

The Friendship Forest  
by  
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THE FRIENDSHIP FOREST

Lights Up: The children's TV show *Friendship Forest*.

On stage is DERRICK, a calm, happy looking British fellow reading from a large children's book. He wears slacks, a colorful T-shirt and a rainbow colored scarf. He sits on a low stool.

To the right of him, behind a low wall are two hand puppets; SQUIDGEY and NIGEL. They are both made of socks and are appointed with brightly colored button eyes and styrofoam ball noses. They have floppy ears made of felt. Squidgey is a bit larger and has a dim expression. They're supposed to represent some sort of animals...dogs, maybe? They listen intently to Derrick's story as a sweet, preschool type music plinks in the background.

DERRICK

*...and so, Lawrence the Scooter Bug and Fiona the Floundering Frog finally realized that neither one was going to budge. Lawrence would never climb the Mystical Mushroom Stump, and Fiona certainly wasn't going anywhere near the Cliff of Proverbial Parsnips. It finally boiled down to this, they were going to have to agree to disagree. And with that, they headed off to Fiona's cozy, warm mud hut for a fine meal of broasted bog worms and tasty pond scum tea. The End.*

Derrick closes the book and smiles contentedly.

NIGEL

That was a wonderful story Derrick.

DERRICK

Thank you, Nigel.

Squidgey babbles in a strange, incoherent lateral lisp.

NIGEL

Squidgey thought it was smashing, too.

DERRICK

Why thank you, Squidgey. And now, because you've both been so patient and well mannered, I have a surprise for you. We're going to welcome a special guest here on Friendship Forest.

NIGEL

A special guest? How wonderful!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Squidgey babbles in approval.

DERRICK

He's a brand new friend of ours who  
visits us all the way from America!

NIGEL

Oh my!

DERRICK

Not only that, he's a real, live cowboy!

NIGEL

Yipee!

DERRICK

So please give a warm and friendly  
Friendship Forest welcome to Mr. Texas  
Two-Sides.

TEXAS TWO-SIDES enters. He is a loud, brash, tacky cowboy. He wears woolly chaps, boots, a huge, ten gallon hat and a vest covered with corporate logos; GE, Wal-Mart, Nike, etc. Under the vest he wears a NASCAR T-shirt. He sports a bushy moustache on his lip and two six guns on his hip. He has a lump of chew jutting from his lower jaw. His eyes are wild as if he just dropped some PCP backstage. He enters with a loud...

TEXAS

YA-HOOOOOOOOOOOO!

He takes out his guns and begins firing in the air. Derrick is shocked and ducks in fright. Texas fires a few more rounds, then holsters his guns.

TEXAS (CONT'D)

How-dee, partners!

A rousing chorus of children's voices is heard.

CHILDREN

*How-dee, Texas Two-Sides!*

Derrick looks about, confused, wondering where the children's voices are coming from.

TEXAS

(To Derrick.)

How-dee, Mr. Sissy British Feller!

DERRICK

Pardon?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TEXAS  
YA-HOOOOOOOOOO!!!

DERRICK  
(Confused.)  
Well, uhm, welcome to Friendship Forest  
Mr. Two-Sides.

TEXAS  
Call me Texas.

DERRICK  
All right, Texas. I'd like to introduce  
you to my friends. This is Nigel and his  
best companion Squidgey.

NIGEL  
Greetings!

Squidgey babbles.

TEXAS  
(Aside to Derrick.)  
Hey Ichabod. Them's is a couple of  
talkin' varmints!

DERRICK  
What?

TEXAS  
You want I should plug a hole in 'em and  
spill out their greasy varmint innards?

DERRICK  
What? No!

TEXAS  
No charge.

DERRICK  
No, no, no, Mr. Texas, these are my good  
friends. We don't go about shooting our  
good friends.

A pause.

TEXAS  
Geeze, you talk funny. YA-HOOO-HOO-  
HOOOOO!!!

