



HERO

A NEW PLAY

by JOHN McDONNELL TIERNEY

Inspired by

The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell

SCRIPT

CHARACTERS

SARA, The Hero:

Sara is an ordinary person trying to survive in an extraordinary world full of danger, dissonance and discord.

She is afraid for her future and deeply needing guidance on her human journey.

She is driven by universal needs: to find love, security, justice.

Audiences need to be able to relate to Sara's idiosyncrasies, quirks, and deepest fears, while wanting to emulate her admirable qualities.

VOX, The Herald:

Vox is "The voice in Sara's head," that intuitive "Herald" who warns of things to come, issuing challenges and announcing the coming of significant change.

Sara had, as a child, interpreted the "inner voices" that all humans hear as "invisible (to other people) friends." Now, in her time of crisis, Vox appears in Sara's dreams to help her on her journey. Vox is highly energetic, humorous, and fun!

JOSEPH, The Mentor

This character represents all mentors, teachers, coaches and all those who wisely guide and advise younger humans...he is an archetype. Joseph provides motivation, insights and training to help Sara overcome her doubts and fears and prepare for her journey.

He has traveled the road before and can provide needed guidance when Sara is reluctant to face the unknown.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I: LEAVING

Our story begins with “our hero,” Sara, an “ordinary” person in the “ordinary” world. We first encounter Sara in her “lucid dreams,” the setting for our play. This is Sara’s safe place from which she is loath to venture. Nevertheless, she feels that universal need for to find love, security, and justice in her world while at the same time feeling free to live her life as she desires. She is feeling very alone, a voice “crying in the wilderness,” as she asks, “Can Anyone Hear Me?” Much to Sara’s surprise, there is a response to her cry! “I can hear you!” It is Vox, The Herald. She is “the voice in Sara’s head,” who will be Sara’s ally on her journey. Soon after meeting Vox, Sara hears a fanfare in the horns; it is “The Call to Adventure!

Sara’s adventure begins when she receives the call to action, responding to real threats to her safety, way of life and the peace of the community in which she lives, disrupting the comfort of her “Ordinary World” and presenting the challenge of a lifetime, to overcome her fears and personal demons, to heroically rise from the ashes of defeat, to become more fully human able to experience the joys, the sorrows, and the fullness of life. Sara considers answering the call to adventure but she has second thoughts and deep personal doubts as to whether or not she is up to the challenge. The problems seem too much to handle and the comfort of home far more attractive than the perilous road ahead. She is deeply concerned about being alone on her perilous inner journey as she pleads, *“I need a teacher to guide me!”*

ACT II: LEARNING

At this crucial turning point where Sara desperately needs guidance, she meets Joseph, a mentor figure who helps her gain insight into the dilemma she faces and offers wise advice that help to dispel Sara’s doubts and give her the courage to begin her personal “Hero’s Journey. Sara is, at first, doubtful but Joseph persuades her, *“Trust me, you can trust me.”*

Sara begin her quest as she crosses the threshold between the known world and a special world full of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight. With this, Sara commences her journey still quite anxious about whatever it may have in store.

Now finally out of her comfort zone, Sara is confronted by The Boogiemán, representing real-world situations of terrible danger and inner conflicts. And so, Sara must face her greatest fears, represented by most her terrifying foe, The Boogiemán and experience a metaphoric “death” from which Sara can be reborn to fulfill her destiny and reach her journey’s end. After defeating the Boogiemán and overcoming her greatest personal challenge, Sara is ultimately transformed into a new state, emerging a stronger person with greater knowledge that will inform her return to the Ordinary World.

