

**THE MUPPET BABIES**

**PRODUCTION BIBLE**

Written by

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**THE MUPPET BABIES...**

are exactly that. All of those wonderful Muppet characters we've grown to love...as babies. There's little Kermit, and little Piggy (no relation to the one who went Whee! Whee! all the way home). There's Gonzo and Fozzie and Rowlf. There's Animal, Scooter, and his twin sister Skeeter. Even baby Bunsen and Beaker will drop in now and then.

Picture a wild and zany nursery filled with these baby Muppets, each with the unique character traits of their adult selves, but in their embryonic state, expressed in the most comical, juvenile ways imaginable. There may even be a few extra character traits, unique to the Muppet Babies (ones they later outgrew). There will also be a disagreeable Nanny to act as the parental authority figure for our Muppet kids.

The thrust of the series will be the imaginations and fantasies of the Muppet Babies, and how these fantasies differ (sometimes drastically) from one character to another. Each fantasy, as seen from one particular kid's point of view, will involve some or all of the Muppet characters, but will reflect the individual point of view of the Muppet doing the imagining.

After introducing them in the nursery at the top of the show, our Muppet Babies will launch from a basic story thread (which will continue throughout the episode) to worlds of fabulous fantasy and fun, returning now and then to the real world of the nursery, then rocketing off again into another fantasy.

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## THE MAIN MUPPET CHARACTERS

### **KERMIT...**

*As usual, Kermit is the gang leader (although sometimes overwhelmed by the responsibility of this position). He is also the straight man. In contrast to the others, who are prone to elaborating and embroidering upon stories, Kermit is more likely to tell the real versions, be they nursery rhymes, American Frog History or just anecdotes about himself.*

*Kermit is probably the most well-liked and popular of all the Muppet Babies. Although he is very affectionate toward Piggy, his feelings for her are more of the youthful friendship and playfulness variety, whereas Piggy is just reaching that point in life where she's starting to take their relationship seriously.*

*In times of trouble, Kermit is usually the level-headed member of the group. Even at his young age, he's got a heart of gold and a childish warmth and naivete that make him the most charming of all the Muppets.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**PIGGY...**

She is cute and sweet and tough -- a younger version of her older self. Piggy tells stories in a way that interests (and therefore stars) her. Her main goal in life is to grow up and marry Kermit with or without his consent. Thus, most of her fantasies feature her as the prima donna, and include a scene in which she tries to get her hands on Kermit. He may be Anthony to her Cleopatra, a swashbuckling pirate to her damsel in distress, or she might just barge in on one of the other kid's fantasies and chase a cavefrog Kermie all over a prehistoric landscape.

Piggy will occasionally go into a pedantic teacher mode, with the rest of the Muppet Babies as her unwilling class. She will take control and teach the others a wacky version of whatever appeals to her, perhaps pulling down a small projection screen and showing movies (old live-action stock footage), giving the other kids a way-out and way off history lesson. She might pull down a chart or map which, through the magic of chromakey, presents some bizarre live-action visual that misrepresents what Piggy is trying to teach (like a demonstration on driver education, punctuated by a short scene of Destruction Derby). Although her history lessons will be quite screwed up, they may serve to launch the kids into a wacky historical fantasy of either her conjuring, or one of her pupils. Kermit might be Napoleon, or Fozzie and Gonzo might turn out to be the Wright Brothers. We might even see some Egyptian history, with Animal as a wild and crazy King Tut in an even wilder musical number (and a Gonzolike Sphinx next to the pyramids, of course).

It should be noted that Piggy's karate weilding, "Super Pig" mode will be seen far less than her sensitive and vulnerable side.

**GONZO...**

*None of the Muppets (including Gonzo) knows exactly what Gonzo is, in fact, it's often a source of humor for the others as they argue amongst themselves as to what he might be. But one thing is for sure, whatever he is, Gonzo is an adventurer at heart. He sees himself as a Super Hero, and thus relates to the television more than the others. Occasionally his fantasies will feature him going into the television set (right through the screen) and becoming a part of whatever he was watching (fantasies with animated or live-action backgrounds may be started in this fashion). Gonzo might lead the other Muppets into the TV and get mixed up in an animated parody of "The Incredible Hulk." Or he might wind up standing in the middle of an old WW II Navy film with a real torpedo coming at him.*

*Gonzo has a different view of reality than any of the others. Nothing is ever ordinary in Gonzo's universe. If he were to look out the window to see if Nanny were coming, he see a live-action diesel locomotive speeding right toward him. And when he goes to show the others, it's gone! It's almost as if Gonzo is the only one of the Muppet Babies whose fantasies are out of his control. He never knows what's going to happen when he starts imagining.*

*Gonzo has a crush on Piggy. He goes out of his way to impress her with his daredevil antics but only succeeds in getting into comical trouble. Like the time he fantasized being "Tarzan" to Piggy's "Jane" and swooped from a tree in the jungle, right into a clothes hamper in the corner of the nursery (what a way to ruin a perfectly good fantasy).*

