DANNY TROOPER IN THE LAND OF MODMYTH

A Play in Three Acts

By Brent Alles

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Just B Cuz Productions

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Cast of Characters

(Note: As you can see, it is typical for many actors to play more than one part. The suggested doubling is below. The roles can certainly be split apart as you see fit. Gender for roles is also fluid and can be changed as needed.)

Danny Trooper	5th grade student. Suggested age: 10-12.
Patricia Trooper/Queen Star	Patricia ("Trish") is Danny's mother. Queen Star is the ruler of the Starlight Kingdom in ModMyth. Suggested age: 30s or 40s.
Janet Starr/Princess Starlight	Normal girl in our world, a princess and MythMaker in ModMyth. Suggested age: 10-12.
David Parker / Davey Bowen / Lt. Robert Trooper	David Parker is a 5th grade teacher. Davey Bowen is a frontiersman in ModMyth. Lt. Robert Trooper is the ghost of Danny's father. Suggested age: 30s, 40s, or early 50s.
Dougie Wynn	A bully in the 5th grade. Suggested age: 12-13, as he's probably been held back a couple of times.
Principal Swinson /Commander Nightshade	Swinson is principal of Ryder Elementary in the "real" world. Commander Nightshade is the leader of the evil villains in ModMyth. Suggested Age: 40s or 50s.
Ms. Wiley / Countess Malice	Ms. Wiley is the 4th grade teacher at Ryder Elementary. Countess Malice is an evil henchwoman of Commander Nightshade. Suggested Age: 30s, 40s, or 50s.

Mr. Wait / Sikko Fant	Mr. Wait is the 3rd grade teacher at Ryder Elementary. Sikko Fant is a minion of Nightshade in ModMyth. Suggested age: 30s, 40s, or 50s.
Masked Marshal	Wild West hero from days gone by. Suggested age: 30+.
Dawn / Bookworm Snark	Dawn is an elementary school student, 5th grade. Bookworm Snark is one of the Snarks. Suggested age: 10-12.
Chris / Nature Snark	Chris is an elementary school student, 5th grade. Nature Snark is one of the Snarks. Suggested age: 10-12.
Kim / Arty Snark	Kim is an elementary school student, 5th grade. Arty Snark is one of the Snarks. Suggested age: 10-12.
Stephanie / Gizmo Snark	Stephanie is an elementary school student, 5th grade. Gizmo Snark is one of the Snarks. Suggested age: 10-12.
Terry / Eagle Feather	Terry is an elementary school student, 5th grade. Eagle Feather is the Native American "sidekick" of the Masked Marshal in ModMyth. Suggested age: 10-12.
Tammy / Jeepers	Tammy is an elementary school student, 5th grade. Jeepers is a clumsy and timid but somewhat lovable "felinoid" creature in ModMyth. Suggested age: 10-12.

Tommy / Mu Shu	Tommy is an elementary school student, 5th grade. Mu Shu is a porcine martial arts master in ModMyth. Suggested age: 10-12.
Bully 1 / Hyena Bully 2 / Wulf Bully 3 / Bugg Bully 4 / Surge Bully 5 / Princess Viper	The bullies are mean children in the "real" world and minions of Nightshade in ModMyth. Suggested age: 7-14.
Mean Girl 1 / Fury Alecto [ah-lec-toh] Mean Girl 2 / Fury Megaera [mah-geer-ah] Mean Girl 3 / Fury Tisiphone [tis-ee-phone]	"Mean girls" in the "real" world and Furies in ModMyth. Suggested age: 12+.
Gardner Schwartz / Announcer	Mysterious creator of the World of ModMyth… or at least he THINKS he created it. Can also double as the "Announcer" offstage voice. Suggested age: 50+. (Younger actor can of course play him with "aging" make-up.)
Wrex the Wonder Dog	Faithful canine companion. (Nonspeaking part.) Suggest a child play this in costume.

Setting

Our World and ModMyth.

The Time

The late 2000's.

Notes on Staging

The set can be kept relatively simple to allow for the changes between scenes. Feel free to get as creative with the staging as you like, of course!

ACT 1

SCENE 1

AT RISE: (We are on a "Wild West" set. FX: Exciting classical music is heard, something similar to the "Wiliam Tell Overture," perhaps.)

ANNOUNCER
(off)
A valiant steed, a cloud of dust, and a triumphant "Palladium, Into the Fray!" It's THE MASKED MARSHAL! Go back in time with us to the exciting days of the Old West… THE MASKED MARSHAL rides again!

(MASKED MARSHAL enters, waving to the audience. He is then attacked by a band of RUSTLERS. NOTE: The RUSTLERS can be played by different members of the cast as needed.)

MASKED MARSHAL
Rustlers! Well, come on, then! You'll be no match for THE MASKED MARSHAL!

(MASKED MARSHAL fights the RUSTLERS off one by one in dramatic fashion, and the RUSTLERS finally make their retreat as the theme music fades.)

RUSTLER
(while leaving)
Who was that masked man?

MASKED MARSHAL
(turning to audience)
That was a great memory of mine, partners. A great memory.
(frowns and shakes his head)
But these days… it just seems there isn't so much for me to do anymore, you know what I mean? The Old West is long gone… and people don't seem to care as much about COWBOY heroes.

(MASKED MARSHAL smiles sadly and shakes his head again.)

MASKED MARSHAL
Aw shoot, listen to me… gathering wool while you folks are trying to watch a story. And it will be an exciting story, folks, that I promise. I've got a particular interest in the boy it's mostly about… Danny Trooper. Why am I so interested in him? Well, I reckon you'll see why as things unfold.

(MASKED MARSHAL pushes his hat up and grins.)

MASKED MARSHAL
In the meantime, I've got some rustlers to catch!
(waves his cowboy hat in the air)
PALLADIUM, INTO THE FRAY!

(MASKED MARSHAL exits as LIGHTS go down and his theme music plays for another short moment.)

SCENE 2

AT RISE: (We are on the playground of RYDER ELEMENTARY. A BUSH WITH PURPLE FLOWERS is on one side of the stage. We hear the sound of schoolchildren. PATRICIA TROOPER leads her son DANNY TROOPER on stage.)

PATRICIA TROOPER
Well, here we are, Danny. Your new school. Ryder Elementary.

(DANNY looks around but says nothing.)

PATRICIA
(turning to face DANNY)
Look, Danny, I know this is hard. But it's a new start for us, you know? So, we need to make the best of it.

DANNY TROOPER
I know, Mom.

PATRICIA
(smiling)
That's my boy.
(gives him a kiss on the forehead and hugs him)
That's my little Trooper.

(MR. PARKER enters. He is the 5th grade teacher at Ryder.)

MR. PARKER
Hello! You must be the Troopers. I'm Mr. Parker. I'm going to be Danny's teacher this year.

(PATRICIA shakes MR. PARKER's hand.)

PATRICIA
Patricia… Trish. Trish Trooper. And this is my son Danny.

MR. PARKER
Danny!

(MR. PARKER extends his hand to DANNY. After a moment, DANNY takes it and shakes it quickly.)

PATRICIA
Danny, why don't you go run and play? I'm going to talk to Mr. Parker alone for a moment.

(DANNY reluctantly exits.)

PATRICIA
Mr. Parker.

MR. PARKER
(smiling)
David.

PATRICIA
David. I don't know how much they told you, but… it's been a tough year for us.

MR. PARKER
Yes, I heard. I'm very sorry for your loss.

PATRICIA
Thank you. You know, being a military wife, you always have the fear that it could happen… the expectation… and then when it does… you're still not really ready for it.
(shakes her head)
I'm sorry. You probably don't want to hear this.

MR. PARKER
No, no. It's all right. It must have been very hard for Danny as well.

PATRICIA
It has been hard. Danny was always a very imaginative and playful kid before we lost Rob. And then… it just seemed like a light went out. Now he just sits in his room, staring out the window… reading old letters and e-mails from his father over and over… things like that. He won't even watch his favorite show anymore… G. I. Maxx… you know, that animated show?

MR. PARKER
I've seen it.

PATRICIA
He and his dad used to love to watch that together. They did everything together. Danny is just having a really hard time coping with the loss.

MR. PARKER
Well, that's to be expected, I guess.

PATRICIA
I hoped that a move to a new area and a new school would help him. My husband always talked about how great it was here at Ryder Elementary, where he grew up.

(FX: A recess bell is heard.)

MR. PARKER
Mrs. Trooper… Trish. Thank you for sharing this with me. I really think Ryder Elementary WILL be a good thing for Danny. I'll do my best to make his first days here go as smoothly as possible.

PATRICIA
Thank you, Mr. Park… David. I appreciate that.

(PATRICIA and MR. PARKER exit. Some children – DAWN, CHRIS, KIM, STEPHANIE, TERRY, TOMMY, and TAMMMY – enter. They are joined by DANNY, who stands off to the side and watches the other kids play. DAWN also goes off to the side to read a book she brought with her.)

TAMMY
We've only got 15 minutes. What are we going to do today?

TOMMY
Let's go to the camps!

TAMMY
Tommy, it rained all night. The camps are going to be all wet.

TOMMY
Oh yeah… I forgot.

TAMMY
Besides… YOU KNOW WHO will get us if we go there.

TOMMY
(shuddering)
Yeah… I forgot that too.

STEPHANIE
I know… let's play Mystic Heroes!

TERRY
(sighing and rolling her eyes)
Here we go again. We ALWAYS play Mystic Heroes!

STEPHANIE
Do you have a better idea, Terry?

TERRY
No. Let's do it. Dawn, who do you want to be?

DAWN
Leave me alone… I'm trying to read! I just have to finish this next chapter of *Timmy Doyle and the Books of Magic* before the recess bell rings… since they won't let me read it in class!

STEPHANIE
OK, good. That means 3 on 3 anyway. I'm a hero!
(strikes a heroic pose)
I'm the Iron Maiden… using my magic power armor to fight evil!

CHRIS
(waving his hands in a "magical" fashion)
I'm the Horticulturalist… using my nature powers to make plants grow and trap the bad guys!

STEPHANIE
The hort-a-whats-i-kist?

CHRIS
Come on… I looked it up in the dictionary last night!

STEPHANIE
All right, whatever. Kim, who are you going to be?

KIM
(putting on a bad French accent)
I am Le Peregrine, fighting the forces of evil with my magic paints!

STEPHANIE
(shaking her head)
I can't believe I'm teamed up with these two. OK, Terry, Tammy, and Tommy, that leaves you three as the villains.

TAMMY
Oh come on. I always have to be a villain! Why can't I be a good guy?

STEPHANIE
Sorry, Tammy, we've already picked, and there has to be the same number of villains and heroes to make it fair!

TERRY
(not really into it)
I am the Evil Shaman, using my mystical powers for the forces of evil.

STEPHANIE
Come on, Terry… you're not trying!

TERRY
(trying a little harder, demonstrating "magic")
Boolie boolie boolie!

TOMMY
I am the Ninja Warrior! Ninjas are super cool… and super evil! It's time to get PUMPED UP! Ya! Ya!

(TOMMY does some martial arts moves in a comical fashion.)

TAMMY
I am the Gem Princess, who may LOOK evil, but once I was good, and I'm just PLAYING evil to trick the bad guys!

STEPHANIE
(shaking her head)
All right, as long as that means you FIGHT the good guys right NOW, that'll be good.
(strikes a heroic pose again)
Now, evil villains, you tried to conquer Ryder Elementary, but you won't get away with it! Prepare to be driven back by… the MYSTIC HEROES!

CHRIS
Why can't we be the FORCES OF NATURE?

STEPHANIE
Because I made up the name Mystic Heroes, and that's what we're gonna be!

KIM
(still with the fake French accent)
How about "Le Resistance"?

STEPHANIE
NO! We're the Mystic Heroes, and that's final! Now come on, we've only got 10 minutes of recess left to beat back the evildoers! Take my power blast, Evil Shaman!
(pantomimes a "power blast")

TERRY
(still not into it)
Oh no… I am defeated.
(flops to the ground)

STEPHANIE

Well… uh… that was easy.

(clutches her chest in an exaggerated manner)

AGH! The… feedback… from the… Evil… Shaman… frying… my… magical power circuits…

(collapses to the ground)

Le Peregrine… Horti… Horticult… Plant Man… AVENGE ME!

(pretends to pass out)

CHRIS/KIM

(clutching each other)

Iron Maiden! No! Whatever shall we do?