ACT III: RETURNING

Now Sara must return home with her new knowledge, Sara’s journey is not yet over. Still experiencing some final doubts, she opens herself up to another attack by the Boogiemán. Although beaten down, she rises up once again, stronger and transformed into the “Extraordinary Hero” she was destined to become. This is the climax of our story in which Sara must have her final and most dangerous encounter with The Boogiemán whom she thought she had defeated. The final battle will have far-reaching consequences to her Ordinary World and the lives of those she left behind. This is the moment when Sara commits to the last stage of her journey in which she returns home to her Ordinary World a changed person. She has grown, learned many things, faced many terrible dangers and even death but now looks forward to the start of a new life. Her return brings fresh hope to those she left behind, a new perspective for everyone to consider: *“Participate happily if you want to live your life more joyfully!”* Ultimately Sara will wake from this lucid dream and return to where she started but things will clearly never be the same again.

PRELUDE

*The play opens with an empty “stage.”
We hear a bell clanging as Vox enters bell-in-hand.*

VOX, The Herald
Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye!

*(Spoken in the manner of the medieval heralds,
but with a sense of humor...Vox is having fun.)*

My dear friends and gracious listeners, welcome to a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight. I am Vox. I am the voice in your head that warns of danger and heralds the coming of change. I am intuition, inner knowledge. I am your personal storyteller! Tonight ...I shall tell you a story... the story of a hero whom we shall call “Sara.”

*As Vox speaks Sara’s name, she is seen in a solo spotlight.
She strikes a “heroic pose!”*

Now, Sara is not the kind of “hero” you may be thinking about.
Sara isn’t “super;” she has no unique special powers.

SARA releases the heroic pose, looking disappointed!

In fact, Sara isn’t even a person, she’s an archetype.

SARA is bit offended at that!

You see, the kind of hero we’re talking about lives inside of every person, wiggling, thrashing, battling to become what their destiny has deemed; timorously participating the deeply human experience of transformation from the moment of birth to the moment of death.

*As SARA listens to VOX’s lines below,
she becomes concerned.*

Tonight, we will join Sara as she reluctantly ventures into the unknown...
but fear not, friends and listeners...Sara will not be alone.

Vox introduces Joseph.

Sara will meet Joseph, a Mentor, who will help Sara gain discernment, provide sage counsel, and bolster her self-esteem and her confidence that she can, indeed, achieve her dreams and aspirations. He will help Sara discover within herself the strength and courage to begin her journey into the unknown and the resilience to endure it.

SARA looks worried with all this talk of the unknown.

VOX

So then, these are the players in our little drama: Sara, the Hero; Joseph, The Mentor; and yours truly, Vox, a Herald of things to come and an ally to help Sara along the way.

But wait...there's more!

There is one more character in our play, someone you know well. He has many names... Bugaboo and Beast; Specter and Spook; Hobgoblin, Gremlin, Monster; but you...you know him by another name. He was part of your realty as a child; he entered your world through a secret portal located at the back of your closet. Say his name, you know his worldly fame!

Vox mouths the name in terror.

“The Boogieman!”

SFX: The Boogioeman's footsteps!

And so, dear friends and listeners, there you have it...our cast of characters, and our setting deep in the psyche of an ordinary woman...or so she may think.

But let us begin now, in the ordinary world as we join Sara and whose ordinary life and ordinary days are filled with wrestling with inner demons, withstanding bullies, and navigating her way on the hazardous highway of self-awareness and becoming.

We join Sara as she twists and turns in her bed, falling deeper and deeper into a lucid dream, indistinguishable from reality. She cries out in her dream, “Can anyone hear me?”

*Vox repeats the question and
we hear Sara's voice (off-stage) doubling.
As the line is repeated, Vox fades and Sara emerges.
Sara is now alone in a darkened space.*

Seamless segue to Act I.

ACT I: LEAVING

VOX (*fades out*) & SARA (*fades in*)

“Can anyone hear me?” “Can anyone hear me?” “Can anyone hear me?”

SARA

Here...in the darkness...*here* is where I feel safe. Here...in the silence is where my heart is a peace. Little I knew how it would be just becoming me...what to do...what to do? Give up and give in or fight the good fight? Do I bend a knee or do I stand up and speak my truth? But...oh, how the darkness swallows light, and oh...how my mind dwells in chaos. I want to be in a place where no eyes can see me...wanting to hide... wanting to flee.

Sara looks up and directly addresses audience.

