

Under a Midsummer Moon by Claudia Haas  
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**SYNOPSIS:** It's the summer of 1969. Viet Nam is raging, Woodstock will end the summer. Cities are crumbling. People are shouting. On July 20, 1969 a man walked on the moon. It was a night where all things seemed possible. David knows the war in Viet Nam is just. How else could he justify the recent loss of his brother in the war? Russell knows the war is an abomination and cannot wait until he is 18 and can burn his draft card – just like his brother did. And Madrigal knows that the times are fragile and call for magic. And if the faeries won't supply enchantment – she will.

**RUNNING TIME:** 60 minutes

**PLACE:** Run-down urban park (I used New York City's Central Park for inspiration). Props and set decoration can be changed at director's discretion.

**TIME:** July 19 and 20, 1969

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:** 14 (5m, 6f, 3 male or female)

- David (m) 17; grieving over the loss of his brother in Viet Nam
- Chris (m/f) 16; Park employee
  
- Lee (m ) 12 – summer is for fun and these three friends are still young enough to play make-believe
- Gene (m or f) about 12-13 – well, Gene does get bored easily
- Maida(f) 12 – as with her group, summer is for playing and enchantment
  
- Joe (m) 15 or 16 – trying to find himself
- Sherrie (f) 15 or 16 –Joe's close friend who is all about staying under life's radar
  
- Madrigal (f) 16 or 17 – sent to the USA from Belfast to escape the violence – she recreates herself as a gift-giving sprite
  
- Cindy (f) 16 –17 protesting – because she can
- Russell (m) 16 - 17 – intensely dedicated to the cause of ending the Vietnam War
- Vicky (f) 15 or 16 – a people pleaser
- Ronnie (Vicky's younger brother) (m ) 10-12 – is spending the summer being dragged around by Vicky; it's not fun and in reality he seems older than Vicky
- Terry (m/f) – 16-17; passionate about changing the world
  
- Natasha (f) 15; new in town, hides behind books

Under a Midsummer Moon

Scene1: July 19, 1969 a.m.

AT RISE we see a run-down park. The trash can is empty but there could be broken pieces of furniture or broken appliances about. Some well-meaning, hastily planted flowers may be planted amid some rough bushes or dying grass. A bench or two from a more elegant past remains. It's midsummer. Three children run through the park.

LEE

You're it, Maida!

GENE

Bet you can't catch us!

(MAIDA starts to run but is momentarily stopped by the ethereal MADRIGAL who enters and looks around. MADRIGAL is part sprite – she may have a crown of flowers or stars and is dressed in a manner that suggests the earth, wind and water. MADRIGAL suddenly exits and MAIDA – a bit spooked runs off.)

MAIDA

You guys! Come back here! Don't leave me!

(DAVID enters ready to work in the park. He may have work gloves, a rake or a spade. He carries a backpack that contains a Life Magazine and a sketch book and pencils. He remains in the background as MADRIGAL enters with a potted dead tree branch. She looks around and thinking that no one is watching her, she puts the potted branch somewhere downstage. It branch has a sign that says "Moon Tree" and is decorated with stars or love beads. MADRIGAL casts a spell by the Moon Tree with a poem by Yeats. Depending on your theatre's license and availability to "rights," Celtic music could underscore MADRIGAL'S entrance. Music from the times could also cover scene breaks.)

MADRIGAL

"Come away O human child  
To the water and the wild  
With a faery hand-in-hand  
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand."

(Next to the moon tree sign, MADRIGAL places a scroll that is an invitation. Satisfied with her morning deed, MADRIGAL exits. DAVID comes forward to inspect the "Moon Tree" and is spied by RUSSELL who is entering with a sign "War is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living Creatures." He is also working on a sign that states "Moon People Say Yankee Go Home.")

RUSSELL

Morning.

(DAVID looks at RUSSELL'S sign and looks right through him and exits. The park comes alive. NATASHA enters and sits on a bench reading *War and Peace*. She is engrossed and ignores all – no matter what happens in the park. CINDY, VICKY and RONNIE join RUSSELL. VICKY and CINDY also have protest signs. RONNIE is reading the Encyclopedia. MADRIGAL.)

CINDY

What do you think? “Spend Money at Home and Not on the Moon?”

RUSSEL

To the point. I like it. Now get it done before tomorrow.

CINDY

Don't nag. I come here to get away from the nagging.

(MAIDA dashes in and hides under NATASHA's feet. NATASHA simply lifts her legs up and continues reading. LEE and GENE come in searching for MAIDA.)

LEE

MAIDA! You're supposed to be trying to get us!

GENE

Catch us!

(And they exit as MAIDA appears.)

MAIDA

LEE! GENE! COME BACK! I – don't want to play anymore.

(MAIDA exits. NATASHA adjusts position and turns a page. DAVID comes on with CHRIS. They have a simple t-shirt or apron showing that they work in the park. DAVID has some plants or flowers to get in the ground.)

CHRIS

What are you doing here so early? You don't start for another hour. Give yourself a break.

DAVID

Don't like being home. I'm just going to hang out a bit and then I'll get the new plants in the ground. “The powers that be” said this place needs sprucing up. They're right.

CHRIS

Waste of time. They'll just get trampled tomorrow night.

DAVID

When I was younger, there was a patch here covered with flowers. You couldn't go six inches without spying a monarch butterfly. We always took our picnics here –

CHRIS

I remember when Sam worked here and brought you home leaves to look up in your nature book. You must have had hundreds! All catalogued between sheets of wax paper.

DAVID

Don't want to talk about that.

CHRIS

Sweet memories...

DAVID

I said I don't want to talk about it.

(GENE and LEE sneak back on and hide.)

CHRIS

Sorry! I'm - weeding by the sailboat pond today. Pick you up for lunch?

DAVID

I guess. I'm stuck in this area – I really don't want to be with – them.

(DAVID indicates the “protesters.”)

CHRIS

Ignore them. They're harmless. Probably bored rich kids.

(CHRIS exits as DAVID perches himself on a rock or a bench – somewhat elevated. He has a well-worn copy of the June 27<sup>th</sup> Life Magazine which depicted the photos of the 241 killed in Vietnam in one week. He notes it, puts it away and begins to weed. He spies an interesting plant. He takes out a sketch book and begins to sketch it.)

LEE

Olly-olly-oxen free!

GENE

Where's Maida? She's supposed to be seeking.

(MAIDA appears.)

MAIDA

There you are! I said I don't want to play anymore!

GENE

Yeah – this is boring – let’s do something else.

MAIDA

Listen guys – I saw something – kind of weird -

LEE

Last one to the baseball field’s a rotten egg!

