

The Fuzzy Five Vs. Governor Good Hair **By Anton Prosser**

The first thing that anyone noticed about Austin was the Squishables. There were Squishables everywhere - riding the bus, bouncing along the hike and bike trail along Lady Bird Lake, working in theaters and libraries, gathering on the University of Texas campus. The second thing anyone noticed was that no one seemed to notice or be surprised that giant, adorable fuzzy animals were talking and working and hanging out everywhere.

"The city slogan is "Keep Austin Weird," Max explained to the bemused and baffled members of the Fuzzy Five. "A bunch of talking Squishables is hardly even the weirdest thing about this place!" Max was a Squishable tiger, and he lived with some people who ran a movie theater. He had invited the members of the Fuzzy Five down to see some movies and attend the Zilker Kite Festival. Nina Jr. was concerned that kite flying could be dangerous for a Squishable, but Max assured her hardly anyone was ever swept off by a rogue gust of wind. Plus there were mini-kites and team kites and often humans would help Squishables flying larger stunt kites.

The Fuzzy Five were especially glad to escape the freak late spring snow storms and enjoy the beautiful weather. Spirit ran around with a smart phone, intent on making a music video montage of her enjoying the wildflowers and balmy blue skies. At the festival, Otto quickly made friends with some members of the Philosophy Club from the university. They included Mao, a Squishable mouse, and Max's good friend Leopold the Squishable leopard. Breakfast made arrangements to meet up with another helper chicken and scope out the local vampire community. His owner was thinking of making the movie South where rent was much cheaper.

Everyone was enjoying the fantastic day. The smell of wildflowers and sun warmed grass mingled with fruity popsicles and tasty tacos. A swarm of Squishables Bees lofted an enormous bee kite to great applause. Nightshade was relaxing under a parasol when tragedy and ominous events struck!

"What is that?" Otto asked with alarm. He pointed a tentacle at a man in a suit surrounded by bodyguards with perfectly coiffed and intensely pomaded hair. They roared to a stop in the middle of the road with several unmarked vehicles.

"That's Governor Good Hair," Max sighed. "He's a big problem."

"Why?"

"He doesn't approve of Squishables."

"How does his hair do that?" Nina Jr. wondered. "It looks like a plastic doll head."

Good Hair grabbed a megaphone from one of his goon squad and began shouting garbled, angry words at the crowd. Several goons swept nets over nearby Squishables, gathering them up with cries of indignation and panicked squeaks. People shouted and shook their fists, but the goons were extremely menacing. They threw the nets of squirming Squishables into some dark vans and sped off with squealing tires.

"Oh no," cried Otto. "Spirit and Nightshade have been kidnapped by this crazy governor!"

"Kidnapped, again?" Breakfast muttered under his breath. "This is starting to feel like a daytime soap opera."

"What can we do?" Otto asked Max.

"Well, he usually tries to round up Squishables when he's feeling feisty. He's recently threatened to start deporting them. No one thought he would actually try to do it!" The tiger looked very uncomfortable.

"We can't let that happen!" The Fuzzy Five Currently Three cried out in horror. "There must be some way to stop him."

"Well Austin has the largest urban bat colony in the world. They also have the largest urban Squishable bat colony too. Come on, they will be waking up in a few hours, let's go get some advice from them."

Breakfast, Otto and Nina Jr. made their way with Max and Leopold to Congress Avenue bridge where the bats lived. They didn't see many Squishables out and about, Max noted with some sadness. Whenever Governor Good Hair raided the community lots of Squishables went into hiding. Despite the lovely weather, there were few people out on the bridge. Leopold explained that most of the regular bats hadn't yet returned from their winter vacation in Mexico, but that Squishables bats weren't very migratory. Most of them lived in apartments and houses instead of under bridges, but the bridge was a popular gathering place for the bat community.

A spectacular sunset streaked the sky with fiery colors reflected in the rippled water of Lady Bird Lake. Otto pointed out that it was technically a river and not a lake, and Max frowned like he heard that all the time. Breakfast and Nina Jr. debated rescue plans and tactics, as well as the merits of helicopters versus sports cars for escapes. As the path lights came on along the hike and bike trail, a few Bat Squishables appeared.

"What are you guys doing out here?" asked a very round Squishable bat. "Heard it isn't safe today, with Good Hair running around. " Max introduced him as Vaughn and another bat as Dark Nocturnal Agony.

"Your human named you Dark Nocturnal Agony?" Otto seemed a little surprised and the bat nodded sheepishly.

"I bet you and Nightshade would have a lot to talk about," Breakfast chuckled. "Goth kids and their silly names."

"Yeah," the bat sighed. "I go by Dan usually."