Tell me where I'll be when destiny calls my name!
Tell me what I'm living for!

Sara cries out in frustration!

Can anyone hear me?
Can anyone hear me?

VOX

I can...I can hear you!

SARA

What? Who?

VOX

Here...in the shadows...I'm coming out!

Vox re-enter...does a silly pose.

VOX

Ta-da!!!!

SARA

Okay...that's it...I'm crazy...or...dreaming.

VOX

You're not crazy!

SARA

Then I'm dreaming?

VOX

Maybe...let's assume for now...this is all a dream, a profound dream; a dream of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight.

SARA

That sounds pretty scary!

VOX

Yeah, but not to worry; you are not alone...I am here.

SARA

And who are you?

VOX

Me? You know me! I have been speaking to you since before you could speak. And oh, what lovely chats we had when we were young...when you believed in me and called me by my name.

SARA

I...I knew your name...once?

VOX

And you know it still...search your heart...

Brief pause; then SARA remembers and screams VOX's name.

SARA

Vox? Vox...Vox...is it really you?

Where have you been all these years...when I needed you?

VOX

I've been right here in your imagination...you just stopped talking to me.

SARA

Yeah, so I did.

I guess I just thought you were...ya' know...an "invisible friend."

VOX

So, why did you stop talking to me...your invisible friend?

SARA

I don't know...I just grew up.

VOX

Growing up doesn't mean giving up friends, invisible or otherwise. Actually, I was a bit hurt when you sent me into the shadows.

VOX

Do you remember how we played together in the fields of your imagination. We had so much fun together...laughing, running, cheering at the top of our lungs!

SARA

Yes...yes, we did...I'm trying to recall... (struggling)

VOX

And, Sara...do you remember all those times when you faced challenges...when you doubted your ability to succeed, when you doubted yourself? That's when I came to you...showing you your power, your strength, your vigor! Together we could do anything...and we still can!

Sara struggles to remember.

VOX

And, Sara...think back to the first time some mean kid called you names...belittled you, devalued you. I came to you to show you how to be tough, sturdy, hardy, robust and resilient.

SARA

But, I thought you weren't real...ya know...a childish invisible friend.

VOX

Childhood not childish!

Anyway, do you see me now?

SARA

I do...I do!

VOX

Well then...let's get on with it!

SFX: The Call to Adventure
Sara reacts to the sudden fanfare in the horns.

SARA

What's that!!!!!!?

VOX

What's what?

SFX: The Call to Adventure

SARA

That!

VOX

Oh, that!

That's the call to adventure.

SARA

The what?

VOX

The heroes' call to adventure!

You would not be hearing it if you were not ready!

SARA

Ready...ready for what?

VOX

Ready to be a hero!

SARA

I don't want to be a hero!

VOX

Yeah...I know...I know. Heroes usually don't want to be heroes. They start off just like you, an ordinary person just trying to make their way in an extraordinary world full of danger, dissonance, and division. But then, Sara...they begin to feel something rousing deep within their being and abruptly they're thrust into animation...blooming, buzzing, booming, and being alive! And, make no mistake, Child...pain, sorrow, suffering are all part of the eternal equation...but you are alive...and it is spectacular!

SFX: The Call to Adventure

VOX

Listen Sara! I know that you can hear it...your personal call to adventure!
Tell me, Child, what will be your adventure?
What calls to you? What do you want?

SARA reflects for a moment, and then responds.

SARA

Well...for one thing, I certainly do not want to be a hero.

VOX

Sara...Sara...relax; no pressure. Anyway, this is just a dream...right? Ya, know, the place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight.

SARA

Did you seriously say "unimaginable torments?"
Aren't there enough imagined torments in my life; that's not what I want!

VOX

Fair enough; so, I'll ask again, what do you want?

SARA

I want to feel safe, secure! *(sighs)*
I just want to know that I'll be okay.

VOX

Hey, Sara, I hear you! You need security! Welcome to real life! Guess what, Sara? We all want security...safety...protection; but, you won't find them hiding under your bed!

