

Playground Battlefield

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The playground looked like a tiny metropolis, its skyline twisting and bending. Children were swarming in the area playing kickball, swinging, and tag, but not Donny. He was playing in the grass with a giant bucket of army men. His shiny brown hair was hanging just above his eyes as he looked down at the plastic figures.

As Jessie was swinging, he saw someone playing in the distance. Dragging his feet on the wood chips, he stopped to gaze.

It was Donny, who sat behind him in class. What is he doing out there, Jessie thought as he ran over to investigate. Coming closer, Jessie saw what Donny was playing with. "Whoa, where did you get all those army men?" Jessie said. The bucket was full of soldiers, every one in a different position, and they even had guns.

"My dad gave them to me," said Donny, "but they're not army men." He then started pointing at each soldier and said, "This is the mom, this is the dad, and these are their two kids. They're having a picnic."

"Then why do they have guns?" said Jessie.

Donny stared at the ground thoughtfully and bit his lower lip. He waited a long time before replying, "I don't know," and

resumed playing.

The boys started building a town from the ground up. "Hey Donny!" Jessie said, "This rock is their house, and over there is where they go to school." They continued building until the bell was about to ring. An elaborate city rose from the dirt and an entire community of army men were cast to the various roles of teacher, nurse, and friends.

The two boys were just finishing the last touches of their town when they saw Paul running as fast as he could toward them. Paul's crooked smile bounced above his striped shirt. His hands and face were sticky from candy, soda, and dirt. The boys looked at each other and remembered what their others had told them about being nice to others.

Before they could even greet Paul, he screamed, "Incoming," as he ran his fist through their town.

"Stop," yelled Jessie.

"What are you doing?" said Donny. Paul laughed and started running away.

"Who's going to clean this up?" asked Donny as he looked at his town in shambles.

Paul glanced over his shoulder and said, "Let God sort them out."

My dad was the Pied Piper / And my cat talked with the queen / I picked a peck of peppers / And breathed fire, spouting steam