*Gonzo, as in the movies, will often carry a little camera (of the instant picture variety), and will constantly be snapping pictures of the most unlikely things (especially chickens). He might aim his camera out the window and snap a picture, only to peel off the print and see a "real life" photograph of King Kong on the Empire State Building!*

\* \* \* \* \*

**FOZZIE...**

*This little bear is the comedian of the group. He wants to be a standup comic when he grows up, only first he's got to learn to stand up (something all the Muppet Babies have trouble with now and then). He understands the format, but not the content of the jokes, and therefore his jokes go nowhere: "Have you ever noticed a funny thing about grownups? They don't have to stand on boxes to reach the doorknob because they're already tall enough! Am I right? Do you get it?" He drums his jokes to death, eliciting groans from the others.*

*Fozzie is incredibly gullible, and the others play it for all it's worth. If Skeeter told Fozzie that the Santa Claus was coming and the only way to see Santa was to put a lampshade on his head, stand in the corner, and sing Jingle Bells, you can be sure Fozzie would be standing in the corner with a lampshade on his head, singing Jingle Bells up until about the 3rd of January.*

*Fozzie is also larger and slower and clumsier than the others, and he desperately wants to be the center of attention. Fortunately, he's as lovable as he is pathetic and will, more than any other character, pluck the heartstrings of the audience.*

\* \* \* \* \*



**ROWLF...**

*This little pup plays a mean piano, and being a little bit older than the others, is generally more philosophical about being a baby. Rowlf gets his smarts from reading the newspaper, but he just can't understand why they're always spread on the floor in his corner of the nursery?!*

*Rowlf will be only one of the Muppet Babies who occasionally looks into the camera and talks directly to the audience, making comical and/or witty asides about the others or some aspect of the fantasies. Often his asides will be common cliches, ones our audience is hopefully familiar with.*

*For instance, if Kermit and the gang found themselves in one of Piggy's educational fantasies, standing before a skyscraper-sized letter "R," and Fozzie accidentally knocked it over, and the giant "R" came crashing down on Gonzo and Animal, Rowlf might look into the camera and casually note, "The bigger the R, the harder it falls!"*

*When Rowlf isn't philosophizing, he's musicalizing...banging away on his little toy piano. Only it doesn't play rinky-ding music, it plays real piano music, be it honky tonk, classical or otherwise. His favorite tunes seem to be 50's rock'n'roll numbers which will set the musical undertone of the whole series.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**SCOOTER...**

*He's the brains of the bunch. Computers are his thing; he's a neophyte hacker, always extending his computer just beyond the limits of his imagination! Where a normal kid would play PAC-MAN with his computer, Scooter also reads a lot, and is enthusiastic about practically everything. He's the perfect follower.*

*Scooter, through his fantasies, might suck himself and the others into the inner world of his computer, going on a Tron-like fantasy adventure in worlds yet to be imagined.*

*Scooter is somewhat mechanical and analytical in thought and action. In Scooter's fantasies, he would try to calculate the precise, logical or mechanical way to escape from jeopardy, instead of just "imagining" his way out of it. This annoys the others, as they find themselves facing dangers they'd like to get away from. They can't stand waiting for Scooter to figure out the best avenue of escape. "Hurry, Scooter! The monster is coming" Kermit might say as the Muppets find themselves trapped by a towering stone wall. Then, just in the nick of time, Scooter might apply pressure to one particular stone, bringing the entire wall crashing down, allowing them to escape.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**SKEETER...**

*As her name might suggests, Skeeter is Scooter's twin sister. If Scooter were to announce that he's the older of the two, she would quickly explain that it's only by 3 minutes. She's loud and punky, and can't understand Piggy's primping. Skeeter loves to organize games (like dodgeball) and plays each game as if it's an Olympic trial. And, to add even more humor and mayhem to the Gonzo-Kermit-Piggy triangle, Skeeter has a crush on Gonzo. And let me tell you, you've got to be weird to have a crush on him. "He's so ugly, he's beautiful," she might say.*

*Although Skeeter is continually accusing her brother of being a brat, it's Skeeter who more often than not manifests bratlike behavior.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**ANIMAL...**

*This little Muppet is younger than the others and is the classic hyperactive baby. He's constantly overexcited, eats everything he can get his mouth onto, and understands nothing of the world around him. No crib, no cage, no closet can hold him; within minutes he's burrowed, chewed, or broken his way out. He is the Tasmanian Devil of the Muppet Babies, and is the source of much of the comedy. In explaining things to Animal, the other Muppets will reveal much of their own perceptions (and misconceptions) of life.*

*Animal is mess prone. No, not accident prone; Fozzie's more likely to have accidents. Animal commits messes. Whatever he gets into, by the time he's gotten out of it, something is messed up: the walls, the couch, the bookcase, the plants. Whatever Animal touches, turns into a mess.*