SARA

Harsh! You're supposed to be my friend.

VOX

I am, Sara! I am your friend and I speak your truth.

SARA

And that's supposed to make me feel better?...I don't!

VOX

Listen, Sara...I do understand how you feel; like you are just tumbling, willy-nilly toward tomorrow. You're speeding along a one lane highway and things are changing fast. You don't know where you're going, when you'll get there, or even if there will be anyone there to meet you when you do. That's when your inner-demons sing terrible songs in your ear.

SARA

Whoa! Hold it right there! "Inner demons!!!!!!" No thank you very much; I'm out of here.

SFX: The Call to Adventure

I don't hear that!

VOX

Yes you do, Sara. It "the call," Sara!
It's your call to adventure.

SARA

Oh, really?
Well, I'm refusing the call.

VOX

Okay...okay, fair enough. And, truth be told...you are not alone.
Most future heroes, at first, refuse to heed the call!

SARA

And for good reasons, the aforementioned "unimaginable torments" for example!

VOX

Hey, Sara...relax...nobody really imagines "unimaginable" torments in their life... how do you even get out of bed in the morning to face a day full of "unimaginable torments?" That's not why folks refuse the call...the unimaginable torments.

SARA

Alright, then; why?

VOX

Fear...insecurity...a sense of inadequacy. Sara, just being born into this world is the primary and universal "call to adventure!" When you refuse the call, what had been a positive becomes a negative. What had been light becomes darkness! What had been strength becomes weakness. What has been courage and community becomes cowardice and isolation and you begin to feel alone and afraid.

SARA

I admit it...I do feel alone and afraid.

VOX

What are your fears, Girl?
Speak them!

SARA
No! I dare not!

VOX
Then I will speak them for you!

You fear loneliness and rejection; being without friends; without allies in a very scary world. And you fear failure...there are so many people who love you, believe in you; you are so afraid that you will disappoint them. And, you are just afraid of something really, really bad happening, ya know...getting hurt, physically...or worse, emotionally.

SARA
Yes, those things.
But still, I am sooooo afraid... of...something...something deeper than loneliness, rejection, failure...something more terrifying than being hurt.

VOX
Then say it...say it, Sara.
What do you fear the most.

SARA
Monsters...fiends...evil sprites and demons that come in the night.
They sing in my ear like a choir of the damned.
They tell me to be afraid!

VOX
Do not listen to their song, Sara! Be not afraid! When your demons sing in your ear, that is the moment you must remember just who you are and where you belong. Be not afraid, you are brave, you are a force resilient. Be not afraid, you are not alone. Wherever you roam, I'll be there with you, no matter how long the road may be. Wherever you wander, I'll be there, walking right beside you, and whispering be not fearful, be not alarmed, be not worried or vexed. So, Sara, when in the night your demons, sing in your ear their terrible song, remember, you're not alone, so you need not be afraid.

Vox comes to Sara and embraces her.

VOX
So, Sara...feel better?

SARA
I guess...a little better I suppose... but I am still afraid of all those things you mentioned and more terrible things unspoken. Face it...I'm no hero!

SFX: The Call to Adventure

Forget it...I told you...I am refusing the call!

*SFX: The Call to Adventure repeats twice.
Sara yells over the second call.*

Blow your horns all you want to...I'm not answering!

VOX

Too late, Sara! The adventure has begun!
And here's the good news... I'm going with you!

SARA

Oh, great! Correct me if I misspeak, but aren't you one of the previously mentioned strangely fluid polymorphous beings! I don't need help from strange or fluid beings and I'm not even sure what polymorphous means! Anyway, if this is all a dream; I need to know who will be there for me when I wake up. Who will be my faithful companions and trusted allies? Who will know me when I get somewhere where no one knows me? I need a teacher to guide me.

So, who will be there for me...someone to carry me... to care for me?

VOX

Good questions!

SARA

I have many questions!
Who can I trust, who can I believe?
Whose path should I take?

VOX

Take your own path, child.

