

A CHILD'S PLAY

Bryan Ricardo Marini Quintana

Estudios Interdisciplinarios

Facultad de Humanidades, UPR RP

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Act 1: A Choice

Late at night, passing by colorless streets, a dazzling theater illuminates the pale ambience. Deciding to halt for a glance, I'm frightened by an imposing shadow that creeps over me, constraining any movement. It's the adult I've become, rashly yelling: "Stay outside and carry on with routine". Tempted to turnaround, a frail silhouette dashes over, willing to loosen any motion. It's the child I've lost, gently whispering: "Go inside and try something new". A flicker of impulsiveness sways me, eager to soothe a monotonous mind. "I don't have time", reaffirms an impatient adult. "What about me?", longs an abandoned child. Will I empower the adult and neglect the child? In an act of recklessness, instinct kicks, as I'm drawn to purchase a ticket, seeking liberation in A Child's Play. Thereafter, a frail silhouette hand grasps upon a shadow's rugged fingers that cling on to my flesh, guiding both to the entrance. Once inside, a blinding light drives away both shadows, leaving me to make a choice. Should I leave or stay? Close by, murmuring adults apathetically diminish the play, discouraging any enthusiasm. However, far off, giggling children eagerly boost the play, driving away any pessimism. Steadily, I take a seat, choosing to embrace A Child's Play, longing a return to what I've lost.

Act 2: Where I Belong

Inside, a hall welcomes my arrival, while the stage neglects me. Upon seeing my adult drama, a somber hall illuminates the way to a seat reserved specially for me, whereas a joyful stage dims away and closes its curtains when noticing my lack of childish fun. Reality settles in, for I'm a part of an audience, not the show. Behind, there are grim adults ready to spectate. In front, there are cheerful kids ready to act. While those who live confined to reality are relegated to meager seats in a hall, those who live beyond in dreams are uplifted by rich lights to a stage. In the audience, there are no outstanding personalities. Everyone stuck in a seat, hides behind a fancy

suit or dress that befits a norm. Ashamed of my true self, I sell a personality that complies with society's expectations. However, in that stage, amongst actors, there's a colorful wardrobe of unique personalities. Each one wears what abides to their own taste. Proudly, they rebel against society's constraining guidelines. While spectators have chosen to dim away from the spotlight, actors embrace it. Suddenly, lights fade in the halls, neglecting my adult drama, while a stage brightens, empowering A Child's Play.

Act 3: A World of Imagination

Once the play begins, my spectrum of reality breaks away, easing into freeing an imprisoned mind. Brewing with life, the stage is transformed into magical domains and far-reaching corners of space. Inhabited by children, a stage is polished with performances that turn into whimsical characters, displaying unique personalities. They've come to embrace a playful essence, showing no shame, fear or guilt in what the audience will perceive. From head to toes, children dress in silly clothes with outrageous amounts of makeup and ridiculous hairstyles. Regardless, they keep on enjoying each one's performances carefree. Up there, a stage accepts you, letting true feelings be expressed without any judgement. This is a freedom only actors relish in; one a kid exuberates. Agonizingly, I'm stuck in an adult's world of spectators, while they are free to act in A Child's Play.

Act 4: A World Lacking Color

Amidst the intermission, my spectrum of imagination fades away, returning into a confined seat, that promptly recalls reality. Dwindling with life, the hall remains dull. Down here, rows of seats don't undergo any transformation, for there's no time to be wandering in places that I'll never reach. A hall encompassed by deprived adults, doesn't display uniqueness within anyone. Instead, a monstrous somber essence feeds off from fear, shame and guilt being suppressed into hiding from outsiders. Amongst spectators, there's a sea of identical standard clothes and faces, hiding behind a facade. Each one is careful, avoiding any display of emotion. I follow suit by succumbing any feelings, because if exposed, rejection will follow. This is a suppression only spectators suffer in; one an adult represses. Once I was an actor, now grown into a spectator, with time holding me back from ever returning to A Child's Play.

Act 5: My Awakening

In a grim moment of self-defeat, I come to terms with a stage far from my reach, while a childhood essence of memories attempts to refresh mind, body and soul. This cheerful aroma drives away the dismal fume. Although, I've descended

from that stage, these children remind me what it was like to dawn an actor's performance. In that play, they pass on what the audience lost. Suddenly, a child's curiosity is awakened within me. A wondrous sense of adventure comes back, amazing me of every trivial discovery, replacing indifference. Thereafter, a child's joy is sparked. Through giggling kids, miseries wash away. Afterwards, a child's innocence initiates. In an act of carelessness, feelings of guilt drive away. However, I'm the only one rediscovering wonderment, laughter and innocence. Realizing none have joined in the act, I begin to hide again with judging eyes sharply criticizing. Regardless, I've come too far to give in, proceeding to neglect at least for once the adult and empower the child. Now, gathering up a child's bravery, I've completed my transition. Consequently, fear lays weak, with childhood fully awoken in triumph over adulthood. Nevertheless, a childish essence reaches the audience, with frowns turned to smiles, shame to empowerment and reality to imagination. A somber hall is awakened by spectators, who even though they've long left the spotlight, now ecstatically remember what it was like to be up there. Finally, *A Child's Play* is embraced by spectators who relish in the freedom an actor embodies, refreshing memories of curiosity, joy, innocence and bravery.

Act 6: A Show Must End

Enlightened, I savor this last moment with my rediscovered inner child, knowing the play won't last forever. Unwavering eyes gaze upon the stage, recalling a concealed bubble that an actor fills up with dreams of a hopeful future. Inside, there were written scenes and a character's guideline to follow through. Abruptly, the bubble burst upon facing reality, leaving characters stranded, without any sense of direction. Outside the theater, away from a stage's spotlight, nothing was scripted, allowing despair to take over while I sought to uncover my true character. Whilst lingering in thoughts of lost youth, *A Child's Play* came to an end, witnessing an actor's culmination. Performers were stripped from characters and lines, leaving an exposed nakedness of personalities barely defined. Then, each child bowed before the audience, subjugating to reality. They've given away the joy, curiosity, innocence and bravery of frivolous characters. Soon after, a harsh transition occurs, relegating everyone to a role backstage. In there, each one will be interacting behind the scenes, close enough to the action, yet far away from the thrill of a main act. A time will pass through, where they'll mature, undertaking a journey to find their true selves and replace me. Meanwhile, I get up and give my seat to the next one that passes from backstage to assume a role in the audience. My time here is up, but at least I've been reminded of what it was like to be a child. Once more, a frail silhouette with smooth hands grasps upon my wrinkled ones. Now, it guides me back to the hallway where I made a fateful decision. Here, I chose to embrace my inner child. However, behind lays my imposing shadow, longing to stay. Desperately, it

grabs my hand abruptly, begging to return. Although tempted to relish again that feeling of being young, I'm dissuaded, opting to rather give another the chance to experience it. Decisively, I turn away the older shadow, as it peels off from any hold in my body. Whatever energy was left in me has been sucked away by the play and a fleeting decayed shadow. Passing through the hallway, my mind eases, accepting there's no return to childhood, yet thankful those days ever happened at all. Where once night reigned when I came in, now day deposed it with my exit. Upon these final moments, a frail silhouette takes the leap upwards, to a dazzling light, with energy surging through again, I return in my purest form, that of an actor, in the eternal embrace of A Child's Play.