*Animal doesn't talk much. In fact, he only repeats the last word (or the one word that expresses the major concept) of what someone else has just said. If Kermit were to suggest they play a game of baseball, Animal's eyes would bug out and he'd probably say, "Baseball! Baseball!" Then he'd more than likely eat the baseball, the bat, and Kermit's uniform! Then, after the others vented their frustration for his having ruined the game, Animal would probably smile and say, "Go bye-bye?" If any word is Animal's byword, that's it. We'll probably get the feeling this was the first phrase he learned, and mislearned at that. Like a dog responding to the word "walk," Animal will, at the most unexpected times, react to a situation with a broad smile and wide eyes and say, "Go bye-bye?" If Godzilla's foot slammed down into shot before him, Animal would probably look up and say, "Go bye-bye?" In the middle of a Piggy-Kermit love scene he's liable to rear his ugly face, smile, and say, "Go bye-bye?" Oh, the wrath of a Muppet pig scorned.*

**BUNSEN & BEAKER...**

Bunsen Honeydew, as you might suspect, is the scientific type, always looking for the "whys" and "wherefores" of life. He's into everything, making experiments and discoveries about the world around him. But not the types of things you might imagine; he might try to discover how many push-ups are in one scoop of ice cream, or he might search for the elusive Vitamin Q, one taste of which creates instant brilliance, or he might attempt to discover the formula for nuclear chewing gum (with which you can blow bubbles the size of the Graf Zeppelin that explode with nuclear sound effects).

Bunsen's window into fantasy is his inventions and/or experiments. He might whip up a batch of magical fingerpaint that creates living art, taking the kids into some wild "scientific" oriented fantasy.

Just like every Psychiatrist needs his "rat," every scientist needs his "guinea pig," and Beaker is Bunsen's guinea pig. Beaker is the effect of Bunsen's experimental causes. If Bunsen is trying to discover how many miles of tread wear you get from a pair of running shoes, Beaker will be the one wearing the running shoes (and attached to a comical treadmill that runs him ragged). Beaker speaks only in pathetic little eeps and beeps, usually used to express his most common emotions: fear, terror, anxiety, etc.

Bunsen & Beaker live down the block, and will enter the nursery on occasion as a friend might drop over to say hello. But when these two kids come to say hello, watch out! all hell's about to break loose.

**ROBIN...**

*is a tadpole in a fishbowl. His dialogue, which is minimal, is in bubbly monosyllables. Robin is Kermit's newest nephew (from a litter of 10,000).*

*Every child loves to have a "low man on the totem pole" to feel superior to, and practice parenting on. For this group, Robin is it. Poor Robin!*

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE NANNY...**

*The Nanny is an adult woman who looks after the Muppet Babies. She is the parental authority figure to the Muppets. However, she will be represented graphically only from the knees down. We will never fully see the Nanny, but rather we will see her legs from the Muppet Babies' point of view -- towering, awesome legs that rise up out of shot like two Sequoias.*

*As a distinguishing feature, the Nanny will always wear the same, distinctively colored socks. When the Muppet Babies have a particularly threatening fantasy adventure, it is quite possible that the villain, be he/she pirate, witch or dragon, will be wearing Nanny's socks, and will have the same, grating voice as Nanny. In the case of the dragon, we may even see the scaly beast's "argyle" legs dissolve into the Nanny's socks at the end of the fantasy. You might say that Nanny will be the "JAWS" of the series, perhaps even to the extent of having her entrances portended by a throbbing musical accompaniment.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

*Perhaps the most important thing to remember about the interrelationships of the Muppet characters is that basically they are all nice kids. They each have unique personality traits and idiosyncracies, but we do not want to set up the usual antagonisms between characters, or establish some characters as the good guys and others as the bad guys. The Muppet Babies are just ordinary kids (well, maybe not Animal) with ordinary needs and worries and fears and joys. They may pick on one another's weaknesses at times, but in the end they will support that character's growth, helping him or her overcome whatever the problem is, learning something about themselves in the process.*

*The most obvious of the Muppet character relationships will certainly be the "Gonzo-loves-Piggy-loves-Kermit" triangle, only in a more youthful version. Though it will be obvious to the audience that Piggy can't stand Gonzo (in terms of a sweetheart), he will always misinterpret her animosity and physical abuse as signs of affection. Very often he will be trampled in Piggy's stampede to get to Kermit, but instead of being disappointed, he'll come up all hearts and flowers, ga-ga over his favorite pigette.*

*Piggy quite probably is the only one who knows how to appeal to the adult, and when the Nanny enters the nursery, Piggy might suggest to her that the other Muppet babies were responsible for tearing the room apart. Piggy will be very manipulative with the Nanny, doing practically anything to get on her good side.*



*Scooter and Skeeter have a sibling rivalry. Scooter can't stand his sister's illogical, ideas and her ridiculously improbable fantasies. They're no more ridiculous or improbable than any of the other fantasies, but they're Skeeter's, and to Scooter, that makes them worse. Scooter will always be trying to correct Skeeter's fantasies. But how can you correct a fantasy? Skeeter, on the other hand (that's a puppeteer's joke. On the other hand! Get it? Where was I? Oh!) Skeeter, on the other hand, can't stand Scooter's always having to be logical and accurate with his fantasies, and does her best to sabotage them. She might literally yank his background away, leaving Scooter standing in an empty white screen. "Hey! Where'd my fantasy go?" Scooter would say as his sister snickers with impish delight.*

