

TROUBLE IN TOYLAND

A 20-minute Play

by

Jeff Gallagher

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

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Characters:

MUM
JOHNNY

THE TIN SOLDIER }
THE TEDDY BEAR } (*old toys*)
THE RAG DOLL }
THE JACK IN THE BOX }

PANDEMONSTROTECHNICON }
AUTODISCONNECTICON }
THE SPACE MINCHER } (*new toys*)
MEGACYNTHIA }

THE FAIRY TOYMOTHER

THE EXTERMOBOT

MUM *and* JOHNNY *are humans.*

*All the other characters are toys,
but the EXTERMOBOT is life-size.*

PRODUCTION NOTES:

All the toy roles in this play are cameos - there isn't a lot to do, but what there is should be played for all it's worth.

Mum is rather weak-willed; not many kids could be as petulant as Johnny and get away with it.

The Tin Soldier is rather a sad character, like an old man who misses 'the good old days'.

The Teddy Bear is kind and gentle, if a little slow-witted.

The Rag Doll would make a devoted house-wife, though she's not exactly what you would call a 'modern woman'!

Jack in the box is a 'cheeky chappie' who likes to have the last word.
The characters of the new toys are fairly obvious.

The Space Muncher's movements around the stage should imitate the way a 'Pac-Man' moves around a computer screen.

For *Megacynthia*, you might like to assume the character of one of those wicked females in a James Bond movie: Grace Jones, for instance.

The two *Androids* are based loosely on Rambo and an intellectual Dalek.

The Fairy Toymother has stepped straight out of a pantomime.

Costumes:

Mum: dull everyday dress.

Johnny: The latest flash gear for spoiled kids.

Tin Soldier: old-fashioned (e.g. red Napoleonic) soldier's uniform; black riding boots

Teddy Bear: self-explanatory.

Rag Doll: pigtails, red patches on cheeks, cotton frock, white socks, dancing pumps/sandals.

Jack in the box: loud suit, silly wig, clown's shoes.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: U.S. Army Uniform or Action Man Outfit.

Autodisconnecticon: Darth Vader Outfit; or you could dress him as a conventional robot, provided he looks different from Space Muncher and Extermobot.

Space Muncher: cardboard boxes covered in tin-foil.

Megacynthia: she should be attractive in a very blatant way. Try a short skirt, fishnet tights, high heels, loads of make-up, long curly wig. The walk is also important!

Fairy Toymother: an old wedding dress (if you can scrounge one!) Otherwise crepe attached to a plain cotton dress. Dainty shoes.

The Extermobot: It seems a pity to take much trouble when he is only on stage for a few moments. However, remember he is the big 'surprise' at the end, and we must make a big impression. You could make cardboard boxes as a base, and perhaps decorate them with knobs and buttons, bits of old coat hangers - anything you can get hold of! Remember, though, he must have his hands free in order to carry Mum off stage.

Props:

Johnny (end): control panel.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: machine gun and belt with bullets.

The Fairy Godmother: magic wand.

Notes on the Script:

'It is life, Jim, but not as we know it': a well-known line from 'Star Trek', and from a pop song that was a send-up of it.

'Star Trekkin' by The Firm.

Jeff Gallagher.

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(Throughout the play there is a table and chair down SL. No other scenery is required, although a black backdrop could also be used).

SCENE I

(Enter MUM and JOHNNY. JOHNNY sits at the table)

Mum: Now then, Johnny, have you written your letter yet to Santa Claus?

Johnny: Oh, come on, Mum! You don't believe in that old berk with the white beard!

Mum: Now, don't be rude, or he won't come down the chimney on Christmas Eve!

Johnny: How can he come down the chimney? We've got a gas fire.

Mum: All right, he'll come in through the back door, then.

Johnny: Huh! I'll set the dog on him if he does!

Mum: You know, you really don't deserve any Christmas presents. You're a very naughty boy.

Johnny: But, Mum, Santa Claus is so old-fashioned! All he ever brings us are board games and chocolate and monkey nuts and fruit! Doesn't he know what kids really want for Christmas? Doesn't he ever watch TV?

