

GUESS IT HAD TO BE THAT WAY

Written by

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CHILDREN OF ALL AGES  
by  
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CHARACTERS

BIN ORRIC                   A TEN YEAR OLD BOY WHO LIVES IN THE  
                                  COUNTRY OF DENOMIA, TWO AND A HALF MILES  
                                  FROM THE BOARDER OF PROTERRIA.

TALLY HODGE                A TEN YEAR OLD GIRL, AND BIN'S BEST  
                                  FRIEND. SHE LIVES IN PROTERRIA, FIVE  
                                  MILES FROM BIN'S HOUSE.

MARROW ORRIC              BIN'S FATHER. AN OLD-FASHIONED WORKING  
                                  CLASS MAN IN HIS LATE FIFTIES. HE IS A  
                                  VETERAN OF THE WAR BETWEEN DENOMIA AND  
                                  PROTERRIA.

ILIA ORRIC                 BIN'S MOTHER. A GENTLE WOMAN IN HER  
                                  FIFTIES.

SHAN HODGE                TALLY'S FATHER. HE IS A PROTERRIAN SOLDIER  
                                  IN HIS LATE THIRTIES.

SETTING

THE PLAY TAKES PLACE IN VARIOUS PLACES IN THE FOREST BETWEEN  
BIN'S AND TALLY'S HOUSES, AND IN THE BACK YARD OF BIN'S  
HOUSE.

Most of the stage area should be dressed as the forest, with  
rocks and/or tree stumps for the children to play on and  
around. Upstage there should be the back porch of Bin's  
house with a small table and chairs, a window looking out  
from the house, and the back door of the house. Also,  
prehaps a small playhouse or tree house.

The play takes place in the present.

SCENE 1

A clearing in the forest. It is late afternoon on a warm,  
sunny day. As the scene opens, we see BIN and TALLY playing.  
Bin is facing front holding a stick like a gun. Tally is  
sneaking up on him. All of a sudden Bin spins around.

BIN  
Bang... Bang!

Tally hesitates and then falls to the ground.

BIN (CONT'D)  
I win.

TALLY  
 (Getting up.)  
 You always win.

BIN  
 That's because I'm better than you.

TALLY  
 YOU ARE NOT!

BIN  
 Am too.

TALLY  
 ARE NOT!

BIN  
 AM TOO!

TALLY  
 I don't want to play this anymore.

BIN  
 You're just a sore loser.

Silence.

TALLY  
 Let's play something where we're  
 both on the same side. Like  
 "Superheroes"!

BIN  
 "Superheroes"! Yeah! O.k., I'll  
 be Capt'n Wonderful, and you be the  
 Kosmic Kid.

TALLY  
 Aye, aye, Capt'n. And who will be  
 are arch enemy today?

BIN  
 How about Dr. Badweather? The evil  
 scientist who makes it rain all day  
 so kids can't go out and play.

TALLY  
 Didn't we defeat him last week?

BIN  
 Oh yeah. Well how about Dr.  
 Bedtime the mad profesor who makes  
 children go to bed early!

TALLY

Everytime we fight him, I end up sleeping half the game. Aren't there any new villians around?

They begin to pace while trying to think of a new foe to foil.

TALLY (CONT'D)

Got any candy Bin?

BIN

No, it's all gone. (He gets an idea from this and turns to Tally. And do you know why it is all gone? Because it was all stolen by that fiendish foe... DR. SWEETTOOTH.

TALLY

DR. SWEETTOOTH? Oh no!

BIN

Yes Tally, Dr. Sweettooth, our arch enemy is on the loose again.

TALLY

This is terrible Bin. What are we going to do?

This now becomes routine.

BIN

Why, there is only one thing for us to do. It is time for us to turn into (he spins around and throws out his arms) Capt'n Wonderful...

TALLY

(Mimicking Bin.)  
...And the Kosmic Kid!

They begin to dance around the forest humming their "theme song." They end up spinning each other to the ground, laughing.

TALLY (CONT'D)

So Capt'n, what's the plan?

BIN

Well, according to our radar-scope sugar detector, Dr. Sweettooth and his gang of... of dental dropouts...

(MORE)

BIN (CONT'D)  
are hanging out right here. (He  
points to a spot on the imaginary  
screen.)

TALLY  
Why that's the old security prison  
island, Capt'n.

BIN  
The old security prison island?

TALLY  
Yeah. That's where they hid out in  
the movie I saw last night on T.V.  
And the old guy said, "Well who  
would know the island better than  
him? After all, he spent fifteen  
years there."

BIN  
Well Kid Kosmic, who would know the  
island better than him? Afterall,  
he spent fifteen years there. Lets  
fly over the island, and see what  
we can see.

They soar through the forest and land on an imaginary perch  
overlooking the island of Dr. Sweettooth.

TALLY  
I guess now we should swoop down on  
those evil doers, beat them up and  
rescue the candy. (She prepares to  
swoop.)

BIN  
(Stopping her.)  
No, that is what they'll be  
expecting us to do. So instead, we  
will dive into the sea, climb up  
the side of the mountain, and sneak  
into the tower through the secret  
escape tunnel.

TALLY  
(Mad because Bin changed her plan.)  
And how do you know there is a  
secret escape tunnel Capt'n  
Smartypants?

BIN  
Because all tower hideouts have  
secret escape tunnels.

(MORE)

BIN (CONT'D)

Come on, we have to hurry or he'll throw all the candy into the sea, and it will melt!

TALLY

OH NO! (She dives off the perch.)

BIN

Hey, wait for me! (He dives after her, and they crawl around the forest to the secret hideout.)

TALLY

(Standing up.)  
Look Capt'n, all the candy. Let's grab it and fly out of here.

BIN

Oh no, Kid Kosmic, it's a trap! I guess we'll just have to fight our way out.

TALLY

Couldn't we have just taken the candy and flown out of here?