TOMMY

(grabbing TAMMY's shoulder and pointing to DANNY)

Gem Princess! Let's go after that bystander there and take him hostage!

(TOMMY lunges at DANNY with a karate chop. DANNY flinches.)

TOMMY

HI-YA!

TAMMY

Ha! You thought I was evil, but I'm really good! And now I'm going to blast you with my gem, Ninja Warrior, and save the day!

(TAMMY pantomimes a "gem blast," with accompanying self-made sound effect. TOMMY clutches his chest comically and falls to the ground.)

TOMMY

Aieeee!

STEPHANIE

(after a pause, standing up and shaking her head)

Well, that was quick. We've still got 5 minutes of recess left.

DOUGIE WYNN
(off)
Hey, look at all the CAMPIES!

TAMMY
Oh no…

TOMMY
It's Dougie!

STEPHANIE
Run!

(All the KIDS on stage start to run off. CHRIS stops and pulls at DANNY.)

CHRIS
Come on, new kid, you want to get out of here!

(CHRIS runs off but DANNY, not sure what's going on, stays put. Three MEAN GIRLS, five BULLIES, and then DOUGIE WYNN enter and quickly surround DANNY.)

DOUGIE
Hey, look! The "campies" found a new friend! It's a stupid new kid…

(DOUGIE shoves DANNY, who backs away.)

DOUGIE
Hey, new kid… why don't you give me your lunch money… I'm saving up for that new video game I want… "MDK – Murder Death Kill"!

DANNY
I… I don't have lunch money. My… my mom made me my lunch.

DOUGIE
(mocking him)
"My mom made me my lunch…"
(grabbing DANNY)
Well, that's too bad, new kid… cuz if you don't have money, you'll have to pay some other way!

(The other BULLIES and MEAN GIRLS laugh. JANET STARR enters and rushes between DOUGIE and DANNY, shoving DOUGIE back.

JANET STARR
Leave him alone, Dougie!

DOUGIE
Or what, Janet? You'll get your cooties all over me?

(The other BULLIES and MEAN GIRLS laugh.)

JANET
(defiant)
Yeah? Maybe I will!

DOUGIE
I'm not afraid of you.
(points back to the other BULLIES)
These other guys in my "gang"… they may have a problem with hitting a girl… but I don't, "Janet Planet."
(grabs JANET, snarling)
I remember that day when you kicked me… maybe I owe YOU some payback…

(Before DOUGIE gets a chance to inflict harm, DANNY steps forward in between DOUGIE and JANET and pops DOUGIE in the nose!)

DOUGIE
(holding his nose in pain)
OWWW!
(releases his nose and looks at his hand)
I'm bleeding.
(stares psychotically at DANNY)
That's it… YOU'RE DONE!

(DOUGIE begins to move forward, but before he can retaliate, PRINCIPAL SWINSON enters and breaks up the fight.)

PRINCIPAL SWINSON
What's going on out here? Mr. Wynn? Ms. Starr?
(looks at DANNY)
Mr…?

DANNY
(quietly)
Trooper, sir. My name is Danny Trooper.

SWINSON
Ah, yes. Trooper. New student.
(looks back at DOUGIE)
Mr. Wynn? Why are you bleeding from the nose?

DOUGIE
(trying to wipe the blood away)
Me and my friends…

SWINSON
My friends and I, Mr. Wynn. Proper grammar is important.

DOUGIE
My friends… my friends and I were just playin'… playinG kickball like we always do during recess, and this new kid decides to start trouble and sucker punched me right in the nose!

JANET
That's not what happened, and you know it!

SWINSON
Ms. Starr, BE QUIET. Someone with your poor attendance really doesn't get a say in something like this.

DOUGIE
Yeah… I mean, YES, Principal Swinson… and SHE egged him on to do it!

SWINSON
Is that true, Ms. Starr?

JANET
It's not true!

DOUGIE
(fake sweetness)
Principal Swinson… when have I ever gotten in trouble?

SWINSON
Not under my watch, Mr. Wynn. Under my watch, you are an impeccable student. Your grades are top notch, and your attendance is flawless. You serve as a role model to all your friends. Isn't that right, children?

BULLIES/MEAN GIRLS
Oh yeah… he's the coolest… he's my hero! (Etc.)

SWINSON
Mr. Trooper. Ms. Starr. I'm afraid it's detention for the both of you today. Ms. Starr, I suppose I'll have the usual trouble contacting your mother. And Mr. Trooper, I'm very sorry to have to contact YOUR mother and let her know you've already proven yourself a FAILURE on your first day here.

(SWINSON exits.)

DOUGIE
(getting dangerously close to DANNY)
This isn't over, new kid. You'll pay for making me bleed my own blood.

SWINSON
(off)
Mr. Wynn, come along!

DOUGIE
Yes, Principal Swinson! Coming!

(DOUGIE leaves, shoving DANNY as he goes. The other BULLIES and MEAN GIRLS laugh, poke, and shove DANNY and JANET as they exit. DANNY rubs his shoulder, looking at JANET.)

JANET
(extending her hand)
Hi… my name's Janet. Janet Starr. What's your name?

DANNY
(hesitating but then taking her hand and quickly shaking it)
My name's Danny. Danny Trooper.

JANET
It's nice to meet you, Danny. Thanks for standing up for me back there.

DANNY
You stood up for me. I guess we're even.

(A pause as both of them look at each other, smiling. FX: The recess bell rings.)

JANET
Well, there's the bell. I guess we better get back to class.

DANNY
Yeah, I guess we better.

JANET
I guess I'll see you in detention this afternoon too… unfortunately.

DANNY
Well, it's better than being there by yourself.

JANET
(smiling)
That's true. Now we'd better get in or we'll have ANOTHER detention. Come on!

(JANET takes DANNY by the arm and they exit. The BUSH WITH PURPLE FLOWERS glows for a moment. Then, LIGHTS down.)

SCENE 3

AT RISE: (We are back on the "Wild West" set of the MASKED MARSHAL.)

ANNOUNCER
(off)
We now return to the Adventures of the Masked Marshal!

(MASKED MARSHAL enters, this time joined by his Native American "sidekick," EAGLE FEATHER.)

MASKED MARSHAL
Come on, Eagle Feather… after those rustlers!

EAGLE FEATHER
(handing MASKED MARSHAL a "six shooter")
Here… a gun to kill the bad men.

MASKED MARSHAL
I'm not going to do any killing.

EAGLE FEATHER
You will not defend yourself?

MASKED MARSHAL
I'll shoot if I have to. But I'll shoot to wound, not to kill. If a man must die, it's up to the law to decide that, not the person behind a six-shooter!

EAGLE FEATHER
Whatever you say, Tatanka.

MASKED MARSHAL
You always call me that, Eagle Feather… what's it mean, anyway?

EAGLE FEATHER
It means "buffalo." Because you are certainly as stubborn as a buffalo!

MASKED MARSHAL
(laughing)
You may be right, faithful friend! Now let's go… time's a-wasting… EAGLE FEATHER… PALLADIUM… INTO THE FRAY!

(EAGLE FEATHER exits.)

MASKED MARSHAL
I… I hope there aren't too many of them.
(gulps and leaves the stage)

SCENE 4

AT RISE: (We are now in the RYDER ELEMENTARY "detention room." JANET and DANNY are both seated at desks, being monitored by the cruel MS. WILEY.)

MS. WILEY
(talking on a cell phone)
So anyway, Louise… you know what that little brat did in class today? Instead of doing her sentence diagramming, she was drawing superheroes or some nonsense on a sheet of paper. Well of course I made her rip it up!

JANET
(to DANNY)
I can't believe we've still got 10 minutes to go. I wish I could make that clock move faster!

MS. WILEY
QUIET! No talking!

JANET
Yes, Ms. Wiley.

DANNY
(whispering to JANET)
If she's the fourth grade teacher, I'm glad I didn't come to this school in the fourth grade!

WILEY
(putting away the phone)
What was that?

DANNY
N-n-nothing.

WILEY
That's what I thought. Ms. Starr, I'm not surprised to see you here again, because when you're NOT on one of your MANY absences, you're usually in the detention room. If it weren't for the fact that you receive SLIGHTLY above adequate grades, I would have thought you'd be EXPELLED by now.

JANET
(sarcastically)
Forgive me if I didn't want to spend MORE time with you last year, Ms. Wiley.

WILEY
THAT'S IT! I will NOT take that IMPUDENT tone from you anymore, missy… you'd better be prepared to be in detention for the rest of the WEEK, if not the YEAR…

MR. WAIT
(off)
Oh, Ms. Wi-leeee…

(MR. WAIT, the slightly slimy third grade teacher, enters. He has an obvious interest in MS. WILEY.)

WILEY
Oh… Tom… I mean… Mr. Wait.

WAIT
I see you've got detention today. How about you step out with me for a few moments and… get some fresh air?
(waggles his eyebrows and chuckles creepily)

WILEY
(blushing)
Well… I don't know… it wouldn't be… appropriate.

WAIT
Oh come on… sometimes a little "inappropriate behavior" is needed, don't you think?

(WAIT and WILEY canoodle for a few moments like a couple of giggling schoolchildren, as DANNY and JANET look on with disgust and horror.)

WAIT
(turning to DANNY and JANET)
HEY! Mind your own business, you little rats!

DANNY
S-s-sorry.

WAIT
You'd better be. Now Ms. Wiley and I are going to go outside for a few moments. You BETTER stay in here… if you know what's good for you… because if I see you sneaking out of detention like the VERMIN that you are… you… will… pay! You got me?

DANNY
Yes, sir.

WAIT

Good.

(turning to Ms. Wiley, all slimy "sweetness" again)

Come on, Ms. Wiley… let's go get that FRESH AIR.

(WAIT and WILEY giggle and exit.)

DANNY

I can't believe that guy's a teacher.

JANET

Yeah. He's MAJORLY creepy. He doesn't even like kids… he just likes to yell at them. I heard from some other kids that he wants to bring back somebody called "Corporal Punishment." I don't know who that is… but he doesn't sound good.

DANNY

And Principal Swinson lets him get away with it?

JANET

Oh, whenever Principal Swinson comes by, Mr. Wait turns into "Teacher of the Year." But the moment Principal Swinson's back is turned, Mr. Wait makes all kind of faces at him. I think Mr. Wait wants Principal Swinson's job.

DANNY

That would be bad!

JANET

You know it. Anyway, at least we've got a couple of minutes to talk. Why'd you come to this school, anyway?

DANNY

(shrugging)

Well, my mom got a new job around here, so we moved.

JANET

What about your dad?

DANNY

My… my dad's not with us anymore.

JANET

Oh. Sorry. I know a lot of kids here have folks that are split up…

DANNY
No. He… he died. Overseas in the war. He was a lieutenant and… and he…

JANET
(putting a hand on DANNY's arm)
Danny. You don't have to tell me. I'm sorry I asked. And I'm sorry about your dad.

DANNY
(smiling shyly)
No, it's OK. I don't usually talk about it, but I… I don't mind telling you.

JANET
(smiling at first, but then her face darkens a bit)
Danny… I don't have a lot of friends here. Those kids that were playing superheroes at recess today are kinda my friends, but… there are a lot of days when I'm not here, so it's hard for me to really make friends with anybody.

DANNY
Why are you gone so many days?

JANET
I've got something they call A-L-L.

DANNY
A-L-L?

JANET
Acute lymphocytic leukemia. I know… they're big words, but I've heard them so many times that I've memorized them. Anyway… there are a lot of times when I get sick… and then I have to… go somewhere… somewhere else… so I can get better. You know what I mean?

DANNY
Yeah.

JANET
My mom and I don't really tell that many people about it. We don't want people to feel sorry for me all the time. I mean, I don't feel sorry for myself, so why should anybody else?

DANNY
That's true.
(pause)
Listen, you didn't have to tell me that…

JANET
(smiling)
Well, Danny… now we BOTH know a secret about each other. So, we can keep each other's secret, right?

DANNY
Right!

JANET
Danny… Dougie Wynn…

DANNY
(shaking his head)
What a jerk.

JANET
Yeah. But he's nasty, Danny. And since you punched him in the nose and made him "bleed his own blood," I think he's going to be looking to get even with you. You're the only one besides me who's ever stood up to him. All the rest of the "campies" just run and hide whenever he and the other bullies come around.