Mum: All right, then - what DO you want for Christmas?

Johnny: I'd like a dozen personal computers, half a dozen radio-controlled cars, some nuclear-powered skis, a submarine and a space rocket.

Mum: He's going to need a very big sack

Johnny: Yeah, well, maybe if he bought himself a juggernaut, instead of using that old sled and those stupid reindeer, he'd be able to fetch me some decent presents!

Mum: Well, anyway, you won't get anything for Christmas unless you write your letter to Santa Claus. Come on. Upstairs. Do it now. *(Exit MUM)*

Johnny: Oh, all right, then Dear Santa Claus, for Christmas I would like you to retire and draw your old-age pension. How about getting someone younger on the job with a few up-to-date ideas? *(Exit JOHNNY)*

SCENE 2

(Enter the TIN SOLDIER. He moves stiffly across the stage. He has one arm. Enter the TEDDY BEAR: large, a bit slow, but very kind)

Teddy Bear: Oh, there you are, Tommy! On parade as usual?

Tin Soldier: Got to be on your guard, mate. Guardian of the toy cupboard, that's me.

Teddy Bear: Haven't you forgotten something?

Tin Soldier: What?

Teddy Bear: Your gun, Tommy! You can't be a soldier if you haven't got your gun!

Tin Soldier: Huh! It's worn out. No use any more. Just like me Let's face it, Ted, you and me - we've had our day. We're past it.

Teddy Bear: Oh, come on, Tommy! I'm only 37 years old. And I've still got my original nose.

Tin Soldier: We've had it, though, Ted. You and me - and the others. I mean, who wants to play with a boring old tin soldier, when there's? Well, you know

Teddy Bear: oh, yes, I suppose you're right Ever since last Christmas those two children - that boy and his sister - they haven't even looked at us. Ever since Santa Claus brought them those those things!

Tin Soldier: You're right. It wasn't like this in the old days. Remember all those years ago, when their father was a boy? He used to play with us all the time. .

And remember at night, when I used to drive the steam engine, and drive round the living room on the dumper truck?

Teddy Bear: Yes, and I'd get the golliwog to push me round in the wheelbarrow, while I stuffed myself full of chocolate mice!

Tin Soldier: Yeah, those were the days *(Enter the RAG DOLL)*

Rag Doll: Has anyone seen the key to the Wendy House?

Tin Soldier: It's under the mat, Jemima. What's your problem?

Rag Doll: Well, it needs a jolly good spring-clean. The whole place looks as if a bomb's just hit it!

Teddy Bear: I know why that is. Our children have been smashing it up with their catapults!

Rag Doll: Why, that's disgraceful! They really don't deserve us! *(Enter the JACK IN THE BOX, not in the box)*

Tin Soldier: It's Jack! Hey, Jack, why aren't you back in your box?

Jack in the Box: Sabotage! That's what it is! He did it on purpose! there I was , ready for a really good spring, and what's he gone and done? Only

unscrewed my bottom, that's all! Next thing I know, he's pressed the button, the lid goes up, and I'm flying across the room - smack! Straight into the wall And that's not all. The little so-and-so's nicked me squeaker!

Tin Soldier: Crumbs! Poor old Jack!

Teddy Bear: You were lucky! He was going to throw ME on the bonfire! His Mum stopped him just in time.

Rag Doll: And I haven't had a new dress for years!

Tin Soldier: And my arm got fed to the goldfish

Rag Doll: This is terrible! What are we going to do?

Jack in the Box: We could always go on strike

Tin Soldier: No point. We've been made redundant anyway. He never plays with us now. Not since THEY arrived

Teddy Bear: Look out! They're coming! Quick! Hide!

Tin Soldier: Too late! They've seen us! *(Enter two powerful-looking battery operated androids, known as PANDEMONSTROTECHNICON and AUTODISCONNECTICON. PANDEMONSTROTECHNICON carries a machine gun and has an ample store of bullets in a belt slung across his shoulder)*

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hold it right there, or you're dead meat!

Autodisconnecticon: Attend us, O puny toylings. We are your masters.