*In the nursery, Skeeter is always being a pain in the Muppet to Scooter. He might find her stuffing celery and tomatoes into his computer printer and when he asks what she's doing she'd probably say, "I'm just trying out your new "Food Processor" program." Scooter would tear his hair out, crying, "Not food processor! Word processor!" But even then Skeeter wouldn't bat an eyebrow. She'd just say, "Oh! What kind of dressing do you put on a word salad?" (To which Fozzie would probably add, "French?")*

*Animal is always misunderstanding Scooter's computer lingo. If Scooter starts to talk about "bytes" chances are real good Animal's gonna poke his head into shot and say, "Me bite! Me bite!" then take a mouthful of computer. And Animal loves computer diskettes. "Mmmmm! Cookie! Cookie!" he'll say, as he pops one into his mouth.*

*Gonzo, being lowest in the kids' pecking order, is often forced to take care of Animal. Because Gonzo's so weird, and Animal's so uncontrollable, they often wind up going on incredible fantasies together.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### TYPES OF FANTASIES

*Each of the Muppet Babies will have a uniquely different way of getting into fantasies. Each character's personality will determine the mood, content and setting of the fantasy.*

**KERMIT'S FANTASIES...***will begin in just about any way imaginable, via story telling, from a reaction to a painting, or he might just drift off into a fantasy. His imaginings will be conservative, the types of fantasies you might expect to read in a picture book, almost architypical. All of Kermit's fantasies will have him as the unassuming good guy, the underdog, that searching, trusting, honest soul who is "the common frog."*

**PIGGY'S FANTASIES...***might begin from her blackboard, or a history lesson, or maybe a slide show. Or she might find an old trunk in the attic and upon taking out an old 1920's outfit, go right into a Perils of Piggy fantasy, tied to the train tracks, her loving Kermie racing to her rescue (unfortunately, Gonzo's attempts to butt in on the rescue just might cause her to not be rescued before the choo-choo comes)! Her fantasies will be more fanciful, more frilly, and more self-indulging. If her fantasy came from a classical fairy tale, Piggy would more than likely be the beautiful princess, about to be saved by her handsome Frog Prince. Whatever the story, Piggy will be the center of attention in her fantasies. However, don't be surprised if now and then Piggy has a real wild fantasy, with her turning up as a female Conan the Barbarian or something similar. Needless to say, in Piggy's fantasies, Piggy is always cast in the optimum role. You might call her a little "prima porker."*

**GONZO'S FANTASIES...**are likely to spring from the pages of a comic book he's reading, or he might take us into the television, getting involved in a conventionally animated fantasy based on a game show, a cartoon series, an old movie, or even a commercial. Gonzo's fantasies are of the super hero, daredevil category. He might be a caped crusader, or visit a strange planet full of man-eating shoes, or be a stunt driver in a live-action movie, or transcend into a new dimension, or he might even find himself being a daring test pilot with "The Right Stuffing!" If one word could sum up Gonzo's fantasies that word would be "BIZARRE!"

**FOZZIE'S FANTASIES...**will parallel his dreams of Vaudeville stardom. He might start a joke with "and then there was the time..." and suddenly he'd be off performing at the Palace, dancing on Broadway, or starring in a comedy movie. But even in his fantasies, Fozzie will be incredibly clumsy and never quite able to get the punchline right. No matter what Fozzie does in a fantasy, there will be an audience (be they fish or people or flies) that boo him off the stage. Fozzie's fantasies will lead him, rather than him leading his fantasies.

**ROWLF'S FANTASIES...**will usually be of a doggie or a musical nature, or, oddly enough, both! They may start off in real life, with him playing the piano, then transform into wild musical sequences like the old Judy Garland-Mickey Rooney production numbers, featuring Kermit and Piggy in the starring roles...with Rowlf on piano, of course.

**SCOOTER'S FANTASIES...**will be more analytical than the others, in fact, Scooter will find it hard to fantasize, because he's more grounded in reality

than the others. He needs the help of others to get his fantasies going. But once he gets going, watch out! Scooter's fantasies will contain villains and monsters of an electro-mechanical nature that are totally out of this world! And only Scooter can figure out how to stop them...but can he do it in time?

**SKEETER'S FANTASIES...**are Tom-boyish, sibling rivalries gone berserk. Her imaginings will be slanted toward the great outdoors and sports: glacier skiing, backpacking, baseball, you name it. Whatever it is, it's Skeeter doing it better than anyone...especially Scooter! Scooter will always be the big loser in Skeeter's fantasies.

**ANIMAL'S FANTASIES...**like Animal, are totally out of control. Whack City! You never know what to expect from Animal's fantasies, except to laugh. Animal gets into his fantasies via his messes. He might be fingerpainting on the wall and WHOOSH! off we go into a wild, Jackson Pollack fantasy. Or he might chew a hole through the wall and crawl through into an incredible fantasy cave, filled with the hallucinations created by whatever Animal has just eaten. Hallucinations that scare the other Muppets, making them want to race out of Animal's fantasies. Animal's reaction..."Go bye-bye?"

