

Legacy

A Short Play

By Dakota Fontes

## **Legacy**

### **A Short Play**

#### **Cast of Characters:**

James, late 40s to early 50s.

Jimmy, 20s.

#### **Time and Place:**

A bench at a lake, evening.

#### **Note:**

Jimmy should not be drunk beyond coherent thought, but there should be a small level of inebriation that is visible.

#### **TRIGGER WARNING:**

This play contains themes of grief, abandonment, and substance abuse.

Lights up. JIMMY sits by the lake, staring off, holding a fishing pole, and drinking a bottle of vodka.

Beat.

JAMES enters behind JIMMY. JIMMY finishes the bottle. Starts to put the cap back on.

JIMMY

Finished with that.

JIMMY chucks the bottle behind him. It shatters at JAMES's feet. JIMMY reaches in his bag and opens another bottle. Drinks.

Beat.

JIMMY's phone rings. He shakes his head, trying to sober himself up. He answers the phone.

JIMMY

Hello... The lake... Mom, I know. I will be home soon... Yes, I did my homework... Yes, 9am... Alright, love you too. Bye.

JAMES

I see your mom hasn't changed.

JIMMY is startled.

JAMES

Still nagging you.

JIMMY

Dad?

JAMES

Hi, son... You know, I came here yesterday... listened to the silent rush of water as the wind made tiny waves. Watched the ducks swim; There was a family right over there  
(gestures toward audience)  
playing Frisbee with their dog.

JIMMY

What are... -/ How are...

JAMES

I get why you come here.

JIMMY

How -/ are you-

JAMES

We came here once, with Bolt. You remember that?

JIMMY nods.

JAMES

And then when Bolt passed, you kept coming back here. I see it now though. The birds chirping. The snow-capped mountains in the distance. I see it. It's calm. It's soothing. Other than the random people making a shit ton of noise.

(to the audience)

HEY YOU! YEAH, CAN YOU KEEP IT DOWN? WE'RE FISHING OVER HERE.

JIMMY

Dad...

JAMES

What? If these assholes would stop -/ being so loud maybe we could catch something-

JIMMY

Dad, DAD!

JAMES

(laughing)

Alright, alright.

Beat.

Just like when we were fishing, huh?

JIMMY nods.

Silence.

JIMMY

Does it hurt?

JAMES looks at JIMMY.

Beat.

JAMES

(sitting next to JIMMY)

I would imagine it does. Getting hooked in the mouth and then being dragged away from your family and friends only to be eaten by the tall, weird looking monsters that we are.

JIMMY

You know -/ that's not what I am talking about.

JAMES

Like what's up with our noses? You ever think about how weirdly shaped our noses are?

JIMMY

Dad.

JAMES

And our ears. What about our ears? It's like a monkey's, but not. Although some people's ears look like actual monkeys.

(gestures to audience)

Like this guy.

JIMMY

DAD!

(to audience member)

He didn't mean that.

JAMES

You're right.

(to audience member)

I'm sorry.

Beat.

JIMMY

Will you just answer the question?

JAMES

I did. I believe it does hurt... Although, can fish even feel? -  
/ Can they comprehend what is happening?

JIMMY

Dad, for once just stop avoiding me!

Pause.

JAMES

Okay, son. No, it doesn't hurt. Not really. It's like you're  
falling asleep. The pain goes away, your worries disappear,  
you're finally at peace.

JIMMY

So you didn't feel anything?

JAMES

No.

Beat.

JIMMY

Why did you leave?

JAMES

Do you remember the baseball games we would go to?

JIMMY

Yeah.

JAMES

I miss those. You always asked for that hot dog. Every. Single. Game.

JIMMY

You never bought me one.

JAMES

It was \$25! You never could have eaten the whole thing!

JIMMY

Yes I could have!

JAMES

No you couldn't.

JIMMY

Yes I could.

JAMES

No you couldn't.

JIMMY

Yes I could!

JAMES begins to respond.

And don't you say I couldn't!

JAMES

(happily frustrated)

Ahh!

(beat)

I see you learned from the master.

JIMMY

I did.

JIMMY's smile turns to  
sadness.

Silence.

JAMES

You remember how instead of the hot dog, after the game I would  
take you to your favorite restaurant?

JIMMY

Alberta Dave's.

JAMES

They had the worst food ever, I still don't know why it was your  
favorite.

JIMMY

They had the best chicken nuggets!

JAMES

(chuckling)

They were ninety percent fat!

JIMMY

(laughing)

That's the point!

JIMMY's laughter turns to  
sadness.

Beat.