BIN

(Grabbing Tally and throwing her aside.)  
Lookout Kid! (He then begins to fight off the imaginary foes.)  
POW! POW! BAMMMM! KAZOWEE!

Tally, again upset about not getting her way, quickly gets caught up in the imaginary battle. The two children then proceed to run around kicking and punching the air yelling "pow", "bam", "smash", etc. They help each other out of sneak attacks, and swing each other around fending off imaginary foes. Finally they fall to the ground laughing.

BIN (CONT'D)

(Standing up.)  
Well, I guess that's all of them.

TALLY

DUCK CAPT'N!! (She jumps up and swings over Bin's head.)  
POWWEEEEEE!!

BIN

Thanks Kid Kosmic.

TALLY

Twern't nothin', Capt'n Wonderful.  
And now that we've defeated the  
evil Dr. Sweettooth...

BIN

...We should collect up all the  
candy, and deliver it safely  
back...

BIN & TALLY

To all the children of the world!  
(They strike a pose.)

TALLY

Well, we did it again Bin.

BIN

Yup. But you know what? Fighting  
evil sure makes me hungry.

TALLY

Me too. I know, you could come  
over to my house for dinner.

BIN

We always eat at your house. Why  
don't you come over to my house?

TALLY

I don't know, do you think it's  
o.k.?

BIN

Sure it's o.k. Besides, we're  
closer to my house.

TALLY

Gee, wouldn't it be nice if we  
lived in the same country, right  
next door to each other?

BIN

We only live five miles apart.

TALLY

Yeah, but if we lived next door to  
each other, then we could set up a  
phone line from your house to my  
house. And we could play with each  
other anytime we wanted to, and for  
as long as we wanted. And if we  
lived in the same country... your  
parents would like me.

BIN

(Feeling bad about this.)  
My mom likes you. It's just my  
dad, you know, because your dad's a  
soldier and all...

TALLY

They told me in school that our  
countries were once one country.

BIN

Maybe once, but my dad says that  
ever since his grandfather was a  
boy, our countries have been at  
war. And he lost his whole family  
during an attack right here when he  
was about our age. And that's why  
we're not supposed to be friends.

TALLY

But we weren't even born when those  
things happened. Why can't we be  
friends now? I mean, what's that  
got to do with us?

BIN

We were alive when my brother was  
killed.

TALLY

That was when we were two. We  
didn't even know each other. I  
can't even ever remember there  
being any fighting around here.

BIN

Well there was! My dad said so.

TALLY

So I guess we shouldn't be  
friends... huh?

BIN

(Saddly.)  
I guess...

TALLY

Gosh, I don't understand grown-ups.  
If they don't want anybody killed  
anymore, why don't they just stop  
fighting? Us not being friends  
isn't going to help anything.



BIN  
It's a matter of principles.

TALLY  
Principles?

BIN  
You know, those are reasons grown-ups have to do things they don't want to do. They're what start wars, and make people keep fighting.

TALLY  
Well I don't think that I like principles. And I'm sure glad I'm not a grown-up, 'cause I don't like war, and that's the only game that grown-ups like to play. And I don't think that just because they want to have this stupid war that we shouldn't be friends!

BIN  
Hey, let's make a pact that we won't ever play war against each other.

They shake on it. Bin then turns and runs.

BIN (CONT'D)  
(As he runs off)  
Race you to my house...

TALLY  
(Running after Bin.)  
Hey, no fair! You got a head start...

Tally runs off. Lights fade.

END OF SCENE 1

## SCENE 2

Lights come up on the porch area of Bin's house. Tally comes running on stage and sits at the base of the playhouse. Bin comes running on a moment later and plops down next to Tally. They are both out of breath.

TALLY  
I beat you! I beat you fair and square.

BIN  
Fair and square? I tripped!

TALLY  
That's not my fault. You should have been looking where you were going.

BIN  
Well you got lucky this time, but I'll get you next time.

TALLY  
Huh!

ILIA comes out on to the porch.

ILIA  
Bin, is that you dear? There you are. I've been looking for you all day. (Just now noticing Tally.) Oh, hello Tally.

TALLY  
(Getting up.)  
Hi, Mrs. Orric, I was just leaving.

BIN  
(Stopping Tally.)  
Mom, can Tally eat dinner here tonight?

ILIA  
Well... I don't think that I have enough for four....

TALLY  
That's o.k. Mrs. Orric. I think I got to go now anyway.

BIN  
Wait Tally. Mom... please....

ILIA  
Bin.... (She motions for him to come over to her.)

BIN  
(To Tally.)  
Wait for me in the playhouse.

TALLY  
I don't want to cause any trouble, Bin.

BIN

Come on, Tally, just wait here for me.

(Tally goes into the playhouse to wait, while Bin goes onto the porch to talk with Ilia.)

ILIA

Bin, you know how your father feels.

BIN

Yeah, but I eat dinner over at Tally's house all the time. And I don't think that her parents care what country I'm from.

ILIA

Tally's a nice girl, and so far I think that your father has been pretty reasonable about letting you play with her at all. But you're pushing things, Bin....

BIN

Oh Mom, pleeeeeaaaaaassssssee!!!

ILIA

Bin, don't whine. You're too old. (Pause. The front door of the house is heard closing.) Oh dear, that's your father now. O.k., Bin. Go wait in your playhouse with Tally and I'll talk to your father. (Soto voce.) And I hope that he doesn't get too upset.

BIN

Yeah! Tally... My mom said it all right for you to eat dinner here.

Bin goes into the playhouse. Ilia goes over to the back door.

MARROW

Ilia I'm home. Where are you dear?

ILIA

I'm out on the porch dear. (MARROW enters.) Hello dear, how was work today?

MARROW

Work was work. How was your day?

ILIA

My day was fine.

MARROW

Where is Bin?

ILIA

He's in his playhouse with Tally.