**BUNSEN & BEAKER FANTASIES...**will come from their experiments, gizmos, formulas, etc. They might invent a whacky time machine, taking the others off into the past or future. Bunsen might whip up a strange formula, and when Beaker takes a taste POOF! they're into an eerie Dr. Beaker and Mr. Hyde fantasy.

*Our entree into fantasies will not be limited to the above, but will span the imagination as will the fantasies themselves. We might see the same fantasy from three points of view, with each character altering the story to suit his own needs, limitations or peculiarities. There might be a door that all of the Muppet Babies are afraid to go into. Each has a different idea of what's behind the door, and each fantasizes about it differently. However, we will never see what is actually behind this door.*

*The Muppet Babies' fantasies will also make fun of movies (a la Mad Magazine), TV videos, books, Sat. Morning cartoon shows, game shows, etc. This type of fantasy can be entered into via Gonzo's method of walking right into the television tube. Or perhaps the kids can just be watching, then fantasize how "they'd" like to see the show. "The Bride of Frankenfrog" is a particularly apt example of a fantasy that has universal appeal among children. Picture Bunsen in the Dr. Frankenstein roll, with Beaker as his Igor. Piggy, right down to the streaked hair and studded neck, would rise up from the sparking table, falling in love at first sight with Kermit (in the role of Fankenfrog). And to make matters funnier, we might even add a few other horrific favorites to the story, like Fozzie in the role of The Werewolf (a stand up comic with lots of teeth and biting jokes. "Why did the werewolf cross the street? Give up? To bite the chicken. Get it?"*

*We might have some comical/educational fantasies. Piggy could open a school book and attempt to teach the others that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . But as the lesson gets out of hand, off they go into a wild fantasy that takes them into the school book, and into a wild world where everything is based on numbers.*

*Imagine the fun when they try to add a two-headed giant to a three-winged bird and come out with a five-footed dancing Flamingo. Arithmetic will never be the same.*

*Another type of fantasy game that the Muppet Babies will sometimes play is the PASSING THE STORY GAME. Each character will narrate a different piece of the story. As we see the first Muppet Baby begin to tell the story we'll go into the fantasy and see it from that character's point of view, and told in that character's voice. After a designated period of time a bell will ring and it will be the next character's turn to continue the fantasy from that point. That character change points might find the lead character in the fantasy in some piece of jeopardy, usually so bad it appears he'll never be able to get out of it. Or it might find Piggy with Kermit in his arms, about to give him a kiss. The entire feel of the fantasy, including its background, design and ancillary character content, will change as the storyteller changes. A good deal of humor will come from these fantasy interchanges as Piggy's love story is suddenly transformed into Gonzo's super-hero story, which is transformed into Fozzie's stage routine.*

*Throughout the fantasies, of whatever variety, the Muppet characters will retain their ability to comment on the weirdness of each other's fantasies, complain about their role in a particular fantasy, argue about aspects of the fantasy they disagree with, or even stomp off screen, refusing to participate in a particular fantasy.*

*There should be no boundary to the imagination when it comes to fantasy realms. You shouldn't be surprised at all so see Scooter looking in the*

*directory for a phone number, only to wind up taking a fantasy-filled "walk through the Yellow Pages!!" The Golden Rule is that there are no set rules. Anything goes. Kermit and the gang will have control of their fantasies. Thus, if a horrible monster is about to gobble up Scooter, Kermit might react with a sudden, "Wait a minute! Who's fantasy is this, anyway?" Then suddenly the tide of the story would change and our guys would causatively defeat their adversary.*

\* \* \* \* \*



### THE NURSERY, ETC.

*Home base for our Muppet Babies will be a nursery/playroom. This room will contain their beds (cribs), along with their playthings (blackboard, TV, toy chest, furniture, etc.). This will be a generic nursery, by which is meant it shouldn't be distinguishable from an institutional nursery, or a home day care center. It's just a nursery. But from our Muppet Babies' points of view, it's the center of their wonderful, fanciful universe. This nursery will be the main room where we find our kids at the beginning of each episode. Here they will do their thing, be it playing with toys, arguing, reading books, looking out the window. It is from this nursery that they will wander off into other parts of the house. Through the toys, instruments or objects in the playroom, the Muppet Babies will launch themselves into fantasies on unlimited scope.*

*Although they are "not supposed" to be in other rooms of the house, the Muppet Babies will sometimes venture out of the nursery. The kitchen, basement, closet under the stairs, and attic will be the most commonly used rooms. They may also venture into the backyard, where they will have a swing set with slide, sandbox (which might, through the magic of a fantasy, transform into the Sahara Desert), a giant tree and treehouse, as well as all the other things you might find in a child's backyard, with which we can launch into multi-dimensional fantasy worlds.*

*The Muppet Babies will use the normal objects in their nursery/playroom to launch into fantasies. Two chairs placed together and covered by a blanket might turn into a haunted house. A couch will transform into a bus. A stack of pillows into a rocket ship.*

*When a fantasy begins in the nursery it will end with the nursery in a similar state as the end of the fantasy, but usually in a comically chaotic mess. All the things used in the fantasy (chairs, pillows, etc.) are now scattered across the playroom, indicating the extent they acted out fantasy in their real world.*