MAIDA

No! I need to tell you -

(But LEE and GENE run by DAVID knocking away his magazine or book.)

DAVID

Watch it!

LEE

Sorry, man!

DAVID

Get lost, will you. Before I call the cops.

LEE

For what? For playing in the park on a summer day? Come on, Maida!

(LEE and GENE run off.)

MAIDA

Wait you guys! Will someone listen to me!

(MAIDA exits.)

VICKY

I could win a date with dreamy Bobby Sherman.

RUSSELL

Who?

VICKY

Bobby Sherman – he plays Jeremy on Here Come the Brides – and he sings like an angel.

CINDY

I’d rather win a date with Davy Jones.

VICKY

He's short – and married.

CINDY

Since when?

VICKY

Since – forever – for months now. Don't you read Tiger Beat?

CINDY

That's for little kids. I read The Enquirer.

RUSSELL

You're kidding, right?

CINDY

The Enquirer is for grown-ups – you get the best news. The stuff Walter Cronkite doesn't tell you.

RUSSELL

I trust Walter Cronkite. Wish he'd run for president.

VICKY

News is boring.

CINDY

Not The Enquirer. Inside these pages has a Leonard Nimoy shocker –

RUSSELL

Do you two live in an alternate universe? Who are these people?

CINDY

Really Russell – how can you change the world when you're not part of it? Leonard Nimoy and Davy Jones are stars!

RUSSELL

Can we forget the stars and concentrate on the moon? The moon walk is tomorrow!

VICKY

I haven't kept up to date with anything this summer – this protesting stuff's eating up my summer.

RUSSELL

It's important – you do realize that, don't you?

VICKY

Sometimes - it's a downer. War! Poverty! Death! Hating this – hating that – I need something – fun. I'm going to enter the contest and win a trip to Hollywood! I'll finish the moon poster later. Anyone have some paper and a pencil?

CINDY

Over there – look Vicky – that guy has a sketch book –and a pencil – ask him.

(VICKY approaches DAVID.)

VICKY

Hey.

DAVID

Hey yourself.

VICKY

I was wondering if you could loan me a piece of paper and a pencil. I'll pay you back.

DAVID

No.

VICKY

Really? Cause I have this idea for an essay –

DAVID

What part of “no” didn't you understand? The “N” or the “O?”

(VICKY retreats.)

VICKY

Wow – that guy's uptight. He could use some of your peace, love and happiness.

(MADRIGAL enters. She carries a large basket with gaily wrapped goodies – treats worthy of being the creation of a fairy. The basket is decorated with flowers. She peeks around and leaves the basket where it is likely to be found and exits - unnoticed. Meanwhile, SHERRIE enters trying to get away from JOE – who in full mime-face pursues her. SHERRIE is dressed for her work in a concession stand.)

JOE

*Sherrie! Wait!*

(SHERRIE stops under DAVID.)

SHERRIE

Stop following me, Joe! It's – embarrassing! I want to ride the carousel before I start my shift after lunch. I don't need to be shadowed by a weirdo.

(DAVID is fed up with being distracted and turns around.)

JOE

You promised me we would hang out this summer and do crazy stuff! You said we'd go to horror movies and scream at the movie screen and then visit the zoo and walk like a penguin and we haven't done anything! It's already the middle of July and you haven't kept one promise!

SHERRIE

I made those promises before you turned into Bozo the Clown!

JOE

Oh – I am wounded! What you see before you is not a clown – but an artist – think Marcel Marceau. I'm a mime – ahead of his time! I have finally found my calling and my best friend in the whole wide world does not support me. Watch!

(JOE improvises a man walking on the moon.)

SHERRIE

What's that slow-motion stuff?

JOE

I'm walking on the moon – get it? I'm an astronaut! Celebrating the moon walking event! The spectacular! The magic! But with realism! A magician makes the visible invisible – but a mime makes the invisible – visible!

SHERRIE

Who says?

JOE

Marcel Marceau.

SHERRIE

I thought mimes didn't speak.

JOE

Actually, Marcel Marceau says that if you get a mime talking, you can't get him to shut-up!

(SHERRIE quickly exits with JOE following.)

JOE

Sherrie! I want to ride the carousel, too -

(JOE exits as the action returns to CINDY, RUSSELL, VICKY and RONNIE.  
TERRY has just joined them.)

TERRY

You guys! The piers have exploded with soldiers – they're all over. What are you doing wasting your time here? The protest's over by the pier.

RUSSELL

Getting ready to protest the moon landing – you know that's important. We're wasting money there, too.

TERRY

I really think we should be focusing on the war – you know? Not making all new signs for the moon landing.

CINDY

Terry! There are like – a gazillion people coming to watch the moon landing in the park tonight. We have to take advantage of the audience.

RONNIE

I'm excited for tonight.

VICKY

I knew you'd finally agree with me!

RONNIE

I'm excited for the moon landing – not your silly demonstration.

(VICKY spies the basket of goodies and goes to it. MADRIGAL peeks out with anticipation.)

VICKY

Far-out! Look at this! Treats for everyone!

(VICKY starts to unwrap a treat when TERRY rushes over and knocks it out of her hand.)

TERRY

Are you nuts? There's probably a razor blade in there somewhere or – it's laced with cyanide.

(MADRIGAL is ready to protest but stops herself.)

RUSSELL

Bad child. You should know better than to take candy from strangers.

VICKY

You two are such downers! Do you see a stranger? I don't see a stranger.

RUSSELL

Well, someone put it here. It sure didn't come from the man in the moon and if it did – he's up to no good.

TERRY

Wait! My mother read me something about gifts being left in the park. There were bouquets of wildflowers left for some kids who were sailing toy boats and – love beads were left on bicycles.

CINDY

That is so – evil.

TERRY

I know! They're probably from some horrid killer who's hiding somewhere in the park... waiting ... lurking... to see you take a bite. Then your eyes will roll around and you'll clench your throat gasping for the air... and slowly sink down to the ground...

CINDY

Dead! For the rest of your life you'll be dead. As dead as that weird branch in a pot.

VICKY

(Throwing the gift in the air and running from it.)  
Stop it! You guys are freaking me out!

CINDY

Come here. My mom bought tons of Milk Ways in honor of the moon landing. Quick – before they melt!

(And they gather back together as MAIDA, LEE and GENE enter and collapse by the Moon Tree. NATASHA will change position and continue to read.)

GENE

What kind of a park is this? Can't even play on the baseball fields.

LEE

They're getting everything ready for the moon walk.

MAIDA

*Will you listen to me?*

GENE

We did listen to you. You're seeing things, Maida. There is no fairy running around the park.

MAIDA

But I saw her.

LEE

Probably an alien. Coming down to get us because we're invading the moon!

