

**From the full length play:
A Trip to the Moon
By Tracy Wells**

FORTUNATE SON

JIMMY, *an experienced soldier, 20s*

BRETT, *a new recruit, 20s*

AT RISE: A U.S. army camp in Vietnam. There can be a green canvas tent center, sandbags, wood crates, and other army paraphernalia. JIMMY is seated on a crate in front of the tent, whittling something out of wood with a small pocketknife. The end of his rifle sticks out from behind his crate. The distant sounds of ammunition firing and other sounds of war are heard. At start of scene, BRETT enters, carrying his rucksack, the end of his rifle sticking out. He looks nervous and jumps during loud explosions. JIMMY looks up from his whittling and laughs.

JIMMY
(with a smirk)

You must be Chambers.

BRETT
(jumps, startled, then holds out his hand)

Brett. Brett Chambers.

JIMMY

Okay, Brett, Brett Chambers. Welcome to the bush.

BRETT

Um...thanks...I guess.

JIMMY

My name's Jimmy, but most people just call me Switch.

BRETT
(pointing to the pocket knife)

Because of your knife?

JIMMY
(looks at knife)

This?

(sticks the knife blade first into the crate)

No. It's cause I'm the radioman for this platoon.

BRETT

Oh, right. Switch. I get it.

(chuckles half-heartedly)

JIMMY

Cap'n paired you up with me, then?

BRETT

I guess so.

JIMMY

Pop a squat then. Get settled.

(BRETT looks around, grabs a crate or two, maybe some sandbags and tries to make a makeshift seat and table.)

You see the moon landing?

BRETT

Yes! It was amazing. Everyone at boot camp went down to the mess hall to watch. Did you see it?

JIMMY

Sort of. One of the guys got ahold of an old black and white portable. We tried to plug it into the generator but it conked out before Armstrong even stepped off the ladder.

BRETT

Bummer.

JIMMY

Yep.

(BRETT starts unpacking his rucksack. JIMMY just watches him in amazement)

Whatcha doin' there?

BRETT

(as he unpacks)

Getting settled.

JIMMY

Gotcha.

(watches for a few minutes there)

So you're unpacking then?

BRETT

I figured that was probably the best place to start.

JIMMY
(with a smirk)

Sure. Sure.

(continues to watch BRETT unpack and arrange his possessions)

Where you from, Brett?

BRETT

Back home?

JIMMY

Yep.

BRETT

The Cape.

JIMMY

Down in Florida?

BRETT

Nope. Massachusetts.

(proudly)

Cape Cod.

JIMMY

Makes sense.

(watches as BRETT unpacks a toothbrush)

What's that?

BRETT
(holds up toothbrush)

My toothbrush.

(JIMMY busts out laughing; BRETT is confused)

What? What is it?

JIMMY
(looks offstage as if talking to a solidier, and points to BRETT)

This guy brought himself a toothbrush!

(laughs again)

Thinks he's actually gonna brush his teeth.

BRETT
(upset)

What do you mean? I've got to brush my teeth! If I don't, I might get cavities!

JIMMY

Cavities!

(laughs harder, slapping his knee)

BRETT

(getting angry, stands)

What's so funny?

JIMMY

(stops laughing and stands)

Boy, the only cavities you need to be worrying about out here are the ones the Viet Cong are gonna put in your body with their frag grenades.

BRETT

(looks down)

Oh. Right.

JIMMY

You're not in Cape Cod no more, Brett, Brett Chambers. This here is Cape Fear! And if you don't keep your eyes and ears open, you're not gonna make it out of here alive. Now pack that stuff back up. You don't unpack in Vietnam. You gotta be ready to move out at a moment's notice.

BRETT

Got it.

(packs up his stuff during the next few lines. The sound of a distant bomb is heard, and he jumps involuntarily)

JIMMY

Don't worry. You'll get used to the noise around here.

BRETT

That's a relief.

JIMMY

(looks at him pointedly)

Is it? There ain't nothin' else to do *but* get used to it. You'll be hearing shots fired day and night around here.

BRETT

Oh, great.

JIMMY

I take it you're used to peace and quiet up on Cape Cod?

BRETT

(smiles, thinking about it)

Yeah. The Cape's beautiful this time of year...sun shining...flowers blooming...

JIMMY

(sits, and resumes whittling)

Sounds great. You do any shooting up there?

BRETT

Oh, yes!

JIMMY

Really?

BRETT

We have our own skeet shooting range right on the edge of our property.

JIMMY

(laughs, then looks offstage as if he's talking to another soldier)

This guy here thinks shootin' skeet is real shootin'!

BRETT

Well, it is. I have my own rifle and everything.

JIMMY

You do any actual hunting with that rifle of yours?

BRETT

Of course! My father, brother and I would take the hounds out in the woods nearby and hunt all types of quail and pheasant.

JIMMY

You ever kill anything?

BRETT

(proudly)

A few times. Pop says I'm a crack shot.

JIMMY

You skin and eat your kills?

BRETT

Gosh, no! We've had a few of our kills stuffed and mounted, and I think Pop has sent some of the larger birds to the kitchens to be prepared, but mostly we shoot for sport.

JIMMY

So not real hunting then?

BRETT

I mean...what's real hunting?

JIMMY

Oh you'll find out...soon enough.

BRETT

Why do I get the sense that you don't like me very much?

JIMMY

I don't even know you.

BRETT

Exactly.

JIMMY

But it seems to me you don't come from the same places that me and the rest of the boys here come from?

BRETT

And where is that, exactly?

JIMMY

I'm from a small town in the Appalachians.

(points to someone offstage)

Calvin comes from the south side of Chicago.

(points to someone else offstage)

And Teddy....well, I don't know where Teddy comes from but it ain't nowhere good.

BRETT

I don't see why it makes any difference where I come from.

JIMMY

(stands, angrily)

Because it's guys like you who get guys like us killed! Guys who've never had to fend for themselves, guys who've never walked through brush up to their knees or stomped through mud so thick they've had to leave their boot behind. Guys who've never killed—not really—and who aren't prepared to do whatever it takes to keep themselves—and their brothers at arms—alive.

BRETT

You lost somebody here?

JIMMY

More than you can imagine.

BRETT

I'm sorry.

JIMMY

Don't be sorry. Just look...and listen. Do what I tell you to do. Keep your mouth shut. And you'll stay alive.

BRETT

(quietly at first)

I didn't have to come here, you know.

(JIMMY looks up, interested. BRETT grows stronger and speaks louder)

BRETT (cont.)

My dad's a big shot. We've got money. He could've gotten me out of it easy.

JIMMY

Then why didn't he?

BRETT

Because I wouldn't let him.

JIMMY

Then you're stupider than I thought.

BRETT

Maybe so. But I just couldn't run away. Not from this. Not when so many were giving up everything to fight for the freedom of others.

JIMMY

You know what, Brett, Brett Chambers? You just might be a soldier after all.

BRETT

That's what I was trying to tell you?

(jumps at the sound of an explosion, then chuckles. He looks at JIMMY whittling)

What are you working on there?

JIMMY

It's gonna be a spoon.

(moves it through the air as if he's scooping)

I'm always losing the ones they give us with our c-rations. They don't work that good anyway. Figured I could whittle one just as good as any they have.

(smirks)

Unless of course you have a better one in that rucksack?

BRETT

(smiles)

Nope, sorry. I left my silver spoon at home.

JIMMY

Good boy.

(JIMMY pats the spot next to him. BRETT picks up a crate and puts it next to JIMMY. JIMMY shows him how to whittle as lights fade to black.)

To read the rest of this play, please visit
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