

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

(or, Guy Friendly Meets the Saint of Thieves)

By

John Patrick Bray

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

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FRIENDLY'S FIRE

Special Thank You to Danielle Bienvenue Bray, Gregg Bray, Christopher Laube, Alex Kulscar, my parents John and Carolyn (some of our toys still live in their basement), and the kids that lived on Orchard Lane. Big thanks to Dan and Sadie Bray who fell in love with He-Man. And a huge thank you to Nicholas Piper, Richard Rose, Derek Davidson, and Gene Kato for believing in this play.

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

Characters:

Guy Friendly, a Bee Herder (rather than keeper), former Army pilot, and the embodiment of the frontier spirit.

Todd, a relocated Texan, part-time deputy, and pawnbroker. For the majority of the play he wears a spacesuit: NOTE: it should be a cheesy send-up of a 1950's b-movie spacesuit, not something one needs to purchase from NASA.

Jessica, a punky girl who collects teeth.

Queen Bee, a bee who, at times, stands in for Friendly's wife, Natalie.

Actor 1:

Moss Pete, a man made entirely out of peat moss

Santa Claus, The Saint of Thieves and Pawnbrokers

Bee 1, a bee

Bera, A polar bear

Reynolds, a local deputy (Base character)

Actor 2:

Young Man (aka Jason Friendly), Friendly's brother; a deceased UH-60 Gunner (Base Character)

Poacher, a very dangerous man

Voice of Dennis, off-stage character

Bee 2, a bee

4M 2W with doubling. Note: the doubling is not "suggested." Rather, each Actor has a "base" character which manifests in different ways during the course of the play.

Setting:

Inside Friendly's Cabin in Alaska. It will change a bit as we enter Friendly's head and take a journey to the North Pole, late 1990's.

Note:

The play has been written to be performed without intermission and without scene changes. The action is continuous. Some scenes are labeled as an "then," which indicate scenes from the past that Friendly is reliving. However, there is still no break in action: this is to help the reader differentiate between worlds – the present, the past, and those scenes that exist in the imagination.

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

Production History:

Friendly's Fire was developed with the Athens Playwrights Workshop in the spring of 2012. It had additional development (including an in-house reading) with BluePrint, a playwrights' group that met at Horizon Theatre and in member apartments, in the autumn 2013.

Friendly's Fire had its first public reading on Thursday, August 20, 2015 as part of the Appalachian Festival of Plays and Playwrights at the Barter Theatre (Richard Rose[^], Producing Artistic Director at the time of the reading; Katy Brown[^] is the Producing Artistic Director at the time of this publication). The reading was directed by Nicholas Piper.*[^] The play won first place at the festival.

Friendly's Fire had a subsequent reading on June 6, 2016 at Flicker Bar and Theater in Athens, Georgia, under the auspices of the Athens Playwrights' Workshop, directed by Dina Canup.

Friendly's Fire had an invited workshop production presented by the University of Georgia Department of Theatre and Film Studies and Athens Playwrights' Workshop as part of the Classic City Fringe Festival at The Cellar Theatre in the UGA Fine Arts Building on October 27, 2016. The workshop production was directed by Dina Canup and featured the following cast and crew:

Guy Friendly – Scotty Gannon

Jessica – Melanie Sheahan

Queen Bee – April Boyer Brown

Todd – Fred Galyean

Actor 1 (Moss Pete, Bee 1, Polar Bear, Santa, Reynolds) – Tom von Dohlan

Actor 2 (Jason Friendly/Voice of Dennis/Bee 2/Poacher) – Jordan Richards

Stage Manager – Chanel Pinnock

Sound Designer – Nate Byrd

Assistant Director, Set Coordinator, Lighting Technician, Poster Designer – David Forsee

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Friendly's Fire had its first preview performance at the Barter Theatre (Barter II) on October 5, 2017 and World premiere on October 14, 2017 at the Barter Theatre (Barter II) directed by then – Producing Artistic Director Richard Rose^ (Katy Brown^ is the Producing Artistic Director at the time of publication). The production featured original and incidental music by Matt Martin (with lyrics by John Patrick Bray) and featured the following cast and crew:

Guy Friendly – Nicholas Piper*

Jessica – Sarah Laughland*

Queen Bee – Hannah Ingram*

Todd – Rick McVey*

Actor 1 (Played the following roles) – Sean Maximo Campos*^

Moss Pete, Bee 1, Bera, Santa Claus, Reynolds

Actor 2 (Played the following roles) – Joe Veale*

Jason, Voice of Dennis, Bee 2, Poacher

Stage Manager – Cindi A. Raebel*

Set and Production Design – Kevin Dudley+

Costume Designer – Kelly Jenkins+

Lighting Designer – Camille Davis+

Sound Designer – Tony Angelini+

Wig & Makeup Design – Whitney Kaibel+

Rehearsal Assistant Stage Manager – Victoria Sutton*

The production was developed through Barter Theatre's Appalachian Festival of Plays and Playwrights and was part of Barter Theatre's *Shaping America Series*.