*If the Muppet Babies take a journey to the kitchen to get a drink of water at the sink, their efforts to climb up onto the counter will transcribe into a "climbing" fantasy, the likes of Mallory climbing Mt. Everest.*

*If the Muppet Babies journeyed into the attic, they would find all sorts of fun things to get into and fantasize about. There might be old trunks, faded photographs, antique clothing, etc.*

*Similarly, the basement, with its old steam pipes, massive furnace, rats and shadowy corners may be the beginning of a creepy fantasy a la Indiana Frog in "Raiders of the Lost Basement!"*

*It should be noted, however, that both the visual look of the environments and content of fantasies should be more exciting than scary.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**BASIC EPISODE SEGMENTS**

*Any combination of the following segments can be used in a given half-hour:*

**STORY BOOK...***In this segment, one of the Muppet Babies, usually Scooter, reads a classic story or nursery rhyme (or maybe something just made up) and as we dissolve into the fantasy, each of the kids plays a different part of the story.*

**PASSING THE STORY GAME...***As described earlier, this segment involves one of the characters starting a fantasy. Using some sort of timing device (like a cooking timer), each character gets about a minute to tell a portion of story. At the DING! of the bell, the next character takes over the story, changing the lead character to himself, telling the story from his or her point of view with their own dreams, fears, etc. This proceeds from one character to the next until the story is over.*

**PIGGY'S LESSONS...***This segment includes Piggy's history lessons, math lessons, geography, astronomy, and just about any other subject you can imagine. Using books, slide shows, movies, show and tell objects, etc., Piggy plays teacher before the other characters, getting them into comical historical/educational fantasies that possess an ounce of truth and ten pounds of nonsense.*

**TV-MOVIE SATIRE...***In this segment, Gonzo will take us into the inner world of the television set, in which we poke fun at all aspects of television: satires on well known movies, TV series, commercials, even cartoon shows. Imagine spoofing the Smurfs...literally! There's Kermit as Poppa Spoof, Piggy as Spoofette and of course, Nanny's legs as the evil "Garglewell!"*

*Classic movies (which the audience is familiar with) such as Star Wars will be transformed into STAR WARTS! TV series like Knight Rider will wind up as KITE RIDER (Gonzo with a computerized, talking kite).*

**NURSERY LAB...***staring Bunsen & Beaker. Their comical, experimental nonsense will be a segment in itself. Insane inventions, funny formulas, exasperating experiments. In this manner, Bunsen & Beaker will entertain and enlighten with the whackiest version of science since the dark ages!*

*The above methods of entering the world of fantasy will be used more than once in the Muppet Babies show. There are numerous other ways of getting into fantasies which can be used less frequently: Fingerpainting. The newspaper. A shadow. A creaking door. Anything that can start a child's imagination going can start the Muppet Babies' fantasies.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### MUSICAL INTERLUDES

*Each half-hour of the Muppet Babies will include one musical number. The music will lean heavily towards Fifties rock'n'roll, but will all have original lyrics relating to our characters, the nursery, a particular fantasy, or in some way relate to that day's episode. We'll hear classics like, "Come on over baby, there's a whole lot of sleeping going on!"*

*The musical numbers will be equally bizarre as the Muppets' fantasies, and may even have a similar structure and feeling to the music videos seen on MTV.*

*More often than not it will be Rowlf who gets the Muppet Babies into a musical routine, starting with his piano. However, other environments may lend themselves to musical situations. For instance, once the Muppet Babies have climbed to the top of the sink, the pots, pans, glasses and other kitchen utensils will be discovered for their musical qualities and off we go into the wild "blues" yonder.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### ANIMATION TECHNIQUE - BACKGROUNDS - COLOR - DESIGN

The background designs should vary as widely as do the characters' fantasies. To add a unique dimension to some of the fantasies (especially Gonzo's) photographic cut-outs can be used. For example, Gonzo might be flying in a WW I biplane which is actually a photo cut-out, moved across the rendered background (creating a similar effect to the animation in the Monty Python Show).

There will be no fixed size scale to the fantasies. If the Red Baron were chasing Gonzo's biplane, we might see a 50' Kermit, in a suit of armor, come in and swat the Red Baron as if he were a fly. As the little plane spiraled to the ground, Kermit's fantasy (or just his point of view) might take over.

To add still another dimension to some of the fantasies, photo-realistic still-life backgrounds can be used. High contrast, black & white photographs or extreme enlargements of half-tone screened photos may be used for effect.

Keeping within financial restrictions, backgrounds should be thought of in terms of story plotting. Perhaps in one episode Gonzo might start to tell a story and, as we would expect, we see the background form as his fantasy begins. Then he changes his mind and the b.g. changes again. He hesitates, changes his mind, and again the background changes. The other Muppets might get angry at his procrastination and enter the scene with paint cans, rollers and ladders, and proceed to paint the background themselves (this could be done inexpensively via "rub-off" method, or chromakey for live-action background).