DANNY
Why do you call them "campies"? Dougie called them that too…

JANET
You saw those big bushes on the edge of the playground, right?

DANNY
Yeah.

JANET
Well, over the years, kids have hollowed them out and made "camps" out of them. They're great for playing superheroes… or fairy princesses… or even army soldiers for some kids.

DANNY
So, anybody that plays in the camp is called a "campie"?

JANET
Yeah. Then last year, when Dougie Wynn came to town, nobody really played in the camps anymore, because that would be the FIRST place where Dougie and his "friends" would look for you.

DANNY
Were you a "campie"?

JANET
(smiling defiantly)
I still AM, Danny. Dougie and those other goofs don't keep me from playing in there. Besides, there's one "camp" that you can hide in, and they'll never find you.

DANNY
Which one is that?

JANET
It's the bush with the purple flowers.
(lowers her head and then raises it to make eye contact with DANNY)
We'll look out for each other, Danny… I know that. But if there's ever a day when I'm not here… and Dougie and his gang come after you… then you go hide in the bush with the purple flowers in bloom on it. Got it?

DANNY
Yeah, but…

JANET
There are some thorns in that bush, so you have to be careful when you get in there. But those thorns also keep the bullies away.

(FX: The detention bell rings. DANNY stands up. JANET stands up and looks at the clock.)

JANET
Good… detention's over. I've gotta get home. Don't forget, Danny… bush with the purple flowers if you ever get in trouble.

DANNY
I won't forget.

JANET

Well… goodbye.

(DANNY and JANET stare at each other for a moment. JANET then somewhat impulsively hugs DANNY. She smiles and runs off. DANNY is shocked but not upset. LIGHTS down as DANNY exits.)

SCENE 5

AT RISE: (We are in the "Darklands," a dark and twisted place, in the lair of the evil COMMANDER NIGHTSHADE, who sits in his evil-looking chair as the LIGHTS come up. The lighting should be kept dim and ominous in the Darklands if possible.)

ANNOUNCER

(off, ominous)

Meanwhile, in the Darklands, Commander Nightshade plots yet another evil plan against the citizens of the Starlight Kingdom…

(NIGHTSHADE is obviously bored: yawning, sighing, drumming his fingers, etc.)

COMMANDER NIGHTSHADE

Another day in the Darklands.

(rises and paces)

What shall I do today? The same thing I do every day, of course… try to take over the Starlight Kingdom! But every time I try… I fail. What is the matter with me? I have an IQ of 210… unlimited resources… every sadistic weapon that I could imagine. I even DESTROYED my archenemy, G. I. Maxx! Why then, do I continue to fail? Against a rag-tag group of "heroes" that should not be able to prevail… and yet they ALWAYS do!

(The haughty COUNTESS MALICE enters with the sniveling SIKKO FANT right behind her.)

COUNTESS MALICE

Perhaps you need to change your tactics, Commander, Darling…

NIGHTSHADE
(mock "bowing")
Ah, my dear Countess MALICE!

MALICE
That's Ma-LEESE, Commander. How often you forget…

NIGHTSHADE
Ah, yes. Ma-LEESE. I also forget that your PRETENTIOUSNESS knows no bounds!

MALICE
(ruffled, but quickly regains her composure)
Commander… darling… I'm only trying to say that perhaps if you'd listen to a few of my suggestions… a few of my plans… that we might stand more of a chance of…

NIGHTSHADE
ENOUGH! As usual, you presume too much, my dear Countess! Considering that many of my defeats have come when YOU were the field leader does not exactly inspire confidence in me when you come up with "plans" of your own.

MALICE
But darling… my "defeats" were perhaps due to your lack of foresight…

NIGHTSHADE
SILENCE!
(advancing on MALICE menacingly)
Perhaps you'd like another time in the disintegration chamber, my dear Countess? Spending time as a tortured phantom in that well of twisted souls?

MALICE
(cowering)
No… no that! Anything but that!

NIGHTSHADE
I thought not!

SIKKO FANT
Master, you must forgive the Countess… she forgot her place! She forgot that all we have… the control of the Darklands… is all because of you! And some day… we will rule the ENTIRE world of ModMyth… when the Starlight Kingdom falls at your hand, oh GREAT and POWERFUL Commander…

NIGHTSHADE
(backhanding SIKKO)
That's enough, you sniveling little toad! Sikko Fant, your incompetence is only matched by your cowardice. It's no WONDER my plans always fail… with minions like you and Ma-LEESE. I am DOOMED to failure! Now get out of my sight…

(FX: Eerie music is heard as NIGHTSHADE holds his head in pain.)

GARDNER SCHWARTZ
(off)
Commander Nightshade… for many years have you toiled… for years, there always had to be a BALANCE between the forces of good and evil… but you… and I… can change all that… now open your mind to me and know who you are… know your DESTINY!

(FX: The eerie music fades.)

NIGHTSHADE
Aggh… what was that?
(look of realization appears on his face)
Oh… oh yes… that… that would make sense. Yes! It's all so clear now! I never knew before! But somehow… somehow now I know!

SIKKO FANT
Know what, master?

NIGHTSHADE
The meaning of our lives, Sikko! Why we never truly defeat the forces of the Starlight Kingdom! But now… now we can!
(looks to the sky)
Whoever you are… thank you! Thank you for truly opening my eyes! Now I know how to destroy THEM… once and for all!

(NIGHTSHADE exits, laughing. MALICE helps SIKKO to his feet.)

MALICE
What do you think he meant by that?

SIKKO
I have no idea.

(SIKKO spits on the ground, his "craven toady" façade now gone.)

SIKKO FANT
By the dark gods, I don't know how much longer I can keep this up… pretending to lick his boots. "Yes master"… "no master"… feh! I'd like to stab my adamantine dagger right through his cold black heart!

MALICE
(purring)
Sikko… darling… I know how hard it is. But just think… the more plans that idiot fails at, the more his "loyal subjects" grow restless. Soon, they will have had enough… and Commander Nightshade WILL be overthrown. Then who better to replace him as RULERS of the Darklands… then Countess Malice… and Count Fant?

SIKKO
Count? Pfft! I will be King! No… I will be EMPEROR FANT!

MALICE
Emperor Fant… and Empress Malice… I LIKE it!

(SIKKO and MALICE laugh malevolently as LIGHTS go down and they exit.)

SCENE 6

AT RISE: (We are back on the school playground as LIGHTS come up. The BUSH WITH PURPLE FLOWERS is back on stage. DANNY, DAWN, CHRIS, KIM, STEPHANIE, TAMMY, and TOMMY enter. They are now playing "Ninja Commando Warriors," though DANNY doesn't seem that into it.)

TOMMY
(martial arts pose)
Come on, Ninja Commando Warriors! It's time to storm the evil Dread Terror's castle stronghold! But first we have to defeat his evil robot soldiers! I, Tatsuko, master ninja, will lead us to victory!
(does some karate chops)
Hiya! Hiya!

CHRIS/TAMMY/DAWN
(playing "killer robots")
You will never defeat us… we will destroy you…

STEPHANIE
(brandishing a crudely made pair of "nunchuks")
No way, robots! My electric nunchuks will take you all out! Ya!

KIM
(fake French accent, doing "savate kicks")
And I, Le Peregrine, the French ninja, will defeat you with my savate kicks!

STEPHANIE
(breaking character)
Kim! Come on! A FRENCH ninja?

KIM
Hey… you be what you want to be… I'll be what I want to be!

TOMMY
(stopping and looking at DANNY)
Danny… what's wrong? I thought you wanted to play this?

DANNY
Yeah, I know. It's just… I don't know. Just not into it today, I guess. Does anybody know where Janet is?

TAMMY
She's sick… AGAIN.

DAWN
I don't know how she's ever going to make it to the 6th grade, she's gone so much.

CHRIS
Terry's gone today too. I wonder if she caught what Janet's got?

(DANNY opens his mouth to say something but then thinks better of it.)

DOUGIE
(off)
Hey, CAMPIES, prepare to be invaded!

DAWN
Oh no…

CHRIS
Not again!

KIM
Run!

(DAWN, CHRIS, KIM, STEPHANIE, TAMMY, and TOMMY scatter. DANNY is paralyzed by fear as DOUGIE enters and advances towards him.)

DOUGIE
My "crew" is keeping the playground monitor busy right now, Trooper. Your "girlfriend" isn't here today, and the rest of those campies have enough sense to run from me. So now it's just YOU… and ME.
(laughs sadistically)
I owe you from the other day… making me bleed my own blood.
(glances at his watch)
And I've got just enough time to do it. And when you go back into class… bleeding YOUR own blood… don't bother trying to "narc" on me. Because I'll just tell Principal Swinson that you FELL, and that you're LYING again. And who's he going to believe? You, the new kid who's always "making trouble"? Or ME, his FAVORITE kid?

(DOUGIE laughs and grabs DANNY. DANNY kicks DOUGIE in the shin and then runs away from him, perhaps through the crowd, up and down the aisles, pursued by DOUGIE.)

DANNY
Bush with purple flowers… bush with purple flowers… bush with purple FLOWERS!

(DANNY jumps into the bush with purple flowers on it. DOUGIE howls in disgust. FX: Recess bell rings.)

DOUGIE
I don't care about being tardy. I'm coming for you, Trooper! No stupid thorn bush with purple flowers is going to keep me away from you. I'm going to make you PAY!

(DOUGIE dives into the bush. FX: LIGHTS dim and fade. Weird music is heard and a swirling light effect is seen.)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

AT RISE: (We are in "The Camps," an amazing forest of many colors and swirling energy, the "border" or "neutral zone" between the Starlight Kingdom and the Darklands.)

ANNOUNCER
(off)
Welcome to ModMyth, the land of inspiration for all heroes and villains for the past 100 years! You are currently in "The Camps." Enjoy your stay, Otherworlders!

(DANNY comes running out on stage.)

DANNY
(looking around in amazement)
Where am I? This is a big forest… but the colors are all wrong. Where's the bush with purple flowers?

(The MINIONS of NIGHTSHADE enter: HYENA, WULF, BUGG, SURGE, PRINCESS VIPER, and the three FURIES – ALECTO with her metal ropes, MEGAERA with an energy bow, and TISIPHONE with razor sharp claws. They quickly surround and menace DANNY.)

BUGG
Bzzz… what do we have here, Megaera?

MEGAERA
Looks like a fish out of water, Bugg… I say we fillet him!
(raises bow menacingly)

HYENA
HA HA HA HA! Fishy fishy fish… flopping on the ground… drawing its last breath! HA HA HA HA!

PRINCESS VIPER
(snakelike)
SSSILENCE, HYENA! Ssss… I don't recognize you, boy… do you claim allegiance to the all-powerful Commander Nightshade… or my hated mother Queen Ssstar?

DANNY
Holy cow! You're… you're all REAL?!? Queen Star? Commander Nightshade?

ALECTO
He's a spy, Princess Viper!

DANNY
I'm not a spy!

WULF
Grrr! Who cares? Nightshade's had us out here for days, looking for possible weaknesses in the force field that surrounds the Starlight Kingdom… I'M HUNGRY! AHH-WOOO!

MEGAERA
I agree… spy or no spy… this boy will make an excellent snack for you, Wulf!

SURGE
(always acting like he's being electrified)
Yeah Wulf… yeah! Snack snack snack! Fry the flesh… fry his bones! Bones! Flesh and bones! Ha ha ha!

DANNY
No! Get away! Get away from me!

DAVEY BOWEN
(off)
Ah suggest you do what the boy says, you scalawags.

(DAVEY BOWEN, frontiersman, enters, dressed in leather and wearing a coonskin cap. He carries a "battle staff" in one hand and a sci-fi blaster in the other. WREX THE WONDER DOG, his faithful companion, accompanies him.)

BUGG
Bzzz… Davey Bowen!

MEGAERA
And that mangy mutt of his!

VIPER
Ssss… you're a long way from the Starlight Kingdom, Bowen.

BOWEN
Lucky me. It's my turn for guard duty. To guard people like this kid out here in the Camps from the likes of you.

HYENA
Yeah, but there's one of you… and eight of us!

WULF
Grrr… don't forget the kid!

HYENA
OK… one and a half!

MEGAERA
And the dog!

HYENA
OK… one and nine sixteenths! HA HA HA HA HA!