Look, Sara...if you think you already know what your path should be, every step of the way pre-determined by somebody else...then guess what, Kiddo...that path *belongs* to somebody else. You've got to bushwhack your own path through whatever bramble and bushes impede your way. So, get ready!

SFX: The Call to Adventure

SARA

Oh, no! Not another call to adventure!

*The "Call to Adventure" fanfare repeats and fades
as Act I comes to a close.*

END ACT I

ACT II: LEARNING

*Lights up on VOX.
She speaks directly to the audience.*

VOX

And so it was, try as she might to resist change, Sara will discover as the ancient Greek philosopher Seneca so wisely put it, “the fates lead those who will; and those who won't...they drag.” And so, Sara needs to make a critical decision: heed the call and launch into the adventure or linger and languish in her familiar world clinging to its illusions of security. Destiny has summoned Sara, catapulting her from within the pale of society to a zone unknown wherein dwell many of the previously mentioned strangely fluid and polymorphous beings: bugaboos and beasts; specters and spooks; hobgoblins, gremlins, monsters, and more. Sara will be severely tried, and although she may not win every battle, she must go forward. But fear not, dear friends and listeners, Sara will not be without a guide on her perilous journey. His name is Joseph, The Mentor.

*VOX fades leaving SARA in a soft solo spot.
We hear Joseph's voice off-stage/camera.*

JOSEPH

Sara? Sara, can you hear me?

SARA

What...who's there?

Joseph fades into the scene as lights come up.

JOSEPH

You summoned me, Sara; you said “I need a teacher to guide.” An ancient Chinese philosopher named Lao Tzu once said, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.”
Ta-da!!! Here I am.

SARA

And, who exactly are you?

JOSEPH

I am called Joseph; Mentor, Counselor, Guide, Tutor, Teacher, Advisor, Coach, Trainer, Educator, And Professor Of Humanity...(he bows deeply)...at your service. And, trust me...even the greatest heroes need help and guidance in their journey... So, Sara, you can trust me, I will always stand by you. And, if you'll trust me, I will guide you through the night and I will stay with you and carry you upward.

Come now, walk with me, there will be magic and miracles waiting. Come now talk to me of your sorrows and your joys. You may stumble and fall on your journey, but know that there's gold at the end of the rainbow. And, you may doubt that your heart is worthy; still it beats with a constant fury. Hear now, Sara! Destiny calls you, benign and protecting with the power of love. See now, rising before you, a beautiful vision of love.

SARA
How inspiring! (*sarcastically*)

*Sara and Joseph remain in view.
Sara looks around for Vox and VOX. She speaks...*

So...what happened to my invisible friend?

JOSEPH
Who?

SARA
Vox, The Herald...my ally? To what place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight has she gone?

VOX pops into the scene.

VOX
Hey Sara, have you not been paying attention? I told you...I'm always with you. You didn't think I'd let you go on your journey all by yourself, did you? It's not so easy becoming a hero... especially a personal hero...you're going to need the help!

SARA
There you go with the hero stuff again...how many times need I say it?
I'm no hero...I'm just an ordinary person...

VOX
Look Sara...you seem convinced that you are nothing special...that you are the usual, every-day, average, common, mundane, and "run of the mill" individual...in other words ... an "ordinary" mortal.

SARA
What's so bad about being an ordinary mortal?

VOX
Actually, I don't think there's any such thing...an ordinary mortal.
Each and every human being is unique, no two minds are exactly alike, and no two lives are exactly the same. You, Sara...you are unique, a one-of-a-kind and you need to recognize it!

SFX: The Call to Adventure

SARA
I hear it...I hear it!

VOX
Sara!
Sara...the time has come, refusal is not an option.

SARA
I'm scared.

VOX

Of course you are, Child. The fear of the unknown, this tumble into tomorrow, can be very scary. Nevertheless...the journey has begun; a special world awaits. The time for crossing over has come.

SARA

“Crossing over?”

Crossing over to what?