MARROW

Is that girl over here again? I told Bin that I didn't want her around here. I asked that they please only play together in the forest. But that boy just won't listen to me. I guess I'll just have to forbid him from seeing her anymore.

ILIA

Marrow, that would only hurt him. Tally is the only other child his age around here for miles. He's too young to understand.

MARROW

Too young to understand that Tally is a Proterrian?

ILIA

Too young to understand why we are at war. She is such a sweet child.

MARROW

That is not the point. It is a matter of principles. Bin is a Deinomian. Tally is a Proterrian. Her people killed our son. We are at war with one another. They cannot be friends.

ILIA

Bin wants Tally to stay for dinner.

MARROW

No, absolutely not! I will not have the enemy over for dinner!

ILIA

The enemy? She is a ten year old girl.

MARROW

It's a matter of principles! Bin must learn. They will both be in the army in a few years, carrying guns against each other. Then what will happen?

ILIA

I don't know what will happen then, and I pray to God they never have to find out... (Silence.) And I won't treat a ten year old child like a war criminal!

MARROW

Well I won't have her eating under my roof!

ILIA

Fine! Then they can eat out here in the playhouse.

MARROW

Fine! Do what you want.

Marrow storms into the house. Ilia stands her ground angrily. Bin and Tally, who have been watching the whole time, turn sadly toward each other.

BIN

(To Tally.)  
He's just a little upset...

ILIA

(Walking over to the children.)  
Children, I have a suprise for you. We have decided to let you eat out here in the playhouse. Won't that be fun?

BIN

(Sadly.)  
Thanks, Mom.

TALLY

(Sadly.)  
Thank you Mrs. Orric.

Ilia goes into the house. Bin and Tally smile sadly at each other as the lights fade out.

END OF SCENE 2

## SCENE 3

The lights come up on the porch area. It's night. Bin is sitting quietly on the steps, as Marrow speaks to him. Ilia looks on in the background.

MARROW

Bin, try to understand, Deinomia and Proterria are two countries, with different needs, different customs and different people. Sometimes certain of these needs and custom conflict, and the people must go to war...

BIN

Why?

MARROW

Because... (Pause. He tries to think of an easy way to explain about war to Bin, but he can't.) It's too complicated to go into now, Bin. It's just the way it is.

BIN

You mean you don't know why?

MARROW

Of course I do. It's just too complicated to go into now!

BIN

Oh.

MARROW

What I'm trying to say, Bin, is... you're a Deinomian, And Tally, she's a proterrian...

Pause.

BIN

Yeah?

MARROW

Deinomia is at war with Proterria...

Pause.

BIN  
I'm not at war with Tally.

MARROW  
No, but your people are at war with  
her people. And you must stand  
behind your people.

Pause.

BIN  
I know! What if I introduce Tally  
to my people. I think they would  
like her...

MARROW  
BIN, THAT'S NOT THE...

ILIA  
Marrow...

MARROW  
(Calming down.)  
Bin, you were just a baby when your  
brother was killed, but do you  
remember him?

BIN  
Sort of.

MARROW  
He loved you very much, Bin. You  
know that, don't you?

BIN  
Yeah, sure... but he's dead.

MARROW  
And Tally's people killed him!

ILIA  
MARROW! He's just a boy. He  
doesn't understand.

MARROW  
Well it's about time he understood.  
In the name of God! We are at  
war... My family, Bin's family,  
your son, (To Bin) your brother,  
all died fighting the Proterrians.

BIN  
Weren't they all soldiers?

MARROW

Yes they were. Good and proud soldiers.

BIN

Well isn't that the soldiers job... to fight and die?

There is a long silence. Marrow is at a loss for words. Bin just stares up at him. Finally Ilia walks over and touches them both.

ILIA

Bin, there is no easy way to explain war. This war is generations old... it's a matter of principles...

BIN

I lknow all about principles, and I don't like them.

ILIA

Bin, your father and I love you very much, and we don't want to see you get hurt. We've heard now that there may be some fighting at our border... here. Do you understand that?

BIN

Uh-huh.

ILIA

For that reason alone, we have to ask you not to see Tally... Not for a while, Bin. You mustn't even go out into the forest. It could be very dangerous for you, and for Tally. You wouldn't want to see Tally hurt, would you?

BIN

No ma'am.

ILIA

Good. Now you go in and go to sleep. (She kisses Bin good-night. Bin heads for the door.)  
And say good-night to your father.

Bin kisses Marrow good-night and walks toward the door. He stops before going in, and turns toward his parents.



BIN

Maybe I'm too young, but I just don't understand why Tally is so bad. (He goes in.)

Ilia hugs Marrow. Lights fade on scene.

END OF SCENE 3

SCENE 4

Lights come up on forest. It is late afternoon. Bin is trying to play alone, but he is not having any fun. He gets frustrated and sits down on a rock. Just then, Tally comes on and sneaks up behind him.

BIN

This is no fun. I wish Tally was here to play with me.

TALLY

(Jumping out from behind Bin.)  
TA-DAAAA!! I'm here.

BIN

TALLY! Boy am I glad to see you. But how did you get here? My dad says that the border patrol was out.

TALLY

They are. Whole groups of soldiers marching back and forth. But I took our secret path. I don't think anybody in the whole world knows about it. Nobody's been up or back it. All of our markers are still in place. I guess we're just smarter than both sides put together.

BIN

We are both sides put together.

TALLY

Oh yeah. (She giggles.)

BIN

Gosh, Tally, things sure have been boring around here without you to play with. You know something?

(MORE)

BIN (CONT'D)

I think this whole war thing is stupid.

TALLY

So do I. But what can we do about it?

BIN

Nothing. (Pause.)  
But you know who can...? I think this is a job for (He spins around and throws out his arms)  
Capt'n Wonderful...

TALLY

(Following.)

...And the Kosmic Kid!!

Once again they run around the forest humming their "theme song". They finish together, center stage.

