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The unexpected alliance

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THE UNEXPECTED ALLIANCE

This children's book narrative was authored by undergraduate students enrolled in Professor Eckelmann Berghel's HIST 3920: United States Race and Childhood course in 2018 Spring at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

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So much had changed for Betty since the war started. Her Dad went far away to fight, her mom had to start a new job in a factory, and most of all, Betty had to help more than ever before.

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The days when her mom was not at work, she would help in the Victory garden they planted a few months ago. Betty always loved to help when she could, because she knew that helping at home meant she, in some way, was helping her Dad far off at war.

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At school Betty had been hearing about collecting scrap around town to help the troops. Her teacher said, "The more scraps of metal you find, the more it helps the war effort." So Betty thought about and decided to ask her mom one day if she could go hunt for scrap by herself. Betty's mom thought about it and told her, "Yes, but you have to be back before sunset!" So Betty packed a lunch, got her red wagon and went off on the hunt.

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Betty was excited for this chance to go on a hunt for scrap. There was just one problem, Betty didn't know the first thing about scrap hunting. She searched wherever she could think of to find scraps of metal, but she had no luck in finding anything. Betty said to herself, "This is harder than I thought it would be."

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Betty was tired, and thought about giving up, until she saw a black boy walking down the road. He was about her age and it looked like he had a few pieces of scrap metal in his arms.

"Hey!" Betty called out, "Where did you find that scrap? I have been looking all day and couldn't find a thing." The boy responded, "I know all the best places to find scrap, the more I find the more it helps my brother in the war."

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Betty seemed surprised by this and said, "Your brother is fighting in the war?" The boy nodded his head and responded with pride, "He is part of the 761st Tank Battalion, the Black Panthers."

Betty thought for a minute and said, "I haven't heard of the Black Panthers, is he really fighting in the war? Or are you making that up?" Stanley snapped back, "He really is! I wouldn't lie about that! My mom told me everyone has to help with the war, even us kids."

Betty felt bad and said, "I'm sorry. I just didn't know they let everyone fight. My dad is in the war also. He a part the 141st Signal Battalion, and I'm trying to find scrap to help him out but I can't find anything. I thought it was going to be easier than this."

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That's when the boy stuck out his hand and introduced himself, "My name's Stanley, what's yours?" She slowly lifted up her hand and shook his hand and said, "I'm Betty, pleased to meet you."

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Stanley noticed Betty's red wagon, and got an idea. "Say, how about you and I work together to find some scrap. With my skills and your wagon. I think we could get a lot done." Betty thought about it for a minute and smiled. Betty said, "Sure! Why not? I haven't found anything all day, so what have I got to lose?" Stanley, laughed and said, "Well, let's get to it!"

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Stanley was right, he knew all the best places to find scrap. Everywhere they looked they found something new. "This is great!" Stanley said, "I've never been able to collect this much scrap before. If we keep this up I think we are going to fill this wagon up before the day is over!" Betty thought about it, then asked, "Well...How do you usually get your scrap then?" Stanley

answered with a laugh, "I usually just carry it all!" Betty smiled and said, "Well today you don't have to carry anything."

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Along the way Betty spotted something, two old cooking pots. "Hey Stanley!" Betty shouted, "Look what I Found!" Holding up the two pots Betty thought of an idea. "I think we should wear these like helmets!" Stanley put the pot on his head and said. "I wonder if my brother's helmet looks like this!" They both laughed when they saw each other wearing their new "helmets." But, they still kept them on anyway, and the two marched proudly as they pulled that red wagon full of scrap down the road.

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They marched all the way to the collection station. Mr. Russell, the collection manager, saw the two marching his direction. Mr. Russell looked surprised at the two wearing cooking pots and behind them a red wagon full of scrap march his way.

When they approached him at the station he said, "How can I help you today?" That's when Betty stepped up, saluted, and said, "Two scrappers reporting for duty sir!" Mr. Russell looked at Betty standing in front of him and said, "Let me see how much scrap you found today young lady." Betty replied quickly, "No, it's not my scrap, it's our scrap!" Stanley looked over at Betty and smiled. Mr. Russell replied, "Well then, let's see how much scrap you two have found today then."

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As Mr. Russell weighed their scrap, the two stood in full attention trying to hold back their excitement. After a few minutes Mr. Russell came back to tell them how much they found, "Well I have to say, you two have found more scrap than anyone else today, congratulations." The two jumped up and cheered. Mr. Russell added, "You know, if everyone could find this much scrap on a daily basis, we will win this war in no time, keep up the good work soldiers!" Betty and Stanley snapped back to attention and said loudly, "Yes sir!"

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As the day came to an end, Betty and Stanley knew they had to head back home before it got dark. Along the way they came to a fork in the road, Stanley spoke up. "Well I can't go where you're going to get home, I have to go this way. I had fun today though, hope we can go scrap hunting again soon! Bye Betty!" Betty thought for a second and replied, "I hope so too!" As Stanley went down the road Betty waved and then she started to head home.

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Along the way home Betty was thinking of her day and she felt proud. Proud because she knew the scrap that she and Stanley found would not only help her Dad, it would help Stanley's brother, and everyone who was fighting in the war. But Betty wasn't only proud she was happy. Betty was happy, because that day, she made a new friend.