Tin Soldier: You big bullies! I wish I had my gun with me!

Autodisconnecticon: All your weapons are useless. The toy cupboard is ours to command. You are in our power. You will obey.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: I'm Pandemonstrotechnicon. Otherwise known as Jim.

Autodisconnecticon: I am Autodisconnecticon. I am completely invincible. (Well, almost).

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Say, who are these guys anyway?

Autodisconnecticon: It is life, Jim, but not as we know it.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hey, gimme the lowdown, gooks, or I'll blow you apart.

Tin Soldier: I'm Tommy, the tin soldier.

Rag Doll: I'm Jemima, the rag doll.

Teddy Bear: I'm Teddy, the teddy bear.

Jack in the box: I'm Jack in the box. But I'm not in the box. I would like to be back in the box, because when I'm back in the box, I'm Jack in the box

Autodisconnecticon: Silence! These are outmoded toylings. They are no longer useful to the children we serve. Let us destroy them.

Tin Soldier: Wait! You can't!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Sure, why not? Hey, let's feed 'em to the Space Muncher! Hey, Munch! *(Enter the SPACE MUNCHER, a little round fellow, rather like a Pac-Man or a Space Invader)*

Space Muncher: Beep! Beep! beep!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: O.K., Munch! Time for Lunch!

Space Muncher: Beep! beep! *(the SPACE MUNCHER chases the four toys methodically round the stage. Enter MEGACYNTHIA, dressed in black, a bit like a pop star)*

Megacynthia: Hold it right there! Call him off!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hey, Munch! Take five!

Space Muncher: Beep! *(The SPACE MINCHER stands still)*

Autodisconnecticon: It is Megacynthia! She who must be obeyed!

Megacynthia: What is going on here? Who ARE all these creatures?

Autodisconnecticon: They are outmoded toylings, Megacynthia.

Megacynthia: Hmm. Let's have a look at them. You! Explain yourself!

Tin Soldier: I'm Tommy, the tin soldier. Reporting for duty, mum *(He stands to attention)* Ooh, me back

Megacynthia: Very impressive, I'm sure Why, hello there, you big hunk

Teddy Bear: Oherhello

Megacynthia: And what kind of toy are you?

Teddy Bear: I'm teddy. A teddy bear. All the children hug their teddies when they go to bed at night.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hey, this guy's a creep! Kids should be hugging their M16s at night. Like me. You never know when some gook's gonna bust his way in. . . .

Megacynthia: I think he's rather cute. Completely useless, of course - but cute

Space Muncher: Beep! beep! Beep! beep!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: What's he say?

Autodisconnecticon: The Space Muncher says it is not practical to munch the Teddy Bear toying all at once. He says we will need to store him in the freezer.

Megacynthia: Be quiet, Space Muncher!

Space Muncher: Beep!

Megacynthia: Goodness! And what on earth are you?

Jack in the box: I might ask you the same question.!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hey, you! Talk to the lady, or I'll fill you full of lead!

Jack in the box: All right! All right! Don't blow a fuse! I'm a Jack in the Box.

Megacynthia: Oh, really? And what do you do?

Jack in the box: Well, just at the moment - not much But, listen, when I'm properly screwed down in my little wooden box - here, come a bit closer, you'll love this - when I'm in my little box, and I've got my squeaker back - all you've got to do is press my little button - and then, bingo! Up I pop!

Megacynthia: I see. Then what?

Jack in the box: Then what what?

Megacynthia: Then what do you do when you've popped up out of your box?

Jack in the box: Nothing! You have to push my head back in, and close the lid.

Megacynthia: And then?

Jack in the box: Same again! Bingo! Up I pop! And scare the living daylights out of you!

Autodisconnecticon: A primitive design, O mighty Megacynthia. Intended to frighten our children and keep them occupied for a considerable length of time.

Megacynthia: I see. And does it work?

Autodisconnecticon: Negative, O mighty one. The device in question has been pulled to bits, thrown out of the window, and kicked around the window. There has even been an attempt to flush it down the lavatory.

Jack in the box: What did I tell you? Hours of harmless entertainment!