MAIDA

You're just being silly. I tell you – *I saw a fairy!*

LEE

Now who's being silly?

GENE

I don't want to talk about fairies. Can we do something that isn't boring?

LEE

I know! It's summer – let's – do – nothing!

(And in agreement, they collapse - lying on the grass.)

TERRY

This is such a waste of time! I mean the Moon landing is what – one measly day and then it's done. Protesting the moon walk won't stop the war.

RUSSELL

We're educating the public. Millions of dollars are going being wasted on the moon walk while the country is filled with poverty and the garbage people went on strike and the teachers went on strike –

VICKY

I liked having a month off from school –

RUSSELL

Did you like staying in class till 5 p.m. to make up for the time lost?

VICKY

Oh yeah. Forgot about that.

RUSSELL

There's no money to pay people proper salaries – my parents haven't had raises in three years! But we can pay for moon walks! This country's priorities are wrong!

TERRY

And the war – we're paying for the war! Listen to me! We should stick to our protest agenda. We work on the war! It's immoral and undeclared! Let others protest the moon walk.

RUSSELL

The moon walk is getting attention. We can't ignore it.

RONNIE

Why don't you guys do something – you know – real?

RUSSELL

Protesting's real – it's our right as American citizens. It's how we sort things out – get things done.

CINDY

While we're protesting, we should protest this park. It's an eyesore – and it's the only place we can go to that doesn't cost money.

VICKY

I'm with you, Cindy! We need to overcome the park!

RONNIE

If you could only hear how silly you all sound.

VICKY

Someone who reads the encyclopedia for fun shouldn't throw stones, little brother.

RONNIE

What does that mean?

VICKY

Just – what I said.

CINDY

If we were really motivated, we'd sign ourselves up and volunteer to be activists. I think we're all lazy protesters.

(DAVID pays attention.)

RUSSELL

I'm not lazy – we're going to change the world.

CINDY

I think every generation says that.

RUSSELL

Maybe. But we're going to do it.

TERRY

If we're going to stop the war than we should be picketing those soldiers on leave! Those immoral guys who go off to war and kill babies! Just thinking about the soldiers disgusts me!

(DAVID throws his sketch book at them.)

DAVID

Soldiers disgust you? Oh really? The men who are risking their lives so you can execute your rights to dishonor them – *they* disgust you? Well here's a thought – you disgust *me*!

(DAVID exits.)

VICKY

Did you see his face – he just hates us. He doesn't know us – but I can tell – he hates us.

TERRY

He goes to our school. In all the honor classes. I think his name is David. He's always seemed harmless and sort of – nice, you know? Never would have pegged him for a "hater."

NATASHA

He doesn't hate you.

CINDY

What?

NATASHA

He doesn't hate you. He's angry. There's a difference.

CINDY

If you say so.

NATASHA

But he's right.

RUSSELL

How can you say that? Do you know what goes in Viet Nam?

NATASHA

Of course I do. He's right about soldiers risking their lives so you can complain. And you're right about trying to change the world. This country is a conundrum. You can be at opposite sides of the spectrum and both be right.

(And as suddenly as she spoke up, NATASHA resumes her reading.)

VICKY

(Aside to friends.)

All right. She's strange.

CINDY

They're both probably war-mongering hawks! There's always a few in every crowd. What's in his book, Terry? Drawings of bombs?

TERRY

Plants. Your hawk sketches plants. And you know - he's pretty good. Look! He found some cool-looking stuff to sketch. Wonder where he saw it? All I ever see are weeds.

VICKY

Who cares about plants? That sounds – so-science. Which sounds like so-school – which sounds like so much work.

RUSSELL

Protesting's work. We should map out a proper plan of what to protest if we're to do it correctly. Once the moon landing is done, we need to figure out the summer. I want to tell Alan that we are definitely instruments of stopping the war.

CINDY

If you're going to lecture us about your brother again – then forget it. I have a mother for that.

RUSSELL

My brother actually did something! He didn't go to protests to play. He went for the meaning. And he was willing to sacrifice.

CINDY

You know Russell – maybe we're not being the sacrificial lambs for “the cause.” There's stuff to figure out – I mean sometimes I think if we do leave Vietnam – maybe the whole world will become Communist.

RUSSELL

Then why have you been protesting all spring?

CINDY

Trying to figure things out. And annoy my mom.

RUSSELL

You don't really buy that “better dead than red” stuff, do you? That's a scare tactic to keep the public for the war.

CINDY

It works – 'cause sometimes I'm - scared.

RUSSELL

Don't be. Really. We've got so many missiles pointed at each other – if they attack – we are all goners.

(Pause)

RONNIE

These drawings are pretty good – almost surreal.

VICKY

Get rid of it. Probably covered with bugs.

(VICKY throws away the notebook. MADRIGAL gingerly sneaks out, picks it up and leaves. MAIDA sits up and notes her.)

MAIDA

The fairy! Gene! Lee! Wake up! There she is!

(But of course, she is gone.)

GENE

Hey Ronnie!

RONNIE

Gene! Didn't notice you.

GENE

Watcha doing?

RONNIE

I'm stuck protesting everything in the world with my sister.

GENE

Sounds like fun.

RONNIE

It's not.

GENE

Join us.

RONNIE

What are you doing?

GENE

Nothing.

RONNIE

Be right there.

(RONNIE shows VICKY where he's going as we hear JOE offstage.)

JOE

SHERRIE!

(SHERRIE runs on.)

SHERRIE

Quick! Hide me!

CINDY

Are you all right?

SHERRIE

I'm being chased by a moon-walking mime!

CINDY

Quick! Lay down behind us.

SHERRIE

Thanks!

(JOE rushes on.)

JOE

Sherrie? Oh – an audience!

(And he goes into full mime-mode. He tries “the astronaut bit” and possibly being blasted to the moon.)

GENE

Look! A clown!

LEE

What's the clown doing?

GENE

I have no idea. Kind of flaky if you ask me.

VICKY

Clowns are evil. It's a fact.

NATASHA

A clown is merely a grotesquely-dressed comedy performer. There is no good or evil associated with his jests.

SHERRIE

Actually he's not a clown – he's a mime.

MAIDA

What's a mime?

NATASHA

Someone who acts a part with mimic and gesture using no words.

(JOE finishes and passes the hat. He is ignored. JOE quickly exits – very dejected.  
SHERRIE stands and feels bad.)

SHERRIE

You guys! Couldn't one of you give him a measly penny for his efforts? Joe! JOE!

(She exits.)

RONNIE

Hey Gene – what do you make of that?

GENE

What?

RONNIE

The dead tree branch?

MAIDA

It was put there by a fairy.