BOWEN
Back when I was battlin' Santa Ana and his men… we were usually outnumbered MORE than 8 to 1! Didn't bother me then… doesn't bother me now.
(brandishes his blaster)
Queen Star said I should carry this new-fangled blaster pistol in case I ran into the likes of y'all. Reckon I'll see how it works.

(BOWEN tries to fire the blaster, and it doesn't work. He shakes his head and tosses it aside.

BOWEN
Ah, heck, never did cotton to technology anyway.
(brandishes his battle staff)
All right… let's get this over with! Sic 'em, WREX!

(WREX chases most of the MINIONS away, leaving WULF to attack BOWEN. They struggle for a moment, and then WULF knocks BOWEN down. WREX heads back to help his master.)

MEGAERA
(aiming at WREX)
Time to put you down for good, puppy!

(WREX heads for MEGAERA and knocks her down. He begins licking her face!)

MEGAERA
AGGH! GET OFF ME! GET OFF ME, YOU FILTHY ANIMAL!
(tosses WREX aside and wipes her face)
YUGH! Dog germs! I'm contaminated!

(WREX runs around the stage as WULF tries to catch him. ALECTO wraps one of her metal ropes around BOWEN and chokes him.)

ALECTO
I got him, Megaera!

MEGAERA
(raising her bow)
Say goodbye to ModMyth, Bowen!

(TISIPHONE knocks the bow out of MEGAERA'S hand.)

TISIPHONE
NO! If someone is going to get rid of Davey, it should be Tisiphone who gets the gravy!

MEGAERA
Tisiphone, you crazy witch! Stop trying to become the Countess' #1 girl! You know I'M the leader of the Furies!

VIPER
Furiesss! Ssstop it! Focusss on Bowen!

(TISIPHONE and MEGAERA start to fight. VIPER tries to stop them. SURGE is now back on stage, shuffling his feet towards BOWEN to build up a charge.)

SURGE
Ha ha! While those two have their slumber party pillow fight, I'm going to give you the shock of your life, Bowen!

(BOWEN manages to escape ALECTO's rope at the last second as SURGE touches her metal rope and "shocks" ALECTO instead! FX: electric shock sound effect.)

ALECTO
(before being shocked)
Surge! You fool! Look OUT…

(SURGE and ALECTO both fall to the ground. BOWEN tries to recover but HYENA jumps on his back.)

HYENA
Ha ha ha! Don't forget about me, Davey!

(BOWEN tosses HYENA off, rolls to grab his blaster and fires it at HYENA instinctively. FX: A blaster sound effect is heard, and HYENA clutches his chest.)

HYENA
(no longer smiling)
That's… not funny.

(HYENA collapses as WULF tries to attack BOWEN, but BOWEN puts him down with the pistol. Only BUGG remains and stands still, looking very cute and innocent.)

BOWEN
Oh, what a cute little ladybug! Why do you hang out with these Lost Children anyway? Come on, let me take you back to the Starlight Kingd… AGHH!

(BOWEN is "stung" by BUGG.)

BUGG
Bzzz! That's right, Bowen! This "cute little ladybug" has a not-so-cute STING!

(BUGG continues to "sting" BOWEN as WREX grabs something from DAVEY's knapsack and hands it to DANNY.)

DANNY
What?
(looks at what WREX gave him)
Oh!

(DANNY steps forward and sprays BUGG with the bug spray WREX handed him.)

BUGG
AGGH! Bug spray! Bug spray! Buggs check in but they don't check out!

MEGAERA
We're in trouble here! Retreat! Retreat!

TISIPHONE
Megaera, this is surely your fault… so from this place we must vault!

VIPER
You'll get yourssss, Bowen… you'll get yoursss!

(The MINIONS flee the stage, helping those off who have fallen previously. When all are gone, BOWEN takes off his coonskin cap and wipes the sweat from his brow. WREX stays by BOWEN's side.)

BOWEN
Thanks, son. Those varmints won't be botherin' anyone for a while. Hard to believe they were once loyal citizens of the Starlight Kingdom, but then Nightshade got in their heads and turned 'em into a bunch of bullies, just lookin' for people to terrorize. That's why they're called the Lost Children. Usually when somebody stands up to them, they show their true color… yella.

DANNY
Who… who are you?

BOWEN
Name's Davey Bowen…
(grins and offers his hand for DANNY to shake)
Though some of the ladies call me the Handsome Prince of the Wild Frontier.

DANNY
(slowly shaking BOWEN'S hand)
You… you're DAVEY BOWEN?

BOWEN
You heard of me?

DANNY
We… we read about you in our history book!

BOWEN
Well, that's pretty surprisin' to me, son… me bein' in a history book, since ah kinda lost track of time when ah first arrived in this place. Don't know how exactly it happened… one minute ah was fightin' Santa Ana's soldiers at the Alamo, and the next ah'm in this magical place… like somethin' out of a fairytale book. It was a bit disorientin', to say the least. But the people in the Starlight Kingdom were nice folk, and after a while ah decided that protectin' them was the same as protectin' the people of the American Frontier.

DANNY
But you're… you're d…

BOWEN
Ah'm what?

DANNY
Never mind.

BOWEN
Like ah said, ah'm not sure how many years have passed since ah arrived here. Time works kinda funny here… first thing ah noticed. And since you're obviously not from the Starlight Kingdom, judgin' from your funny clothes, you must be from the "Otherworld," as they call it. What's your name, son?

DANNY
Daniel. Daniel Trooper. You can call me Danny.

BOWEN
All right, Danny. What year is it, anyway, where you come from?

DANNY
Two thousand and nine.

BOWEN
(staggering a bit)
Two thousand and nine? Two thousand and NINE? But that would mean… Aw heck, ah gotta sit down!

(BOWEN sits, his head in his hands for a moment. WREX comforts him.)

DANNY
Have you seen a bush with purple flowers on it? That's how I got here… and that's how I'm hoping I can get back home!

BOWEN
(shaking his head)
Can't say ah have, Danny. Colors work differently here anyway… that's the SECOND thing ah noticed. Right before I met HER… Queen Star.
(snaps his fingers)
Say! Ah bet Her Royal Majesty would know how to get you home, Danny! It's worth a shot, at least. We need to get you to the Starlight Kingdom!

DANNY
Ohh-kay.

BOWEN
Cuz even if Her Royal Majesty Queen Star don't know a way, ah bet her daughter Princess Starlight certainly would!

MASKED MARSHAL
(off)
PALLADIUM, INTO THE FRAY!

(MASKED MARSHAL and EAGLE FEATHER enter on hobbyhorses. MASKED MARSHAL looks around.)

MASKED MARSHAL
The forces of evil already defeated?

EAGLE FEATHER
Maybe we shouldn't have stopped for that sarsaparilla first, Tatanka.

BOWEN
(dryly)
Howdy, Masked Marshal. Nice of you to show up after the fightin' was already over… AGAIN.

MASKED MARSHAL
Well, I… I was just scouting the perimeter… to make sure none of the evil forces were still lurking about!

BOWEN

Uh huh.

MASKED MARSHAL

Uh… well… I apologize for my tardiness, Davey. If Eagle Feather here hadn't had to heed nature's call, we would have been here sooner!

EAGLE FEATHER

Hey!

MASKED MARSHAL

But lucky for them we weren't here! Because fighting Davey Bowen, Handsome Prince of the Wild Frontier, can be tough, but also having to fight THE MASKED MARSHAL… that would be too much for any evildoer to bear!

EAGLE FEATHER

(to herself)

Yeah… too bad evildoers haven't had the chance to see US in action for MONTHS!

MASKED MARSHAL

What was that?

EAGLE FEATHER

Nothing.

MASKED MARSHAL

Very well then… since evil has been vanquished, it's time for us to return to the Starlight Kingdom… PALLADIUM, INTO THE FRAY!

(MASKED MARSHAL exits.)

EAGLE FEATHER

(shaking her head)

I'm sorry we were not here to aid you, Davey.

BOWEN

That's all right, Eagle Feather. It's the thought that counts. And it's probably a good thing you weren't here… or you probably would have had to rescue the Masked Marshal again, "faithful sidekick"!

EAGLE FEATHER
(smiling at BOWEN's joke)
Yes… it is good that the Masked Marshal has his faithful friend Eagle Feather to aid him. I will see both of you back at the Kingdom.

(EAGLE FEATHER exits. BOWEN grabs his knapsack.)

DANNY
That's amazing!

BOWEN
What?

DANNY
That's the Masked Marshal! And Eagle Feather!

BOWEN
Yyyeah… you know them too?

DANNY
Well, not really. But my grandpa… he used to tell me stories about them. He grew up listening to stories about them on the radio… and watching them on TV!

BOWEN
(shaking his head, now thoroughly confused)
Well, if you say so, son. Some of that stuff you're talkin' about must be that new-fangled "technology" they're always talkin' about in the Kingdom… all ah know is that Masked Marshal and Eagle Feather were here before ah got here… but then again, like ah said, time works funny here in ModMyth. Anyway, let's go see Queen Star and Princess Starlight… they'll probably know a way to get you home.

(DAVEY, WREX, and DANNY exit. LIGHTS down.)

SCENE 2

AT RISE: (We are in COMMANDER NIGHTSHADE's lair again.)

ANNOUNCER
(off)
Meanwhile, in the Darklands, Commander Nightshade reveals his insidious plan to his minions.

(NIGHTSHADE, MALICE, and SIKKO enter.)

NIGHTSHADE
(as he enters)
And so you see, my dear Countess, THAT is my plan.

MALICE
It sounds… interesting, my dear Commander!

NIGHTSHADE
Interesting? INTERESTING? It's genius!

SIKKO
Master… if I may… it is a bit… "out there"… all this talk of other worlds… and being someone else's… inspiration?

NIGHTSHADE
Of course it is too much for your simple mind to bear, Fant. And I don't know exactly HOW I came about the information, but now that I know, there will be no stopping my plans for conquest!

(The MINIONS – HYENA, VIPER, BUGG, SURGE, WULF, and the three FURIES - enter, still showing the effects of their battle with BOWEN.)

SIKKO FANT
What in the name of the Seven Planes happened to you?

BUGG
Bzzz… it… it was Bowen… and… and his ARMY!

TISIPHONE
We fought them with all our might, but in the Camps, it was not our night!

HYENA
Ha ha ha! What are you guys talking about? We got our butts kicked by just one guy! Ha ha ha!

SURGE
Yeah! Just one guy! Just one guy! Just one guy!

VIPER
(hissing at Hyena and Surge)
Sssilence, you foolsss!

NIGHTSHADE
Lieutenant Wulf, is this true?

WULF
Grrr… Commander, you have to understand… he… Bowen had a blaster pistol… and… we were distracted… by a boy… from another world!

NIGHTSHADE
(grabbing WULF as eerie sound effects are heard and the lighting turns eerie)
SILENCE! For your defeat in the field, Lieutenant Wulf, you know the penalty!

WULF
AWWOOO! Not the disintegration chamber! Anything but that!

NIGHTSHADE
NOT the disintegration chamber this time… I have a new weapon at my command that won't just momentarily disintegrate you until I deem you WORTHY to reincorporate… instead, my new weapon will ERASE you from existence itself!

WULF
NOOO! PLEASE! I'LL DO <u>ANYTHING</u>!

NIGHTSHADE
Say goodbye to your EXISTENCE, Lieutenant Wulf…
(pause)
Did you say you were distracted by a BOY… from ANOTHER WORLD?

WULF
Y-y-yes!

MEGAERA
Commander, he was dressed in strange clothing… and he didn't look like anybody I know from the Starlight Kingdom, and I know EVERYBODY there. I assumed he must be from another world!

NIGHTSHADE
(releasing WULF and passing back and forth)
Another world… another world…

MALICE
Commander… darling… this theory of "another world" has always been nothing more than a rumor… a bedtime story made for the pathetic children, elves, and gnomes of the Starlight Kingdom.

NIGHTSHADE
Yes, my dear Countess, I once thought that too. But haven't you noticed that over the years the forces of the Starlight Kingdom have changed… as have our own… sometimes without rhyme or reason? And the recent information I "miraculously" received would also lead me to believe otherwise.

VIPER
Ssss… the boy went back to the Starlight Kingdom with Bowen, Massster. Probably to get help from my useless mother and ssstepsssister.

NIGHTSHADE
So, it would seem that the boy would ally himself with the forces of the Starlight Kingdom. But that would mean… there must be a balance.

