

How To Get To Sesame Street

By Keilani Gleave

Cast (in order of appearance)

Count Von Count

Bert

Cookie Monster

Big Bird

Oscar the Grouch

Setting: The Greenroom of the set of Sesame Street. The present. In this play the characters are playing themselves (there are no actors or voice talent controlling puppets, etc.)

(The scene opens on a greenroom, backstage of the set of sesame street. There is a table with Kraft Food Services, a couch, a chair, a large garbage can (Oscar's), and a coffee table with some old magazines and a puzzle that has been partially completed. There is a door exiting the greenroom stage left and a door that goes to a restroom stage right. Cookie Monster is holding a box of cookies, which he keeps eating. Count Von Count is in the middle of a dramatic recap. He has a box of chicken nuggets.)

COUNT: So I told them, "I ordered ten chicken nuggets, and you only gave me nine." And they said, "No we didn't." So I pulled them all out of the box and counted them! Ah ah ah! (*"Ah ah ah" is the way the COUNT laughs. Think Dracula.*)

BERT: You didn't!

COUNT: I did. One, two, three, four--

BERT: I know how to count.

COOKIE: Well did they give you another one?

COUNT: Yes. Ten nuggets! Ah ah ah.

(Big Bird Enters.)

BIG BIRD: Hey guys. I uh... I've got news... The show's been cancelled.

(Everyone is stunned and confused. Various "What?"s and "You're not serious"s.)

BERT: What do you mean 'cancelled'?

BIG BIRD: We're stopping. It's over. We've been down to reruns for ages. It was only a matter of time.

BERT: How could they do that?

COUNT: This is a travesty!

BIG BIRD: The network said we just don't appeal to our audiences anymore. And they said I'm looking old... I'm not old, am I?

COOKIE: Well...

BIG BIRD: They said that you come across dumb!

COOKIE: I do not!

(COOKIE throws the empty box of cookies away in Oscar's trash can, slams the lid closed, and storms out of the room.)

BIG BIRD: *(Calling after COOKIE)* The only word you ever say is 'cookie!' It gets old!

COOKIE: *(Returning with a new box of cookies)* That is not the only word I ever say!

BIG BIRD: *(turning to COUNT)* And they said you count too slowly. Kids these days are more fast paced. *(turning to BERT)* They hate your sweater. The same stripes since the 70's? It's not modern. *(turning to OSCAR'S trash can)* And... well no one likes you. Your ratings are rock-bottom.

COOKIE: We should tell everyone else. Where's Elmo?

COUNT: He's always off in "Elmo's World" these days...

BERT: He thinks he's so great. Ever since that stupid tickle-me toy came out, he's been acting like he owns the place.

COOKIE: How about Ernie?

BERT: He's out buying me another sweater.

COUNT: I don't understand why they would cancel us. We've been going strong for years!

BIG BIRD: We're just not as popular as we were. Remember the days when we had N'Sync on the show? Those were the times. No one watches us. Kids' Saturday mornings are spent with 'Phineas and Ferb'.

BERT: Well that platypus is hilarious.

BIG BIRD: And we've been slipping, making mistakes. Remember that time we tried to count to 58? It was a disaster. And we haven't gone above seven since.

COUNT: That was a long episode.

COOKIE: What else?

BIG BIRD: Remember when they tried to turn you into the Veggie Monster?

COOKIE: "Celery starts with C" just doesn't roll off the tongue.

BIG BIRD: It seems like lately the internet rumors about us have been more popular than our show.

BERT: There were lots of rumors that they were going to kill off Ernie. Or have me die of AIDS. Or a traffic accident. It's all so stupid.

COUNT: There were never any rumors about me.

COOKIE: Well you're not a terribly popular character.

BERT: *(Pounding on the lid of OSCAR'S trash can)* Oscar, You've been really quiet.

(Sound of a toilet flush. OSCAR emerges from the restroom, heads immediately to his trash can, and climbs in.)

OSCAR: It's about time the show was cancelled.