TALLY (CONT'D)

So what are we going to do, Capt'n?

BIN

I'm not sure. I've talked to all the grown-ups I know about how it started, and why we're fighting, and no one will give me any answers.

TALLY

Same here. I really don't think they know themselves.

BIN

You may be right, Kid Kosmic.

TALLY

This is a tough one, Capt'n. How are we going to stop this war if nobody knows why they're fighting.

BIN

I know, let's put the question to the "Kosmic Komputer".

Bin types the question into the imaginary computer, makes some computer noises, and pulls out the answer. He stares at it, looks at Tally, they both shrug their shoulders and stare out.

TALLY

Everyone says that they don't like war, and they don't want war... Maybe no one's told them they don't have to fight. Maybe if we told them they can be friends...

BIN

No Tall... I mean, Kid. There seems to be something that makes them fight. Something unknown that forces them into war.

TALLY

An unknown force?

BIN

Yeah, that's it. An unknown force, being controlled by...

BIN & TALLY

DR. WAR!

TALLY

So, Capt'n, how are we going to find out where Dr. War and his diabolical war machine is hiding out?

BIN

Well, Kid, think. If you had to control all the people of the world and hide out, where would you go?

Pause. They both think.

TALLY

Right on the border where I could see both sides at once!

BIN

Good. Oh... na. If you hid on the border, you'd get shot at from both sides at once. No, it would have to be someplace safe. Safe even from a nuclear war.

TALLY

But no place on Earth is safe from nuclear war?

BIN

That's it, Kosmic Kid! Come on, let's get going.

TALLY

Where to, Capt'n Wonderful?

BIN

The only place safe if there is a nuclear war on Earth. The moon. To the starship "Wonderful", Kid!

They run across the forest and climb into the imaginary starship "Wonderful". They sit down and prepare for blast-off.

BIN (CONT'D)

Ready for blast-off, Kid?

TALLY

Ready for blast-off, Capt'n.

They take off in their imaginary ship. They shake back and forth as they veer left and right steering the starship to the moon.

BIN

Well, we're off to a good start, Kosmic Kid.

TALLY

I don't know about that, Capt'n Wonderful. There's a whole squad of Dr. War's fighter ships on our tail.

BIN

A whole squad, huh. Well we'll just blow them all up!

TALLY

But Capt'n, that would be like fighting a war, and that's what we're trying to stop.

BIN

Hmmmm. Right you are, Kid. It must have been an effect of the "war ray" Dr. War is shooting at Earth. It's even stronger up here. I guess I'll just have to out run them.

TALLY

WATCH OUT, CAPT'N. THEY'RE FIRING AT US. VEER LEFT!

As they veer left, there is the loud boom of a real explosion in the - not too far off - distance. They drop to the ground and cover themselves. Bin slowly raises his head, and then sits up. Tally follows, staying tight to Bin.

TALLY (CONT'D)

I'm scared, Bin.

BIN

(Trying to not be scared.)

I'm not Bin. I'm Capt'n Wonderful, and you're the Kosmic Kid. There's nothing to be afraid of. We're superheroes, we can't be hurt. That was just our ship exploding. But we bailed out. We're safe now. (He gets up and looks around.) Come on, Kid. Let's get out of here.

Bin grabs Tally's hand, quickly gets her up, and they run off to the sound of another explosion. The lighting changes. We are now deeper in the forest, at the ruins of the old city of Shriner, just off Bin's and Tally's secret path. Bin enters, Tally follows close behind.

TALLY

Bin, where are you going? I don't think that we should leave the secret path.

BIN

It's o.k. Tally. We're safe here.

TALLY

(Looking around.)  
Where are we, Bin?

BIN

I think this is the ruins of the old village of Shriner.

TALLY

Wow! We read about this place in school. This is where the biggest battle in history took place twenty years ago. People from both our countries used to live here, together. They told us this place didn't exist anymore.

BIN

Well it almost doesn't. Look, almost everything that is left is covered by the forest.

TALLY

This place is neat. (Pointing over on the ground.)  
Look there, that was a door. And that looks like part of an old dresser. And what this...?

With her back to the audience Tally kneels down and begins to dig a little. All of a sudden, she screams and jumps back.

BIN

What is it, Tally?

Tally stands there, not crying, just holding her hands to her face. Bin walks over, kneels down, and picks up an old burnt toy doll.

TALLY

(Fighting back tears.)  
It's a dolly, Bin. It looks like one I have, except it's all...burnt, and... missing parts of it's... This was someone home, Bin.

BIN

There were lots of homes here once. Both our houses were probably part of this village. I found it a few years ago, when I was a kid. I used to play army here. I'd pretend I was a soldier and I came here to find my brother. I thought it was a pretty neat place. Then I saw some old pictures of this village in school, before and after the battles... After that, I stopped coming here.

TALLY

Why did you bring me here, Bin? I don't think I like this place.

BIN

I knew it would be safe here. I don't think anyone wants to find this place.

TALLY

I don't understand. In school we were taught this war is a matter of honor and principles. But from all I've seen of war, it just separates people, and destroys things. Where is the honor in that? (Taking the doll from Bin.)  
And what kind of principles could do this...? (Silence.)  
When I grow up, I'm not going to have anything to do with war.

BIN

You can't do that, Tally. They make you go to war.

TALLY

Well, I just won't go.

BIN

You can't do that.

TALLY

Why?

BIN

Because they'll send you to jail.

TALLY

Then I'll tell all my friends not to go either. They can't put us all in jail.

BIN

Then your country won't have any soldiers. And what will you do about the enemy army?

TALLY

You'll be the enemy army, Bin...

Silence, they both look at each other.

BIN

So you mean if I tell all my friends not to go... I don't know, Tally. It sounds too easy.

TALLY

I know, let's go ask my dad. He knows everything! (She starts to run off.)

BIN  
Hey, wait for me!

Bin runs off after Tally, dropping the doll behind a rock. As the doll hits the ground it lets out a little, distorted, doll cry.