*Denotes a member of the Actors Equity Association

^Denotes member of SSD&C

+Denotes member of United Scenic Artists

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Friendly's Fire had its NYC premiere on May 3, 2019, produced by Rising Sun Performance Company (Akia Squitieri, Artistic Director) in partnership with the Theater at the 14th St. Y (David Stallings, Director of Arts and Culture at the 14th St. Y). The production was directed by RSPC Associate Artistic Director Anna Hogan and featured the following cast and crew:

Friendly- Matthew Weitz

Todd – Adeyinka Adebola/Johnny Blaze Leavitt (swing)

Queen Bee – Ita Korenzecher

Actor 1 (Played the following roles) – Kyle Porter

Moss Pete, Bee 1, Bera, Santa Claus, Reynolds

Actor 2 (Played the following roles) – William Serri/Johnny Blaze Leavitt (swing)

Jason, Voice of Dennis, Bee 2, Poacher

Jessica – Desiree Pinol/Hannah Taylor (swing)

Assistant Director /Associate Producer Chris Goodrich

Production Stage Manager Callie Stribling

Dialect Coach & Fight Director – Monica Blaze Leavitt

Intimacy Direction – Akia Squitieri

Assistant Stage Managers – Thalia Sablon and Kadeja Blanding

Set Design – Daniel Hogan (nominated for the 2019 NYIT Award for Best Set Design).

Costume Design – Janet Mervin

Sound Design – Janet Bentley

Projection Design – Taylor Edelle Stuart

Lighting Design & Technical Director – Zac Goin

Production Interns – Sarah Manzo, Xiaoyu Meng

Social Media – Sarah Manzo

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Production Photos – David Anthony Anderson

Music performed, mixed, and recorded by Roly Poly Productions (Janet Bentley and Andy Evan Cohen). www.rolypolyproductions.com

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Awards and Honors:

Friendly’s Fire won the 2015 Appalachian Festival of Plays and Playwrights (2015); earned the playwright Semifinalist status for the Princess Grace Awards Playwriting Fellowship (2017); was a Semifinalist with nuVoices at The Actors Theatre of Charlotte (2015) and Boulder Ensemble Theatre of Colorado’s Generations (2015); and a Finalist for Kernodle Playwriting Award (2016).

Notes on Music:

The music for “Tumbleweed Glacier” and “I Can’t Tell What’s Real Anymore” is the discretion of the creative team –the playwright trusts you. You may also contact Matt Martin (of Holy Ghost Tent Revival) to inquire about the music he created for the Barter Theatre Production. <http://www.holyghosttentrevival.com/contact/> You may also contact Janet Bentley and Andy Evan Cohen at www.rolypolyproductions.com to inquire about the music and soundscape they created for the NYC production. Though it is not a musical, *Friendly’s Fire* can be (and should be) considered “a play with some music.” How much is some? It’s up to you and your creative team.

Special Note:

During the play’s run at Barter Theatre, members of *Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture* talked with the audience about the realities combat veterans face when they return home, and about their program (and others like it) meant to help our veterans find peace and meaning in their new lives. I want to send a special thank you to this organization, and those that aim to help members of our military.

I also want to note that I did not set out to write a play about PTSD (the term is never used in this play). I did, however, want to write a play that served as a love letter to my closest friends that served in the mid-to-late 90s, and to the childhood toys and games we took with us as we grew up. I still have all of my old toys.

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PROLOGUE

DARKNESS. SOUND of a bee buzzing. Two bees. No, three bees. More bees. How many bees? An entire swarm? A fire – just a glow at first. It grows. SOUND of a helicopter. Hovering. It's on top of you! SHADOWS – helicopter blades, wings, etc., cutting through flames. A man in camouflage seems to stand in it. He's trying to say something to us...but, what? He's holding a radio. Looks like he's shouting. It's too late. SOUNDS FADE as LIGHTS FADE.

END PROLOGUE

LIGHTS UP. A cabin in Alaska. Sparsely furnished. Really, a bed. An old claw-footed bathtub. A white, bearskin rug. A toilet. A sink. A clothesline with a few blankets and sheets. An old, rusty beartrap on the wall as a kind of decoration – it might be over the bed. And on the back-wall, where a window should be, a beehive. That is to say, part of a beehive. Think of an ant-farm, but with bees and comb. Presumably, it leads to an extension outside to where a larger hive is kept. GUY FRIENDLY enters. He is a walking simulacrum of The Frontiersman. Long coat. Cowboy hat. Probably has a pistol hidden somewhere on his body. Even when naked. He surveys the room. Turns on a light. Too bright. Turns on a dimmer light – can be an oil lamp on the table, or something that casts a more romantic glow, keeping some of the sparse eccentricities hidden from a new guest. JESSICA enters behind him. She is a young, petite redhead who has not dyed her hair purple in some time. She turns Friendly around and they look at each other. They kiss passionately. As if they both need this. Right. Now. She notices the beehive.

JESSICA. Um.

FRIENDLY. What is it?

JESSICA. Are those...bees?

FRIENDLY. Oh. Yes. Yes, they are. Rest of the hive is outback.

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JESSICA. Huh. (*She turns him around. They continue kissing/undressing until she is in her bra and underwear. Friendly is in his boxers. They kiss. A lot. They get under a sheet.*) I need you to do something for me.

FRIENDLY. (*Beat.*) Oh, of course. I'm not Catholic. (*He moves to go under the sheet. She stops him. She reaches into her coat and retrieves a necklace which she puts on. It is made entirely out of teeth. She returns to Friendly and kisses him.*) What's this? Are those...teeth?

JESSICA. Yes. From everyone I've ever loved. (*Friendly leaps out of bed.*) Wait. Is it too?

FRIENDLY. Well//

JESSICA. //I don't have to//

FRIENDLY. Yes, it is too.

JESSICA. //I lied. I have to.

FRIENDLY. Very too. Too too very too. Really not practical, either. The whole "arousal" thing kind of gets tossed.

JESSICA. I just. Everyone leaves. Or I leave. There is leaving involved. So. It's just something. To remember them by. Don't you keep anything to remember your lovers? Tokens? Torn tickets? Tattoos? Lock of hair? Fingers?