GENE

Who is invisible to everyone but Maida!

RONNIE

If you say so I want to have a look -

VICKY

RONNIE! Leave it! Cindy thinks it was placed there by an evil gift giver!

RONNIE

Well... your evil gift-giver left a note.

VICKY

Don't touch it!

(NATASHA puts down her book and listens. Finally intrigued by something.)

NATASHA

Let me see.

(NATASHA takes the note from RONNIE.)

Interesting.

CINDY

You could read it –

NATASHA

I could.

“Hear ye! Hear ye! In honor of tomorrow’s stroll on the moon, you are hereby invited to create moonscape of your won. Meet here tomorrow morning at 8 a.m. and you will be treated to a scavenger hunt. Together we will decorate the moon tree in celebration.”

GENE

A scavenger hunt! Hey! Something to do!

CINDY

But it’s at 8 a.m. in the morning. I don’t exist at 8 a.m.

NATASHA

I wonder why someone would go to the trouble of creating a scavenger hunt for total strangers.

VICKY

Maybe it’s from an alien. Maybe going to the moon has spooked some Martians or something.

LEE

It’s Star Trek come to life!

MAIDA

No. It’s the fairy.

TERRY

I bet it’s the creepy gift-giver I was telling you about! You guys should know – someone’s been going around the park all summer – leaving gifts. It was in the paper and everything.

RUSSELL

We should go. Figure out what this gift-giver wants.

CINDY

You? “Mister-going to save-the-world-from-itself” is going to go on a scavenger hunt that was arranged by a total weirdo?

RUSSELL

Maybe we’ll catch the weirdo – put him in his place. Or maybe – we will come face-to-face with Vicky’s Martian. Who knows? I want to know more. I’m in.

NATASHA

Me, too. This is a curiosity.

TERRY

I don’t know – maybe we should report this. This could be arranged by a sicko.

RUSSELL

And say what? “Excuse me but someone’s been leaving gifts in the park for people. And now he wants to arrange a scavenger hunt in honor of the moon walk.”

NATASHA

He’s right. They don’t arrest people for leaving gifts.

RUSSELL

The only way to catch this person is to play along –

CINDY

All right ! I’m in. 8 a.m. I’ll live.

VICKY

Me, too.

MAIDA

Me, three.

NEWS ANNOUNCER VOICE (recorderd)

Apollo 11 prepares for tomorrow’s historic event by going into orbit around the moon.

LEE

What’s that?

NEWS ANNOUNCER VOICE

In other news, during the wee hours of the morning, fisherman found Mary Jo Kopechne’s body in Edward Kennedy’s car. It was submerged in a tidal channel on Chappaquiddick Island.

RUSSELL

Sounds like the news. They've been setting up TV equipment in the meadow for the moon landing. We will be able to watch it tomorrow night right here in the park. I'll be there. With my signs.

LEE

That's right! My family's going. Let's see what they're doing. Maybe we'll be on TV!

(LEE, MAIDA and GENE exit.)

NEWS ANNOUNCER VOICE

The Black Panthers are in Oakland for a special convention.

(CHRIS enters looking for DAVID.)

CHRIS

Anyone see a guy around here – kind of yea high – he works in the park.

VICKY

Oh! I think he was the jerk who threw the sketch book at us.

CHRIS

He's – not normally like that –

CINDY

Like what? Violent?

CHRIS

You don't know – so – don't play judgment day.

CINDY

Just calling a spade a spade. I need a break. I'm going to the meadow to check out the TV cameras.

RUSSELL

Bring your sign – you never know.

VICKY

Come on, Ronnie.

RONNIE

I'm coming – but I'm not protesting.

NATASHA

Stay by me. I'm not protesting either.

(ALL exit except CHRIS - towards the meadow – which could be the audience. NATASHA follows. CHRIS sees the Moon Tree and picks it up. DAVID enters.)

CHRIS

Hey David! Ready to work?

DAVID

Ready as I'll ever be. What're you doing with that?

CHRIS

Dumping it I guess – I was sent to help you clean this area up.

DAVID

Don't. I sort of like it.

CHRIS

It's – dead.

DAVID

Yeah.

(CHRIS glances at DAVID and puts the Moon Tree down.)

CHRIS

We need to get the weed whip.

(DAVID and CHRIS exit.)

NEWS ANNOUNCER VOICE

The number of troops in Vietnam peaked at 543,000 in June.

(The lights fade to black pausing for a moment on the Moon Tree.)

SCENE 2 – July 20<sup>th</sup>, early a.m.

AT RISE it is early a.m. MADRIGAL is arranging a note on the Moon Tree as well as 3 cut-outs of apples – 2 silver and one golden – with riddles on them. The note is placed so all can see and the apples are hung on the dead branches. She has added more flowers to the pot. The Moon Tree is becoming quite fanciful. Then MADRIGAL sits down to watch the sunrise. She also has a small pouch of small quartz stones to be revealed later and DAVID'S sketch book. DAVID enters and sees MADRIGAL. MADRIGAL remains intent on the sunrise. DAVID moves closer.

DAVID

Hey –

MADRIGAL

Shhh!

DAVID

You shouldn't –

(MADRIGAL turns and quietly puts her fingers to her lips to keep him quiet and then moves back into position to watch the sun rise. DAVID stands over her.)

DAVID (cont'd)

This isn't –

MADRIGAL

Shhh!

DAVID

Safe.

(And they quietly watch for just one more moment. And the sun is up.)

MADRIGAL

Ahhh – sure but that's a wondrous thing, isn't it. Seeing the sun rise up over the treescape. And it's there every morn – just for the taking.

DAVID

I guess. You really shouldn't be here this early – nobody's in the park except muggers.

MADRIGAL

Surely, you're not proclaiming yourself to be a mugger then?

DAVID

Well – no.

MADRIGAL

Nothing evil can happen while the sun rises. 'tis a fact.

DAVID

Where do you get your facts from? Fairy tales?

MADRIGAL

Indeed – one learns a lot from the “little people.” If one bothers to pay attention.

DAVID

And you do?

MADRIGAL

Most definitely. But don't try listening to them now. For they're all curled up snug as lady bugs in the dew-soaked petals of the smallest flowers. For they are but wee ones.

DAVID

Wee ones?

MADRIGAL

Little people. Don't look so wide-eyed. If you don't listen for them – you'll never hear them. And your life will be just a touch sad. And know that I am meaning that in the nicest way.

DAVID

You're a wee bit nuts, you know that? And know that I am meaning that – in the nicest way.

MADRIGAL

I know things.

DAVID

Told to you by the "little people?"

MADRIGAL

Yes.

DAVID

Soooo... come here often?