VOX

Crossing over to a new world, to the myst’ry, to the light that’s the journey!
So, Child; know that you are not alone on your crossing, and know also that you, my reluctant hero, need take the first step.

SARA

But to where? Where am I going?

What am I stepping into?

VOX

That step, Sara, that first brave step of your journey, is out of your self-imposed limitations, your imagined constraints, your walls and boundaries.

SARA

But, I am still afraid. I still want to feel safe...secure.

VOX

Listen, Sara...no one can promise safety or security in this life.

SFX: The Call to Adventure

SARA

Oh, no...not another call to adventure!

VOX|

No, not “another call”...it’s the same call...and trust me, it won’t let up until you answer it!

SARA

But, I don’t understand...what is the adventure!

VOX

Your adventure, Sara, is emerging, butterfly-like, out of your former self.
The true hero’s adventure is being fully, passionately, relentless alive.

SARA

I told you up front...I don’t want to be a hero!

Joseph enters.

JOSEPH

Ah, Sara, Sara, Sara...be happy! Destiny has offered you the privilege of a lifetime, the opportunity for your own private and unique adventure into your inner world.

SARA

Inner world, you say?

You mean “dreams”....dreaming is nice...or not nice...but still, they’re just dreams.

JOSEPH

Yes, it is true that many dreams are fleeting, ephemeral, un-remembered; but, some dreams are more than that. Some envision the future...like the coming attractions at the cinema.

SARA

But, still...visions and coming-attractions notwithstanding... they are all part of that “inner-world,” the world you live in. What about when I wake up...when I have to live in the outer-world? What’s the connection?

JOSEPH

Ah...wonderful! (*addressing VOX who approves!*)

Now she’s asking the right questions! (*back to Sara*)

Okay, then...pay attention: the “inner world” is the real you; known fully to you and you alone. The “outer world” is the place where the pieces of the real you that you want to be known, become known. That’s where you are now where the inner and outer worlds meet.

SFX: Call to Adventure

SARA

Okay, okay...I hear it!

JOSEPH

You must have courage, Sara; remember...the call to adventure means there is no security.

SARA

I am really trying here, but I don’t need adventures, I need advice.

JOSEPH

Fair enough...here’s some advice you can use in the outer world.

SARA

Finally!

The follow line delivered with a sense of foreboding!

JOSEPH

Beware The Boogiemán.

SARA

The Boogiemán?

Sara, at first, is dismissive...then gets serious.)

Seriously?

JOESPH

He goes by many other names: Bugaboo, Beast, Specter, Spook, Hobgoblin, Monster. He was part of your realty as a child; he entered your world through a secret portal located at the back of your closet.

SARA

Oh please, I'm not a child anymore...
I don't believe there's a Boogiemán hiding in my closet!

*VOX re-enters!
Joseph steps back.*

VOX

Foolish, Child! Let me tell you about The Boogiemán! He is more than a scare tactic parents use to get children to obey! He feeds, like a hungry wolf, on the fear of his victims; the more he devours, the stronger he grows. And, it's well known that he has a network of connections to the real world, mostly through specifically chosen closets into the bedrooms of children. How or why he chooses specific children and closets, we don't know, only that closets are a portal for The Boogiemán. And, most terrifying child, he is a shapeshifter, one of those polymorphous fluid beings we warned you about...he can take any form. He can deceive you with a smile. He can con you with a word. He can seduce you with a song.

SARA

So, The Boogiemán, huh?|
You're telling me that he's out there...in the dark...the bleak and barren blackness...

JOSEPH

Sara, you're not five years old anymore, you do not need to be afraid of the dark.

VOX

Yeah, Sara. And, anyway, "It's always darkest before the dawn." Sometimes things just seem to get worse before they get better, but, trust us, there is "a light at the end of the tunnel;" so hang in there and be not afraid of the dark.

SARA (*frustrated!*)

Enough platitudes! Sometimes things don't get better, they just get worse. And sometimes there is no light at the end of the tunnel...sometimes there's not even a tunnel!

Joseph...you're the teacher... the mentor...
Please...just tell me what to do?