FRIENDLY. If I wanted something it would be...your left eye.

JESSICA. The left one?

FRIENDLY. It doesn't sparkle quite as much as your right. Would be a pity to take that from you.

JESSICA. Ha. Right. Nutty girl in a necklace.

FRIENDLY. If you're going to extract one, I have an impacted wisdom tooth. All yours. And half a baby tooth that never came out. Just bits of it shattering off every now and again.

JESSICA. I don't want a dead tooth. Or a hidden tooth. Has to be the front tooth. See?

FRIENDLY. Oh. (*He looks at the necklace.*) You have alotta teeth. I mean, a lot a lot.

JESSICA. I'm not really a slut. Though. I mean. Yes. Yes, I am. But it's not like that. It's more like...what if I miss an experience, and it was like the one I was supposed to have? You know? So.

FRIENDLY. No, I'm just thinking...wherever you live. It'll be easy to discern, just ask the men there to smile.

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JESSICA. And women. And a poodle once. It humped my leg. That's...*(She looks.)* This one. Right next to Mandy.

FRIENDLY. Mandy?

JESSICA. She was my favorite. Greek girl. Kind of skinny.

FRIENDLY. I don't like skinny.

JESSICA. That's good. That's. That's good. *(She kisses him. She continues to kiss him. They are under the sheets. She gets up on top of him and produces a syringe from within the necklace and sticks it in his neck.)*

FRIENDLY. Gah!

JESSICA. This won't...this shouldn't really hurt you, okay? I mean...it shouldn't...you won't feel the tiny scratches of death's fingertips. *(She pushes him back. He is seriously drugged. She gets up and gets a tooth extractor.)*

FRIENDLY. *(Drugged.)* I will. Find you.

JESSICA. No. Please don't. Don't ruin this night. *(She puts the extractor in his mouth. BLACKOUT.)*

THEN

SOUNDS: a helicopter; radio static; LIGHTS GO RED; JASON'S voice can be heard through the static. RAPID GUNSHOTS.

JASON'S VOICE *(On Radio)* Hold your fire! We're search and rescue! Hold your fire! *(Helicopter in distress.)* Oh, shit! Someone: come in! Come in! We're...oh, God! *(GOING DOWN. CRASH! Battle sound fade, except for some static.)*

FRIENDLY'S VOICE. Someone...please come in. Please come in...please...someone...

NOW

The static continues and becomes the sound of bees. LIGHTS UP on QUEEN BEE. She is under yellow lights and exists in another plane. She buzzes. SOUNDS of buzzing and a helicopter. Friendly comes to. Groggy as hell. Where's his pants? Underwear's on....

QUEEN BEE. Sweetness is the currency of the world.

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FRIENDLY....God...

QUEEN BEE. Take the honey.

FRIENDLY. I don't need... (*He has trouble speaking...*)

QUEEN BEE. To trade with.

FRIENDLY. Trade?

QUEEN BEE. It is the currency of the world.

FRIENDLY. What is?

QUEEN BEE. Sweetness.

FRIENDLY....oh...

QUEEN BEE. Sweetness is the currency of the world.

FRIENDLY....please stop saying that.

QUEEN BEE. You will gather supplies. You will go. Into the world.

FRIENDLY. Really not interested in the world right now.

QUEEN BEE. You will go. Meet the Saint of Thieves. The Saint of Pawnbrokers.

FRIENDLY. ...?

QUEEN BEE. Bzzz. Go to the front door. Now.

FRIENDLY. Tried once. They take teeth.

QUEEN BEE. Do it. Move your legs.

FRIENDLY. No.

QUEEN BEE. If you move your legs, you will be rewarded.

FRIENDLY. With what?

QUEEN BEE. Companionship. Romance. Intrigue. Friendship. The satisfaction of a completed journey. Point A to Point B back to Point A.

FRIENDLY. Legs...fail me.

QUEEN BEE. The door keeps you in...

FRIENDLY. It keeps them out. All of them. Their faces hang in mourning. Don't ask if there is anything you can do.

QUEEN BEE. I never would.

FRIENDLY. I hate the damn question.

QUEEN BEE. I will never ask it...bzzzzz. Go to the door.

FRIENDLY. Don't...make me get up....

QUEEN BEE. Bzzzzz. Bzzzzz. (*Friendly moves toward the door.*)

FRIENDLY. God. My legs ache. There's a weight in... (*He drops to the floor holding his mouth.*) So heavy. (*He puts his nose to the floor.*)

QUEEN BEE. Bzzz. Bzzz.

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FRIENDLY. Persistent little...

QUEEN BEE. BZZZZ. BZZZZ. BZZZZ. (*Friendly picks himself up. He moves to the door.*) BZZZ. BZZZ. BZZZ. (*Friendly opens the door. LIGHTS CHANGE – DOWN ON BEE, white light streams through the door. An ASTRONAUT stands there. NOTE: the ASTRONAUT'S outfit does not have to be "legitimate." Think 50's B-Movie Space Explorer. They have a moment. Friendly looks at him and collapses. ASTRONAUT TODD enters. Kneels by Friendly. He lifts the faceplate.*)

TODD. Friendly? Jesus! Friendly?! What the hell...Is there anything I can do?

THEN

LIGHTS CHANGE. Jason enters, dressed in camouflage. He stands upstage as Todd moves to the radio. He looks at Friendly. Friendly senses him and turns a bit. Jason looks at Friendly. Friendly reaches out. Jason exits as...

NOW

...LIGHTS CHANGE. Todd is on the radio; diligent, frantic.

TODD. Come on, doc. Where the hell are you, over?