MADRIGAL

Every morning. And you?

DAVID

I grew up a block from here and now, I work here. So yeah – I come here. I used to dig up plants and bring them home and try to identify them. I didn't know it was illegal. I was - a "wee one." Once I brought my brother a pail filled with poison ivy. He was bummed when we broke out in a rash.

MADRIGAL

Ah - but 'tis all in the interest of discovery. Does your brother share your love of plants?

DAVID

Once. Not any more.

MADRIGAL

Things change.

DAVID

That they do.

MADRIGAL

What will you be searching for today?

DAVID

I don't – search anymore. I work. And really – who cares about what grows in a city park? It's mostly weeds.

MADRIGAL

I believe – this is yours.

(She gives him his sketch book that he threw yesterday.)

DAVID

How –

MADRIGAL

Doesn't matter. But I noted there were some mighty fine plants sketched that were not weeds.

DAVID

(Indicating the Moon Tree.)

Are you – the perpetrator of this?

MADRIGAL

It's a whimsy. Do you like it?

DAVID

It's – dead. Yeah, I like it.

MADRIGAL

But surrounded by life. Imagine – if you plant a moonbeam – what would you get?

DAVID

Buy you can't plant a moon beam.

MADRIGAL

But I have.

DAVID

And what did you get? Moon beam stalks?

MADRIGAL

Have fun with me if you will! For I am here today and gone tomorrow. But know that if you plant a moonbeam you will harvest memories to treasure. Those are precious things.

DAVID

If you say so.

MADRIGAL

I do. Spend the day with me. I'll take you to where the rocky highland dips into the lake. Where I've hid a faery vat full of berries and of reddest stolen cherries. Will you come? It's me own private hazel wood of safety.

DAVID

You – want me to search for – fairies with you?

MADRIGAL

It's a quest we will be doing. Searching for a magical safe place. Me Da taught me that. Find your private hazel wood. That's where you can be quiet and discover yourself.

DAVID

This park used to be my safe place. Not any more. Are you here with your Dad?

MADRIGAL

No. He - died last spring.

DAVID

I'm sorry. Really.

MADRIGAL

The Giant's Causeway is me own safe place – do you know it?

DAVID

No.

MADRIGAL

It's a great, craggy miracle of a place. The wild Irish sea crashes against cliffs and caves. St Patrick tended sheep on nearby Slemish Mountain and castles appear from clouds. It was made from the days of enchantment. Do you know those days?

DAVID

The days of the fairy tales?

MADRIGAL

More than that – from the days of wonder. In those times, there were two giants – Finn MacCool and Benandonner. The great Giant Benandonner built the Causeway all the way from Scotland to Ireland to fight with Finn MacCool.

DAVID

So – your safe place was built by two warring giants.

MADRIGAL

Indeed. Now, we don't know for certain if Finn MacCool was a pacifist or a great-grand scairdy-cat but it is certain he did not want to fight Benandonner. He wrapped himself in a blanket and curled up in a giant pram pretending to be a wee one. When Benandonner came knocking on his door Finn's mother answered and showed him Finn MacCool's baby brother – who of course was Finn MacCool himself! Benandonner took one look at the giant baby and decided that if that was how big the baby was – Finn MacCool must be much bigger and stronger and it would be better not to fight him. He ran back across the sea to Scotland and tore up the great Causeway as he fled. 'tis true!

DAVID

And – you believe that?

MADRIGAL

Benandonner left in such a hurry that his boot remains planted in the Causeway. If you saw it, you would believe it, too. Me Da and I would sit by the boot every spring and he would tell me these tales.

DAVID

Sorry about your Dad. He sounds – like one of the good guys.

MADRIGAL

You'd have loved him. Everyone did. There was an explosion you see – and Da was in the wrong place, talking to the wrong person at the wrong time. Me mum thought – send me away to my aunt in America. Keep me safe. But I'd rather be home. Even though there are troubles.

DAVID

There's no guarantee of safety here either. Crime is pretty high in the city – especially in the park. At sunrise.

MADRIGAL

At home, people want to build barricades to separate themselves from each other.

DAVID

Maybe there is no safe haven.

MADRIGAL

That's why you search inside you. Look at this -

(She empties some of her pouch and shows DAVID small pieces of quartz.)

DAVID

Pebbles. You carry around pebbles?

MADRIGAL

Precious pieces of quartz from the Giant's Causeway. From the sweet nights when my family built midsummer bonfires for the fairies. I take these everywhere. Where you see "pebbles," I see time. I see a piece of the earth that was here when the dragons flew and the earth began. Something that is as old as the fairies and as new as the first bud on a tree. They're time, they're memory, perhaps even eternity. Spend the morning with me. I am offering you an escape – if only for a brief moment in time.

(MADRIGAL holds out her hand. DAVID does not take it. He looks at his dog tags.)

DAVID

It's tempting – but the thing is – it's –just - weird. Going ... fairy-chasing and with someone I don't know.

MADRIGAL

I'm Madrigal. Now you know me.

DAVID

If I went with you – could you do something magical?

MADRIGAL

I – don't know.

DAVID

Because that's what I need. Some enchantment that could turn back time. But you can't do that. If you could – you would have gone back to save your dad.

MADRIGAL

Come with me – who knows what we will discover?

DAVID

I – can't. There're things I need to do before work. I have my own – stuff.

MADRIGAL

If the seasons of your mind change -

DAVID

I'll find you.

MADRIGAL

Or – I'll find you. Now, there are things I must do. Promises to keep.

(MADRIGAL exits.)

DAVID

(Calling after her.)

David. I'm David.

(RONNIE enters – with his encyclopedia. RONNIE watches DAVID who is going through some things in his backpack – he has a picture of Sam and maybe a baseball - even a Boy Scout kerchief.)

RONNIE

Hey! Aren't you the guy who threw the book at us yesterday?

DAVID

(DAVID hastily puts away the belongings and starts stretching – as if prepping for a jog.)

Yeah... sorry about that. Hope I didn't hit anyone.

RONNIE

You didn't. Too bad you didn't hit my sister. And knock some sense into her. Going out for a jog or something? 'cause if you want company – I'm in.

DAVID

Not jogging. Just something.

RONNIE

What – something?

DAVID

If you must know – I'm looking for a proper burial ground. I shouldn't tell you this stuff. You're just a kid.

RONNIE

*You didn't kill anyone, did you?*

DAVID

*No!* It's just – for stuff.

RONNIE

Mind if I go with you?

DAVID

Don't you have anyone looking out for you?

RONNIE

Yeah. My sister.

DAVID

Where is she?

RONNIE

I don't know.

DAVID

You – come here often to jog?