"We need your help," Otto explained. "Our friends were kidnapped by this awful Governor Good Hair person today and we need to get them back before someone horrible happens!"

"Governor Good Hair," Dan sighed again. "If Squishables could vote, that guy would be out of office by now.

"Who keeps electing him?" Nina Jr wondered.

"Lots of people in parts of the state where they think Squishables are just stuffed animals who couldn't possibly talk." The other Squishables nodded sagely. "Austin is just about the only place here where Squishables are pretty visible, even though they are everywhere."

"How can he be so hung up on hating Squishables though?" persisted Otto. "It doesn't make any kind of sense."

"Some people are just born mean." The bats all rustled their wings in agreement.

"We must fight back!" The Fuzzy Three took up heroic poses.

"How?" asked Vaughn.

"We've had some experience fighting Evil Nemesis dudes before," Breakfast said quite seriously.

"Public humiliation is often a good weapon," Nina Jr added.

The Squishables went to all all night diner to plot strategies for tomorrow. They had to succeed! A round cloud of Squishable Bats took off into the night.

Just before noon on the next day, Governor Good Hair held a press conference at the Capitol. The local reporters crowded around, as well as a couple from national news outlets who knew crazy Texas governor antics were good filler material. On the steps were two large cages, crowded with numerous Squishables of all kinds. Goons in sunglasses stood shoulder to shoulder around the podium, holding back the crowd. There were also some unhappy humans, loudly demanding the release of their Squishables. Otto, Breakfast and Nina Jr pushed their way up to the front near the reporters. There weren't many Squishables in the crowd. Max showed up, his humans in tow. They were both carrying cameras and hastily texting on their phones.

"Ready?" Nina Jr. asked. Max looked at his humans and nodded. Up on the stage, Governor Good Hair appeared and waved to the reporters. He grinned and ignored the booing from the few Squishables in the crowd.

"My fellow Texans," he began pompously. "Today we introduce new anti-terrorism and security measures for our great state that involve rounding up dangerous elements such as these so called talking spherical animals..."

"Squishables aren't terrorists!" shouted Breakfast.

"These Squishables are taking away our jobs!" Good Hair said menacingly. "They are threat to our moral fiber with their poly fill fiber stuffing! Do you want your children to grow up stuffed with fake fiber?!"

"Down with Good Hair!" shouted Max. His humans rushed towards the good barricade, cameras held high. On the stage, Good Hair began sputtering and shaking his fist.

"I'll mail you back to wherever you came from!" he blustered. At the edge of the stage, the goons were trying to push away the cameras and suddenly very interested reporters. Suddenly the air was full of flapping and a cloud of Squishable bats descended on the goons. They were buffeted by tiny wings and high pitched shrieks that cracked the shiny reflective lenses of their sunglasses. Without sunglasses, the goons appeared blinded by the sunlight and lost their will to repress others.

"What are you doing?!?" shrieked Good Hair. He tried to chase Otto as the Squishable octopus snatched away the keys to liberate the other Squishables from the belt of a good. He waved his hands around angrily and stomped his feet. A shadow passed over him, and he had time to look up with dread before a group of Squishable bats dumped a giant bucket of water over his head.

"Nooooooooooooo! I'm melting!" Indeed, Good Hair's famously perfect and immovable hair was actually melting. He fell to the ground, clutching at his head. Cameras zoomed onto close up shots of the governor wailing and gnashing his teeth.

"I knew that wasn't really hair," Nina Jr. said smugly. "He was all hat and no cattle, or all product and no hair as the case may be."

Otto, Nina Jr. and Breakfast leaped up to the nearest cage to bust open the lock and release their comrades. Spirit and Nightshade tumbled out breathlessly along with dozens of other Squishables. Touching reunions took place all over the Capitol lawn as humans and Squishables hugged with glee.

"Thank goodness!" Spirit exclaimed. "I hate being kidnapped!"

"Really?" Breakfast had on his skeptical face. The reunited Fuzzy Five bounded over to where Max and his chortling humans were reviewing their footage of Good Hair shrieking and melting.

"This is going to make the best no talking in the movie theater bump ever!" one of the humans exclaimed. They did a little dance of glee.

"Hopefully with the power of his perfect hair broken, we can elect a better governor." Max looked pleased. "Maybe even a Squishable friendly governor!"

"Good luck with that," Otto said.

"Thanks for helping us," Nightshade said to Dan when he landed. Several Squishables bats were still harassing goons and Good Hair from the air, dumping water on them and buffeting them around the head.

"Anything for a fellow creature of the night," the bat said bashfully. "Say, do you like music? My human is in this band..."

THE END.
(Or is it? *cue exciting music*)