Acting Edition

To Tokyo & The Moon

by Steve Yockey

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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TO TOKYO & THE MOON was commissioned by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as part of the John F. Kennedy Centennial. It premiered at the Bing Crosby Theatre in Spokane, WA, as a part of the Region VII Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival on February 22, 2018. The production was directed by Shea King. The cast was as follows:

BEVERLY . . . . . Kelly Quinnett
JANET . . . . . Gail Harder
SUSAN . . . . . Kameron Nichols
SAKURA . . . . . Hanah Toyoda
CHORUS . . . . . Dan Cassilagio, Tyson Coles, Valerie Denton, Andrew Yoder, Cecil Milliken, Maggie Espinoza, and Aidan Leonard

CHARACTERS

BEVERLY – A woman, sardonic, exhausted, but a picture of poise and humor in the face of epic loss.

JANET – A young woman, Beverly's older daughter, acts too hip to care, but is really struggling.

SUSAN – A young woman, Beverly's younger daughter, full of spirit, bold, and incredibly stubborn.

SAKURA – A woman, Japanese, lovely and patient, very Pierre Cardin circa 1960s, visiting the United States. She's frankly confused by her current situation but far too polite to speak up.

CHORUS – A group of people, various and sundry experts in the many aspects of astrophysics.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

[ ] in the script indicate overlapping dialogue.

The set is mid-century modern American living room with a front door that leads out into the world. Outside the front door, high above the house, a robust and lustrous full moon hangs.

Sakura's Japanese is a conversational middle ground. Casual and gentle. Contextually, she's speaking to someone she knows well.

This all moves swiftly, careening ahead. It isn't very thoughtful, especially on the front end. It shouldn't be freighted with meaning.

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

– John Fitzgerald Kennedy

1. After The Funeral

(A mid-century modern living room. There is a front door leading to a small outside area. Suburban. Above that area, a full moon hangs in the sky.)

*(***BEVERLY***,* **JANET**, **SUSAN**, *and* **SAKURA** *enter.* **BEVERLY**, **JANET**, *and* **SUSAN** *are in all black. They look like they just came from a funeral.* **BEVERLY** *is carrying an arrangement of crisp, white flowers in a crystal vase or vessel of some kind. She can manage it with one hand or arm.* **SAKURA** *is in a chic vintage Pierre Cardin outfit from the 1960s with large, mod sunglasses and a handbag.)*

(As **BEVERLY** *and* **SUSAN** *take off coats, hang them up, and settle in,* **JANET** *stays near the door.* **BEVERLY** *does not put down the flower arrangement. She works around it for other tasks.)*

BEVERLY. Finally! That traffic, ugh, it's already dark out. Oh, Sakura, feel free to have a seat there on the couch. Or anywhere, I suppose.

*(***SAKURA** *just sits quietly on one end of the sofa.)*

That's perfect. Everyone, coats off. And please no throwing things [down just anywhere.]

SUSAN. [Mom, stop. You're] such a micro-manager.

BEVERLY. Honey, don't say that.

JANET. You interrupted the service multiple times to footnote people's stories [about Dad?]

SUSAN. [Like, stories] about Dad that didn't involve you.

BEVERLY. I think context is important. Janet, take that off and hang it up.

SUSAN. I'll be back in a minute!

*(***SUSAN** *runs out the front door and looks up at the moon.* **JANET** *just stands there. She doesn't remove her coat. But* **BEVERLY** *doesn't notice, her focus turned to* **SAKURA**.*)*

BEVERLY. Sakura, this is our home. Welcome. Would you like anything?

SAKURA. No, thank you.

BEVERLY. Well, I'm going to have a scotch neat. Janet, for God's sake, take off your coat and hang it up.

JANET. I'm not staying.

*(***SUSAN** *rushes back inside, slamming the door.)*

BEVERLY. Susan, don't slam the door.

SUSAN. I'm excited. I'm going to the moon. I've just taken a moments-long constitutional and definitively decided: I will go to the moon.

BEVERLY. Honey, no you won't. Now Janet, where exactly do you think you're off to this evening?

JANET. I'm going to [meet up with…]

SUSAN. [Mom, I'm going] to the moon. Dad used to tell me all the time I could do anything I put my mind to, even going to the moon. And that if I ever did, he'd be waiting there for me. So I'm going.