VOICE OF DENNIS. Todd? Is that you? Over?

TODD. I'm up at Friendly's. And something's...something's happened. Over.

VOICE OF DENNIS. Happened? What happened? Over.

TODD. I think he's been mugged. There's...his mouth is bleeding. Over.

VOICE OF DENNIS. Put a compress on it. I can't get up there –

TODD. Can't get – (*Stops, as if realizing Dennis can't hear.*)

VOICE OF DENNIS. -snow already has folks...did you say something, over?

TODD. I don't think I can bring him down...I don't...over.

VOICE OF DENNIS. Even if I wanted to, it'll be morning before I can get the CAT. Over.

TODD. Can you radio Deputy Reynolds? Let him know...something happened? Over.

VOICE OF DENNIS. I'll do it. Over.

TODD. What can I do? Over.

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VOICE OF DENNIS. Keep him cool. Make sure he has Tylenol. He have any Tylenol? Over.

TODD. Uh... (*Looks around.*) Aspirin. Over.

VOICE DENNIS. Tell him to take two and call me in the morning. Over.

TODD. Did...did you really just say that, over?

VOICE OF DENNIS. After the snow, dipshit. I'll be there after the snow. Over.

TODD. Screw you, too, Dennis. Over and out. (*LIGHTS CHANGE. Todd lifts the faceplate and looks at Friendly.*)

TODD. Hey, bud. You with me?

FRIENDLY. Radio doesn't work.

TODD. Yes it does.

FRIENDLY. No. I tried telling them. We both tried telling them. We were on their side, Todd.

TODD. On their side?

FRIENDLY. Search and rescue.

TODD. Oh, shit.

FRIENDLY. Combat search and rescue.

TODD. Hang in there, bud. Hang in. (*He grabs a cloth from the sink and holds it on Friendly's mouth.*) Friendly? Look at me. I just talked to Doctor Dennis. We can't get into town before tomorrow.

FRIENDLY. Dennis. (*Beat.*) Are you in space?

TODD. Yes. I'm in space. Right now. All in space. Now lay down. Take some aspirin. (*LIGHTS UP on Queen Bee.*)

QUEEN BEE. You need legs.

FRIENDLY. They've failed me.

QUEEN BEE. If we're going to cross the snow, yes.

TODD. Who failed you?

FRIENDLY. What has legs that can carry us...

TODD. Bayer. Best legs in the world. Here. (*Hands him aspirin.*) Water. (*Todd runs over to the sink and gets a small tin cup. There's a pitcher – he pours some water, bring is to Friendly.*)

FRIENDLY. It's all about space...what flies in space...she said she wanted a lift to go see Santa.

TODD. Okay. (*Todd hands him water.*)

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

FRIENDLY. We don't have a sleigh. Or...rocket ship. You have a rocket ship?

TODD. *(Still running around.)* Just the suit. Came into my pawnshop. I thought it was fate. We're supposed to have our sci-fi movies tonight. Remember? *(Todd grabs some ice from the icebox and wraps it in a rag from the line.)* Here. Keep it... *(He puts it on Friendly's mouth. NOTE: throughout the play Friendly will periodically put the rag to his mouth. This should become second nature.)* For the swelling.

FRIENDLY. Plan's changed...We're going to beat her there. Today.

TODD. Okay. *(Beat.)* Who are we beating where when?

FRIENDLY. Look! *(He moves to the tub. Regards the claw feet.)* Legs. *(He grabs his hat and gets in the tub.)* Are you coming with me? *(Todd takes a breath.)*

TODD. You want me to get in the tub with you? *(Friendly nods, smiles.)* I'll, uh. I'll just ride shotgun. *(Friendly gives him a severe look.)* Fine. Just until the aspirin kicks in. *(Todd gets in behind him. Friendly pulls the radio off the desk.)*

FRIENDLY. Are you ready? *(Todd looks over his shoulder to the hive and back at Friendly.)*

TODD. For what?

FRIENDLY. *(Smiling.)* We're off! *(Friendly smiles. LIGHTS CHANGE. The Tub seems to move. Friendly reacts. Todd doesn't. Friendly smiles, maybe even hoots and hollers! Queen Bee smiles. LIGHTS CHANGE. Exciting frontier music. SOUND of wind. Music fades. The tub comes to a halt.)*

FRIENDLY. Todd, I'm going in.

TODD. Are you?

FRIENDLY. We need supplies. You want something?

TODD. I'm good. I'll, uh...I'll keep the tub running for you. *(LIGHTS CHANGE. A SIGN lights up – it reads GENERAL STORE. Friendly approaches the toilet. He opens it. A man made entirely out of moss rises up.)*

MOSS PETE. Guy Friendly.

FRIENDLY. Moss Pete. *(They shake hands.)*

MOSS PETE. Shit, man. Ain't seen you around since...what were you...eight years old? Ten, maybe?

FRIENDLY. Can't be that long, can it?

MOSS PETE. Sure. Ever since...you were *doing it wrong.* *(He gives Friendly a knowing look. Friendly is a little confused. Moss Pete laughs.)* What can I get you today? Strawberry Moon Pie? My reindeer soup? A house made out of moss?

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FRIENDLY. Skis. Batteries. Blanket.

MOSS PETE. Preparing for the storm?

FRIENDLY. Heading to the North Pole. (*LIGHTS UP on Todd just a little; he is on the radio.*)

VOICE OF DENNIS. (*Through static.*) No, that's pretty unusual for a fever...unless he's burning hot. Is he burning hot? Over.

TODD. I don't know. But. He mentioned the radio failing. He said the two of them tried. He...he talked about the rescue. You know. The rescue? Over.