RONNIE

Not really. Let's just say I need to get in shape.

(RONNIE starts stretching.)

DAVID

Getting bullied on the playground?

RONNIE

Something like that.

DAVID

And you want to be able to fight back?

RONNIE

Heck, no! I just want to be able to run away faster.

DAVID

I need to check out the far end of the park – it's kind of peaceful. I guess you can tag along.

RONNIE

Thanks!

DAVID

Want to put your book in my satchel? The far end of the park's a good mile away. I leave my stuff here.

RONNIE

Is it safe? 'cause I'm not done with this and it's getting compelling.

DAVID

Believe me, nobody's looking to steal books in this park. What are you reading?

(RONNIE hands over his encyclopedia which DAVID puts in his backpack and then stows it behind a plant or a rock or with his park equipment.)

RONNIE

The encyclopedia – “Book M.” Figured I better brush up on my knowledge of the moon before the moon walk. Are you going to watch that?

DAVID

Forgot about it.

RONNIE

*You forgot about the moon walk?*

DAVID

Yeah.

(They exit. NATASHA enters and opens her book. As she is doing that, SHERRIE enters with JOE following. JOE is now in full Shakespearean dress.)

SHERRIE

You told me you were not doing the mime thing any more!

JOE

And I’m not. Look! I’m not a mime anymore.

SHERRIE

I can see that. You look like you escaped from *Romeo and Juliet*!

JOE

That’s the look I was going for! Perfect for the Moon landing!

SHERRIE

What does Shakespeare have to do with the moon landing?

JOE

I’m Shakespeare – celebrating the moon landing -Shakespeare had a line about fighting aliens!

“Combat with adverse planets in the heavens!”

The Brad was truly ahead of his time.

SHERRIE

You’re nuts.

JOE

Join me on my Shakespearean adventure. Be my Juliet! Together we will speak the speech trippingly on the tongue. We will offer free Shakespeare in the Park! Bring culture to the masses – delight – enchant – enthrall!

SHERRIE

Sweet delusional Joe! There already *is* free Shakespeare in the Park. There has been for over ten years! They open *Twelfth Night* next week.

(JOE is momentarily taken aback – but just for a second.)

JOE

Anyone can put on a Shakespearean play. But can they do it with two actors ? That's never been done. Together, we can make history. We'll shoot for the moon and settle for the stars!

SHERRIE

I don't want to make history. Don't want to go to the moon. I just want to do my shift at the concession stand and live for today. Hang out in the park and get up in the morning and do the same thing all over again.

JOE

But that's so - ordinary. You know I have a calling!

SHERRIE

But who's doing the calling? You really don't know, do you?

JOE

I'm trying to find out!

SHERRIE

Oh Joe – I can hang out with you – when you look normal. When you're not in costume and just want to be a regular Joe –

JOE

You really don't want to be seen with me, do you?

SHERRIE

I'll be late. Gotta go.

(SHERRIE exits to go to work and JOE sits spies NATASHA .)

JOE

Hey.

NATASHA

Hey yourself.

JOE

Good book.

NATASHA

Yes, it is. And I'd like to continue to read it.

JOE

Tolstoy's chronicle of life, love and loss haunts me. Did you know Tolstoy didn't like to call it a novel? He thought it was history. Others categorize it as a romance novel – but that seems to be demeaning. Don't you think?

NATASHA

I do. This novel is quite simply a work of art.

JOE

I think so, too.

(Joe sits on the bench with her. NATASHA finally looks up.)

NATASHA

You're in the wrong costume. For Tostoy – it's all wrong.

JOE

This morning I thought I was going to be a Shakespearean actor in outer space. But now I am thinking I should be exploring Russia during the Napoleonic Wars. I'm searching for myself. I've tried sculpture, wood-turning, and being a mime and now I'm checking out being an actor. Trying it on. Seeing if it fits. I'm Joe, by the way.

NATASHA

Natasha.

JOE

Natasha – who is sitting in the park reading *War and Peace* by Tolstoy. It's perfect. Mind if I just sit here a bit?

NATASHA

Not at all.

(NATASHA continues to read as Joe just sits. Meanwhile, LEE, MAIDA and GENE “skulk” into the park. One may have a trench coat or a Sherlock Holmes hat. LEE has a telescope (from a spy kit), MAIDA may have some invisible ink and paper and GENE may have a *007 James Bond* spy-decoder-ring. These are all cheap toys from cereal boxes. They will all communicate into something ridiculous – a watch – a band-aid.)

GENE

Any sign of the weirdo gift-giver?

LEE

Negative. But the stuff's here. As promised.

MAIDA

We should dust for fingerprints.

LEE

Don't touch them! Maybe there's an explosive attached to it!

(CINDY, RUSSELL, TERRY and VICKY may come from different entrances and congregate. CHRIS is getting ready for work.)

LEE

People alert! The scavengers are gathering. The scavengers are gathering.

GENE

Roger. Over and out.

CINDY

My sister dyed her hair with Kool-Aid last night – it's the greatest shade of purple. I'm thinking of doing that.

VICKY

Purple hair would be so groovy –

CINDY

Yeah – she looks like a giant Easter egg.

RUSSELL

Can we not discuss purple hair? We're here to figure what the mysterious gift giver wants from us. I'm taking time out from my normal work to do this.

CINDY

Maybe - he doesn't want anything.

RUSSELL

Live in the real world. Everyone wants something. Everyone has a motive.

CINDY

There they are - the scavenger stuff – as promised. It's possible this could all be on the “up and up.”

RUSSELL

Someone's toying with us.

LEE

Careful – they could be wired to explode.

RUSSELL

Do you live in a Mission Impossible TV episode?

GENE

I just love it when the tape explodes at the beginning of each episode.

(RUSSELL takes the note. JOE, NATASHA and MAIDA move in to take a look. CHRIS pays attention. MADRIGAL may watch from afar.)

RUSSELL

I don't know if the gift-giver is evil or just plain weird. Listen to this.

*Pluck till time and times are done*

*The silver apples of the moon*

*The golden apples of the sun.*

CINDY

I don't get it.

JOE

It's from a poem. Everyone knows that.

LEE

*The gift-giver wants us to pick apples off of the moon?*

JOE

It's a sweet wish for all of you, if you think about it. If you knew the poem.

RUSSELL

You can't be serious.

JOE

But I am.

RUSSELL

No – I mean your “get-up” – you don't expect to be taken seriously dressed like Shakespeare.

JOE

But I do. And if you don't want my help – well – I won't explain the note to you. It's fine. I'm not hurt. I'm used to being scoffed at.

RUSSELL

Come on –

JOE

The poetry line is from *The Song of Wandering Aengus*. An Irish poem.

