

## James and the Giant Peach Audition Sides

EARTHWORM

You are absolutely off your head! How on earth do you propose to get a loop of string around a seagull's neck? I suppose you're going to fly up there yourself and catch it!

CENTIPEDE

The boy's dotty!

LADYBUG

Let him finish! Go on James. How *would* you do?

JAMES

With bait!

GLOWWORM

Bait! What sort of bait?

JAMES

With a worm, of course. Seagulls love worms, didn't you know that? And luckily for us, we have here the biggest, fattest, juiciest Earthworm...

EARTHWORM

*You can stop right there!*

ALL (except EARTHWORM and JAMES)

Go on! Go on!

JAMES

The seagulls have already spotted him. That's why there are so many of them circling around. But they daren't come down to get him while all the rest of us are standing here. So this is what...

EARTHWORM

Stop! Stop, stop, stop! I won't have it! I refuse! I... I... I... I...

CENTIPEDE

My dear Earthworm, you're going to be eaten anyway, so what difference does it make whether it's sharks or seagulls?

EARTHWORM

I won't do it!

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER

Why don't we hear what the plan is first?

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EARTHWORM

I don't give a hoot what the plan is! I'm not going to be pecked to death by a bunch of seagulls!

CENTIPEDE

You will be a martyr. I shall respect you for the rest of my life.

JAMES

But he won't *have* to give his life! Now listen to me. This is what we'll do... (ALL huddle around JAMES as he whispers the plan.)

OLD-GREEN-GRASHOPPER

Why, it's absolutely brilliant!

EARTHWORM

Oh, I shall be pecked to death!

CENTIPEDE

Of course you won't!

EARTHWORM

I will, I know I will! And I won't even be able to see them coming at me because I have no eyes! (JAMES goes over and puts his arm on the EARTHWORM's shoulder.)

JAMES

I won't let them touch you. I promise I won't! But we've got to hurry! Look down there! Action stations! Jump to it! There's not a moment to lose! All hands below deck except Earthworm!

ALL (except EARTHWORM and JAMES)

Yes, yes! Come on! Let's hurry!

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EARTHWORM

I wonder where we'll finish up this time.

CENTIPEDE

Who cares? Seagulls always go back to the land sooner or later.

JAMES

Wow! Didn't it seem as if the people on that ship really got excited when they saw us? But then, I suppose we probably did appear a little peculiar.

LADYBUG

What do you mean, James?

JAMES

Well... what I mean is... is... is...

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER

What he means is that we all look mighty strange to human beings. And why wouldn't we? After all. They have their ears attached to the sides of their heads.

JAMES

Doesn't everybody?

ALL (except JAMES)

Ha... ha... ha... ha...

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER

Where, for example, do you think I keep my ears?

JAMES

I... don't... know.

OLD-GREEN-GRASSHOPPER

Right here. One of each side of my tummy.

EARTHWORM

And I swallow soil!

LADYBUG

And without charging a penny, I gobble up all the nasty little insects that are gobbling up all the farmers' crops. I am the farmers' best friend.

JAMES

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I think you're wonderful. It seems that almost *everyone* around here is loved! How nice this is!

CENTIPEDE

Not me! I am a pest and I'm proud of it! Oh, I am such a shocking, dreadful pest!

EARTHWORM

Hear, hear.

JAMES

But what about you, Spider? Aren't you also much loved in the world?

SPIDER

Oh... no... I am not loved at all. And yet I do nothing but good. All day long I catch flies and mosquitoes in my webs. I am a decent person.

JAMES

I know you are.

SPIDER

It is very unfair the way spiders are treated. Why, only last week your own horrible Aunt Sponge flushed my poor dear father down the drain in the bath. I watched the whole thing from a corner up in the ceiling. It was ghastly.

JAMES

But isn't it unlucky to kill a spider!?

CENTIPEDE

Of course it's unlucky to kill a spider! Look what happened to Aunt Sponge after she'd done that! *Bump!* We all felt it, didn't we, as the Peach went over her?

SPIDER

It was very satisfactory. Will you sing us a song about it, please?

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SPONGE

Why did we have to get up so early, Spiker? Why... it's still dark outside.

SPIKER

Well... if an early bird catches the worm, then two early aunts will catch the suckers... ha... ha... ha...

SPONGE

Ha... ha... ha... that's funny... ha... ha... (pause) I... don't... get it, Spiker! What do you mean?

SPIKER

Money! We're out here to make money, Sponge! Get it? Make money! *M-o-n-e-y!* We shall make a fortune today. Just look at all those people coming up the hill!

SPONGE

I wonder what became of that horrid little boy of ours last night? He never did come back in, did he?

SPIKER

He probably fell down in the dark and broke his leg.

SPONGE

(Hopefully) Or his neck, maybe?

SPIKER

Just *wait* till I get my hands on him. (She waves her cane) He'll never want to stay out all night again by the time *I've* finished with him. Good gracious me! What's that awful noise?

SPONGE

Spiker, I know this sounds silly, but I... it... looks as if the fence is breaking... and... the Peach is... the Peach is...

SPIKER

Are you ill, Sponge? Are you? *Are you?* You must be... (SPIKER notices the Peach moving towards them.) Oh, no! It... can't... be...

SPONGE

*Move, Spiker! Out of my way!*

SPIKER

Shove off, Sponge! Me first!

SPONGE

*No, no, no! Stay away!*

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LITTLE OLD MAN

Come closer to me, little boy. Come right up close to me, and I will show you something wonderful. (The LOM hobbles a step or two nearer to JAMES, then puts a hand into the pocket of his jacket and takes out a small, white paper bag. He whispers.) You see this? (He waves the bag in front of JAMES' face.) You know what this is, my dear? You know what's inside this little bag? (He comes still closer to JAMES, so close that he is only a few inches away.) Take a look, my dear. (He opens the bag and lets JAMES look inside.) *Listen* to them! Listen to them move! There's more power and magic in these little green things than in all the rest of the world put together.

JAMES

But... but... what are they? (He pauses.) Where do they come from?

LITTLE OLD MAN

AH-ha... you'd never guess that! (He suddenly jumps back and begins waving his stick madly in the air.) Crocodile tongues! One thousand long, slimy crocodile tongues boiled up in the skull of a dead witch for twenty days and nights with the eyeballs of a lizard! Add the fingers of a young monkey, the gizzard of a pig, the beak of a green parrot, the juice of a porcupine, and three spoonfuls of sugar. Stew for another week, and then let the moon do the rest! (He pushes the white bag into JAMES' hand.) *Here*. You take it! It's *yours*. (He pauses.) And now, all you've got to do is this. Take a large jug of water, and pour all the little green things into it. Then, very slowly, one by one, add ten hairs from your own head. That sets them off! In a couple of minutes the water will begin to froth and bubble furiously, and as soon as that happens you must quickly drink it all down, the whole jugful, in one gulp. And *then*, my dear, you will feel it churning and boiling in your stomach, and steam will start coming out of your mouth, and immediately after that, *marvelous* things will start happening to you, *fabulous, unbelievable* things – and you will never be miserable again in your life. Because you are miserable, aren't you? You needn't tell me! I know all about it! Now, off you go and do exactly as I say. Don't let those green things in there get away from you. Because if they do escape, then they will be working their magic upon somebody else instead of upon you! *Whoever they meet first, be it bug, insect, animal, or tree, that will be the one who gets the full power of their magic!* So, hold the bag tight! Off you go! Hurry up! Don't wait! Now's the time! Hurry!