END OF SCENE 4

SCENE 5

The lighting changes once again. We are now in a clearing not far from Tally's house. HODGE, Tally's father, cautiously walks on. He is a Proterrian soldier, in uniform, and carrying an appropriate rifle.

HODGE  
(Calling.)  
Tally... Tally!  
(Pause.)  
Tally, Where are you?

There is a noise in the brush. He turns and raises his rifle.

HODGE (CONT'D)  
Tally... is that you?

TALLY  
Yes, Dad, it's me.

Tally enters. Hodge lowers his gun.

HODGE  
Tally, I thought I told you not to play out here. It's dangerous, with all the...

Bin enters. Hodge is startled, then angry.

BIN  
Hello, Mr. Hodge.

HODGE  
Bin...? Tally! Don't you kids realize that there is a war going on. You are old enough to know what that means. You aren't babies.  
(Pause.)  
You can not play in the forest right now. It is a battle zone. Bin you crossed enemy lines.  
(MORE)



HODGE (CONT'D)  
You could have been killed. This  
is not a game, children.

TALLY  
We're sorry, father.

HODGE  
Sorry is fine, but sorry isn't  
going to help if one of you gets  
shot. I can not beleive this. You  
are more than in trouble, young  
lady. And what am I going to do  
with you, Bin?

Pause. Bin gives Tally a little push.

TALLY  
(Hesitant.)  
Father, can we ask you a question?

HODGE  
(Thinking more about what  
to do with Bin.)  
What is it, Tally?

TALLY  
What would happen if when Bin and I  
were old enough to go to war, we  
refused to go?

HODGE  
If you refused to go into the army,  
you would both be put in jail.

BIN  
What if everyone refused to go?

HODGE  
(He laughs lovingly at the  
children's simplistic philosophy.)  
Why then there would be no war.  
But that wouldn't solve the  
problems, Bin. And as long as  
there are differences, someone will  
always fight, and someone else will  
always defend themselves. Then you  
have a war.

TALLY  
But you taught me that it's better  
to solve your differences by  
talking?

HODGE  
It's very complicated.

BIN  
That what everyone says...

The children look sadly at him for an answer.

HODGE  
O.k., I'll give it a shot, as simply as I can. Bin, your people believe in a certain God, and in the name of that God, they took away from our people, our land. And so our people must fight for that land.

BIN  
But my dad said they never kicked you out. It's just that you wanted to rule the land.

HODGE  
I told you it was complicated. You see, your religious beliefs are different from our religious beliefs.

TALLY  
Well why can't we just share the land, and each believe what we want?

Silence. Hodge smiles, kneels down and takes the children in his arms.

HODGE  
Tally, you tell all your friends just what you told me. And tell them to tell all their friends, and their friends to tell their friends to tell their friends. And Bin, you do the same. And maybe, when you children are older, you can put an end to this thing forever.

Hodge hugs the children. At that moment there is an explosion nearby. Hodge throws the children to the ground and blankets himself over them. They hold for a moment and then get up.

HODGE (CONT'D)  
O.k., kids, let's get back to the house.

BIN

But Mr. Hodge, I have to get home.

HODGE

Sorry Bin, you are just going to have to stay with us until the fighting stops.

BIN

But my parents?

HODGE

Oh my God... (Pause. Hodge tries to think of a reasonable solution. O.k. Tally, run on home, and tell your mother I'll be back shortly after dark. I'll take Bin home in my jeep.

BIN

But Mr. Hodge, you're a soldier, you'll be crossing enemy lines.

HODGE

And you are a child. I won't let you walk out there alone.

BIN

But our secret path is safe...

TALLY

Yeah, Dad. It's the safest way, and you can't take a jeep down it.

HODGE

Tally, don't argue with me. Go home. We'll wait until the battle calms down, and then cross the line in the dark.

TALLY

But Dad... you're a Proterian soldier.

HODGE

(He kneels down and grabs Tally.)

First I'm a father, your father. And I told you to go home. (He kisses her.) You know how much I love you, Tally?

TALLY  
I know, Dad.

HODGE  
Tell your mother I love her.

Tally looks at him confused. He hugs her, and then pushes her along on her way.

TALLY  
(Exiting.)  
Good-bye Bin. Take good care of my father.

BIN  
Don't worry, Tally. I will.

Hodge puts his arm on Bin's shoulder.

HODGE  
(Exiting with Bin.)  
O.k., Bin. You keep low in the jeep. And should anything happen to me, you just wait until someone finds you. Don't be scared. You're a child, they won't.....

BLACKOUT. War noises swell.

END OF SCENE 5

## SCENE 6

The lights come up on Bin's porch. It's night, and the war can be heard in the distance. Ilia is sitting there crying. Marrow comes out. He is worried too, but he tries to comfort Ilia.

MARROW  
He'll be back, Ilia. Try not to worry.

ILIA  
But it's been dark now for hours.

MARROW  
No one knows this forest like Bin. He'll be alright.

ILIA  
But Marrow, there is a battle going on out there.  
(Pause.)  
(MORE)

ILIA (CONT'D)

He 's a ten year old boy in the middle of a war, how can you say he'll be alright?

MARROW

What do you want me to say? What do you want me to do? I've alerted the colonel of the division stationed at this part of the border. I've called the police; but they won't go into an active battle zone. (Pause.)

I've gone out as far as I could, and combed the area around here twice already. Give him a little longer, and if he doesn't show up, I'll get my gun, and I'll and go out and cross the battle lines...

ILIA

NO! No, I don't think that you should go out anymore tonight. (She hugs him. Silence.) Bin knows that he's supposed to be home by dark... Where is he?

MARROW

He's been late before.

ILIA

But what if he's out there and hurt?

MARROW

I think I'd better go looking for him.

ILIA

I'll go with you.