VOICE OF DENNIS. Ah, Jesus. I knew this was going to happen. I knew it...over.

TODD. Knew what would happen? (*Beat.*) What do I do? Over.

VOICE OF DENNIS. If it is what I think it is...just keep playing along. Over.

TODD. Are you an MD or shrink? Over.

VOICE OF DENNIS. You're the one asking me questions, lunchbox. I'll be there first thing when the storm clears. Over.

TODD. Over and out. (*LIGHTS CHANGE to Friendly and Moss Pete. Friendly is distracted.*)

FRIENDLY. What was that?

MOSS PETE. Just the radio. I like my stories.

FRIENDLY. Oh. It sounded like Todd was talking to Dennis. Did you hear...? (*SOUNDS of a helicopter getting closer.*) It can't be...it can't be...

THEN

LIGHTS CHANGE. Sound of a helicopter. OFF-STAGE voice in static.

JASON'S VOICE. Don't shoot! We're a U.S. Black Hawk! Hold your fire! Hold your fire! (*CRASHING. Friendly goes pale.*)

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NOW

LIGHTS RETURN to Moss Pete's.

MOSS PETE. The currency of the world. Good for trade. (*Moss Pete hands Friendly three jars of honey.*) And this. (*He hands Friendly a jar with Queen Bee.*) She said she's coming with you.

FRIENDLY. She'll freeze out there.

MOSS PETE. You know how persuasive she is. (*Friendly looks into the jar.*)

FRIENDLY. Well, well, well. Queen Bee. You never cease to surprise me. (*LIGHTS UP on Queen Bee. She looks up and smiles. Friendly continues looking at the jar smiling – it's a moment. LIGHTS DOWN on Queen Bee.*)

MOSS PETE. Be careful up there. The Egg Man is around.

FRIENDLY. The Egg Man?

MOSS PETE. Poacher. Thief. Has a terrible weakness for honey. (*Friendly looks at a jar.*) Most poachers go after bears...this one goes after lost travelers. Sets traps. Takes things. All kinds of things. Be careful.

FRIENDLY. Teeth?

MOSS PETE. Teeth?

FRIENDLY. A girl...she took my tooth.

TODD. Did you say a girl?

MOSS PETE. My God. She did the same thing to me. (*Moss Pete opens his mouth. Friendly reacts.*) That girl. That girl. (*Excited.*) She was so... (*can't find the words*) ...so! (*Suddenly scared.*) And yet, too...too...very too too.

FRIENDLY. Yes, yes. That was my experience.

MOSS PETE. If you see her again. Tell her. Tell her I forgive her.

FRIENDLY. Forgive her?

MOSS PETE. Sometimes, people leave, Guy. Vanish from our lives. That can't be helped. Sometimes we drive them away. Tell her I forgive her. Tell her. Tell her.

FRIENDLY. People vanish. Is that supposed to happen? (*Moss Pete vanishes. SOUND OF A FLUSH. Todd approaches. GENERAL STORE LIGHT FADES.*)

TODD. Guy...did you say a girl did this to you? (*Beat.*) Dennis put a call into Deputy Reynolds. We can stop whoever...you gotta be in a shitload of pain. Go ahead and lay down.

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FRIENDLY. (*Snapping out of it.*) Got the supplies we need. Pete says The Egg Man is out there. Laying traps. (*Friendly looks at the Polar Bearskin rug.*) But I'm crafty.

TODD. Egg Man. Isn't that a character from...? (*Beat.*) Okay, look, Guy, I'll come along with you. Okay? I'll do this. But you need to fill me in a little.

FRIENDLY. Tonight I went down to The Glacier Inn.

TODD. You...you left the house?

FRIENDLY. And I saw a girl there. Tourist. Tiny. Punky. (*LIGHTS UP on Jessica.*) Her name is Jessica...such an ordinary name for her. Jessica. I tell her I was in the Gulf War. She tells me she wants to find Santa Claus. Says he let her down.

JESSICA. (*As if on another plane.*) He always let me down.

FRIENDLY. "He lets everyone down," I say, ordering another drink. She says,

JESSICA. I never got anything from Santa. I'm gonna change that. Gonna find him and beat a gift out. You know?

FRIENDLY. What kind of gift?

JESSICA. Something...something I can actually use.

FRIENDLY. She wants me to fly her to the North Pole. I tell her I don't fly anymore. Not since the war.

TODD. Yes you do. You fly tourists up the mountain all the time.

FRIENDLY. "Not since the war," I tell her.

TODD. Okay. So?

FRIENDLY. She's funny. She's attractive. She's temporary.

JESSICA. You're not a destination.

FRIENDLY. Just a station on the way.

JESSICA. You're just a stop.

FRIENDLY. And for me, you're a pause. A breather. Until I can get back. To brooding. (*Todd reacts.*) A pause from anything that involves... (*LIGHTS FADE on Jessica. Friendly speaks, more to himself than Todd.*) I'm not something to be remembered. I am a stop. It starts that way. These things always start that way. And they never end that way. I hate being wrong.

TODD. I didn't know you started leaving the house, Guy. I mean, it's one thing to do it for the tourists but to do it for you...that's great.

FRIENDLY. And then she takes a token.

TODD. She...she...

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

FRIENDLY. She numbed me with something.

TODD. With...with what? (*Friendly points to his neck. Todd looks.*) Oh my God! She drugged you? (*Beat.*) LSD...or something? (*Todd picks up the receiver.*) Poison shit. Dennis? Are you there, over? Are you...? (*Todd notices some papers on the table. He picks them up. He sets down the receiver. Friendly sees him looking. He turns away. A shadow moves under the door. Friendly regards it. Todd doesn't notice. Regards Friendly.*) What is it?