BEVERLY. Susan, your father was speaking symbolically. And even though he was an incredible man, we all

know that he drank quite a bit, let's just be honest about things.

SAKURA. The moon is quite lovely.

BEVERLY. Well, I don't think anyone is disputing that.

SAKURA. But the moon is also so lonely, don't you think? It's almost like all the longing in the world has been wrapped into a ball and hung in the sky. We cannot touch it, but it waits for us to reach out. It yearns for us to try.

SUSAN. See, Sakura gets it.

BEVERLY. Sakura is our guest [and she may…]

JANET. [Mom, she] is not our guest.

BEVERLY. She is sitting right there and she can hear you. Now Sakura is welcome to share deep and moving reveries that cause all of us to reflect on our own relationships to the moon, but that does not change the fact that I'd like you to drop this business about physically going there.

SUSAN. Unfortunately, I can't because I am going to the moon.

BEVERLY. You can't go to the moon.

SUSAN. Not with that attitude.

JANET. All right, I'm leaving now.

BEVERLY. Janet, hold it right there. Susan, what I meant is that you are a young woman with no resources. Maybe one day you could go to the moon, but not anytime soon. Plus you have a clarinet recital next Tuesday and I am going to hear you play that Copland "Clarinet Concerto" excerpt.

JANET. Oh wow, I don't have to go to [that, do I?]

BEVERLY. [Yes, you have] to go, be supportive of your sister.

SUSAN. If you supported me then you would have let me play "Dream March and Circus Music" from *The Red Pony* like I wanted.

BEVERLY. Copland's "Clarinet Concerto" is a better selection.

SUSAN. They're both by Copland!

BEVERLY. Honey, I'm doing my best to keep it together today and I didn't make the rules of music. Or physics. You simply cannot be an entire orchestra. You are one clarinet. So the "Clarinet Concerto" just makes more sense.

SUSAN. You're really good at telling me all the things I can't do.

BEVERLY. Fine. But answer me this: you're going to the moon all by yourself?

SUSAN. Obviously I'm not going to do it by myself. I'm going to assemble a team of experts, various and sundry experts. I'm going to challenge them with a deadline and make it a possibility. Historically that works.

(She rushes out of the room. **BEVERLY** *turns to* **SAKURA**...*)*

BEVERLY. The imagination on this one.

*(***SAKURA** *smiles and shrugs.)*

JANET. Mom, don't aside to her. She's not your ally or your confidante or whatever you imagine. She's your hostage.

BEVERLY. Don't be ridiculous. She's visiting. You're visiting from where?

SAKURA. Tokyo.

BEVERLY. How nice.

JANET. Mom.

BEVERLY. She was lost and we're going to help her.

JANET. She was not lost. You kept asking, "Are you lost?" over and over again while leading her away from the cemetery and putting her into our car and bringing her back to our house.

BEVERLY. Now, honey, that is a massive oversimplification.

SAKURA. I hoped to see the eternal flame.

JANET. See? She's just too polite to tell you this is false imprisonment.

BEVERLY. Well, we will help Sakura get to the eternal flame. In the meantime, I'm reading a biography on Kennedy and we can compare notes. Honestly, thank goodness we came along when we did or who knows how long you may have been lost?

JANET. Mom, you've taken her literally miles from where [she wants to be.]

BEVERLY. [You know it pains] me to say this, but you have never understood charitable behavior or simple kindness, Janet. Honestly, I blame myself.

JANET. I blame you, too. For kidnapping a tourist.

BEVERLY. I understand you are upset about your father's death. But channeling your rage towards me isn't going to make things better.

JANET. Oh. Okay. And I understand that you feel powerless to fix that he's gone, and it breaks my heart. But channeling those feelings into abducting a woman to fix a problem that you created in order to have purpose and feel agency in the world is not going to make things better either.

BEVERLY. Well let me just rush outside and check the mailbox to see if our degrees in advanced psychoanalysis have arrived yet!

*(***SUSAN** *rushes back on with an enormous, old school phone book.)*

SUSAN. Dad said I could go to the moon and I'm going to prove him right!

(She rushes over to a nearby table, pulls the TouchTone crimp-corded phone over, sets down the giant phone book, and starts searching for numbers. Eventually she starts making calls and having muffled conversations about going to the moon.)

