunt.

AUNT SPIKER Nothing? How dare you do nothing!

AUNT SPONGE Lazy little lump of...

AUNT SPIKER ...laziness!

AUNT SPONGE Do something!

AUNT SPIKER Chop some wood for the kitchen stove.

JAMES *hesitates.*

JAMES But it's hot!

AUNT SPONGE Hot? What rot! I'm deliriously cool.

AUNT SPIKER And I'm coolly delicious!

The AUNTS enjoy a long swig of their drinks.

JAMES *(under his breath)* 'Cos I get all the work!

AUNT SPONGE }
AUNT SPIKER } *(together; outraged)* I beg your pardon?

JAMES *(thinking quickly)* Er... I said, "I'll get on with my work".
(He goes to the wood-chopping area.)

AUNT SPONGE Go on, then. Chop, chop!

AUNT SPIKER Ha, ha! Very good, Sponge dear. Chop, chop!
(suddenly vicious) Go on, James, chop!

AUNT SPONGE Or we'll lock you up in the cellar for a fortnight.

AUNT SPIKER With all the other rats.

AUNT SPONGE Ha, ha! Very good, Spiker dear. *(to JAMES)*
Scabby little rat!

The AUNTS cackle with laughter.

JAMES *starts work. This could be mimed or for real. The chopping sound could become percussion accompaniment for the AUNTS' rhyme/song. The AUNTS enjoy another gulp of their drink. AUNT SPONGE watches JAMES work. AUNT SPIKER looks in a hand mirror and picks her teeth.*

Ugly little brute. How fortunate he is to have such an attractive aunt.

AUNT SPIKER *(preening in the mirror)* Yes. Thank you, Sponge dear.

AUNT SPONGE Not you, Spiker dear. Moi!

AUNT SPIKER Toi?

AUNT SPONGE *(grabbing the mirror)* Moi!

AUNT SPIKER Ha!

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER *strikes up to accompany the rhyme/song, and joins in as narrator.*

AUNT SPONGE I look and smell,

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Aunt Sponge declared,

AUNT SPONGE As lovely as a rose!

Just feast your eyes upon my face, observe my shapely nose!

Behold my heavenly silky locks!

And if I take off both my socks

You'll see my dainty toes.

AUNT SPIKER But don't forget,

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Aunt Spiker cried,

AUNT SPIKER How much your tummy shows!

AUNT SPONGE *reacts furiously. She transfers her anger to JAMES.*

AUNT SPONGE (*shouting*) James, chop faster!

The tempo increases as OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER resumes.

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Aunt Sponge went red. Aunt Spiker said,

AUNT SPIKER (*grabbing back the mirror*) My sweet, you cannot win,

Behold *my* gorgeous curvy shape, my teeth, my charming grin!

Oh beauteous me! How I adore

My radiant looks! And please ignore

The pimple on my chin.

AUNT SPONGE My dear old trout!

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Aunt Sponge cried out,

AUNT SPONGE You're only bones and skin!

AUNT SPIKER *reacts furiously. She transfers her anger to JAMES.*

AUNT SPIKER (*shouting*) James, chop faster. Faster!

The tempo increases. AUNT SPONGE stands and poses.

AUNT SPONGE Such loveliness as I possess can only truly shine
in Hollywood!

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Aunt Sponge declared.

AUNT SPONGE Oh, wouldn't that be fine!

I'd capture all the nations' hearts!

They'd give me all the leading parts!

The stars would all resign!

AUNT SPIKER *stands and approaches.*

AUNT SPIKER I think you'd make,

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER Aunt Spiker said,

AUNT SPIKER A lovely Frankenstein!

The AUNTS start arguing ferociously. JAMES stops working to watch.

AUNT SPONGE Aah! You slagheap!

AUNT SPIKER You dunghill!

AUNT SPONGE You skinny scumbag!

AUNT SPIKER You podgy pigsbladder!

AUNT SPONGE You...

AUNT SPIKER You...

AUNT SPONGE }
AUNT SPIKER } (*together*) Aaaaaaah!

They start fighting. JAMES roars with laughter at the squabbling AUNTS. Suddenly they notice him... They advance on him. He stops laughing.

What's the matter with you?

AUNT SPONGE Get on with your work!

AUNT SPIKER You lazy, good-for-nothing brute!

AUNT SPONGE You disgusting little worm!

JAMES (*with a heartfelt cry*) Oh Auntie Sponge! And Auntie Spiker! Couldn't we all – *please* – just for once – go down to the seaside on the bus? It isn't very far – and I feel so hot and awful and lonely...

AUNT SPONGE How dare you!

AUNT SPIKER Ungrateful little wretch!

AUNT SPONGE Beat him! (*She grabs JAMES.*)

AUNT SPIKER I most certainly will. (*She goes to strike JAMES, then stops.*) I shall beat you later when I'm at full strength. Now get out of our sight!

AUNT SPONGE And give us some peace!

The AUNTS stamp angrily into the peach stone.

JAMES, after a stunned pause, bursts into tears. He stumbles away to as private a place as he can find, near the street lamp/old peach tree. He covers his face with his hands and sobs helplessly and hopelessly. **OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER**, playing a hauntingly sad tune, approaches **JAMES**.

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER (*softly*) It was at this point of James's story that something rather peculiar happened, something that led to so many even more peculiar things. Magical, incredible things...

The lighting fades to suggest dusk. An owl hoots. OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER lurks in the shadows to musically accompany the scene.

Suddenly we become aware of a small OLD MAN, carrying a stick, standing near JAMES. He should seem to have appeared by magic from nowhere.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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