FRIENDLY. Egg Man.

TODD. Egg Man?

FRIENDLY. We should go.

TODD. Okay. (*Beat. To himself.*) Egg Man. (*Friendly gets in the tub.*)

FRIENDLY. And we're off.

TODD. Okay. (*Beat.*) So, we're going...

FRIENDLY. To The North Pole.

TODD. For -?

FRIENDLY. A reckoning.

TODD. Right. (*Beat.*) I should get Doc to radio Reynolds and tell him there's a girl...she might be out in the woods. Can't have gotten far. I don't remember seeing anyone. Do you think I should call back?

FRIENDLY. I saw him, Todd.

TODD. Him?

FRIENDLY. Standing there while you were making a fuss. He's. A time capsule in a glacier. A sculpture made of ice. His breath of dried flowers. Here. (*Friendly gets up and moves sheets around his clothesline.*)

TODD. What is -?

FRIENDLY. Mountains. We've traveled to the mountains. Can you see them? (*He dims the light.*)

TODD. Um...sure.

FRIENDLY. Yes, sir, mountains. A cold night like this –

TODD. You turn off the heat? (*Todd looks at the thermostat. Jiggles it. Nothing.*)

FRIENDLY. – it makes me remember the story. Once upon a time there was a helicopter pilot. He never left his house. The end.

TODD. That's not the whole story, Friendly.

FRIENDLY. No...? Wait...there's more. (*Friendly reaches into his pocket and looks at the jar with the queen bee. LIGHTS UP on Queen Bee.*)

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

QUEEN BEE. They are after you.

FRIENDLY. Who?

QUEEN BEE. Agents. (*Friendly turns to Todd.*)

FRIENDLY. Run for the hills!

TODD. The hills? (*Friendly ducks under the sheets.*) Right. Hills. (*They get behind the sheets. SOUNDS of a swarm and gunshots. Friendly crouches low. Todd watches Friendly. Imitates him. SOUND of a buzz saw. TWO BEES enter through the wall in a puff of sawdust. The Bees approach. They look at Friendly and Todd. Note: they can be represented by two men in black and yellow-striped cowboy outfits with a stinger sticking out the back of a long coat.*)

BEE 1. You done screwed with the wrong hive.

BEE 2. Taken too much of the honey.

BEE 1. Made the bees freeze.

BEE 2. Face us like a man, Friendly. (*Friendly looks at Todd. Nods meaningfully. He steps out.*)

FRIENDLY. What is it, boys?

BEE 1. There you are.

BEE 2. Been looking for you.

BEE 1. Aim to kill you.

FRIENDLY. You're not my bees. What are you? (*Bee 2 spits tobacco on the floor and brandishes a tape measure while Bee 1 shows Friendly a hammer in a holster. Friendly grows stern.*) Carpenters.

BEE 1. Hired guns.

BEE 2. Courtesy of the drones.

BEE 1. WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

BEE 2. You just had to do that now.

BEE 1. Right moment, friend. Right moment.

BEE 2. Never the right moment. This is America.

BEE 1. (*To Friendly.*) Wanted to find you.

BEE 2. Make short work of you.

FRIENDLY. You're talking too much for it to be short work. Obviously, you want something else. (*Pause.*)

BEE 1. We want the honey.

FRIENDLY. Honey?

BEE 1. And the Queen.

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

FRIENDLY. My queen?

BEE 1. We're taking her from you. You got too big for your own boots.

BEE 2. A dictator.

BEE 1. We're gonna make it right. Making a new hive out here. A new beginning. Democracy for all.

FRIENDLY. With a queen?

BEE 2. (*Beat.*) We'll hash it out later. But first. Hand them over – real slow like. (*Todd sticks his head out.*)

BEE 1. Who's THAT?! (*Friendly slugs Bee 1; he falls! Friendly stomps him. He grabs his stomach and spins his arms and legs. Bee 2 removes a hammer from his belt. Todd rushes in, grabs the hammer. Friendly throws Bee 2 to the ground.*)

FRIENDLY. Let this serve as a warning for you, Bee!

BEE 2. You stomped my brother...

FRIENDLY. Your...

BEE 2. (*To Bee 1.*) Are you okay?

BEE 1. I'm...I'm dying, Slim.

BEE 2. Don't you dare crush me while I see him off to Bee heaven.

FRIENDLY. I...I wouldn't.

BEE 2. The honey doesn't belong to you. (*Suddenly with a slight accent, suggesting Iraq.*) You're a foreigner in our land. (*He returns to being a bee.*)

FRIENDLY. What are you talking about? (*SOUNDS of a helicopter crashing. Friendly reacts.*)

TODD. Friendly?

FRIENDLY. We're foreigners. They were here. We took their honey. And we crashed. Do you see? He's holding his brother while his brother...

TODD. Friendly.

FRIENDLY. Shhh...they...they need to do this.

BEE 1 and FRIENDLY. Just...move me...a bit...I want to see...the sunrise as I die.

FRIENDLY. It's been awhile since I've seen the sun rise.

TODD. Sunrise?

BEE 1. Please...it's important... (*Bee 2 turns him a bit. He looks out.*)

BEE 2. That's it...the color of honey...