Megacynthia: Ha! When you are as frightening as Pandemonstrotechnicon and Autodisconnecticon, you may begin to serve some purpose in the toy cupboard! And what have we here?

Rag Doll: I'm Jemima, the rag doll.

Megacynthia: My dear, where DO you get your clothes from?

Rag Doll: It's that sister of his! She's not bought me anything new since she had me! I used to belong to her mum, you know.

Megacynthia: Oh, my dear! You must be simply ancient!

Rag Doll: Well, at least I don't show myself off like you do!

Megacynthia: Hmm. I'm not in the least surprised. You have nothing to show off about.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: O.K., Megacynthia! What's the news? Can we blow 'em away?

Megacynthia: I just can't believe it! These creatures are museum pieces! If we HAD a museum, they would be our prize exhibits. But, since we HAVEN'T got a museum yes, you may as well dispose of them.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Great! Go get 'em, Munch!

Space Muncher: Beep?

Autodisconnecticon: You are instructed to devour the toydings.

Space Muncher: Beep! Beep! beep!

Megacynthia: This won't take long. He can devour a whole galaxy for breakfast.
(the SPACE MUNCHER is about to devour the toys. Enter the FAIRY TOYMOTHER)

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Oh, shucks! It's the Fairy Toymother!

Space Muncher: Beep?

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hold it right there, Munch!

Fairy Toymother: Wait! We cannot have toys eating each other!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Why not?

Fairy Toymother: Well, it makes such a mess, for one thing.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: O.K. ? So what are we going to do, Fairy Toymother?

Fairy Toymother: As Fairy Toymother, I must be obeyed. I am in charge of all the toys that have ever been made - and any toy that disobeys me goes straight on the scrap heap!

All: Yes, Fairytoymother

Fairy Toymother: Very well. The old toys and the new toys cannot stop arguing - and the reason, it seems to me, is because your boy, Johnny, and his sister spend all their time playing with the new toys, and have only tried to pull the old toys to bits. In order to stop you arguing, and to make sure that all the toys are treated the same, I propose a little solution - with the help of my magic wand! *(She waves her hand over them all)* Spirits of toys upon the heap, Whether these toys be dear or cheap, Make the new toys change to old, And make the old ones fresh and bold! *(All the toys freeze)* But now it is nearly dawn - and time for all the toys to return to the toy cupboard
(Exeunt)

SCENE 3

(Enter MUM and JOHNNY)

Mum: What's the matter, Johnny? Where are all your toys?

Johnny: I'm fed up with them, Mum. They're all so boring!

Mum: What do you mean? Your toy cupboard's FULL of toys!

Johnny: Yes, I know - but none of them WORK properly! Look at that Space Muncher! He's supposed to gobble up all the aliens on the screen - instead he just jumps up and down going 'Boing! Boing!' Then I pressed the voice buttons on my two toy androids. Pandemonstrotechnicon's supposed to be a tough Rambo model - you know, blowing the heads off all the gooks. All he says now is 'Hi! I'm Pando! Give me a kiss and a cuddle!' And as for Autodisconnecticon, the conqueror of the universe - when you press HIS button, all he says is 'Sah!' and 'You 'orrible little man!' And that Megacynthis doll you bought for my sister - she's supposed to drive a fast car and go to parties. All she says now is 'Time to clean the Wendy House' Mum, none of our new toys WORK any more!

Mum: Poor Johnny! Well, why don't you play with your OLD toys?

Johnny: You what? They're just as bad!

Mum: Oh, well. It'll soon be Christmas again. Time to write another letter to Santa Claus.

Johnny: Santa Claus? Huh! He's a dead loss, he is. I'm going to write to True Life Supplies!

Mum: What's that?

Johnny: It's a toy firm over in Japan. All the kids are writing to them now. They make all the latest ultra-modern toys - and they're really cheap!

Mum: Well, I hope so, dear - we can barely afford to run five cars as it is Come on, then, I'll get you some paper (*Exeunt*)

SCENE 4

(*Enter JACK IN THE BOX and TEDDY*)

Jack in the box: Beep! Beep! Come here! I'm going to eat you!