MALICE
A balance?

NIGHTSHADE
Yes… from what I recently learned… there must always be a BALANCE between the forces of light and dark… between the Starlight Kingdom and the Darklands.

SIKKO
A "balance"? Master, if I may be so impudent, perhaps you have been working too hard lately… maybe you should take a vacation… I hear the Swoggoth Swamps are quite lovely this time of… URK!

NIGHTSHADE
(grabbing SIKKO by the throat)
Sikko Fant… I find your lack of faith disturbing. If you question my sanity or right to lead EVER again, you will not EXIST to question it again. Do you understand me?

SIKKO
Y-y-yes!

NIGHTSHADE
(releasing SIKKO)
Good. So… if there is a balance that must be maintained… and this boy from another world has joined the forces of the Starlight Kingdom… then…

DOUGIE
(off)
Hello? Is anybody in there? Can anybody help me? I'm lost!

(EVERYONE reacts in shock as DOUGIE enters. The minions quickly surround him, as DOUGIE reacts in fright.)

WULF
It's another one!

MALICE
I don't believe it!

DOUGIE
Hey… I'm sorry to bother you but… but I don't know where I am or what happened and I'm sc…
(He can't say the word.)
I'm sc…
(He finally looks at NIGHTSHADE.)
Hey! Oh man! You're… you're Commander Nightshade!

NIGHTSHADE
You… know me? How do you know me?

DOUGIE
You're only just the COOLEST bad guy that's ever been on TV! Everybody else roots for those idiots who fight you, but not me! You've always been my favorite! Course… I always thought you were taller…

(EVERYONE except DOUGIE gasps as NIGHTSHADE bristles.)

DOUGIE
But… but I know that one day… ONE DAY… you're finally going to beat those hero punks you always fight once and for all! Man, I can't believe I get to meet you! Wait a minute… this is probably a trick, right? You're not REALLY Commander Nightshade… you're just one of those guys who dresses up like him for King's Flag Amusement Park!

SIKKO
Master… he's been "watching" you… on "TV"? Amusement park impostors? The boy is obviously deranged… I say we destroy him right n…

NIGHTSHADE
ENOUGH!
(slowly approaches DOUGIE)
Do I look like an impostor, boy?

DOUGIE
N-n-no… oh man, it really is YOU! I can't believe it!
(looks around)
And… and you're Sikko Fant… and Countess Ma-LEESE… and you guys are the Lost Children! You guys are the coolest too! Especially you, Countess!

MALICE
Well… thank you, darling…

DOUGIE
Course I don't understand why you and Sikko are always plotting to overthrow Commander Nightshade…

MALICE
WHAT?!? How… how dare you! I will destroy you myself!

(MALICE moves forward to attack DOUGIE but a smirking NIGHTSHADE stops her.)

NIGHTSHADE
How very interesting. Tell me more, young man.

MALICE
Commander… you can't… you can't believe his LIES!

NIGHTSHADE
Silence! I WILL hear more from this boy…
(to DOUGIE)
What is your name?

DOUGIE
Dougie… Douglas Wynn, sir.

NIGHTSHADE
Master Wynn, come with me. We have much to discuss… I want to hear all about where you came from.

(shoots a withering look at MALICE and SIKKO)

And whatever other useful information you can give to me.

(NIGHTSHADE and DOUGIE exit together, followed by the other MINIONS except for the FURIES. MALICE and SIKKO also remain on stage.)

SIKKO
How… how could he know? He'll ruin everything!

MALICE
Nonsense, darling. It only means that we must escalate our timetable a bit. Furies!

MEGAERA
Yes, Countess?

MALICE
Try to find out where this "Dougie" comes from. We may need that information soon.

ALECTO
Your wish is our command, Countess!

TISIPHONE
Girls rule and boys drool! Ha ha ha!

MEGAERA
Oh, give it a rest, Tisiphone!

(The FURIES exit, arguing.)

MALICE
Good. My Furies always get the job done. But we must move quickly. Either we destroy "Dougie"… OR we destroy Nightshade…

SIKKO
Or both!

MALICE
Yes… or both!

(SIKKO and MALICE exit, laughing. LIGHTS down.)

SCENE 3

AT RISE: (We are in the STARLIGHT KINGDOM. DANNY and BOWEN enter. DANNY is in awe, of course.)

DANNY
It's amazing… just like on the show!

BOWEN
Show? Well, it truly is something. And it's always changin', too… people comin' and goin'… like our latest new arrival.

(The porcine MU SHU enters and runs around on stage, doing martial arts and muttering, "snuffing," and oinking as he goes.)

BOWEN
That would be Mu Shu.

DANNY
That's amazing! I have a Tatakau [toon-tah-kow] game card with Mu Shu on it!

BOWEN
I'll take your word for it, son. You sure know a lot about the inhabitants of the Starlight Kingdom.

(The purple-skinned SNARKS – BOOKWORM, ARTY, NATURE, and GIZMO - enter, singing as they go. The sullen felinoid JEEPERS also enters.)

SNARKS
(singing, to the tune of the "March from the River Kwai")
Snark snark, snark snark snark snark snark snark SNARK!
Snark snark, snark snark snark snark snark snark snark…
Snark snark… snark snark snark snark snark…
Snark snark snark snark, snark snark snark, snark SNARK!

DANNY
Who are they?

BOWEN
Well, I'll be! Finally some people you don't know. Those are the Snarks!

(The SNARKS surround DANNY, good naturedly.)

BOOKWORM SNARK
Hello, I'm Bookworm Snark… because I'm able to snark anything I read!

NATURE SNARK
I'm Nature Snark, because I love nature! Here… have a flower… it smells so snarky!

ARTY SNARK
I'm Arty Snark! Would you like me to snark your portrait?

DANNY
Uh, maybe later.

GIZMO SNARK
And I'm Gizmo Snark! You need anything invented, just come to Gizmo! I'm your Snark! How did the Bugg Spray work, Davey?

BOWEN
Worked like a charm, Gizmo.

GIZMO
And the blaster pistol?

BOWEN
Not so much.

GIZMO
Oh well. Back to the ol' snarking board!

DANNY
Oh yeah… now I remember you guys. I didn't watch you very much when you were on… sorry.

BOOKWORM
Watch us when we're on what?
(feels DANNY's head)
Did you fall and hit your snark, Otherworlder?

NATURE
I can find a snark that will help you if your head snarks!

JEEPERS
Jeepers! All this talking makes Jeepers' stomach growl! I could really go for some food!

ARTY
Oh Jeepers, you're always snarky!

GIZMO
It's a wonder there's any food left in the Starlight Kingdom with you always snarking around!

(FX: Triumphant, royal music is heard.)

BOOKWORM
It's Queen Star! Everyone snark to her royal majesty!

MU SHU/SNARKS/JEEPERS
(bowing or kneeling)
All hail Queen Star!

(QUEEN STAR enters.)

DANNY
(to BOWEN)
She… she looks like my…

BOWEN
(grinning)
Yeah, I know, son. She looks like EVERYBODY's mom.

QUEEN STAR
Greeting, loyal subjects. Please stand. And please welcome my daughter, the MythMaker, as she has returned to join us once again.

DANNY
Daughter? She's not talking about that nasty Princess Viper, is she?

BOWEN
No, Danny. Princess Viper is Queen Star's actual daughter… used to be known as Princess Virtue. But her jealousy twisted her mind, and Nightshade and his Viper Venom did the rest.
(shakes his head)
It's a sad thing. The Queen doesn't like to talk about it much.

(FX: Triumphant royal music.)

MU SHU/SNARKS
All hail Princess Starlight! All hail the MythMaker!

(PRINCESS STARLIGHT – known in our world as JANET – enters.)

PRINCESS STARLIGHT (JANET)
Hello everyone! It's so good to be back with you again!

(MU SHU and the SNARKS surround the PRINCESS, happy at her return. JEEPERS stays back for some reason, however.)

DANNY
That's… that's…

BOWEN
Don't tell me… you know her from "TV" too.

DANNY
No! She's in my class… at school!

BOWEN
Danny, I like you, but you are one confusin' kid sometimes.

DANNY
(in awe)
She's… she's…

BOWEN
(grinning)
That's all right, son. I learned a long time ago that it doesn't make you less of a man to admit when someone's beautiful.

QUEEN STAR
Representative Bowen… I am glad to see you have returned. The Masked Marshal and Eagle Feather said you encountered some of Nightshade's minions in the Camps?

BOWEN
Nothin' I couldn't handle, Your Majesty. But they do seem to be gettin' dangerously close to the Starlight Kingdom recently… they must be up to somethin'.

QUEEN STAR
Well, it is no matter. There is no way for them to enter the Starlight Kingdom unless they are given the key to get through the force field, and not one of my subjects would ever do such a thing.

BOWEN
If you say so, Your Majesty. But security wise, I still don't think it's a good idea to have everybody knowin' the code to get in and out.

QUEEN STAR
Nonsense! Being a member of the Starlight Kingdom means you are free to come and go as you please. My people need things from the Camps from time to time, and so they may go there as they see fit. And with people like you and the Masked Marshal to protect them, they are always safe until they return.
(turning to the others)
Now let us feast, as my daughter has returned!

GIZMO SNARK
Before that… MythMaker… make us a myth!

OTHER SNARKS
Yes, yes… snark us a myth! (Etc.)

STARLIGHT
(smiling)
Oh, all right… a small one.

(STARLIGHT concentrates as FX: magical music is heard. She "magically" produces a stuffed unicorn from within her garments.)

STARLIGHT
There… a baby unicorn!

(The citizens of the Starlight Kingdom "oo" and "ah.)

ARTY SNARK
It's so cute!

JEEPERS
(jealous)
Jeepers! She's not the only one who can make myths! Good old Jeepers was the MythMaker before SHE was! Watch this!

(JEEPERS makes some "magical" motions and produces a "whoopie cushion" that makes a flatulent noise. Everyone on stage holds their nose from the smell.)

NATURE SNARK
Ugh! You just conjured a Swamp Pooter, Jeepers!

JEEPERS
(very embarrassed)
N-n-no… it was supposed to be a Frog Prince!

STARLIGHT
(trying to comfort JEEPERS)
Oh Jeepers!

(Everyone except JEEPERS laughs.)

QUEEN STAR
All right… come along now… it's time for the feast!

(SNARKS and MU SHU cheer and exit. JEEPERS and BOWEN exit as well.)

QUEEN STAR
(approaching DANNY and taking his hand)
And you must be Daniel Trooper… Danny. Starlight has told me a lot about you. I'm very glad to meet you.

DANNY
Thanks, mo… I mean, Your Majesty.

STARLIGHT
Mother, could you give me a moment alone with Danny?

QUEEN STAR
All right, daughter. But don't be too long.

(QUEEN STAR exits. PRINCESS STARLIGHT hugs DANNY.)

STARLIGHT
Danny! I'm so glad to see you! I see you took my advice.

DANNY
Yeah, bush with the purple flowers. This is amazing, Janet… I mean… Princess!

STARLIGHT
You can still call me Janet, Danny. Or Starlight if you like.

DANNY
How is any of this possible? How is SHE your mother?

STARLIGHT
It's a long story, Danny. Before I came to Ryder, I was an orphan. I ran away from the orphanage one night and found the bush with purple flowers. I hid in there, and the next thing I knew I was here in ModMyth. Queen Star found me and eventually adopted me.

DANNY
How come you don't stay here all the time?

STARLIGHT
Living people from Otherworld can't stay here forever, Danny. If you try to, after a while, you start to fade away… and then you totally disappear! So, I have to go back every once in a while… until I can safely return here again.

DANNY
And does being here make you feel better?

STARLIGHT
It holds it back a little.
(sadly)
But it won't last forever.
(brightens)
I'm so glad you're here! I can't wait to show you around! You can only be here a few days, but that's enough to show you a lot of things!

DANNY
(panicking)
A few days?!? But my mom…

STARLIGHT
(smiling)
Don't worry, Danny… it's a few days here, but back in the other world it's only a few hours. You'll be back in time for the bus to pick you up and bring you back home. I promise.

DANNY
OK. Let's go explore the Starlight Kingdom!

(STARLIGHT and DANNY exit. LIGHTS down.)

SCENE 4

AT RISE: (We are back to NIGHTSHADE's lair. COMMANDER NIGHTSHADE, holding his KILL-O-ZAP gun, and DOUGIE enter. DOUGIE is now dressed like a miniature version of NIGHTSHADE. The MIND DRAINER machine is now on stage.)