They stare at one another once more. Ilia begins to cry. Marrow hugs her. There is a rustle in the bushes. Ilia and Marrow look up. Bin comes on from the forest with Hodge, who is leaning on him.

ILIA & MARROW

BIN!!

They run to Bin and hug him. Hodge stumbles over to a tree stump, and sits holding his shoulder.

MARROW

Bin, what were you doing out there?

ILIA

We've been so worried about you.

BIN

Well, Tally and I were out playing  
in the forest...

MARROW

With Tally in the forest?!! I told  
you that you weren't to...

ILIA

Marrow... Bin, we told you not to  
go out in the forest while there  
was fighting in this area.

BIN

I know, Mom. But Tally and I were  
just playing, and then we heard  
some explosions...

ILIA

Oh my God.

BIN

So we went to hide in the ruins of  
Shriner...

MARROW

Shriner? Bin the ruins of the city  
are on the other side of the  
border. You crossed the border in  
the middle of a battle. You could  
have been killed.

BIN

Well, we took the secret path. And  
then we had this question for  
Tally's father...

ILIA

Oh my God... (Running over to  
Hodge.)  
You must be Tally's father.

MARROW

(Grabbing Bin, not knowing whether  
to hug him or hit him.)  
You went two and a half miles into  
enemy territory?

ILIA

Are you alright Mr. Hodge?

HODGE

Yes, I'm o.k. I was just grazed.

BIN

Then Mr. Hodge said he'd take me home in his jeep.

MARROW

(To Hodge.)

You crossed the border with my son?  
You could've gotten him killed!

HODGE

I knew you'd be worried about him.  
I thought we could travel safely under the cover of darkness. But we got caught in some cross fire and had to abandon the jeep and take cover...

BIN

And then when a shell hit the jeep, Mr. Hodge covered me, but he got hit by something.

HODGE

I took a little shrapnel in my shoulder, nothing serious.

BIN

(To Hodge.)

But you weren't walking so well. So I took him to the secret path and led him here.

HODGE

I don't know how he did it, but he walked us right through the middle of a battle, and we never saw the faintest signs of fighting. Only the din of the war in the distance.

MARROW

You're a sergeant in the Deinomian army?

HODGE

Yes?

MARROW

You realize that I am a captain in the Proterrian army, and you've walked right into Proterrian territory. That makes you a prisoner of war.

HODGE

I'm also a father. I wasn't going to let the boy go back into the forest alone... Sir.

ILIA

Thank you Mr. Hodge. (To Marrow.)  
And you are a retired officer.

MARROW

Yes, well, under the circumstances, I think it would be best if we just forgot about this incident, and you just got going back to your troops, or home, or wherever.

HODGE

(Respectfully saluting a superior officer.)  
Yes Sir. Thank you, Sir.

Hodge turns and begins to exit, but he stumbles and falls to his knees. Ilia and Bin run to him, and lead him to a seat.

BIN

He's hurt, Dad...

ILIA

He's awfully weak, Marrow.

MARROW

If he's too hurt to leave, I'll have to call the Med-Corps to come and pick him up.

HODGE

(Quickly standing.)  
No, Sir. (He sits again, dizzy.)  
If I could just get a little food, and rest for just a short while, Sir, I'm sure I would be well enough to leave.

MARROW

I'm sorry, Sergeant, we're just not a Red Cross...



ILIA

I am.

MARROW

Not for the enemy!

ILIA

He was not the enemy when he was protecting our son! And I say, Mr. Hodge... our neighbor, will eat here, and rest here, until he's ready to leave.

Pause. They stare at one another.

MARROW

He had better be ready soon.  
(Starting to walk into the house.)  
And I don't want him in my house!

He exits into the house as Ilia watches angrily.

BIN

(To Hodge.)  
She's a Major... in the Red Cross.

Hodge smiles. Ilia turns back to them.

ILIA

Bin, run inside and get my first aid kit. Mr. Hodge, come over here and let me take a look at your shoulder.

Bin runs into the house. Hodge gets up and walks over to Ilia at the porch. He sits and she carefully inspects his wound. Bin comes out of the house with the first aid box.

BIN

Here you go, Mom.

ILIA

Thank you, Bin. Just put it down here. Now go in, and in the kitchen on the stove is a kettle of stew. Serve your father, and bring a bowl out here for Mr. Hodge.

Bin goes in. Ilia bandages Hodge's wounds.

HODGE

Well, do you think I'll live.

ILIA

Oh, I think so. If you stay away from the war.

HODGE

It's my job.

ILIA

It's not your job to escort children through the forest. But I want to thank you for looking out for my boy.

HODGE

I just couldn't let him out there alone. Even though, it appears he knows the forest a lot better than I.

ILIA

Well I'm grateful, and I know my husband is too. It's just that he... well...

HODGE

There's no need to apologize. After all, we are at war with one another. We are enemies. I guess Tally and Bin are just too young to understand, they can't be friends.

Pause.

ILIA

(Matter of factly.)

Or maybe we're just too old to understand we don't have to be enemies.

Bin comes out with the stew, as Ilia finishes up bandaging Hodge's shoulder.

BIN

Here you go Mr. Hodge. Will he be o.k., Mom?

ILIA

He'll be o.k., Bin. But no thanks to you. You and Tally risked your lives, and that of her father. We are in the middle of a war. And war is no place for children. You'll be going out there soon enough, Son.

(MORE)

ILIA (CONT'D)  
(She hugs him holding  
backs her tears.)  
Don't get involved now.

BIN  
But I am involved, Mom. You see,  
Tally's my friend. But don't you  
worry, Tally and I aren't going to  
war. And we're going to tell all  
our friends not to go either. And  
then there won't be able to be war.  
And Tally and I, and all our  
friends, will all be able to be  
friends with each other. So you  
don't have to worry about me, I'm  
not going to war.

Ilia hugs and kisses Bin. A tear runs down her face.