JOSEPH (*sighs*)

I cannot...I wish I could...but, I can't. I cannot tell you what to do but I can tell you this; you already know, in your innermost being, what is right, what is just, what is worthy and these things- righteousness, justice, worth – are what we mean by "the light." When it feels like all is lost, when the bleak and barren landscapes of your mind seem to stretch into endless darkness, then comes the light...newborn, fresh, and pristine.

SARA (*sighing*)

I get it...but, life is so darn...(searching for words)...so darn challenging!

VOX

She's right about that, Joseph...life is challenging, always has been, always will be.

JOSEPH

You need to be strong, Sara.

SARA

I am not strong!...not strong enough.

JOSEPH

Relax, Child. When strength is need, it will come.

SARA

And, in the meantime, what do I do?

VOX

Oh, that's easy...you do- what you do- when you don't know what to do... you carry on.

Carry on 'though your heart is breaking and you're shaking.

Carry on to the light.

SFX: The Call to Adventure

All right, okay...enough...I hear it!

JOSEPH|

And?

SARA

And...I'm ready!

JOSEPH

Then come Child, prepare to face your greatest fear, confront your most difficult challenge, and perhaps, even experience a "death" from which you may be reborn, like the phoenix arising from the ashes.

SARA (startled!)

"Death!!?""Ashes!!!"

"The Boogiemann!!!"

I changed my mind. I am NOT ready!"

VOX

Ready or not, Child...He's back! So, be advised, the Boogiemann is real! Be aware, he's coming in the night! The Boogiemann will spin you in a terrifying spin! So, be alert, or you haven't got a hope! The time has come, the Boogiemann is here! See his face, grinning in the night!

The Boogiemann is waiting for you to speak his name! Say it now; you know his worldly fame!

SARA

Stop! Enough! I am not going to be terrorized any more, by my demons, my bugaboos, my beasts; my specters, my spooks; my hobgoblins, gremlins, monsters, and various other polymorphous beings. I am Sara...I am strong, I am brave, I am a force resilient!

JOSEPH (*delighted*)

Hooray! She's got it! And now, Sara...your reward!

SARA

Reward? Reward...for?

JOSEPH

For surviving!

SARA

So, what's the reward?

JOSEPH

Your reward, Sara, is a piece of advice that will change your life.

SARA

Advice...that's my reward? More advice...seriously?

JOSEPH

Do I not look like I'm serious? Now, listen up...this is good advice.

SARA

Okay, okay...I'm listening.

JOSEPH

Good; just three words!

Follow your bliss; find your own way; seek out that which makes you happy.

SARA

That was...like...thirteen words!

Joseph ignores the sarcasm.

JOSEPH

Follow your bliss, to the time and place you can be happy, deeply happy... ecstatic, elated, enraptured, entranced, euphoric, and exhilarated by the pure joy of being alive.

So, tell me, Child. Where is your bliss? You have to try to find it.

SARA (*frustrated*)

You're the Mentor, Counselor, Guide, Tutor, Teacher, Advisor, Coach, Trainer, Educator, and Professor of Humanity...show me the way!

JOSEPH (*spoken*)

No, child; it is time to find your own way. Doors will open for you; don't be afraid.

Follow your bliss and you will survive. You are alive in this world, now arise!

*Sara and Joseph fade.
SFX: The Call to Adventure.*

END ACT II

ACT III: RETURNING

Vox is seen. She speaks directly to the audience.

VOX

And so, dear friends and listeners, we have come to the moment where Sara must return to the ordinary world where her rewards, boons, and knowledge may renew the community, the nation, and the Earth. The hero's journey has been completed and Sara's lucid dream must end. She will wake soon, shake her head and tell herself, "It was just a dream."

But then, there are dreams and there are dreams! Some dreams that were deeply meaningful by night will seem trivial by day... but some dreams are more than that...emerging from deep in the subconscious and returning again and again until their message has been heard...eternal knowledge and an understanding of life's circles- wholeness unending, infinite beauty, timeless perfection, sacred, divine, guiding us home again.