NIGHTSHADE
And this is the Kill-O-Zap ray gun that I designed many years ago, Mister Wynn. I was THIS CLOSE to disintegrating Queen Star and ending her reign over the Starlight Kingdom FOR GOOD!

DOUGIE
That is wicked cool! Can I hold it?

NIGHTSHADE
(handing it to him)
Be my guest.

(DOUGIE brandishes the pistol, pretending to fight heroes with it, and then accidentally fires it as FX: a blaster shot is heard. WULF screams offstage.)

DOUGIE
(to NIGHTSHADE)
S-s-sorry.

(MALICE and SIKKO enter. MALICE grabs the gun away from DOUGIE.)

MALICE
Give me that, you little worm! It's not a toy!

SIKKO
He just DISINTEGRATED Lieutenant Wulf!

NIGHTSHADE
Oh, he'll return to corporeal form soon enough. I was just explaining my new plan to Mister Wynn here. What did you think of it, Mister Wynn?

DOUGIE
I think it's awesome! There's no way those idiots in the Starlight Kingdom will be able to do anything about it. You're finally going to win, Commander!

NIGHTSHADE
(putting his arm around a beaming DOUGIE)
Do you see why I LOVE my new apprentice, Sikko?

SIKKO
(through gritted teeth)
Yes… I'm sure he'll prove very "useful," Commander.

NIGHTSHADE
Do you have news for me, my "faithful" lieutenants?

MALICE
We have a visitor.

NIGHTSHADE
Oh? Who is that?

SIKKO
A visitor from the Starlight Kingdom.

NIGHTSHADE
WHAT?!? And you just let the visitor in?!?

MALICE
This one seems to have… information… that would prove quite helpful to you, Commander.

NIGHTSHADE
Really? Hmmm… show the visitor in.

MALICE
MINIONS! Bring the visitor in!

(MINIONS bring the VISITOR [wearing a hooded robe] on stage.)

NIGHTSHADE
Obviously the information you have for me is quite important, or you would be DISINTEGRATED already. Who are you?

(The robed figure pulls down the hood to reveal that it is JEEPERS!)

NIGHTSHADE
You? I know you. You are the "clown" of the Starlight Kingdom. What information could you have that would possibly be useful to me?

JEEPERS
Jeepers! That's right… I'm a "clown," all right. Everybody just laughs at old Jeepers. But once… once I was second in command of the Starlight Kingdom! I was a Mythmaker! Her Majesty entrusted me with EVERYTHING… and then that meddling girl Starlight came along and became the new Mythmaker and changed everything! Now there are changes almost every day in the Starlight Kingdom… JEEPERS! I can't stand it! I just want things to be how they were before!

NIGHTSHADE
And so… you come to ME?

JEEPERS
Jeepers! I… I didn't know who else to turn to.

NIGHTSHADE
You made the right choice, Jeepers. I know that all these years I have been described as "evil" to you denizens of the Starlight Kingdom. But is it really so "evil," Jeepers, to want ORDER in this chaotic world?

JEEPERS
Jeepers! No… no it's not. And lately I've often thought that maybe you're not as EVIL as they said you were. Maybe you're just "misunderstood." After all, order IS good.

NIGHTSHADE
Of course it is! And that's all I've ever wanted, Jeepers… ORDER. Under the rule of one man… ME. Under Queen Star's rule… and her meddling daughter "the Mythmaker"… look what has happened. CHAOS! You can't tell what the Starlight Kingdom looks like from one day to the next. Is that any way to live, Jeepers?

JEEPERS
Jeepers! No… no, it's not. Would… would I get to help be in charge?

NIGHTSHADE
Of course! I can't be EVERYWHERE, Jeepers. I need my "lieutenants" to help me keep things in order. So… they wouldn't laugh at you anymore, Jeepers. You would no longer be a "clown" to them. You would have RESPECT.

JEEPERS
Jeepers! That… that would be good. To not be laughed at… to be RESPECTED again.

NIGHTSHADE
So… will you help me restore ORDER to ModMyth, LIEUTENANT Jeepers?

MALICE
Commander, I must protest! First this boy… and now this PATHETIC mangy old feline? How is this supposed to help us conquer the Starlight Kingdom?

SIKKO
I agree! You have lost your mind, Commander! You are not fit to lead!
(looking around)
I call for a vote of NO CONFIDENCE!

NIGHTSHADE
Yessss… a vote. All those in favor of ruling ALL of ModMyth… side with ME. All those in favor of losing their very existence… side with these TRAITORS!

(All of the MINIONS except SIKKO and MALICE quickly step to NIGHTSHADE's side.)

NIGHTSHADE
Excellent!
(pointing to SIKKO and MALICE)
Minions… SEIZE THEM!

(The MINIONS seize SIKKO and MALICE.)

NIGHTSHADE
(pointing to the MIND DRAINER MACHINE that's on stage)
Put them in the MIND DRAINER!

(The MINIONS force SIKKO and MALICE into the MIND DRAINER MACHINE.)

MALICE
What… what are you doing? Unhand me!

SIKKO
Let me go!

NIGHTSHADE
Allow me finally to show you the mechanism of my "master plan," Ma-LEESE and Sikko. Behold the "mind drainer"! Once it's activated, it will remove all your imagination… all your will… and you will be totally subservient… to ME.

SIKKO
No! Commander… it was Malice! It was all her idea! I am your faithful servant!

MALICE
Shut up, Sikko, you pathetic worm! Commander… please… don't do this!

NIGHTSHADE
It is far too late for "mercy," my dear Countess. I long suspected your treachery. Mister Wynn's recent testimony only confirmed it. But no matter. There will be no more treachery after you have no minds of your own!

SIKKO AND MALICE
No! Please! Don't! (Etc.)

(NIGHTSHADE "activates" the MIND DRAINER as FX: weird sound effects are heard. SIKKO and MALICE immediately cease their struggles.)

NIGHTSHADE
Now. Who do you serve?

SIKKO AND MALICE
(no emotion)
We… serve… Nightshade.

NIGHTSHADE
Excellent! A perfect test, don't you think, Mister Wynn?

DOUGIE
It worked just like you said it would, Commander!

NIGHTSHADE
Lost Children! Take Sikko and Malice away and have them fitted for war.

(The MINIONS that aren't FURIES take SIKKO and MALICE offstage.)

NIGHTSHADE
Furies… I know your loyalties lied with Malice. But you now have a choice as well. Either swear allegiance to me… or suffer her fate!

(Pause as the FURIES look at each other.)

ALECTO
(finally)
All hail Commander Nightshade!

MEGAERA
The Furies are at your command!

TISIPHONE
You are the coolest, yes it's true! Without Commander Nightshade, we all would be blue!

NIGHTSHADE
(turning to JEEPERS)
And now. My "dear friend," Jeepers. It is time for your INFORMATION, if you please.

JEEPERS
(backing away)
Jeepers! No! You're… you're a monster!

NIGHTSHADE
No… I'm just "misunderstood." FURIES!

(The FURIES grab JEEPERS and put JEEPERS in the MIND DRAINER.)

JEEPERS
Jeepers! No! Please! Let me go!

NIGHTSHADE
I WILL let you go, "Lieutenant" Jeepers, and you will be the one to lead my forces into final battle against the Starlight Kingdom! You will certainly be RESPECTED then!

JEEPERS
No! I won't do it! Let me go!

(NIGHTSHADE activates the MIND DRAINER. JEEPERS immediately stops struggling.)

JEEPERS
Let me… go.

NIGHTSHADE
Now, "Lieutenant" Jeepers. WHAT is the code to enter the Starlight Kingdom?

JEEPERS
(slowly)
"Heart… mind… imagination… hope… and faith."

NIGHTSHADE
Excellent! And can ANYONE enter this code to be admitted?

JEEPERS
No. Has to be… a citizen… of the Starlight Kingdom.

NIGHTSHADE
Then even MORE reason to have you lead my forces, my dear new LIEUTENANT!
(to FURIES)
Take this pathetic cat away to be fitted for war!

(The FURIES take JEEPERS away.)

NIGHTSHADE

Hmmm… two tried to betray me. One betrayed the forces of the Starlight Kingdom. Supposedly, there must always be a BALANCE in ModMyth. If so, I wonder who the other TRAITOR will be in their forces?

DOUGIE

Ha! I knew the mind drainers would work on those idiots Sikko and Malice, but I didn't know if they would work on those Starlight Kingdom freaks! I guess they do.

NIGHTSHADE

Well… it worked on Jeepers, but it won't work on the other citizens of the Starlight Kingdom.

DOUGIE

What? But then why…

NIGHTSHADE

It won't work on them YET. It worked on Jeepers because he had no faith… no hope. In order for the mind drainers to work on the people of the Starlight Kingdom, I must first destroy their FAITH… their HOPE… and then… THEN I will destroy their HEARTS, MINDS, and IMAGINATION!

(NIGHTSHADE laughs malevolently but then weird sound effects and flashes of light occur. GARDNER SCHWARTZ, an older man, enters.)

GARDNER SCHWARTZ

Yes! It worked! They all called me crazy, but I've crossed over to the other side! Hee hee!

NIGHTSHADE

Who… are you?

SCHWARTZ

(trying to shake NIGHTSHADE's hand)

Commander Nightshade! This is unbelievable! I'm Gardner Schwartz, your CREATOR!

NIGHTSHADE

My WHAT?!?

SCHWARTZ
Your creator! I'm a comic book writer. That's where I first created you. In the "G. I. Maxx" comic book. Then they made the TV show from the comic book. I was a writer on that too. I wanted to have you and your forces win, but the people in charge said that villains can NEVER win! That there can be a "balance", but that "good" always has to win! Shortsighted fools! But then one day… ONE DAY… it suddenly became so CLEAR to me! I discovered that you and the others I "created" not only "existed" in our world in comic book or animated form… but for REAL in this OTHER world as well. THIS is where we got our INSPIRATION to create you in the first place. Well, they all called me crazy, but after years of searching, I finally found a way to communicate with this world… with ModMyth! To communicate with YOU! I searched for years to find a way here. I heard rumors and followed a lot of leads. It all seemed to lead to one place… this elementary school. RYDER. And then today I was driving by that school, and I saw a kid dive into a bush with purple flowers. And he didn't come out! I knew that had to be the way in!

NIGHTSHADE
You are…

SCHWARTZ
I'm the one who's been communicating with you! I'm the one who told you who you really are! And I'm the one who…

NIGHTSHADE
Told me how to make the ERASING glove. Yes. This is… unexpected.

SCHWARTZ
You're telling me! But now I've crossed over! Now I can help you fulfill your destiny! OUR destiny! I can finally help you beat the forces of good!

NIGHTSHADE
Yes… I believe you can. Why don't we shake on it?

SCHWARTZ
You got it! Oh, this is so AWESOME… to finally meet my CREATION… what a THRILL!

(SCHWARTZ shakes hands with NIGHTSHADE, not noticing that NIGHTSHADE now has the "erasing" glove he mentioned on it. The LIGHTS go off as weird sound effects are heard, followed by the screams of SCHWARTZ. When the LIGHTS go back up, SCHWARTZ is gone!)

NIGHTSHADE
(walking around the spot where SCHWARTZ was)
Hmmm… interesting. I didn't know if the glove would work on "otherworlders" or not. I guess it does.

DOUGIE
You disintegrated him?

NIGHTSHADE
I ERASED him, Mister Wynn. There's a difference.

DOUGIE
You ERASED your creator?

NIGHTSHADE
I HAVE NO CREATOR, Mister Wynn. I simply am who I am. Whether I inspired that elderly idiot to think he "created" me is not important. What IS important is that I now possess the means to FINALLY accomplish my goals. To conquer ModMyth… and ERASE all those who oppose me! Now come, Mister Wynn. We go to WAR!

CURTAIN

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

SCENE 1

AT RISE: (The Starlight Kingdom… is under attack! Intense music plays in the background.)

ANNOUNCER
(off)
The Starlight Kingdom is under attack! The mind-controlled Jeepers allowed the evil forces of Commander Nightshade to penetrate the defenses of the Starlight Kingdom, and with the help of his minions and robot army, Commander Nightshade has beaten the warriors of the Starlight Kingdom back to the throne of Queen Star herself! The Starlight Kingdom… seems to be DOOMED!