ILIA  
You run in now, Bin. Run in and  
get ready for bed. (Bin runs in as  
Ilia tries to compose herself.)

HODGE  
How is it that a child can take a  
problem, as old as mankind, and  
make the answer seem so obvious and  
simple.

ILIA  
Maybe it is. Maybe if they can  
hang onto their... childlike ideals  
until they're no longer children,  
they can end this war, or any war,  
just that simply.

Pause.

HODGE  
And if not...

ILIA  
God help them.

Hodge finishes the stew, as Ilia puts away the medical  
supplies. Hodge stands and hands Ilia the bowl.

HODGE  
Thank you for the stew, Mrs. Orric.  
It was very good.

ILIA

(Taking the bowl, and  
offering Hodge her hand.)  
Ilia, please. My friends call me  
Ilia.

HODGE

(They shake hands.)  
And my friends call me Shan.

ILIA

You're welcome, Shan.

They smile at one another. It is an ironic smile, for they know tomorrow they will once more be enemies. Then they quickly turn away. Ilia closes up the first aid kit, as Marrow quickly enters on from the house.

MARROW

(Standing at attention.)  
Sergeant Hodge.

HODGE

(Rising to attention.)  
Sir.

MARROW

As a Captain in the Proterrian  
Armed Force, (to Ilia,) be it a  
retired Captain, it is my duty to  
report any enemy movement in my  
sector. Do to extenuating  
circumstances I have allowed my  
wife to feed you, treat your  
wounds, and have myself allowed you  
to rest safely at my home. For  
this, I and my family could be  
tried, and sentenced to death by  
firing squad, for treason. For  
this reason, I must at this time  
order you to leave my property. If  
you are able, and do so, I will  
neither report this incident, nor  
inform any personnel of your  
presence in this sector. However,  
if you are unable to leave, I must  
report you to the militay police,  
who will see to it that you get the  
proper medical attention. This is  
my decision, (to Ilia) and my  
decision is final.

ILIA

Marrow, please...

HODGE

No, Mrs. Orric, he's right. We are at war. I am your enemy.

(He salutes the superior officer.)

Sir!

(Marrow returns his salute, and he turns respectfully toward Ilia.)

Ma'am.

(He begins to leave.)

ILIA

(Quietly.)

Shan... (Hodge stops and turns.)

May we all meet again... as friends. (Pause.)

God be with you.

HODGE

(Raising his hand up in a sign.)

Peace.

Hodge then starts out into the forest. Ilia turns toward Marrow sadly. Marrow embraces her. They hold for a moment and then turn to go in. Before they get to the door Bin comes out holding a piece of paper.

BIN

Mr. Hodge, I drew a map for you of the secret... (Looking around. Mr. Hodge? Where is Mr. Hodge?)

ILIA

He's gone home, Bin.

BIN

Home? But he wasn't ready to go home. He hadn't rested enough. He doesn't have my map! Why did you let him go?

ILIA

He wanted to go, Bin. His family was probably worried about him.

BIN

(To Marrow.)

You made him go.

(To Ilia.)

He's not safe out there.

(MORE)

BIN (CONT'D)  
 He won't be able to find the secret path. He's got to get this map.

ILIA  
 Bin, he's a soldier.

BIN  
 He's my friend.

Bin runs off into the forest after Hodge.

MARROW & ILIA

BIN!!!

They run toward him but he is already gone. Marrow runs off for a moment, while Ilia turns and drops her head into her hands. Marrow runs cross stage and into the house. He comes out with a rifle. He goes to Ilia.

MARROW  
 Go in the house and call Colonel Fields.

ILIA  
 Be careful, Marrow.

They kiss, and Marrow exits off after Bin. Ilia stands watching as the lights fade.

END OF SCENE 6

SCENE 7

The lights come up on the forest. It's night. The forest is dark and cold. All through the scene there are soft flashes of red light and the sounds of shelling can be heard in the distance. Tally walks on slowly. She is lost, alone and scared. This scene should in no way be down played for younger audiences. The more frightening the scene, the more it serves its purpose.

TALLY  
 Bin!!! Father!!! Are you there?  
 BIN!!!  
 (Silence.)  
 Bin, I'm scared, what do I do?  
 (Pause.)  
 I shouldn't have gone out looking for you, BIn. But when my Dad didn't come home, I thought I could help.

(MORE)

TALLY (CONT'D)

I snuck out, but I got lost, and the shelling started, and I need help, Bin.

A small explosion is heard in the distance. Tally winces a little, and then tries to be strong.

TALLY (CONT'D)

I guess this is a job for Capt'n Wonderful and...

Tally spins around as if playing the game with Bin, but she is still terrified.

TALLY (CONT'D)

The Kosmic Kid...

There is another small explosion in the distance.

TALLY (CONT'D)

Well Capt'n, what are we going to do to help Tally. (Imitating Bin. Well Kid, first of all, Tally must stay calm and try not to be scared. She must be brave and face up to this mean old Dr. War. After all, we are superheroes. Dr. War can't hurt us. And as long as Tally is with us, Dr. War can't hurt her either.

(Pause.)

Yeah, that's it, we'll protect Tally, Capt'n. You stay close to us, Tally, and we'll just march you right out of this scary old forest!

Just as Tally gets her confidence back, there is the loud whistling scream of a bomb falling. Tally drops to the ground and covers her head. There is a loud explosion, and a bright red flash. This one was quite close. Tally gets up and runs for cover behind a tree.

TALLY (CONT'D)

That was close, Capt'n. I don't know if we are going to be able to protect Tally. I mean, she's not a superhero. She's just a kid. How can we protect her from the bombs and the bullets.

(Pause. Imitating Bin.)

Listen Kosmic Kid... It's beginning to quiet down. You see, I told you.

(MORE)

TALLY (CONT'D)

Now all we have to do is help Tally find the secret path and we can lead her right home...

A louder explosion breaks the short calm.