Vox shifts her attention to Sara.

VOX

It's time, Sara...time to go back to the ordinary world.

SARA

Wait! I'm not ready to go back. I like dreaming...it's safe in here. It's not safe "out there!" The Boogiemán is real!

VOX

Stop right there, Sara! Have you not been paying attention? Yeah, The Boogiemán is real, alright. He takes many forms; he has many faces, but he's out there feeding on your fears. But Sara... it is not the Boogiemán, "out there" with whom you must first do battle...it is the Boogiemán "in here" (touches her heart) Prepare yourself for Le Dance Macabre...The Dance of Death!

SFX: Dance Macabre (1:30)

*Sara is brutally reminded that the world remains a dangerous place...
that The Boogiemán is still there!*

*Danse Macabre ends with Sara battered and seemingly
defeated by the forces of darkness.
She is alone deeply feeling the effects of her
encounter with her personal Boogiemán.*

SARA

Here within the smoldering embers burns the pain and fire. And, here I lie, my body burning; oh, how the pain consumes me. Still, I feel my mission is not finished; so I'll say I will not be defeated. See me, hear me, know me, trust me when I tell you I'm not only one child; I am all the children crying out for justice. So, I rise, my spirit burning; oh, how the fire now lifts me. Like the Phoenix I will rise up, I will spread my wings and fly. They may burn me, they may hurt be, still, like the Phoenix, I'm unending love.

Vox embraces Sara.

SARA

So, that's it then?

I...ah...guess I'll be leaving now...or, should I say waking up?

VOX

Yeah, I guess...

SARA

And you... (*anxiously*)...where will you go?

VOX

Hey, kiddo...relax...I'm not going anywhere!

Precious Child...I am not leaving you!

I cannot leave you, Sara; I am you!

SARA

And Joseph...what about Joseph?

Will he be there when I wake up...in the outer world.

VOX

Oh, yes Child...Joseph will be there in books, in images, in the thoughts and inspirations of a thousand heroes with a thousand faces.

So, yes... my reluctant hero...it is time wake up.

SARA

But, the world is still out there with all its horror, pain, and suffering.

How do I live in that world?

VOX

So glad you asked...two words...“Participate happily!”

SARA

What?

VOX

Focus on those times when you are happiest, really and truly happy; not just not just excited, not just animated, but deeply happy. So, Sara...figure out what makes you happy and then, stay with it, no matter what other folks may say or think.

A very wise man, whose name also just happens to be Joseph, once said, “Participate joyfully in the sorrows of the world. You cannot cure the world of sorrows, but you can choose to live in joy.” Choose joy, Sara! Participate joyfully, if you want to live your life a lot more happily and don't worry 'bout what you can't cure; focus on the positive and you'll endure!

END ACT III

POSTLUDE

*Vox is seen.
She speaks directly to the audience.*

VOX

And with that, dear friends, we allow Sara, once again, to return to the ordinary world reborn and transformed...an extraordinary hero! And we, reluctantly, bid you farewell, for you too must return to your ordinary worlds to commence your own adventure, your own personal hero's journey.

When you kindly remember us, when you reflect on this dream, please consider this eternal principle...You are the wave on the face of the ocean. When the wave is gone, is the water gone, has anything happened? Nothing has happened.

It is a play, a game, a dance.

*The "Call to Adventure" fanfare is heard again
as it echoes into the distance.*

END

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

John McDonnell Tierney **Composer/Playwright**

THE HUMANITY'S CHILD MUSICALS

John McDonnell Tierney, aka “Jack,” is a composer and playwright with an Off-Broadway Track-Record: “Humanity’s Child: A Musical for Today,” premiered at the 2019 New York Theater Festival and then ran for four weeks at the historic Players Theatre. A retired Professor of Musical Theater, Jack holds advanced degrees in his field (Bachelor's & Master's: UMASS; PhD: UCONN) and has conducted and/or directed more than two-dozen musicals with School, College, Community, and Professional companies.