(SNARKS, MU SHU, EAGLE FEATHER, MASKED MARSHAL, DAVEY BOWEN, WREX, QUEEN STAR, PRINCESS STARLIGHT, and DANNY TROOPER enter, fighting the MINIONS of NIGHTSHADE – including the "reincorporated" WULF and the now "zombified" JEEPERS, SIKKO, and MALICE.)

BOWEN
There are too many of 'em! Fall back, fall back!

(DOUGIE WYNN sneaks on stage and pushes some rubble over on to DANNY, EAGLE FEATHER, and WREX THE WONDER DOG. DOUGIE laughs!)

STARLIGHT
DANNY!

MASKED MARSHAL
EAGLE FEATHER!

BOWEN
WREX!

(As he is distracted, BOWEN is stabbed by one of the MINIONS!)

BOWEN
AGH!

QUEEN STAR

DAVEY!

(PRINCESS VIPER steps forward and holds a blade to QUEEN STAR's throat.)

STARLIGHT

Mother!

VIPER

(cruelly)
Hello, mother… missss me?
(shouting)
EVERYONE! DROP YOUR WEAPONSSS… OR QUEEN SSSTAR IS FINISHED!

BOWEN

Everybody… drop your weapons!

(The forces of the Starlight Kingdom drop their weapons. COMMANDER NIGHTSHADE triumphantly enters to survey the scene.)

NIGHTSHADE

Ah… that was much easier than I thought. Now, despite what you all think of me, I am indeed a FAIR man. So, I will give the Starlight Kingdom a "fair" chance. You choose a "champion," and I will face him… her… them… WHOMEVER… in single combat. If the "champion" wins, my forces will leave the Starlight Kingdom for good and never return.

DOUGIE

What? But why…

NIGHTSHADE

SILENCE, MISTER WYNN! However, if I win, I become the ruler of not only the Darklands but also The Camps AND the Starlight Kingdom. Essentially all of ModMyth. Or… I can just have Viper do away with the Queen right now… and I win ANYWAY. What do you say?

QUEEN STAR

Do… as he says.

(The STARLIGHT KINGDOM citizens confer amongst themselves.)

ARTY SNARK
Who will we pick? It can't be one of us!

NATURE SNARK
We can't snark him!

(MU SHU mutters, grunts, and oinks.)

BOOKWORM SNARK
No, Mu Shu. It can't be you either. You'd be totally in the snark against Nightshade!

STARLIGHT
I'll do it!

QUEEN STAR
No! I forbid it!

GIZMO SNARK
Then who?

(The STARLIGHT KINGDOM forces turn to look at the MASKED MARSHAL, who backs away.)

NATURE SNARK
It has to be the Masked Marshal! He has to snark up to the snark!

STARLIGHT KINGDOM FORCES
Yes… it has to be… he's the only choice… (Etc.)

MASKED MARSHAL
I… I…
(he holds his knee, pretending to be hurt)
Agh! I hurt my knee! I can't do it!

BOWEN
(rising, still obviously hurt)
It'll be me. There's… no other choice.

NIGHTSHADE
So be it. The final battle for ModMyth begins! I've waited a long time for this, Bowen.

(BOWEN and NIGHTSHADE battle, one on one, with the rest of the people on stage watching, unable to interfere as the forces of NIGHTSHADE hold them back. In his injured state, BOWEN is quickly overwhelmed by NIGHTSHADE but then somehow triumphantly fights back, battering NIGHTSHADE to the ground!)

NIGHTSHADE
(feigning weakness)
Enough! Mercy, Bowen! Mercy! You are too strong for me to overcome!

BOWEN
Heh… don't ever underestimate a Kentuckian, Nightshade.

NIGHTSHADE
(extending his hand)
Please… please help me up… I am at your mercy.

BOWEN
Come on now, Nightshade… yore embarassin' yerself. Come on…

(BOWEN goes to help him up but he grabs the hand with the "erasing glove" on it. BOWEN screams as NIGHTSHADE laughs malevolently. The lights go down, and when they come back up again, BOWEN is gone! The STARLIGHT KINGDOM forces gasp. The MASKED MARSHAL hangs his head in shame.)

NIGHTSHADE
(standing)
A pity… I had expected better of you, Bowen.
(to all)
I am victorious! ModMyth is mine! Hope and faith are DESTROYED!
(motioning to his minions)
Take them away!

(NIGHTSHADE's minions take the now defeated citizens of the STARLIGHT KINGDOM away. MASKED MARSHAL remains kneeling on the ground.)

WULF
Grrr… what about the Masked Marshal, Commander?

NIGHTSHADE
Leave that pathetic coward behind. He's not even fit to serve me.

(NIGHTSHADE exits, followed by WULF. DOUGIE stands over the fallen DANNY.)

DOUGIE
(sadistically)
I told you I would make you pay, Trooper. I TOLD YOU.

NIGHTSHADE
(off)
Come along, Mister Wynn!

DOUGIE
Coming, Commander!

(DOUGIE exits. DANNY, EAGLE FEATHER, and WREX slowly recover and climb out of the rubble. MASKED MARSHAL is weeping. WREX tries to comfort him.)

DANNY
Uhhh… what happened?

EAGLE FEATHER
Feels like I was RUN OVER by a whole HERD of tatanka.

DANNY
Where is everybody?

EAGLE FEATHER
(putting a hand on MASKED MARSHAL'S shoulder)
Tatanka… what is wrong?

MASKED MARSHAL
I'm… I'm a coward! I chickened out AGAIN! I let them win! And now… now the Starlight Kingdom is destroyed… everybody's been taken to the Darklands… and my best friend Davey Bowen is gone forever! All because of ME.

(MASKED MARSHAL takes his mask off.)

MASKED MARSHAL
I don't deserve to wear this anymore. I don't deserve to be called a hero.
(weeps again)

DANNY
(after a moment)
Listen, Masked Marshal. I know what it's like to be scared. Sometimes I'm brave… sometimes I'm not. Like with Dougie… one day I stood up to him… another day I tried to run. My dad… my dad wrote me a letter once that said that not even he was brave all the time. That sometimes even HE felt like a coward. But he said that it's not just one single thing that makes you who you are as a person… it's what you do over a long period of time… your entire life… that shows the person that you are.

MASKED MARSHAL
Your father sounds like a great man, Danny.

DANNY
He was.

EAGLE FEATHER
Perhaps you should say your credo for inspiration, Tatanka.

MASKED MARSHAL
It's been so long… I don't even remember.

EAGLE FEATHER
Then I will say it with you. I believe… that you must always be true to your friends.

MASKED MARSHAL
That… that everyone is created equal… and that everyone has the power to make this world better.

EAGLE FEATHER
In being prepared to fight the forces of evil… physically, mentally, and morally.

MASKED MARSHAL
(rising)
That I should do the best with what I have.

EAGLE FEATHER
That all must do what is right for the greater good.

MASKED MARSHAL
That all things change but the truth, and that truth lives on forever.
(standing tall, putting his mask back on)
For my land and my friends… THE MASKED MARSHAL WILL RIDE AGAIN!

(FX: The MASKED MARSHAL's theme plays triumphantly.)

MASKED MARSHAL
Come on… we've got a Kingdom to save and a friend to AVENGE! Eagle Feather, get the horses!

(EAGLE FEATHER leaves the stage and returns with three hobby horses. She hands one to DANNY and the MARSHAL and takes one herself.)

DANNY
(in disbelief)
We're going to get to the Darklands on TOY HORSES?

MASKED MARSHAL
(laughing)
Come on, Danny… you're in the Starlight Kingdom! These aren't TOY horses… they're ROCKET POWERED by the imagination! PALLADIUM!

EAGLE FEATHER
NEKTOSHA!

MASKED MARSHAL/EAGLE FEATHER
INTO THE FRAY!

(FX: Rocket engine sounds as MARSHAL and EAGLE FEATHER run off stage. WREX jumps or holds on to DANNY's back.)

DANNY
(looking down at the horse, still not believing)
Into the… fray?

(FX: Rocket sound as DANNY [with WREX] is pulled off stage.)

DANNY
(as he leaves)
WHOAAAA!

(LIGHTS down.)

SCENE 2

AT RISE: (We are back in the lair of NIGHTSHADE in the DARKLANDS. The SNARKS have been enslaved by the MIND DRAINER and are doing menial functions for the FURIES. MU SHU is in a cage, being poked at by VIPER, SURGE, BUGG, WULF, and HYENA. The enslaved MALICE and SIKKO stand in the background. NIGHTSHADE sits in his throne with DOUGIE on his right and the enslaved JEEPERS on his left. Only QUEEN STAR and PRINCESS STARLIGHT remain unenslaved, but they are both strapped into the MIND DRAINER machine.)

ALECTO
(using one of the SNARKS as a footstool)
Ahhh… I tell you, Furies… this is the life!

MEGAERA
(taking a drink from a tray held by a SNARK)
I agree, Alecto… these little vermin make excellent servants!

TISIPHONE
With Countess Malice we may have had it made, but no one's evil genius compares to Nightshade!

(TISIPHONE clinks drinks with ALECTO.)

NIGHTSHADE
(standing and approaching QUEEN STAR)
To coin a phrase: "Resistance is futile," my dear Queen Star. Soon your hope will be gone, and your minds will be drained. With that, total dominance of ModMyth will be MINE!

QUEEN STAR
(fighting the machine)
There is still Eagle Feather… Wrex… Danny Trooper…

DOUGIE
No way! I took out all three of those losers!

QUEEN STAR
So long as the… Masked Marshal… remains… there is still… HOPE.

NIGHTSHADE
(laughing)
Putting your hope in a COWARD? So be it. At least your daughter seems to be "getting the point," Your Majesty.

QUEEN STAR
No! Fight the machine, daughter… fight it!

PRINCESS STARLIGHT
(listlessly)
What's the point? No hope anyway… might as well give up.

NIGHTSHADE
You see? SHE has the proper perspective. Her final days will be useful ones… serving ME.

MASKED MARSHAL
(off)
Not if we can help it, Nightshade!

NIGHTSHADE
WHAT?!?

(MASKED MARSHAL, EAGLE FEATHER, DANNY TROOPER, and WREX enter.)

MASKED MARSHAL
We are here to AVENGE Davey Bowen and put you down, Commander Nightshade!

NIGHTSHADE
Pathetic. You will fall just like the rest. MINIONS… destroy them!

(MU SHU grunts loudly and then breaks free from the cage!)

SURGE
Look out! He's gone HOG WILD!

(MU SHU indeed goes "HOG WILD" and chases HYENA, SURGE, WULF, and BUGG offstage. THE FURIES and VIPER attack MASKED MARSHAL, EAGLE FEATHER, and WREX. DOUGIE attacks DANNY from behind, holding the KILL-O-ZAP gun!)

DOUGIE
See this, Trooper? It's a disintegration gun. I'm going to disintegrate YOU!

(DOUGIE laughs sadistically but DANNY bops him in the nose! DOUGIE screams in pain. DOUGIE goes after DANNY. However, EAGLE FEATHER bonks DOUGIE with her tomahawk and the bully goes down!)

DANNY
Thanks, Eagle Feather!

EAGLE FEATHER
No problem, Danny, I… AIEEE!

(NIGHTSHADE grabs EAGLE FEATHER from behind!)

NIGHTSHADE
I'm going to end this little rebellion RIGHT NOW! Prepare to be ERASED, Eagle Feather!

MASKED MARSHAL
No!

(MASKED MARSHAL pushes EAGLE FEATHER out of the way, only to be touched by the "erasing glove" himself. The LIGHTS go down, and when they come back up, the MASKED MARSHAL is gone!)

EAGLE FEATHER
No! Tatanka!

NIGHTSHADE
(shaking his hand with the erasing glove)
Hmmm… glove needs a moment to recharge. No matter, my minions will destroy you anyway! Minions… GET HER!

(NIGHTSHADE's MINIONS attack EAGLE FEATHER, WREX, and MU SHU.)

NIGHTSHADE
This is so entertaining… but I need more! Sikko! Malice! Dance for me, flunkeys!

(SIKKO and MALICE dance in an awkward waltz across the stage. NIGHTSHADE watches with amusement. While he does that, DANNY tries to free the QUEEN and the PRINCESS.)

DANNY
I can't break these restraints, Your Majesty!