DERRICK  
So...you're from the great, wide open  
state of Texas, eh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TEXAS

That's right, partner. But you know what we like to call it?

The children's voices are heard again.

CHILDREN

*God's country!*

TEXAS

That's right, God's country. Land of the home, free of the brave! Where life is simple, like it should be. A place where's there's only two sides to every issue and only two ways a doin' things. And those two ways are?

The children's again.

CHILDREN

*My way or the highway!*

TEXAS

That's right, my way or the highway. Texas, a place where a man can be a man and a woman knows her place. It ain't no state for them women's libbers, I'll tell you that. Or as I like to call 'em...

CHILDREN

*Lesbians!*

TEXAS

That's right, lesbians. We tell them citified, left-leanin' carpet munchers to stay up there with their comrades in those commie hide-a-ways like Boston and New York. You know what's in New York, don't you?

CHILDREN

*Steers and queers!*

TEXAS

That's right steers and queers...without the steers, of course. So them no account, yellow bellied, knee jerk, gas savin, solar powered, equal rights pushin' Godless commie cry-babies can just stay up there in New Jew city and leave the free world to the rest of us Jesus loving Americans. And if they don't like it, they can what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHILDREN

*Kiss my rusty, dusty ass!*

TEXAS

That's right, kiss my rusty, dusty ass!  
Because it's...

CHILDREN

*My way or the highway!*

Texas draws his guns and fires in the air, prancing a bow-legged jig.

TEXAS

YA-HOOOOHOOOHOOOOOOO!!!!

At the end of his woop, Texas spits a long, brown drool at his feet.

DERRICK

(Unsure.)

Well...now...Mr. Texas, as much as I, as all of us, respect your...interesting take on things, we like to believe here in Friendship Forest that there is room for many different opinions and points of view.

Texas tilts his head and saunters over to Derrick, suspiciously.

TEXAS

(Eyeballing Derrick.)

What did you say?

DERRICK

(Nervously.)

I...uh, I was just reading a story to my good friends here about how, sometimes, people don't always see eye to eye. But that's okay. It's perfectly acceptable that people with different points of view can agree to disagree.

Texas moves in nearly nose to nose with Derrick.

TEXAS

You're one of them, ain't ya'?

DERRICK

(Very frightened.)

Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TEXAS

I bet you like open forums, don't you?

DERRICK

Uhh...

TEXAS

And intellectual conversations...and lively debate, and burning questions, and open lines of communication, and a free exchange of ideas...don't you?

DERRICK

Uh...well...yes...yes, I do.

TEXAS

You know what we call people like you?

The children chime in.

CHILDREN

*Faggots!*

TEXAS

That's right, faggots.

Texas pulls his gun and shoots Derrick in the leg. Derrick crumples to the floor, screaming and clutching his shattered kneecap as blood trickles through his fingers.

DERRICK

Ahhh! You...you shot me!

TEXAS

Ah, stop yer catterwallin'. It's just a flesh wound. Thank the good Lord I'm in a good mood today. I could-a shot ya' someplace way worse than that. Like...?

The children again.

CHILDREN

*The testicles!*

TEXAS

That's right, the testicles. So stop yer simperin' before I make yer Howard Johnson look like a piece of ground flank steak.

Nigel turns to Squidgey.

NIGEL

God in heaven, man, call security!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Squidgey runs back and forth along the half wall, babbling in fright. Texas takes aim and shoots. He misses several shots, causing Squidgey to move back and forth like a carnival shooting game. Finally Texas hits him. Squidgey screams as blood erupts from his puppet mouth.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

Squidgey!!!

Squidgey looks weakly at Nigel as he fades behind the wall, babbling his last words.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

(Tearfully.)

Oh, Squidgey...I loved you more than  
you'll ever know.

Texas saunters up to Nigel, his guns in his holster.

TEXAS

All right, you prissy, sissy-fied tube  
sock...draw.

Nigel grimaces.

NIGEL

Not in the face!

Texas draws and aims. The lights go to black as a gunshot is heard.