COUNT: He has legs? Awkward...

BERT: *(to Oscar)* How could you say that? This is the worst thing that could happen to us! What are we supposed to do?

COOKIE: Yeah... What do we do now?

BIG BIRD: We could... I'm not really sure. There's not a lot of work out there for fuzzy talking creatures like us.

COUNT: We could try to integrate with the muppets.

COOKIE: Not those guys! They think they're so great. Just because they're more popular--

BIG BIRD: They are not more popular! They... well... Everyone likes Kermit. No one likes Oscar.

OSCAR: *(From inside the trash can)* Do I look like I care?

BERT: We could do theatre. Something on ice.

COOKIE: Is there really a Sesame Street on ice?

BERT: There should be. It would be fabulous.

BIG BIRD: Bert, you could always go work for Reading Rainbow.

BERT: Just because Ernie and I live in the same apartment doesn't mean we're gay!

BIG BIRD: That's not what I meant--

BERT: Oh I know exactly what you meant! I am so sick of people giving me crap about my feminine side! I happen to like my sweater! It's chic! Timeless.

COOKIE: Oh Bert--

BERT: And Ernie likes it too! I'm not going to change who I am just so kids will like me, or the network won't kill me off. You know, you guys can be real jerks sometimes.

(BERT exits angrily.)

COOKIE: He's been really on-edge lately. This show-being-cancelled thing must have been the last straw.

BIG BIRD: Maybe it's time we came to terms with the fact that we're done. Everyone who watches Sesame Street has grown up. We play to an older audience now and they

already know how to count. They've been watching the show for years, but not anymore.

COOKIE: They could tell you how to get, how to get to Sesame Street.

COUNT: Ah ah ah. That was funny.

COOKIE: Thank you.

(BERT enters waving a blue crayon.)

BERT: I'm gonna kill him!

COOKIE: Who?

BERT: Elmo! That little brat drew all over my room with his stupid blue crayon! "Elmo's World" was bad enough when it was just on TV, let alone my walls. I'm not going to let him get away with this! Where is he? I'm going to flush his goldfish down the toilet!

COUNT: Leave him alone. Now isn't the time to bring this up.

BERT: When would be a good time? After I've gone through a whole box of magic erasers? He's going to be the one to clean this up.

COUNT: You shouldn't be so hard on him.

(BERT begins a rude impression of the COUNT.)

BERT: "I want to color on Bert's walls with my best friend Elmo. How many walls will I ruin? One, two, three, four. Four walls! Ah ah ah!"

BIG BIRD: Hey cut it out!

COOKIE: Who put you in charge? *(She begins an impersonation of BIG BIRD)* "I'm Big Bird and everyone has to listen to everything I say because I'm a main character. I'm the only one in the theme song. I'm on cereal boxes."

BIG BIRD: You're acting like an idiot.

COOKIE: No, I'm acting like you.

OSCAR: *(Emerging from his trash can)* I love a good argument.

BERT: Oh shut up Oscar. Just go back in your garbage can!

BIG BIRD: Bert! Cut it out!

BERT: I'm so sick of all of you! I'm glad the show is cancelled. I can't keep working with you people! I'm leaving. Have fun without me.

(BERT exits. There is a small pause, then COOKIE MONSTER starts for the door.)

COUNT: Where are you going?

COOKIE: If the show is cancelled, there's no reason for me to stay. I've always wanted to write a cookbook, and now I can. I'll see you guys around, maybe.

(COOKIE MONSTER exits.)

COUNT: Perhaps I should get going too.

BIG BIRD: So what are you going to do with your life now?

COUNT: They're looking for a new Count Chocula. I'm going to look into that. Come on Oscar, I'll drag you home.

(COUNT begins dragging OSCAR'S trash can off-stage.)

BIG BIRD: *(Small laugh)* I hope you enjoy that.

(OSCAR and the COUNT exit. BIG BIRD takes a short look around the greenroom, then exits humming/singing "Can you tell me how to get, how to get to Sesame Street.")