

FIELD NOTE 0000000

September 8, 2026

Field Notes from the Mabuhay Stories Experiment Beyond the Story Score.

BEYOND THE STORY SCORE

THRESHOLD ZERO: OPEN THE STORY

Before there can be a Story Steward, there must first be someone willing to open a Story.

Before the blank page.

Before the first mark.

Before the WHY.

Before the conversation.

Before anyone wonders about liminality, communitas, dramatic play, drawing, agency, Diversigence™, or any of the other ideas that may help us think about what happens around a Mabuhay Story—

someone has to begin reading.

Preferably aloud.

That is **Threshold Zero**.

And perhaps our first work of mobilization is no more complicated than helping educators, parents, grandparents, librarians, storytellers, neighbors, and other potential threshold keepers cross it.

Here is a Story.

Will you read it?

THE STORY COMES FIRST

It is tempting, especially when we care deeply about something we have made, to explain why somebody should encounter it before allowing them to encounter it.

Here is the educational theory.

Here is the philosophy.

Here is the theology.

Here is what the blank space means.

Here is what we hope will happen.

Here are the thinkers whose work may help explain it.

Here are the twenty-seven reasons this is more interesting than it initially appears.

All of those things may eventually be worth discussing.

But they can also become another threshold standing in front of Threshold Zero.

The Mabuhay Stories should not require someone to understand their architecture before entering them.

Begin with the Story.

That is why the Minimal Viable Stewardship Guide is minimal.

That is why *Beyond the Story Score* is a companion rather than a prerequisite.

And that is why the continuing Field Notes can remain somewhere nearby for those who become curious about what we are noticing.

The resources surround the Stories.

They should not stand in their doorway.

THEN READ IT ALOUD

A Mabuhay Story can certainly be read alone.

But reading aloud changes the field.

A Story held silently between one reader and one book becomes something shared among people.

The words acquire a voice.

Someone hears.

Someone reacts.

Someone laughs.

Someone notices something.

Someone looks at someone else.

A question enters the room.

A page asks for a mark.

A WHY appears.

Another person answers.

And the Story that existed on the printed page begins becoming **the Story that happened among these particular people on this particular occasion.**

That is why read-aloud matters so much to this form.

The book contains the box.

Reading aloud **opens the box in company.**

And once the box is open, the Story can begin passing beyond its author.

THE THRESHOLD KEEPER BECOMES PART OF THE STORY

Something else happens at Threshold Zero.

The person who opens the book becomes part of the continuing story of the Mabuhay Stories.

Not necessarily because they become an official Mabuhay Story Steward.

Not because they endorse a theory.

Not because they agree with everything the author intended.

Not because they produce some predetermined educational result.

Simply because they have carried the Story across a threshold the author cannot cross alone.

The author can write a Story.

The publisher can print it.

A bookseller can place it on a shelf.

A website can make it discoverable.

But none of those acts can create **this particular encounter.**

For that, someone else has to pick up the book.

A teacher.

A librarian.

A parent.

A grandparent.

A minister.

A volunteer.

An older sibling.

A neighbor.

A friend.

Someone says:

“Let me read you a Story.”

And the Mabuhay Stories acquire another storyteller.

That person is no longer merely reading the history of the project.

They have entered it.

They have become **part of the story of the Mabuhay Stories.**

THIS IS WHY EDUCATORS MATTER

Educators occupy an especially interesting place at Threshold Zero.

They already know how to gather people around words.

They know the extraordinary ordinariness of:

“Come sit down. I want to read you something.”

They also know that what happens next cannot be completely predicted.

The quiet child may speak.

The talkative child may listen.

Someone may notice the detail the teacher missed.

Someone may dislike the Story.

Someone may make everybody laugh.

Someone may make a mark.

Someone may ask the question that changes the afternoon.

The educator does not need to manufacture any of this.

The educator’s first contribution is much simpler.

They got the Story off the shelf.

They opened it.

They gave it voice.

They allowed other people to encounter it.

That is no small thing.

It is the act that makes everything else possible.

MOBILIZATION MEANS GETTING OFF THE MARK

The word *mobilization* can sound enormous.

Campaigns.

Organizations.

Training systems.

Networks.

Movements.

An army of armies.

Perhaps some of those things will someday emerge around the Mabuhay Stories.

But they are not Threshold Zero.

Threshold Zero is wonderfully smaller:

Get off the mark.

Pick up one Story.

Find someone to share it with.

Begin.

The objective is not to mobilize people toward our conclusions.

It is to mobilize them toward **their own encounter**.

That distinction protects the whole enterprise.

We do not need to convince someone beforehand what the Story will mean.

We do not need to promise what it will accomplish.

We do not need to tell them which page will matter.

We certainly do not need to supply their WHY.

We need enough invitation for someone to say:

“All right. I’ll read one.”

The rest belongs to the encounter.

OPENING A BOX OF ENIGMAS

We have begun thinking of each Mabuhay Story as something rather like a box of Perpetual Enigmas of Grace™.