NATASHA

You read poetry?

JOE

It's how I relax. Don't you all read poetry?

ALL (but NATASHA)

Nope. Uhh uh, etc.

NATASHA

Yes.

TERRY

I don't get it. Why would someone throw in a line from a poem that no one understands and then expect us to come together over it?

LEE

Maybe it's an evil device to do away with us. Maybe the note is set to explode at a certain time and *ka-pow-ey!* We're all toast!

MAIDA

Stop with the explosions already!

JOE

Look at the line – and then look at the Moon Tree. It's obvious.  
*And pluck till time and times are done*  
*The silver apples of the moon*  
*The golden apples of the sun.*

VICKY

I get it! I so get it! The gift-giver wants us to pluck the apples off of the Moon Tree.

JOE

Give that girl a gold star!

(JOE plucks the apples off of the Moon Tree.)

I have three apples – do I have three volunteers to read what they say? Going.... going ....

(MAIDA, NATASHA and TERRY grab an apple.)

JOE (cont'd)

Gone.

TERRY

It's a riddle: "Find a box without hinges, key or sides that has golden treasure hid inside. Find the answer, bring it to the Moon Tree and you will get a gift."

NATASHA

And this one says: "Many wish to visit me, your hands will be the key; I have secrets to explore but you need your mind to unlock the door." Find this item, bring it to the Moon Tree and you will get a gift.

MAIDA

"I'm up all night and gone all day. I don't eat, cannot sleep and have many faces. Find me and win a gift."

RUSSELL

So Shakespeare – what do you make of these?

JOE

Easy. Find the answer to the riddle, then find something that represents the answer and bring it to the Moon Tree and you all get gifts. And the name's Joe.

(DAVID and RONNIE return. RONNIE joins his sister and DAVID joins CHRIS.)

RONNIE

What's going on?

VICKY

I thought you were in bed. And I have no clue as to what's happening.

LEE

Near as we can figure out, we're supposed to go to the moon, pick some apples and hang them on the dead branch.

NATASHA

No...., we're supposed to solve the riddle and bring the answer to the Moon Tree.

GENE

And don't forget that when we do that – we get a gift.

RUSSELL

Something's screwy here. Normal people don't give gifts to strangers. What's this person want from us? We've got to get him. First, we need to divide into teams.

(And others agree as SHERRIE enters.)

SHERRIE

Joe? JOE! You won't believe this! I got the day off and we can go to the zoo and the movies and everything!

JOE

That's great Sherrie – but I'm busy. I'm searching for the silver apples of the moon.

SHERRIE

Oh!

JOE

And the golden apples of the sun.

SHERRIE

Can I - search with you?

JOE

If you won't be too embarrassed.

NATASHA

You can be on our team.

SHERRIE

Who are you?

JOE

Oh! Sherrie this is Natasha. Natasha meet my friend Sherrie.

SHERRIE

Oh!

RUSSELL

So we divide up in three teams – everyone takes a riddle and figures it out. Agreed?

GENE

Shakespeare, you can be on my team.

VICKY

No, we called Shakespeare!

JOE

See? Some people like me. And it's Joe – the name's Joe.

CHRIS

I want to do this – I'll take my lunch early – really early. Come on, David. A change would do us good.

DAVID

No.

CHRIS

It'll be fun – remember fun?

DAVID

Not interested.

VICKY

(Aside)

Good. I really don't want to do this with him.

CINDY

Aren't you supposed to be cleaning the park? You can't play when you're working. I mean – look at this place – nothing but dead stuff everywhere.

CHRIS

I have a solution – the most mind-blowing radical idea ever – *if you want a cleaner park – do it yourself!*

RUSSELL

Whoa! Peace, love and happiness, man – let's not turn on each other.

TERRY

It's the gifts – the gifts are corrupting us.

RUSSELL

*You –*

(Pointing at CHRIS)

CHRIS

Chris...

RUSSELL

Go with the little kids – parts of the park are not safe and you know your way around. And Shakespeare can go with his friends. And we'll stick together. Nobody return until you've solved the riddle and found something to give to the Moon Tree. Got it?

JOE

What happens when we find the answers?

RUSSELL

Then, Shakespeare - we use it as bait to trap the gift-giver.

(And amid choruses of agreement, they group together sharing the riddle and introducing themselves to each other as they all exit to different parts of the park.)

CHRIS

Sure you don't want to join us?

DAVID

Don't think so. Somebody should stay and work.

(But left alone – he doesn't work. He goes to his Life Magazine and stares at the faces. MADRIGAL appears.)

MADRIGAL

That's a fine work ethic you're showing there.... David!

(DAVID hastily puts the Life Magazine away)

DAVID

I can be a bit of a slug sometimes.

MADRIGAL

You don't want to be knowing the mental picture conjured up by that statement.

DAVID

Probably not.

(Pause)

DAVID (cont'd)

They don't trust you – you know. They think – you're strange.

MADRIGAL

And you – do you think I'm strange?

DAVID

No stranger than anyone else around here. Why are you doing this? The Moon Tree? The riddles?

MADRIGAL

For me Da. I'm keeping him close by sharing him. Me Da gave me a world of enchantment and now I am giving that gift back to the world. Everyone needs an hour of magic. A little moon glow.

DAVID

What are the gifts?

MADRIGAL

Go on the quest and discover for yourself.

DAVID

I can't – I have –

MADRIGAL

- To work. I see. You're working.

DAVID

Ooooo! That cut me to the quick!

(DAVID falls down wounded.)

Aren't you going to summon the fairies to save me?

MADRIGAL

(MADRIGAL lifts him by the collar and nose-to-nose explains.)

There's a lot you need to be learning about the fairies my friend – they don't save you – they steal you and take you away to their world!

(She drops him and moves away.)

But sometimes - being stolen – is indeed what saves you!

(MADRIGAL exits as DAVID slowly gets up and looks at his dog tags.)

DAVID

Madrigal! I think – I want - to be stolen.

Lights fade to black

SCENE 3 – July 20<sup>th</sup>, afternoon

(AT RISE MAIDA, LEE, GENE and CHRIS are huddled over the riddle.)

LEE

Say it again.

MAIDA

Really – we all know it by heart. “I’m up all night, gone all day. I don’t eat, cannot sleep and show many faces.”

LEE

No clue.

CHRIS, GENE and MAIDA

*It’s the moon!*

LEE

Oh – yeah. It was the not eating thing that had me stumped.

GENE

And who knows – maybe the moon eats stars or something?

MAIDA

A star-eating moon – there’s a comforting thought.

LEE

Imagine the astronauts are walking on the moon – and the moon gets hungry and gobbles them up by mistake!