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

FRIENDLY. Spider-web cracks on glass. Clouds of dust. The sun over the hill. Everything goes quiet. Face of dirt. Breath of dried flowers. The world speeds up. Slows down. The first sound I hear is a crunch. (*Bee 1 dies. Bee 2 stands.*)

FRIENDLY AND BEE 2. And I see his eyes grow distant. And I see everything. The toys we used to play with. Summers with skinned knees and spills in the driveway, riding our Huffy bikes. The trench in the Middleton's lawn, and how we used to play Star Wars. And Man-Man. Remember Man-Man? And...and he's too heavy to carry out of the wreck. He wants...and I can't. And I leave. And. (*Beat.*)

BEE 2. Where do I go now?

FRIENDLY. (*To Bee 2.*) Go home. To your wife.

BEE 2. I'm going home now. To my wife...but...the honey is still out there...it's still there. (*Friendly hands him a jar of honey.*)

FRIENDLY. Now go. (*Bee 2 nods. He exits. LIGHTS CHANGE. Todd regards Friendly.*)

TODD. You okay? (*Friendly doesn't respond.*) Who gets carpenter bees this time of year? (*LIGHTS UP on Queen Bee.*)

QUEEN BEE. Have you killed one of my subjects?

FRIENDLY. Just one of the carpenters. Thank you for the warning. (*Beat.*) What is it?

QUEEN BEE. The Egg Man thinks of *you* as an insect.

FRIENDLY. He was out to take you and the honey. I have a responsibility. To the hive. To you. And I have a powerful need to finish what I started. When this is through, you'll go back to your hive. But I ain't handing you off to some strange folks just because you speak a common tongue...or buzz...common...how does that work? Communication, I mean? (*Todd looks at Bee 1.*)

TODD. They do get big, don't they. Reminds me of my days living in Texas. The cicadas were...huge. (*Friendly starts pulling up a few floorboards.*) The hell are you doing now?

FRIENDLY. Need a fire. Stay warm. (*Todd shakes his head.*)

TODD. Okay.

FRIENDLY. You gonna help?

TODD. Yeah.

FRIENDLY. (*Beat.*) Why are you here, Todd?

TODD. Are you suddenly lucid? (*Beat.*) You double-booked yourself. We were supposed to watch B-movies tonight before you...got busy. Figured I'd surprise

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

you with this outfit that came into the pawnshop. Reminds me of the old B-Movies, you know? The guy that sold it...weird looking fellow. Definitely a space cadet. But the very idea of a costume spacesuit coming into my pawnshop. Just seemed serendipitous.

FRIENDLY. That's all well and good, Todd, but it doesn't answer my question. You keep coming back here. (*Beat. While he speaks, Todd sprinkles a little fluid and starts the fire.*)

TODD. Guy...when I was a little boy growing up outside of Galveston, we would go to a place called Andy's Piggy's. Mama would take me there on afternoons. My aunt worked there – she was a waitress. Mama was looking for work. Dad had had that job with NASA, but after that...so, we'd sit there, me with a malted, Mama pouring over the classifieds. And I look out the window; what do you think I see? A man crossing an empty street suddenly gets knocked clean out of his shoes. I mean, this car was a gray blur. Came outta nowhere, went to nowhere. Just whoosh. Separated man and shoes mighty quick. So, I'm sitting there, and so I'm sitting there. I look at Mama. She didn't see it. My aunt didn't see it. The guys in the back, they're laughing, the radio's playing. They didn't see it, either. The man crawls into the grass and just lays there. Not asleep. I see his limbs moving. So, I'm looking out the window and I'm just waiting for someone to notice. I'm only six, so...I don't know what to do. I was always quiet, I guess. After about ten minutes, I finally screw up the courage to say to mama to look over. She looks out, and snaps into action – calls the police. My aunt runs out with a glass of water. I stay inside, and watch mama and my aunt make a fuss over him, but not moving him, they told me later, you're never supposed to move someone if they've been wounded. Now, as far as I know, the man made a full recovery. The ambulance showed up and all that, and Mama and my aunt got back to work – my aunt getting coffee for the cops, mama with her glasses, circling jobs in the paper. But...I just remember sitting there in silence watching a man suffer. On his back. His arms and legs moving, like an insect that'd been poisoned. And I did nothing. (*A moment. The men stand by the fire.*) Guy, I never had a brother. Okay? And I never had a wife, hope to never have a wife. You know? I...I saw the papers she sent you. Over there on your table. I saw it's...I saw it's final. I'm sorry. Guess I can't imagine what you're going through, but...whatever it is, no one should go through it by themselves, you know?

FRIENDLY. (*Beat.*) Your Dad worked for NASA. You think your Dad would be proud of you – seeing in you in a spacesuit? (*Todd chuckles.*)

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

TODD. Maybe under different circumstances. (*A moment. The men seem to be enjoying the fire. Friendly narrates.*) The men sit and enjoy the fire, and the beautiful quiet that comes with a strong, masculine friendship. (*Todd gives Friendly a puzzled look. SOUND OF A BEAR GROWLING. Friendly regards it.*)

FRIENDLY. Tell me that's your stomach, Todd.

TODD. ...not really hungry.

FRIENDLY. Get into the cave...slowly. (*He picks up the jar with Queen Bee and slowly moves behind the sheets. He produces his pistol.*)

TODD. What is -?

FRIENDLY. Belonged to my Dad. [*Note: Insert type of gun here; actor's and director's discretion.*] It's a collector's item, if you know your guns. Has a nice kick, my father used to say. Give it a nice squeeze. The first time I held it, I was scared of it. I remember the sweat on my brow, the wiggle in my legs. Don't know what possessed me to take it with me.

TODD. You're...not going to use it...

FRIENDLY. We're gonna wait here. Just wait here. Bear will probably be gone by morning.

TODD. A bear?