JAMES

Do you remember that Drake concert you wanted to go to?

JIMMY

I remember you didn't let me go.

JAMES

You went anyway.



JIMMY is surprised.

JAMES

We knew. I remember you being super nice to your mom and I afterwards.

JIMMY

I didn't know that you knew.

JAMES

I knew a lot, Jimmy... I remember a lot. I remember how your mom had me change your diaper and you peed all over my favorite shirt. Twice. I remember you walking for the first time. I remember, after it was healed, you getting back on the same bike that broke your leg, and you rode that bike in the same spot you broke it.

JIMMY is silent.

I may not remember everything, but I remember the good things. Maybe not the pain, or heartache, or all of my episodes, -/ but I remember the good parts.

JIMMY

Of course you don't remember those.

JAMES

There was nothing I could do.

JIMMY

You could have stopped drinking!

JAMES

I know. And that was my mistake.

JIMMY

So why didn't you?

JAMES

What?

JIMMY

Stop drinking?

JAMES

(sighs)

It's a disease.

JIMMY

Oh fuck off, dad. Don't give me that bullshit.

Silence.

JAMES

It was a habit. When I married your mother, she told me that I had to stop drinking so much. I promised her that I would. I thought she was enough of a reason that I could break years of habits.

JIMMY

And she wasn't.

JAMES

She wasn't.

JIMMY

And neither am I.

JIMMY starts to walk away.

JAMES

Jimmy, no. That is not true.

JIMMY

(crying)

Why? Why wasn't I enough?

JAMES

You are.

JIMMY

Apparently, I'm not.

JAMES

Yes, you are.

JIMMY

No, I'm not.

JAMES

Yes you are. And don't you say you're not!

(JIMMY is not amused)

(Beat)

Look. You are enough, and I know you may think I left because you weren't, but I left because I wasn't enough.

(JIMMY is silent)

I was ashamed that I couldn't be the dad I wanted to be.

JIMMY

And leaving was how to be better.

JAMES

I thought you would be better off without me.

JIMMY

You know that's not true.

JAMES

I know that now. And I am sorry that I can't make that up to you now.

JIMMY

(chuckling from pain)

You're sorry...

JAMES

Yes.

JIMMY

You're sorry...

JAMES

Yes, I am.

JIMMY

You don't get to be sorry! You left! Mom and me! You can't come back from that -/ and you don't get to be sorry!

JAMES

NO! I can't... You're right, I don't get to be sorry... But that's all I have.

BEAT.

JIMMY's anger shifts into a break down.

JIMMY

Maybe if I found you sooner. Maybe I could have saved you. >

JAMES

There was nothing you could do. >

JIMMY

I could have gotten you to the hospital sooner. I could have given you CPR.

JAMES

Son... Son, Stop!

(Pause)

There was a blood clot. It blocked flow to my heart. The tissue had no oxygen and died. -/ There was nothing you could do.

JIMMY

But what if I answered your call? What if I didn't ignore it? What if I told you -/ not to drink anymore?

JAMES

Stop! You can't think like that.

JIMMY

Why not?

JAMES

Because my dad died in my arms when I was eight.

(pause)

He had a heart attack. Like me.

Beat.

I blamed myself for years. After school, I walked inside and went into the kitchen. He had the Andy Griffith show on so I grabbed some Doritos and went to go watch with him. There he was. Lying on the floor.

(pause)

No matter what I had done differently, it was too late. No matter what you had done differently, it was too late. And that's okay.

JAMES

We all die. The goal isn't to live forever, the goal is to create something that will.

JIMMY looks at JAMES.

Chuck Palahniuk.

JIMMY

The Fight Club guy?

JAMES

Chuck knew to create something that would outlive him when he is gone. So he created Fight Club. A novel. A movie. A legacy.

JIMMY

You didn't create a novel, or a movie, or a legacy.

JAMES

Novel, no. Movie, no. But a legacy, yeah.

JIMMY

What legacy?

JAMES

I created you.

Silence. They share a moment.

I have to go now.

JAMES gets up to leave.

JIMMY

Hey, Dad.

JAMES turns around.

...I'm going to miss you.

JAMES

Take care of yourself, Jimmy.

JIMMY looks away. He then looks back. JAMES is gone.

Beat.

JIMMY grabs his chest.

JIMMY

I love you, Dad.

JIMMY holds his chest, trusting that his dad loves him. JIMMY picks up the bottle of vodka. Starts to drink. Stops. Sets the bottle down on the bench. Stands. Turns to where JAMES exited. Then looks back at the bottle.

**FADE .**