

BENEATH THE PUPPET STAND

CHARACTER LIST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

- Narrator** A stodgy British man too interested in the affairs of others
- Kermit** Kermit the Frog
- Oscar** Oscar the Grouch, a short green furry creature with an oblong head.
Lives in a garbage can
- Ernie** Ernie of Sesame Street. Short fat man, slightly over-attached to a rubber
ducky
- Mr. Rodgers** Fred Rodgers of Mr. Rodgers Neighborhood. A tall slender elderly
gentleman in a cardigan.
- Telletubbie:** Large purple creature resembling a heroine user
- Letter G:** A speaking letter G who sounds like a stereotypical gang affiliated
Hispanic man
- The Count:** Transylvanian vampire muppet
- Big Bird:** An extremely oversized and whiny canarie.

Narrator: Every morning, day after day, you watched the cute, cuddly, puppets of PBS as they taught you your ABC's, your 123's, and how to rhyme. But when the cameras were shut off and credits rolled, felt and yellow feathers flew. Tonight, for the first time in thirty years, the residents of Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood reveal what really happened beneath the puppet stand. Kermit the Frog told us daily that "It's Not Easy Being Green." If the children only knew why...

Kermit: Kermit the frog here. Everything was just fine. For years Piggy and I were happy as clams in our little world. I should have never let her come to the set. We were all just fine until she decided she wanted to be more than just a muppet; she had to be character on Sesame Street, too. So I asked Jim Henson if she could have a shot at being on the team. Two weeks after she gets cast, she tells me that she's pregnant. I'd been doing shows for 3 year olds for the past twenty years; so I have no idea what pregnancy even is. So, of course it isn't mine. It was that Oscar the Grouch. He's the father. I should have known better when he said that he was going to give Piggy a tour of his can. His trash can I mean, not his rump.

It was the ugliest baby I've ever seen. You remember that guy Telly? Purple, with yarn or something coming out of his head? That's him. Oscar obviously couldn't provide for them-- he lives in trash can for goodness sake! So I raised the kid, and things kept quiet, but that's where all the tension started.

Narrator: Oscar the Grouch, born Oscar Grouchawitz, died of salmonella poisoning in 1996. Just after what became known as Porkergate however, he said this to Regis and Kathy Lee:

Oscar: Piggy and I have separated due to domestic differences. She lives like a pig! *beat* Get it? *beat* No? *beat* Sorry. *beat* She and Kermit are now trying to reconcile their differences. Last I heard they went to couples therapy, and have worked it out, for now. She'll come back to me though... they always do.

Narrator: On the surface, Bert and Ernie looked like television's happiest duo with... an alternative lifestyle. Sesame Street had never seen two men living together in the same home sharing bed and bathtub alike. But their alternative lifestyle led to a near tragedy that shook the entire Muppet Community.

Ernie: Yeah, Bert and I were pretty good friends. We had our differences though. He wanted soap suds. I wanted bubble bath. He kept saying, "Oh Ernie. Oh Ernie." I didn't hear him say, "Oh Ernie" as I shoved him in the trunk of a car I drove off a bridge. But, he survived and the show went on because it's all about the kids. After that, I didn't hear anymore comments about my rubber ducky being too small or blowing too many bubbles. It's just brother stuff you know.

Narrator: But we always thought that... you know...

Ernie: You thought that I was... and that... NO! I'm straight! Not that there is anything wrong with that, but... No!

Narrator: Ernie was acquitted of charges of attempted murder, public lewdness, and eating crackers in bed. *two beats* Mr. Rogers was the beloved puppeteer who made his way into every child's home. But did he make his way... elsewhere? This is his last known recording.

Mr. Rogers: Hey kids, who wants to be my neighbor? *(taking off shirt)* Can anyone point out to me where little boys and girls aren't supposed to touch grown ups? That's right. Ooooooh, that's right. That's so right. Go see King Friday! He's waiting for you in the Kingdom of Make-Believe.

Narrator: The "Beneath the Puppet Stand" producers thought it'd be inappropriate to over hype the addictions of the *Telletubbies'* cast members. so you can just see for yourself. Our lawyers will only allow us to show you this clip from a recent episode.

Telletubbie: *(Slapping arm with two fingers, shoots heroin)* Bye bye. Bye bye.

Narrator: The Letter G. In his own words.

Letter G: Yo watup! Since the show, everyone comes up to me, "Watup up, G? Wats going down, G? I'm your G-dog! G? G?!" My name is Geraldo! This show is bull, man! Beneath the puppet stand? Beneath the puppet stand, why not G-neath the puppet stand? I get stuck with gangster rap crap, meanwhile Kermit is starring in Muppet movies? I've got a story for you. So one day I was rolling down the street with my nine. You know, number nine. This vato comes up to us man, he's like, "Hey, watup, G? Watup up, Nine?" Nine just got pissed, and the vato says to us, "Hey man, it should be K-9." Nine flips out and pulls out a nine... millimeter, he pulls out a nine millimeter and he shot the guy. Nine got sent upstate, for nine years. Irony, no? Now we can't use him on the show. Who are they going to replace him with? Eight? Eight is a pansy! So they brought in 11, man. A double digit. A dirty little double digit. But the show went on. For the kids, man. It's all about the kids.

Narrator: Big Bird, the centerpiece of Sesame Street. His struggle with LSD may have been the most tragic fall and triumphant redemption of anyone in the entire neighborhood. By the time that Big Bird's imaginary friend, Snuffleupagus, began to manifest himself on the show, the producers knew that he had hit rock bottom. The count tells his story.

The Count: I used to deal to the Bird, ah ah ah. Three, three hits of acid, ah ah ah. He used to wake up in dumpster at four, four in the morning, ah ah ah.

Narrator: We will allow big bird to defend himself.

Big Bird: Day in, day out, I did the same stupid show about the same twenty-six letters and ten numbers for twenty years. OK! OK! I took the drugs! If I didn't I would just go off the deep end. Nobody, muppet or otherwise, can stay that happy all the time without some sort of chemical assistance. I'm a good person, I didn't want to do drugs, but without them I never could have done that show, but the education of America's youth was worth much more than my own health, my social life, or even my sanity. This confession was brought to you by the letters G, C, and D, and I'm giving a shout out to number nine. you'll be out soon.