Graphically, the nursery/playroom should be of soft pastel colors, making it a warm and cozy place, thus giving contrast to the brighter colored, more graphically unique world of the kids' fantasy realms. The colors in a given fantasy should reflect the character who is the center of the fantasy. Thus, if it is Piggy's fantasy, the background designs and colors should be soft, flowery and baroque in appearance. On the other end of the scale, Animal's background colors and designs should be outrageous; colors clashing, angles clashing, even the characters clashing. Gonzo's backgrounds might look like they were taken directly from the pages of a Superman comic book, somewhat like Roy Lichtenstein or Andy Warhol style graphics.

The visual look of the fantasy segments should run the gamut of available variations from austere backgrounds, to ornate and flowery scenes, to watercolor washes. Old, sepia-toned photographs, dating back to the nineteenth century could be used. Actual photographs without Muppet characters animated over them would produce but one of the possible graphic appearances possible. All of these backgrounds will be unique even though they will be conventionally animated.

During one of the 4-6 minute fantasy segments, we may use live-action stock footage for the background; our characters appearing over the action via chromakey. Picture Kermit and the gang taking a deep sea voyage in an animated bathyscaphe over a background of Jacques Cousteau style live-action underwater footage. They might tangle with an animated octopus, or Gonzo might try to catch a live-action fish, only to be dragged off after hooking it!

*When appropriate, short segments (few seconds) of live-action stock footage might be inserted, via chromakey or other electronic editing technique, into a particular fantasy or sequence. Perhaps Fozzie might tell a bad joke and a live audience will be seen "Booing" at him and throwing tomatoes. Or Gonzo might fire at the Red Baron, then we cut to a stock shot of a biplane spiraling to the ground and crashing. Similar techniques will be used to insert short cuts of live-action into animated backgrounds. For instance, Fozzie might look out the window and see a giant live-action chicken walk by. Or Gonzo might get into the closet and imagine he's an elevator operator. He might say, "Third floor, sporting goods," then the door would "slide" open to reveal a live-action cut of an alpine skier racing right into camera.*

*All of these live-action cuts will get odd reactions from our characters, who feel, as the audience will, that something funny is going on.*

*It should be noted, however, that considering the greater costs involved in matting and matching with regards to combined live-action and animation, that these types of effects will be used sparingly and therefore should be done for maximum effect.*

*Although anything is possible in terms of unique and varied combinations of live-action and animation, there will be set limits on the quantity of such techniques in each episode. There will be a maximum of one five minute fantasy segment with live-action background, and not more than two chromakeyed segments of a few seconds each during the course of one half-hour show.*



**A NOTE ON SOUND EFFECTS**

*With all of the attention being put on the unique visual aspect of the series, the sense of hearing should not be forgotten. Crisp, clear and UNIQUE sound effects will be an integral part of the artistic content that makes The Muppet Babies a compete sight and sound fantasy experience. Just as we will see visual images never seen before on Saturday morning, so will we hear bright new sound effects that heighten the sensory scope of the series.*

*We might, for instance, juxtapose sound effects, having cows "crow" and chickens "moo." A water faucet might be turned on, only to sound like Niagara Falls. A cork gun might sound like a Howitzer. These are fantasies, and just as children imagine heightened visual imagery, so do they imagine heightened sounds. If Kermit and the gang take off in an imaginery rocket it shouldn't sound like the normal Saturday morning sputter, but rather the rumbling eruption of a Apollo launch! Even sound effects as simple as a door slamming can be heightened or exaggerated.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### SERIES FORMAT

*The format of The Muppet Babies will be as unique as the characters themselves. It won't be a half-hour story, so familiar to action-adventure. It won't be two quarter-hour episodes like those little blue fellows. It won't be the multi-length segment formula with its long segment, medium segment, short segment and wraparounds. What it will be is a multi-dimensional half-hour with several short segments strung like pearls along a basic, real-time story string.*

*Every show will begin with The Muppet Babies in their nursery playroom. Between them they will establish the basic thrust of that particular half-hour. For instance, it might be trying to get Animal to keep quiet (by order of Nanny) with a string of fantasies, the purpose of which is to get the wild, little kid to sleep.*

*The thrust of another half-hour might be a party of some sort, with each of the characters opening a present and fantasizing about it. Piggy might fantasize her new sweater was a mink stole she's wearing for the Miss Three-Year-Old America contest. Kermit might put on his new cowboy hat and off we go into a wild west adventure, etc.*

*Another basic thrust might take the Muppet Babies out of the nursery and into some other rooms of the house, fantasizing about the basement, kitchen, attic, etc.*

*Or how about a half-hour based on Fozzie's fear of the dark, with all the other Muppet Babies telling him stories in order to convince him there's nothing to be scared about.*

*Or maybe Gonzo bumps his nose, gets it bandaged up by the doctor, and all the other Muppets sit around his crib, telling him stories to cheer him up.*

*Or how about Halloween time, and the kids are taken on their first Halloween (walked along by their Nanny's legs, of course). Each one fantasizing based on the costume they're wearing.*

*The show will parody and poke fun at anything that is familiar to our kid audience.*