BEVERLY. Well, I can't stop you, so go ahead. Be bold, Susan. Just please clean up after yourself. Janet, if you're done hating everything would you please fix Sakura some tea?

JANET. I can call the police for her?

BEVERLY. Janet, I'm so exhausted.

JANET. I can't make her tea. I'm leaving. I'm going to meet up with Evan.

BEVERLY. You most certainly are not going to meet up with Evan.

JANET. You wouldn't let him come to the funeral and now you won't even let me see him? What kind of a police state is this?

BEVERLY. It's the kind of police state where your new boyfriend with all of those charming tattoos can wait while you stay here to eat [with your family.]

JANET. [Ugh, I don't want] any of this "sad people" food. Everyone keeps bringing us "sad people" food.

BEVERLY. It now seems clear you are not done hating everything yet.

JANET. Like how many green bean casseroles can one family eat?

BEVERLY. It's because the recipe is on the can.

JANET. And that stupid peach pie, did you taste that stupid peach pie?

BEVERLY. Not yet. Honey, people don't know what to do when someone dies. They feel awkward. So they bring food. It's comforting. Anyway, it's supposed to be comforting. At least it feels like an effort.

JANET. Those peaches don't taste like someone cared. They taste like they came from a can. They taste. Like they came. From a can.

BEVERLY. Don't be a snob.

JANET. I'm not eating it.

BEVERLY. Be brave, Janet.

JANET. I'm not eating any of it.

BEVERLY. Then it will all go to waste! What good does that do? Honestly, what on earth has you in such a mood today?

JANET. Dad is dead!

SUSAN. Hey! Keep it down! I'm on the phone with various and sundry experts.

*(***JANET** *crosses her arms and slumps into a chair in a huff. Pause.* **BEVERLY** *crosses over and kneels next to her.)*

BEVERLY. Today is a very difficult day. The service was difficult. And the truth of it will hit us in wave after wave. We must brace ourselves. We must brace each other.

(Pause.)

JANET. I'm sorry I yelled.

BEVERLY. That's all right. I'm not sure there are any rules about days like today.

JANET. Mom?

BEVERLY. Yes, honey?

JANET. You don't like Evan, do you?

BEVERLY. Clearly not.

JANET. Mom?

BEVERLY. Yes?

JANET. Are you going to put down that flower arrangement?

BEVERLY. Eventually.

*(**SUSAN** hangs up the phone and makes an announcement.)*

SUSAN. You'll be happy to know that everything is coming together. Beautifully. Thank you for your begrudging support family! I will remember you fondly in the wake of my grand success.

(She takes the phone book and marches off.)

JANET. Mom, I think something's very wrong with Susan.

BEVERLY. She's just upset. But honestly, honey, it's good for her to dream. Dreams are especially important during bleak times. We need…we need things to hold on to in the dark. Now, let's go eat some of that "sad food," all right? I'll try a slice of that peach pie you hate so much.

*(**JANET** and **BEVERLY** head into the kitchen. **BEVERLY** does not put down the flower arrangement.)*

*(They've all left **SAKURA** sitting alone. She takes off her sunglasses. The lights dim as a warm special rises on her. She reaches into her purse and takes out her smartphone. She dials and waits. As **SAKURA** speaks, an English translation of her words appears in supertitles somewhere else onstage.)*

SAKURA. Konnichiwa.

Uun. Heiki heiki. Shinpai sasete gomenne.

Jitsuwa, ima doko ni iru no wa wakaranaikedo.

Shiranai kazoku ni yuukaisarete shimatta.

Uun, kikendewa nai to omouyo. Ocha demo kuretashi.

Sugoku kanashii kazoku shika mienaiwa.

Itsumade kenkinsareru no wa mada wakaranaikedo.

Dameyo, shitsurei to omowanai?

Ah, souda, kurerunetto no konsaato ni derukamo shirenai yo.

Un, doumo. Mada denwa kakeruwa.

Otsukare.

[Hello.

No. I'm fine, I'm fine. I am sorry to have worried you.

Actually, I don't really know where I am right now.

I am abducted by a family that I don't know.

No, I don't think they are dangerous. They even gave me tea.

They only seem like a very sad family.

I don't know until when I will be held hostage.

No. That's rude, don't you think?

Oh, right, I might be attending a clarinet concert.

Yes, thank you. I will call you again.

Take care.**]**

(She hangs up the phone as the lights fade out.)

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