TALLY (CONT'D)

I don't think so Capt'n.

(She is now utterly terrified.)

It's so dark, and the forest is so big, and Tally is so small. I've been... she's been looking for the path for so long. I think maybe she should just sit down here on this rock and wait for morning. 'Cause Capt'n... she's awfully scared...

Tally sits on th rock, drops her head, and begins to cry. As she looks up, the whole forest begins to glow red. She dives behind the rock just as the loudest, closest explosion is heard. Almost before the explosion is over, she pops up from behind the rock, still on her knees, and screams the next speech almost hysterically.

TALLY (CONT'D)

BIN!!! HELP ME!!! This isn't a game anymore. The bombs are REAL! This war is REAL! And for the first time, I think I know what that means. And it's even worse than we thought. There are no rules here, Bin! Everything gets destroyed. Our forest is being destroyed and I'm stuck in it...and they're going to destroy me too! I'm ten years old and their shooting at me, Bin, and I could really die if you don't help me! If somebody doesn't help me... Oh God...whose ever God you are, I didn't do anything. I didn't start this war, I'm just stuck in it! Please help me out. Please send me a sign. God... Bin... please...

As she moves, we hear the faint cry of the disfigured doll. Tally bends down and picks it up. She recognizes it, and then begins to realize where she is. She surveys the area for a moment.



And then with a deep sigh, she looks up to the heavens, and heads for the secret path. As she exits, there is another explosion, and then... Blackout.

END OF SCENE 7

SCENE 8

It's quiet. The bombing has stopped. The lights come up on Bin's porch. There is the soft glow of the dawn. Ilia is sitting on the porch wrapped in a blanket. We can hear Marrow just offstage.

MARROW

Bin!! Bin, are you there?

ILIA

Come on in, Marrow.

Marrow walks on stage with his lantern and gun. He is walking very slowly. He has been out all night in the cold and can hardly bend his bad leg.

ILIA (CONT'D)

It's almost dawn. You need to eat something. Come on in. Colonel Fields said at first light he would send out a special patrol to look for Bin. You're cold and tired. There's nothing more you can do.

MARROW

What if he's out there, hurt? Now that it's quiet, I can hear if he calls back.

ILIA

It's been quiet for over two hours now, Marrow. The special patrol will be out there soon, and if Bin is out there, they'll find him.

MARROW

Why did he go, Ilia?

ILIA

Because he cares.

(Pause.)

We taught him to care.

(Silence.)

That man is his best friend's father, and he was hurt.

(MORE)

ILIA (CONT'D)

That's all Bin saw, not a uniform, not the enemy, just a man who was hurt. A man who means as much to his best friend, as you do to him.

MARROW

You mean it was my fault. Because I didn't want to harbor an enemy soldier.

ILIA

He is a nice man, Marrow. A nice man with a beautiful little girl, who lives right on the other side of the forest. He risked his life for our son. He isn't Bin's enemy... I don't think he's mine.

Silence.

MARROW

(This hurts him.)

It's been this way all my life, Ilia. We are Proterra, they are the enemy. I don't think I know how to change.

ILIA

(Gently.)

Maybe it's too late for us, Marrow. But let's at least give the children a chance.

Silence. Ilia kisses Marrow.

ILIA (CONT'D)

Let's go in, Marrow. The patrol will find him and bring him back to us soon.

Marrow puts his arm around Ilia and they start in. Just then, there is a rustling in the bushes. Ilia and Marrow both turn, but cannot even speak. A moment later Tally appears. She stands there for a moment surprised. Ilia then starts to walk toward Tally. Tally runs into her arms.

ILIA (CONT'D)

Are you alright, Tally? Where's Bin?

TALLY

Isn't he here?

ILILA

No. He went out after your father.

TALLY

(Crying and mumbling.)

Bin's gone too... Oh no.... I was so lost... and my father and mother weren't there... I didn't know where to go.

Tally begins to cry, uncontrollably.

ILIA

Shhhhh.... Calm down, Tally.

(She sits her down.)

Calm down and tell us what happened.

TALLY

Well... When father didn't come home, I snuck out to look for him, and I got real lost. There were bombs going off everywhere... but somehow I found the secret path, and I took it home. But when I got there, my home wasn't there anymore. I didn't know what to do, so I went back to the secret path. I was safe there. It seemed quieter in this direction, so I headed this way. I figured Bin could hide me in the treehouse, until the fighting stopped and I could go back and find my... family... If they're still alive...

(She begins to cry again.)

But now Bin's lost too...

Tally buries her head in Ilia's breast. Ilia is crying quietly, also. Marrow, who has been just watching up till now, puts down his gun, and goes over to Tally. Tally looks up, frightened by Marrow.

MARROW

You said you've been on the secret path?

(Tally nods.)

And you didn't see anyone else?

(Tally shakes her head.)

Well, don't you see? That means they're alright.

Pause. Tally stares at him. Marrow continues, trying to convince himself as much as Tally.

MARROW (CONT'D)

Bin was going to lead your father home along the secret path earlier last night. So if you didn't see them while you were on the path, that means they made it back o.k.

TALLY

(Hopeful.)  
You think so?

MARROW

(No, he doesn't.)  
I'm sure of it. (Tally hugs him, and slowly, he hugs her back.)  
I heard on the radio that your town was evacuated before the bombing. I'm sure that Bin, and your father and mother are safe, in a camp just outside your town. And as soon as the fighting stops here, you and I and Bin's mother will go over there together and find them all.

Ilia comes up behind Marrow and hugs him. Marrow then takes Tally to his side, and with Ilia they start walking towards the house.

MARROW (CONT'D)

(Very emotional.)  
Until then, you'll stay here with us. You'll stay in Bin's room. I know Bin would like that. Don't you worry about a thing, Tally. You're with friends, now...

Marrow and Tally walk into the house. Ilia pauses on the porch, looking out into the forest. As the lights fade, she follows into the house.

THE END