FRIENDLY. Yes, sir. This is Bear Country. (*Friendly's POLAR BEARSKIN RUG rises and walks around the room. He disappears behind the sheet somewhere.*)

TODD. You think we should put out the fire?

FRIENDLY. Nah. (*Pause. Friendly stretches out.*) He wandered off. We're safe for now.

TODD. Okay. Good. Safe is good. (*Friendly produces a ukulele from under his coat. Regards it. Todd chuckles. Friendly strums a bit.*) You gonna play me something?

FRIENDLY. Yeah?

TODD. Sure. (*Chuckles.*) Play me something, Friendly. Anything to drown out the howling of the wind.

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

MUSIC INTERLUDE

LIGHTS CHANGE a little. Friendly starts to find a tune. Todd seems to enjoy it enough. And so....

FRIENDLY. (*singing*)

TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
YOU WRECK EVERYTHING
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
I WISH IT WAS SPRING
I KNOW GLOBAL WARMING IS A MYTH
WHEN I SEE YOUR CONTINENTAL DRIFT
(*Polar Bear enters, and watches.*)

TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
I WISH I COULD FREEZE YOUR HEART
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
YOU TEAR MY WORLD APART
YOU ARE AN ISLAND MADE OF TEETH
THERE'S ONLY MORE OF YOU BENEATH

TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
WE WILL ALL FREEZE TO DEATH
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
IT IS ANYONE'S GUESS
(*The rest of the cast enters.*)
HOW LONG YOU'LL KEEP US FEELING BLUE
(*Possibly to Jessica, Possibly to Queen Bee.*)
I'VE NEVER MET SOMEONE LIKE YOU

POLAR BEAR. (*Singing*) OH OH (*Polar Bear, Queen Bee, Jessica, and Jason, and even Todd, all join in.*)

ALL. (*singing*)

TUMBLEWEED GLACIER

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

DON'T YOU DARE SAY GOODBYE
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
EVEN YOUR PARTING IS A LIE
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
YOU ARE A WISH MADE FROM A BONE
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
YOU REMIND US WE'RE ALONE

TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
(In harmony)
TUMBLEWEED GLACIER
(The song ends. Jessica, Queen Bee, and Jason exit.)

END MUSIC INTERLUDE

LIGHTS CHANGE.

POLAR BEAR and FRIENDLY. Now that was nice.

TODD. *(Playing along, looking at Polar Bear.)* Thank you, friend. We needed that bit of harmony.

POLAR BEAR. *(Note: he has a slight Russian accent.)* Can't tell you how long it's been since folks invited me to sing along. Heh heh. Where are you all heading?

TODD. North Pole.

POLAR BEAR. Quite a ways to go.

FRIENDLY. Travel much?

POLAR BEAR. I used to all the time. I'm Bera, last of the Golden Paw.

TODD. I'm Todd, he's Friendly.

POLAR BEAR. Best with your journey. I needed to stop traveling once the Egg Man started picking us off.

FRIENDLY. Egg Man?

POLAR BEAR. Poacher. Been hunting the Golden Paw for many years. Tracked us through Iceland. Russia. Here. He's a man like I've never seen before. He's made entirely...of teeth.

FRIENDLY. Teeth?

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

POLAR BEAR. Mmm-hmmm.

FRIENDLY. Have you seen a girl with a tooth necklace?

POLAR BEAR. Is she with the Egg Man? (*Friendly shrugs.*) Well, I try to stay off his grid. So, if she travels with the Egg Man, I'm happy to say I have never met her. But a necklace of teeth. Sounds like Egg Man all right.

FRIENDLY. I imagine you get many hunters up here.

POLAR BEAR. That's true. But most of them are respectful. They free our spirit, use our fur, eat our meat. Not exactly the way I want to go, but to be a trophy. Your soul is caught between worlds. But, if respectful, there is a release of spirit...it's what makes the aurora borealis. It's the song of the Golden Paw. You can only hear the music when you enter the spirit world, but it causes all this light.

TODD. I always thought that was some kinda reflection.

POLAR BEAR. Well, it is. Just because you can use science to explain spiritual phenomenon, it doesn't mean spiritual phenomenon can be explained *away* by science.

TODD. That's some philosophy you got there. Friendly doesn't believe.

FRIENDLY. Hush now.

TODD. Calls the man upstairs "the Sky Wizard."

POLAR BEAR. Man upstairs?

TODD. Yeah, you know. The Man Upstairs.

POLAR BEAR. Ah. I don't really have much use for stairs, so I'm not sure I follow your meaning. I tend to live in caves. Hiding in shadows of ice from the Egg Man and his ilk. (*Beat.*) Say...hungry? I know a good patch in the ice where the salmon try to hide. What say you?

TODD. I'm starving. All we've been living off is honey.

POLAR BEAR. HONEY!

FRIENDLY. Well... (*He takes out a jar of honey.*)

POLAR BEAR. I suggest a trade. My fish for your honey.

TODD. Partner – you have a deal!

QUEEN BEE. Aren't you even going to ask me? (*LIGHTS UP on Queen Bee. Both Friendly and Polar Bear regard her.*)

FRIENDLY. Queen – are you all right?

QUEEN BEE. Oh, I'm great. Take without asking, be demanding. You're all bears to me. (*A long pause. Friendly approaches her in her space.*)

FRIENDLY. I never realized...I never knew it was like that.

FRIENDLY'S FIRE

QUEEN BEE. I would do anything for you. Obviously. It's just nice to be asked.
(*Beat.*) The honey is supposed to be for the eggs.

FRIENDLY. Eggs?

QUEEN BEE. The children.

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