A Story contains more possible invitations than any one encounter is likely to exhaust.

There are too many pages to illuminate.

Too many details to notice.

Too many possible questions.

Too many WHYS.

Too many relationships among the people gathered around it.

Good.

Completion is not the premium. Encounter is.

Reading the Story aloud opens the whole box at once.

Nobody needs to unwrap everything.

One person may find one page.

Another may find another.

Someone may carry an ember away without saying anything at all.

And because the people gathered affect one another, one person’s encounter may become material for another person’s encounter.



The possibilities multiply beyond anything the author—or the person reading aloud—could reasonably follow.

That can feel daunting.

It becomes less daunting when we remember what belongs to whom.

The author makes the box.

The threshold keeper opens it.

The receiving givers encounter what is there.

Nobody is responsible for exhausting its possibilities.

THE THRESHOLD KEEPER DOES NOT HAVE TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

This may be the most important reassurance at Threshold Zero.

You do not need to know what the Story will do before you read it.

You do not even need to know whether anything remarkable will happen.

Perhaps everybody laughs.

Perhaps somebody draws.

Perhaps a wonderful conversation begins.

Perhaps everyone enjoys the Story and goes home.

Perhaps someone appears completely unmoved and remembers one sentence fifteen years later.

Perhaps nothing happens that anyone can see.

A threshold keeper is not responsible for manufacturing transformation.

The first responsibility is much simpler:

Open the door without deciding what another person must find on the other side.

Then tend what actually happens.

Not what was supposed to happen.

Not what the Guide predicted.

Not what the author hoped for.

What happens.

AN ARMY ORGANIZED AND ENLIVENED BY GRACE THAT BEGINS WITH JUST ONE READER

Just one voice — one candle in the wind.

An Army of Stewards that mete out Perpetual Enigmas of Grace™ as acts of Mercy unto the WHY of Lasting Peace—

one sharing with one illuminator, one receiving giver at a time — even when each receiving giver may listen-share as part of a group.

Several eternity-bearing breadcrumbs packed into each little raindrop of each little word they read to each little open-handed ear beyond the threshold of the Story-sharing space they have opened by their graceful invitation.

This is Mercy spoken small yet writ large that—once it all gets started in YOU, dear Story Steward—can have an awfully good shot at having no end, indeed.

There is something almost unfathomable about imagining these Stories being read aloud in many places.

One teacher becomes ten.

Ten become a hundred.

Parents carry Stories home.

Children retell them.

Librarians open another box.

Grandparents make their own marks.

Stories cross languages and cultures.

Receiving givers become givers.

And each gathering generates possibilities that cannot be centrally directed or completely counted.

That scale can become daunting very quickly.

So don't begin with the army.

Begin with the reader.

One human being.

One Story.

One gathering.

One voice saying:

“Once upon a time...”

There.

The army has mobilized.

Not an army marching toward a predetermined conclusion.

An army of threshold keepers willing to open doors through which encounters may pass.

And every one of them becomes another little part of the continuing story of the Mabuhay Stories.

A QUIET SHOUT OUT TO DEB

Every field correspondent has a bunch of first companions.

The Square Zero people.

The alpha-test folks.

For me, one of those people is Deb.

She did not begin by demanding the whole architecture.

She did not ask me to prove every pedagogical possibility before opening the first Story.

She simply had the courage to say, in effect:

“I’ll read them.”

The actual quote being:

“I will definitely read your series! Thanks for sharing and thinking of me!”

That matters.

Because Threshold Zero is not theoretical.

Someone has to be willing to begin.

Someone has to open the book.

Someone has to meet the work before knowing exactly what it may become.

Deb’s willingness to start there—with curiosity, integrity, and no guarantee about what she would find—helped me see more clearly what mobilization really means.

It does not begin with agreement.

It always begins with encounter.

So this Field Note carries a particular word of gratitude:

Thank you, Deb, for having the courage to start at Square Zero with me.

You opened the box.

Everything after that belongs to what we may yet discover.

THRESHOLD ZERO

So perhaps the invitation can remain almost embarrassingly simple:

**OPEN A STORY.
READ IT ALOUD.
NOTICE WHAT HAPPENS.
TEND WHAT EMERGES.
KEEP THE DOOR OPEN FOR MORE.**

The theory can wait.

The bibliography can wait.

The Field Notes can wait.

Even the blank pages can wait.

First—

open the Story.

Because until someone does, every possible encounter remains inside the box.

And the moment someone does—



the Story no longer belongs only to its maker.

It has entered the field.

**Completion is not the premium.
Encounter is.**



HANG THE DOOR.

**TEND THE EMBERS.
KEEP IT OPEN FOR MORE.**

And wherever every first reading may lead—

**MAY WE ALL HELP MERCY ABOUND...
RIGHT ON THE STREETS WHERE WE LIVE.**

*[Maestro — cue “Mercy Has No End”
Multiple singings intended.]*



To listen to the Mercy Has No End Unto 4EVER! Playlist...

Visit:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4C8uUYyS8Yt6SR3t79rjBq>
Today