QUEEN STAR
Free my daughter first, Danny… she's almost lost to the mind drainer!

DANNY
Janet, come on… fight it!

STARLIGHT
Why? No hope… no hope.

DANNY
No! There's always hope! I used to think there wasn't, but then I met you! You gave me hope! Come on! Fight it!

STARLIGHT
(coming around)
Dan… Danny?

DANNY
Yeah! Come on, fight it! I'll break you out of this!
(frantically tearing at the restraints)
You gotta have faith… and hope… AHHH!

NIGHTSHADE
(grabbing DANNY from behind)
Touching. But I'm recharged, Danny… I've already erased one "Otherworlder"… now it's YOUR turn!

STARLIGHT
No! Danny!

(She closes her eyes and concentrates. FX: Magical sound effect is heard.)

STARLIGHT
BY THE POWER OF THE MYTHMAKER… I SUMMON DANNY'S GREATEST HERO!

(ROBERT TROOPER enters, dressed in combat fatigues.)

ROBERT TROOPER
Put… the boy… down.

NIGHTSHADE
What? Who… are you?

ROBERT
Lieutenant Robert Trooper, United States Armed Forces. Or, if you prefer, how about the name of your oldest enemy?

NIGHTSHADE
G. I. MAXX?!?

ROBERT
The same. Or at least that's who I can be now. You erased Davey Bowen AND Masked Marshal, Nightshade… that means other heroes have to come and take their place. Because in ModMyth… there must always be a balance.

NIGHTSHADE
No! I do not accept the ravings of some "otherworlder" lunatic old man! "Good" will NOT always triumph! And there does NOT have to be a "balance"! There needs to be ORDER! And there will be ORDER under ME… EMPEROR NIGHTSHADE!

(NIGHTSHADE and ROBERT TROOPER battle as DANNY finally frees QUEEN STAR and STARLIGHT. NIGHTSHADE gains the upper hand and brandishes the "erasing glove.")

NIGHTSHADE
I destroyed you before, "G. I. Maxx," and now I will ERASE you from existence!

ROBERT TROOPER
(struggling)
Not… going to… happen. You erased two heroes… I arrived… now YOU… are going to DISAPPEAR!

(ROBERT makes NIGHTSHADE touch himself with the erasing glove. NIGHTSHADE screams, the LIGHTS go down, and when they come back up NIGHTSHADE is gone!)

ROBERT TROOPER
(recovering)
You think you're tough, Nightshade? Try fighting with the warriors of Valhalla some time.

DANNY
Dad!

(DANNY rushes to his father and they embrace. EAGLE FEATHER and WREX enter. SNARKS and others appear to be coming back to normal, free from the MIND DRAINER. The FURIES and VIPER are quickly captured by the SNARKS. SIKKO and MALICE enter.)

SIKKO
Ugh… felt like I had bugs crawling around in my brain! What happened?

(SNARKS make an aggressive pose against SIKKO and MALICE.)

NATURE SNARK
Don't move a Snark!

MALICE
(looking around, then)
Let's get out of here!

(SIKKO and MALICE flee the stage.)

DANNY
Dad! I thought you were…

ROBERT
I am, Danny. At least in the "otherworld." But before the war, I'd been coming here to ModMyth for a long time. Since I was your age, in fact. And when I died in the "otherworld," I came here to ModMyth… for good.

DANNY
Why didn't you ever tell us about this place?

ROBERT
I couldn't ever tell your mom or you about ModMyth because you would have thought I was crazy. Rightly so, maybe. But I always talked to your mom about where I grew up… where I went to school. Ryder Elementary. How wonderful it was. So, I had a good feeling that if something happened to me in the "otherworld," she might move you guys near there, and you'd have a chance to discover ModMyth for yourself.

JEEPERS
(to QUEEN STAR)
Jeepers! Your Majesty… I am so ashamed. I do not deserve to be part of the Starlight Kingdom anymore.

QUEEN STAR
Jeepers, envy and hatred were your undoing. However, I will not repay them with spite and contempt… but instead forgiveness and welcoming.

(QUEEN STAR and JEEPERS embrace.)

JEEPERS
Jeepers! Thank you, your majesty! I will never betray you again!

VIPER
(mockingly)
Oh, how touching! It makes me sssick!

QUEEN STAR
My daughter… is there nothing that can heal your warped mind?

VIPER
You made your choice with little missss goody two ssshoes over there! I remain loyal to the Darklands!

QUEEN STAR
(sighing)
Please take her away for rehabilitation.

BOOKWORM SNARK
Your majesty… are you sure? The girl seems quite incorrigible.

QUEEN STAR
I believe we can still rehabilitate her, loyal Bookworm. There is always hope.

ALECTO
What about us?

MEGAERA
If you think we'll serve you, you've got another think coming!

GIZMO SNARK
You'll have time to think about that in the Starlight Prison! I'll just put you in the invisible restraints I created.
(looks around)
If… I can find them…

TISIPHONE
(wailing)
I can't believe we're going to jail! I always thought we could not fail!

(The FURIES are lead off stage by GIZMO.)

DANNY
Dad… can I stay here with you?

ROBERT TROOPER
No, son. Living "otherworlders" who stay here too long fade away. But you can visit. And there ARE other worlds here too, Danny. You know how I liked to read you those books about Greek and Norse mythology when you were a kid?

DANNY
Yeah.

ROBERT
Well, you can reach all of those worlds from here too! I've even fought alongside Thor against the frost giants and Loki. Good man, that Thor… bit of a drinker and a hothead, but a good man. You'll meet them all, Danny. I'll introduce them all to you. After all, this is where the heroes of the Otherworld can continue to fight against the forces of evil… and I aim to help them do just that!

BOOKWORM SNARK
Yes. What Commander Nightshade failed to understand is that the battle between good and evil is a CONSTANT struggle.

ARTY SNARK
Evil may seem to overcome good sometimes, and it may seem like all is lost…

NATURE SNARK
But with faith, hope, heart, mind, and imagination, the forces of good will always rally to defeat the evil!

QUEEN STAR
But without heroes like your father, Danny, or my daughter, Starlight, evil might well overrun us, and that would be disastrous not only for ModMyth but your world as well.

(EAGLE FEATHER is weeping.)

ARTY SNARK
Are you all right, Eagle Feather?

EAGLE FEATHER
I can't believe my best friend Tatanka is gone!
(to STARLIGHT)
MythMaker… can't you bring him back?

STARLIGHT
(turning to QUEEN STAR)
Mother?

QUEEN STAR
(sadly)
I'm afraid not, my daughter. The erasing glove has unfortunately put the myth of him even out of our reach. He sacrificed himself for you, Eagle Feather, and proved himself the hero we always knew he could be. He may be gone, but we will remember him always. Won't we, Danny?

DANNY
Huh? Well, sure… I guess. I'll definitely remember him!

ROBERT TROOPER
I'm sure you will, Danny. After all, I'm the one who told Princess Starlight, the MythMaker, all about Davey Bowen and the Masked Marshal, and she brought the MYTHS of them to the Starlight Kingdom to defend the people when I was fighting evil in other worlds.

STARLIGHT
Your dad was a great inspiration to me, Danny. And I didn't even know he was your dad!

ROBERT TROOPER
Sorry about that, Princess. I couldn't risk you knowing until I knew that Danny was ready to cross over here.

DANNY
Why did you pick Davey Bowen and the Masked Marshal to defend the Starlight Kingdom, Dad?

ROBERT TROOPER
Well, MY dad… your grandpa… was inspired by "characters" like Davey and the Marshal… and when he told me about them, I was inspired. And now because of what you've seen, you can be inspired too.

DANNY
And inspired by you, Dad!

ROBERT
(smiling, tousling Danny's hair)
And inspired by me, champ. I'm glad of that.

(DANNY suddenly holds his stomach in pain.)

DANNY
I… I don't feel so good.

(QUEEN STAR and STARLIGHT look at each other knowingly.)

QUEEN STAR
Danny, I'm afraid it's time for you to go back to your own world… before you fade away.

DANNY
But I don't want to leave! Queen Star, isn't there some way I could stay longer?

STARLIGHT
(taking Danny's hand)
Danny. I know how hard it is… to come here and then have to go back. And I know that my time on the Otherworld will soon be over… and I will be back here to rule ModMyth with my mother for all time. But your time on the Otherworld isn't up yet, Danny. We don't want you to fade away… not when there are still people in the Otherworld that need you.

QUEEN STAR
But you can still come back. Now that you know how to get here, you can come for a visit any time you see the bush with purple flowers glowing. That means it will be safe for you to return… for a little while again. And when you're here, well, ModMyth can always use a brave boy like you to help us when there is a need.

(THE BUSH WITH PURPLE FLOWERS is brought on stage.)

DANNY
I guess it's time for me to go…
(hugs his father)
Goodbye, Dad.

ROBERT TROOPER
Goodbye, champ. You come back and see me whenever that bush with purple flowers glows, you hear? And tell your mom not to worry. Even though I miss her a lot… I'm happy. And some day, I'll see her again.
(smiles)
Knowing your mom, she'll probably be here, fighting the forces of evil right beside me!

DANNY
Goodbye, Janet.
(pause)
See you at school tomorrow?

STARLIGHT
Yep, I'll be back.
(smiling)
And now we'll have another secret to keep together, won't we?

DANNY
(bowing to QUEEN STAR)
Your Majesty.

QUEEN STAR
(bowing to him)
Goodbye, Danny. I'm happy to know that everything my daughter said about you was true.

DANNY
(waving as he enters the bush)
Goodbye, everyone!

SNARKS/JEEPERS
Goodbye! Farewell! Snark the day! (Etc.)

(MU SHU grunts and oinks pleasantly, waving to DANNY. WREX barks cheerfully. DANNY exits through the bush.)

DOUGIE
(waking up)
What the? Where am I… where's Commander Nightshade? I…

(MU SHU gets in DOUGIE's face and oinks and squeals loudly, threatening him with martial arts moves. DOUGIE screams and dives into the purple bush and off stage! All the forces of good left on stage laugh.)

BOOKWORM SNARK
What a Snark!

STARLIGHT
I don't think old Dougie will be bothering anybody again any time soon.

ROBERT
(grinning)
My son will make sure of that.

QUEEN STAR
Now… let us all feast in triumph… as we are victorious again over the forces of evil!

(EVERYONE exits, with the forces of good cheering. Triumphant music plays as the LIGHTS fade.)

SCENE 3

AT RISE: (A darkened stage. The MASKED MARSHAL enters, spotlighted, with his mask off.)

MASKED MARSHAL
(to audience)
Now, hopefully I didn't lie to you, folks, because that sure seemed like an exciting story to me. Couple of sad parts, sure, but most good stories have happy AND sad parts. And anyway, it had a happy ending. Now, I told you that I had a special interest in that boy Danny Trooper, and it's not just because he helped save ModMyth that one time. You see, Danny Trooper did come back to ModMyth many times and had many other adventures. But in the Otherworld, he eventually became a defender of the law. Not surprising, considering who his heroes were. Well, I won't mince words, folks. Something bad happened to him on the job, and Danny found himself in ModMyth for good.

(MASKED MARSHAL puts his mask back on.)

MASKED MARSHAL
At that point, Queen Star and Princess Starlight gave him the chance to pick the hero he wanted to be… just like his dad got to pick the hero he wanted to be when HE came to ModMyth for good. Danny chose to be a man who once taught him the true meaning of bravery and sacrifice. He chose to be one of the heroes of his grandfather and his father. He chose to replace a hero that was once "erased," but who would now live again… and hopefully forever… because Danny Trooper… well… I chose to be the NEW Masked Marshal.

(MASKED MARSHAL has a hobby horse thrown to him. He puts it between his legs. EAGLE FEATHER enters on a hobby horse as well to join him.)

MASKED MARSHAL
Because all things change but the truth.

EAGLE FEATHER
And that truth lives on forever.

MASKED MARSHAL
For our land and our friends… THE MASKED MARSHAL…

EAGLE FEATHER
AND EAGLE FEATHER!

MASKED MARSHAL AND EAGLE FEATHER
WILL RIDE AGAIN!

MASKED MARSHAL
PALLADIUM!

EAGLE FEATHER
NEKTOSHA!

MARSHAL/EAGLE FEATHER
INTO THE FRAY!

(MASKED MARSHAL's theme plays as he and EAGLE FEATHER "ride" off the stage. The music swells.)

CURTAIN