*It is intended that the stories spend as much time with the individual Muppet personalities and their responses to their fantasy situations, as with the group and the group responses. In essence, Gonzo and Animal may be the sole stars of Fantasy #1, while Piggy, Kermit and Fozzie headline Fantasy #2, etc. Meanwhile, the other characters are left behind to carry on in the nursery.*

*As there obviously isn't enough time to do a fantasy segment for each character in a given half-hour, only two or three characters will be featured in each episode, with different characters featured in the following weeks. However, between the fantasies and wraparounds, each of the Muppet Babies will have their time in the spotlight during each half-hour show.*

### **BASIC SEGMENT STRUCTURE**

Following is the general layout of segments within a given half-hour episode of *THE MUPPET BABIES*:

**NOTE:** In each half-hour episode there will no more than 5 minutes of animation with live-action backgrounds!

#### **OPENING SEGMENT** (2-3 minutes)

This will take place in the nursery. In this segment we establish the basic problem/goal of the particular episode. With specific intention of resolving the problem/goal, one of our main characters leads us through his or her particular "window" into the first fantasy.

#### **FANTASY #1** (4-6 minutes)

In this segment the above mentioned character takes us into his or her fantasy, which in some way relates directly to the resolution of the problem/goal. The fantasy will graphically represent this character's view of life, with other characters acting out various parts of the story as necessary.

#### **NURSERY WRAPAROUND** (1-2 minutes)

Here we will come back to the nursery after the end of the first fantasy, resolving that particular fantasy in terms of its relationship to the problem/goal. Following this, our next character will lead us from the nursery into the second fantasy.

#### **FANTASY #2** (4-6 minutes)

Same basic structure as Fantasy #1.

#### **NURSERY WRAPAROUND** (1-2 minutes)

Same structure as previous Nursery Wraparound, with yet another character leading us into the third and final fantasy.

#### **FANTASY #3** (4-6 minutes)

Same basic structure as previous two fantasies.

#### **NURSERY WRAPAROUND** (1 minute)

In this wraparound we will fully resolve the problem/goal of the episode, bringing the show to a close.

**ALTERNATE SEGMENT STRUCTURE**

*As an alternative to the previous structure, and depending upon the requirements of a given episode, is it quite possible that only two fantasies will be necessary, rather than three. In this case, the first or second fantasy would end in a "cliffhanger" and go directly into commercial. Upon returning from the commercial, we would continue with that fantasy until its resolution, thus making the entire fantasy (both Part I and Part II) equal in length to two fantasies and one wraparound (10-14 minutes).*

*NOTE: There will be one musical number which will occur in either a fantasy sequence or a wraparound, depending upon the particular needs of a given episode.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**"GO BYE-BYE" BLACKOUTS**

*In addition to the above mentioned segments, at the end of each half-hour episode will be a five second blackout with Animal saying "Go bye-bye!" in different, comical ways each week.*

*If the theme of the episode was Animal's birthday, we might end the program with a still photograph of a birthday gift, all wrapped up in pretty paper and ribbon. We'd hear this horrible chewing sound, then see Animal eat his way out of the box, look into camera, smile and say, "Go bye-bye!"*

*The possibilites are limitless and the humor as well.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**THINGS TO EMPHASIZE**

*It should be noted, for the purpose of story content and continuity, that there are some positive educational and character traits that will be reinforced in the Muppet Babies series.*

*First is reading. As noted, Scooter will often get into fantasies via a book. Stories and reading should be portrayed as interesting and exciting.*

*Second is imagination. As practically the entire series is based on use of the imagination, it should be made perfectly clear that imagination is a valuable, fun and creative aspect of a child's (or anyone's) personality.*

*Third is breaking the agreed upon form of things. What this means is that when possible, stories should not use the typical (whether industry or societal) ways of handling situations, but rather, new ways of dealing with subjects, ideas and emotions should be emphasized. This may bridge into the area of imagination but differs in that it specially goes against the routine ways of looking at things. For instance, "getting dirty" is considered a bad thing in many cases. Handled creatively, however, getting dirty can be the subject of an entire episode and become a wonderfully creative and enjoyable experience.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**THINGS TO AVOID**

*Certain things should be avoided in stories. Things that are common only to the U.S., whether in dialog or concept, should not be used as they limit the international market and can make the series impossible to understand in many foreign countries. Puns should be avoided for similar reasons, as well as signs and/or words on screen.*

*Also, references to Kermit eating flies, and frogs legs jokes should be avoided, as young audiences have not responded well to these notions in the past. Besides, Kermit is sensitive about these things. He prefers Big Macs.*

\* \* \* \* \*



**END WORD**

*The show's overall attitude is one of joyous celebration of life.*

*The Muppet Babies are a positive, fun-to-be-together kind of group who all enjoy, and genuinely respect each other, even though they disagree and squabble a great deal. The basic feeling within the show is that life is good and that people are basically good. There are lots of interesting things in life to do, adventures to pursue, and most of all, people and things to enjoy. Their fantasies serve as an extension of the liveliness of their surroundings, rather than as an escape.*

*The Muppet Babies show is funny, lovable and warm. It sets up a world that people will want their kids to live in and through for a half an hour every Saturday morning.*

**"GO BYE-BYE!"**