

# NICHOLAS BARTON–WINES

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## **Extract from: *How To Save The World...ish***

Written by Nicholas Barton-Wines

Written for an ensemble of 7, with choreography throughout

1. The old woman ushers Sophie to sit in the armchair while she put on two cups of tea. Following the unsettling news she had watched on TV, this is the perfect opportunity for the Old Woman to have somebody who'll listen.

*5. It's been reported that everyone is threatening to drop their String after, well, a String of protests in the city!*

4. She apologised for her pun.

*5. This situation is far too serious for jokes.*

3. And warns Sophie that letting go of the Strings is a very bad idea.

*5. It's not just bad, no, it's simply suicidal!*

6. But she isn't surprised that nobody else knew why those Strings existed.

*5. People don't really listen to what old ladies have to say...*

1. She begins to tell Sophie about a long ago time, when she wasn't an old lady but aged roughly nine.

7. She remembers when the String scheme was created as a way to save the World. Everyone was made to hold onto a String as a duty to keep the World floating in space.

*2. But what's at the other end of the Strings?*

4. The Woman pulls some paper and a pencil from her cardigan pocket, and begins drawing intricate diagrams to clarify just what's going on

*5. Good Question. Simply put, this World is kept floating in space not by gravity, which used to be the case, but by one very large, very round Balloon. Without this Balloon, kept in place by all the Strings, the World will crash to the bottom of the universe. That is why we keep the Strings in our hands at all times.*

3. Sophie looked out of the window to see if she could see the Balloon high above, but it isn't clear.

6. All she can see is the sharp, clean glass office tower stretching high into the sky.

*5. It's a small price to pay to keep the World safe.*

4. Sophie looked at the woman for a moment and smiled.

1. Until the reality of what she just heard had sunk in.

*5. Oh Sophie, it's such a relief that someone else finally knows! You know, I think we might be the only people in the World who know about that big Balloon.*

4. And she was right. They were indeed the only ones who knew what was long forgotten above the clouds. But Sophie is confused, and a little scared. This is big news to take on board.

1. Imagine if you had been told everything you knew about our World here isn't quite what it seemed. These kind of discoveries have happened throughout history. Like us finding out the Earth is not flat, but round. Or learning that lizards as tall as skyscrapers once roamed the Earth. Or realising the coin your grandfather just pulled out from behind your ear hadn't been there the whole time. They all sound crazy, but they've all turned out to be true.

4. The old Woman had waited many years wondering what the reaction would be when she finally told someone else about this Balloon. And frankly, Sophie's reaction is underwhelming.

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2. Sophie, once again, stares at the floor.
3. The ticking clocks fill the silence.
5. The old woman gazes into the now empty cup of tea to avoid the awkwardness.
1. Just then all the clocks strike four.

*2.&5.: Is that the time!*

1. And catches them off guard. Sophie had best head back home before she gets caught for skiving, and hurriedly makes her excuses as she rushes towards the door.

*5. Thank you, Sophie,*

3. the Woman calls after her,

*5. The World needs more heroes like you*

2. "I'm not a hero" Sophie snorts to herself as she leaves the shop.