Teddy Bear: Hey, get away from me, you crazy creep!

Tin Soldier: I am the master of the toy cupboard! You will be exterminated!
(*Enter the RAG DOLL and MEGACYNTHIA*)

Rag Doll: Really, my dear, you should try wearing rags. They really are the latest thing!

Megacynthia: Time to clean the Wendy House (*Enter the two ANDROIDS*)

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hi! I'm Pando! Give me a kiss and a cuddle!

Autodisconnecticon: Not likely! You 'orrible little man! (*Enter the SPACE MUNCHER, bouncing up and down*)

Space Muncher: Boing! Boing! Boing! Boing! (*they continue to wander round the stage in a trance, repeating the above words and actions. After a few moments, Enter the FAIRY TOYMOTHER*)

Fairy Toymother: Stop! (*Everyone stands still and is silent*) Oh, dear I can see this simply isn't going to work. Very well, as you were (*she waves her wand over them*)

Teddy Bear: Gosh, that's better!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Say, where am I?

Autodisconnecticon: There has been a malfunction

Tin Soldier: Ooh, me back!

Rag Doll: What a weird get-up!

Megacynthia: What dreadful taste!

Jack in the box: Boing! Boo!

Space Muncher: Beep! Beep!

Fairy Toymother: That's better. All back to normal!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Hey, great! So now we can waste these guys after all!

Autodisconnecticon: Prepare to disintegrate

Fairy Toymother: Just a minute! What are you doing? There's really no point in your fighting like this!

Pandemonstrotechnicon: Whaddya mean? We like fighting!

Fairy Toymother: Yes, I know you do. But listen. From now on, you must all stick together. You must all be friends.

Tin Soldier: Friends? What? Us? And them?

Fairy Toymother: Yes, that's right! You are going to need each other! I cannot say more. Farewell! (*Exit the FAIRY TOYMOTHER*)

Tin Soldier: What did she mean - we're all going to need each other?

Pandemonstrotechnicon: I dunno - but I ain't workin' with no dumb limey! Come on! Let's blast 'em.

Megacynthia: No, just a minute, boys. If the Fairy Toymother says there's going to be trouble, there's REALLY going to be trouble

Rag Doll: What do you mean? What sort of trouble?

Megacynthis: I'm not sure

Autodisconnecticon: Attention! Megacynthia! Computer read out suggests alien life form approaching.

Jack in the box: What's he on about?

Pandemonstrotechnicon: I ain't sure. But it's big. And it's headin' our way
O.K., guys! Movin' out!

Teddy Bear: What's the matter?

Pandemonstrotechnicon: This is big! Bigger than any of us! Come on, you guys!
Let's split!

Megacynthia: You heard him, everybody! Let's go! (*Exeunt, apart from the SPACE MUNCHER, who moves towards whatever it is in order to eat it*)

Space Muncher: Beep! beep! Beep! beep! (*Re-enter the two ANDROIDS*)

Autodisconnecticon: Computer readout predicts alien life form inedible. And highly dangerous.

Pandemonstrotechnicon: C'mon, Munch! Get your butt outa here! (*The two ANDROIDS grab the SPACE MUNCHER. Exeunt: Pause: A low rumbling noise is heard. Enter the EXTERMOBOT, a life-size robot*)

Extermobot: I am the Extermobot (*Enter MUM in her dressing gown and slippers. She sees the EXTERMOBOT*)

Mum: What the? Goodness me, it's enormous! Johnny, I think your Christmas present's just arrived What? No! Help! Get off me! Aagh! (*the EXTERMOBOT picks up MUM in it's arms and carries her off stage. Enter JOHNNY, very excited, with a control panel in his hand*)

Johnny: Wow! Now that's what I call a toy! This is the real thing! Good old True Life Supplies! This is better than all my other toys put together! Imagine! My very own Extermobot! I don't need ANY toys anymore! Everything I do with the Extermobot will be for real! *(Pause: He looks round)* I wonder where Mum's disappeared to? I'm hungry! *(Exit JOHNNY as the lights fade)*

CURTAIN