CHRIS

Can we get back to the task at hand. If we’re going to figure this out – we need to take the answer to the riddle and put it under the Moon Tree.

GENE

So – how’re we going to get the moon down here?

CHRIS

You didn’t really ask that.

MAIDA

Yeah – he did.

CHRIS

We need to find something that represents the moon.

GENE

Moon beams!

CHRIS

Can't catch them.

LEE

Moonshine!

CHRIS

No – we won't go there.

GENE

Green cheese! My grandma used to say the moon was made of green cheese.

MAIDA

My grandma always tells me that the moon is God's flashlight shining down on us.

CHRIS

God's flashlight. I like that. I have an idea. Follow me.

(And they exit discussing the merits of green cheese, a flashlight and moonbeams as JOE, NATASHA and SHERRIE come to another area of the park discussing their riddle. JOE is now dressed as an explorer.)

SHERRIE

One more time please... I can't get it in my head. "Find a box without hinges, key or lid yet golden treasure lies inside." I don't get the box. Boxes have lids.

JOE

(Possibly knocking his head into a tree or a rock.)

It's an egg – it's an egg – it's an egg!

SHERRIE

It can't be an egg – an egg's not a box –

JOE

But it's a vessel – a container - with no hinges – no lid – get it?

SHERRIE

Then it should say "find a vessel or a container" and it doesn't say that, Smarty-Pants.

JOE

It's an egg!

NATASHA

And it holds golden treasure.

SHERRIE

What treasure?

NATASHA

It holds an egg yolk.

SHERRIE

But that's not golden treasure!

NATASHA

It is if you're hungry!

SHERRIE

Assuming that it's an egg – and I'm not saying it is – where are we going to find an egg in the park? Oh! A bird's nest!

JOE

Can't take an egg from a bird's nest – against the law.

SHERRIE

You just like putting me down today, don't you?

JOE

No, I just have a fondness for staying out of jail.

SHERRIE

Great get-up by the way.

JOE

I knew you'd like it.

SHERRIE

It's almost normal. Note I said – almost.

NATASHA

I think we need to look at insect eggs.

SHERRIE

That's just – gross.

NATASHA

They're eggs after all. And I know where butterflies lay their eggs.

SHERRIE

You would.

(They exit as RUSSELL, TERRY, CINDY, VICKY and RONNIE enter.)

RUSSELL

One more time – it’s a book. “Many wish to visit me, your hands will be the key. I have secrets to explore, your mind unlocks the door.”

VICKY

But why would the gift-giver choose that riddle? There aren’t any books in the park.

RONNIE

Actually, I have one. And the Visitor’s Center has a whole bunch.

CINDY

They’re for sale. I’m not spending any money.

RONNIE

But you don’t have to – because I brought a book. I left it over there. See the backpack?

RUSSELL

There you have it. The answer to the riddle is a book. The kid has a book. I’ll put it under the Moon Tree and we wait. For the gift-giver to retrieve and that’s when we nail him.

(RUSSELL goes on the rock and finds the hidden books. As he grabs the encyclopedia, David’s *Life* magazine spills out from his satchel.)

RUSSELL

This it, kid?

(Sees the magazine and picks it up.)

What’s this?

(DAVID appears and is stunned to see RUSSELL by his stuff.)

DAVID

Drop it.

RUSSELL

Cool it, man – I didn’t mean –

DAVID

Get away from my stuff!

RUSSELL

I'm just getting -

DAVID

GET AWAY! You all – make me sick! Your posing and your posturing – “I’m going to save the world!” When actually there are people out there – trying to save the world – for you! For the likes of you! Look at the picture!

(DAVID and RUSSELL fight. Neither are fighters. The following lines are said until RONNIE manages to break it up. Appropriate improvisation – taunts are encouraged.)

Look at it! Sergeant Sam Johnson. He is not a pig! He is not a baby-killer. He is – was a good man. Say it! Sergeant Sam Johnson was not a baby killer!

RUSSELL

I – don’t know what you –

DAVID

SERGEANT SAM JOHNSON WAS NOT A BABY KILLER!

RUSSELL

Whoa – cool it – I don’t believe in fighting –

(There is a scuffle and RUSSELL is on the ground.)

RONNIE

DAVID!

(VICKY holds RONNIE back.)

DAVID

*Don’t believe in fighting? That’s all you do! You fight your country. You put down the greatest country!*

RUSSELL

I love my country – why do you think I want to stop the war – because of my love of country!

DAVID

*You don’t even know who the good guys are! Sergeant Sam Johnson was not a baby killer! Say it!*

RUSSELL

I don’t know this Sam person – I don’t know you -

DAVID

Sergeant Johnson –

RUSSELL

Just cool it -

DAVID

– Was not a baby killer... *Private Elliot Needham was not a baby killer...Private George Newcombe was not a baby killer – Say it!*

(DAVID is almost fighting blindly into the air and as RUSSELL starts to defend himself, RONNIE breaks free of VICKY.)

RONNIE

**Stop! He was just getting my book, David. Not your stuff.**

DAVID

That true?

RONNIE

I swear.

DAVID

I don't want any of you touching my stuff! You – all desecrate the memory of brave men everywhere!

RUSSELL

Easy – we didn't mean anything.

DAVID

I've seen you with your signs. I've listened to the names you call our men in uniform. Our saviors – none of you put your money where your mouth is – none of you put yourself on the line.

RUSSELL

I will. As soon as I turn eighteen – I'm burning my draft card. Just like my brother. He's in jail for two years.

DAVID

In jail? Do you visit him on his birthday?

RUSSELL

Well, yeah.

DAVID

And in two years he's out – to find a job – maybe marriage – a life.

RUSSELL

I guess.

DAVID

Well – my brother didn't get two years. He got life! He's twenty-three forever. See that man – that smiling soldier polished and ready for life – that's my brother - Sam. Sergeant Sam Johnson.

(DAVID holds out the magazine.)

He's dead. There will be no more birthdays. No marriage to Debbie, no life as a biologist. He won't make it to the Moon Landing tonight as promised. Cause he's – dead. All of those photos – Private Elliott Needham, Private George Newcombe ... they're all – dead.

(Silence)

DAVID (cont'd)

So – don't tell me about putting your life on the line. These men – my brother – they all put their lives on the line. And lost. For you. For all of you.

(DAVID grabs his stuff and exits. There is silence as the others just look at each other.)

RUSSELL

I think ... I'm – going to split. Yeah. Done for the day.

(RUSSELL exits. VICKY gets RONNIE's book and places it by the Moon Tree.)

VICKY

That's what we're supposed to do, right? Somebody tell me – what are we supposed to do?

(They look at each other as the lights fade to black.)