## **Extract from: *Threads***

Written by Nicholas Barton-Wines

Written for a large ensemble with a range of abilities

SCENE TWO – Family Dinner – Age: 16 years old

*The family awkwardly eat their dinner in silence.*

Erica: Mum, can we just put the telly on please? This silence is really weird.  
Ensemble: This is Erica.  
Mum: No, Erica. We're going to eat dinner like a family.  
Ensemble: She's wearing her favourite scarf. She always wears one. It's a fashion thing.  
Ensemble: That's how you know she's Erica. One of us will wear it and that person will play Erica.  
Erica: Please, mum.  
Ensemble: You could say that this shows the audience that Erica's story could be anyone's story really.  
Ensemble: That's very clever of the writer.  
Dad: This is lovely, dear. Say thank you to your mum, girls.  
Lucy: Thanks, mum.  
Erica: Can we have the telly on please? I can hear Lucy chewing.  
Ensemble: We are following Erica's life from the ages of 15 to 21.  
Dad: Your mother has already said, Erica. No.  
Ensemble: We're looking at her choices through the years and where it leads her.  
Ensemble: It'll be a little bit like A Christmas Carol, except with less ghosts and more exams.  
Mum: So,  
Ensemble: We'll try not to interrupt too much.  
Mum: How was your day, girls?  
Ensemble: Oh, she's sixteen right now.  
Lucy: Erm...  
Ensemble: And that's her younger sister, Lucy.  
Lucy: I got in trouble today...  
Dad: What did you do?  
Erica: She called her teacher a fat cow.  
Mum: Erica! Don't say things like that! (*Softly to Lucy*) Tell me what happened, Lucy.  
Lucy: No, I did. I called Miss Marshall a fat cow!

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Mum: Oh, Lucy... Why must you be so cheeky to her all the time. You can't go around calling people fat.

Ensemble: She is big though.

Ensemble: Shut up, Jordan!

Dad: And what about you Erica?

Erica: I got my grade back for my textiles project in art today. I got an A.

Mum: Oh. That's good.

Lucy: Yeah, but what are you going to do with good grades in sewing? Knit your exams?

Erica: Well I'm thinking about doing fashion design actually.

Dad: Oh not this again! We've already told you, Erica. You don't want to go to into the arts.

Erica: Why not though?

Mum: There's no jobs in it Erica! What's the point of going to study fashion if you can't get a job in it?

Dad: And we aren't going to pay you rent for you. What do you think we are? Made of money?

Erica: There's loads of jobs! I don't just have to be a designer. I can cut, or work in fashion PR, or sales -

Dad: If you want to work in sales, you can come work with me at the garage.

Mum: I just think it would be better if you invested all that energy into finding a job and a place to live here, rather than wasting your time on fashion. You have to be really good to get a job in it.

Erica: Oh, so you don't think I'm very good?

Dad: That's not what she's saying, Erica.

Lucy: It sounded like it.

Mum: Lucy!

Dad: Look, Erica, there aren't many jobs in fashion. We don't want you to be left disappointed.

Mum: I thought I wanted to do something creative when I was your age, but I chose not to and look how I turned out!

Erica: Don't you want me to be happy? What have I done to you?

Dad: It's such a huge amount of pressure. Are you sure you can handle it?

Erica: Oh! So you think I can't handle the pressure if I manage to even get a job!

Dad: We're just thinking about your future.

Erica: At least I have a future, unlike you!

Mum: Look around you. I just don't want you to make the same mistakes that I did with my life.

Dad: Emma...

Lucy: We're mistakes?

Dad: Lucy. Go upstairs.

Erica: Oh great! I'm weak, I'm unemployable, and I'm a mistake. Well you know what mum, don't bother helping me. I'll do it myself.

*Erica storms out of the room.*

Mum: Oh Erica stop it! Lucy go to your room.

*Lucy leaves the room.*

Mum: I just wanted a nice family dinner!

## **Extract from: *And There Was Evening***

Written by Nicholas Barton-Wines and Robert Ginty

Written for one performer, underscored with music

Sometimes, when you feel like this, you wish you can just reach into your brain and cut the chunk out that contains that bad memory that you keep replaying and replaying. The negativity in your head. But then, if you did, what if you slipped and accidentally took away that happy memory that reminds you why you still have hope?

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Hope.

That's why he started this wild scheme: he had just wanted to see if the other people in the world knew what to do, or, at best, where the Sun had gone. "A problem shared is a problem halved". And with 7 and a half billion other people on our planet that's just a small slice of the problem pie we would each have to swallow. However if that pie is left and ignored it starts getting a little bit stale and dry and then smells a bit funny until eventually there is green mould rotting through it, (and, for metaphors sake, you don't have a bin) it has to be eaten at some point.

And the sooner the better.

So there he is now, sitting in his armchair, his face soaked with tears, desperately aware of how small, insignificant and alone he is on this 4.54 billion year old earth that is now inevitably coming to its demise. He is terrified of the situation he's now in.