

IMANI'S MOON

JaNay Brown-Wood • Illustrated by Hazel Mitchell

978-1-934133-57-6 HC \$17.95

E-book editions also available

Ages 6–9 • 8 x 10 • 32 pages

Full-color illustrations

Little Imani is the smallest one in her village. The other children make fun of her and tell her she's too tiny and that she'll never amount to anything. Imani begins to believe them.

At bedtime, Imani's mama tells her stories of the Maasai mythologies: about Olapa, the moon goddess and about Anansi the spider. They accomplished what would seem impossible. Imani's mama tells her that she is the one who needs to believe if she wants to achieve great things. So, Imani sets out to touch the moon.

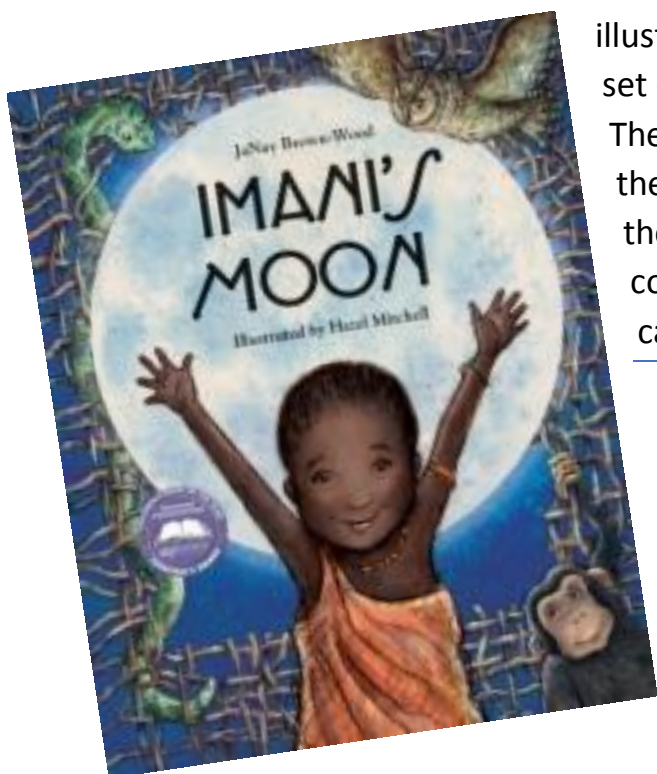
This beautiful story of a little girl who believed will inspire young readers to reach for their own moons.

Readers Theater Developed by Marcie Colleen

Imani's Moon

Readers Theater

by Marcie Colleen



Read aloud *Imani's Moon* by JaNay Brown-Wood, illustrated by Hazel Mitchell. Then, hand out a set of photocopied scripts to twelve children. The remaining children will be the audience. For the first run-through, children will simply read their role aloud. Once all readers are comfortable with their parts, a second reading can include props and costumes, if desired.

This script was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a MA in Educational Theater from NYU.

Marcie can often be found writing picture books at home in Brooklyn, NYC. Visit her at www.thisismarciecolleen.com.

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Roles:

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

**Village Children
(four or more readers)**

Nyoka the Snake

Sokwe the Chimp

Bundi the Owl

Imani

Mama

Olapa

Narrator 1: Imani was the smallest child in her village.

Narrator 2: The other children teased her.

Village Children: Look at tiny Imani!

Nyoka the Snake: She's no higher than a lion cub's knee!

Sokwe the Chimp: Careful. Don't let the meerkats stomp on your head!

Bundi the Owl: Mini Imani, you'll never accomplish anything!

Narrator 1: Day in and day out,

Narrator 2: the children teased her.

Imani: And I, Imani began to believe them.

Mama: Every night I, Imani's mama lifted her spirits with stories.

Narrator 1: This night Mama told her of Olapa, the goddess of the moon,

Narrator 2: who fought a great battle against the god of the sun and triumphed.

Imani: Mama, do you think I could do something great like Olapa?

Narrator 1 & 2: Mama answered,

Mama: I do.

Imani: Even something like touching the moon?

Narrator 1: "Even that," said Mama.

Mama: But it is you who must believe.

Narrator 2: Mama kissed her forehead.

Mama: Usiku mwema. Good night, Imani.

Imani: Good night, Mama.

Olapa: That night Olapa, that's me,

Imani: and Imani,

Olapa & Imani: battled side by side in Imani's dreams.

Narrator 1: Together they protected the people of earth from danger, flew through the sky,

Narrator 2: and guarded the moon.

Olapa & Imani: Imani stood tall and brave on the moon with Olapa beside her.

Narrator 1: The next morning Imani awoke, inspired to do something great.

Imani: Today I will touch the moon.

Narrator 2: Later that day Imani made her way through the village.

Narrator 1 & 2: The children teased.

Village Children: Look! It's Imani the Ant.

Nyoka the Snake: Where are you off to?

Sokwe the Chimp: Where are you off to?

Bundi the Owl: Going to catch a ride on a beetle's back?

Imani: I am going to touch the moon,

Narrator 1: answered Imani.

Narrator 2: The children laughed and followed her.

Narrator: As the moon grew brighter in the late-day sky, Imani began to climb the tallest tree.

Narrator 2: The bark scraped her small hands and legs. On a branch above, Nyoka the snake appeared.

Nyoka the Snake: What'ssss going on?

Imani: I am going to touch the moon.

Nyoka the Snake: That's impossssible! It's much too high!

Narrator 1: Imani climbed on.

Narrator 2: As she got higher and higher, climbing became harder and harder.

Narrator 1: She stretched herself to reach the next branch,

Narrator 2: but lost her footing and fell to the ground with a...

Everyone: THUMP!

Imani: Maybe I won't touch the moon.

Mama: That night Mama told Imani about Anansi,

Narrator 1: the small spider who captured a snake,

Narrator 2: to gain a name for himself.

Imani: Mama, do you believe that a spider, so small and weak, could really capture a snake, so long and quick?

Mama: I do.

Imani: Even if no one else believes it?

Mama: A challenge is only impossible until someone accomplishes it.

Everyone: Imani, it is only you who must believe.

Narrator 1: Imani drifted to sleep and dreamed that she climbed to the top of the highest tree in her village, captured a snake, and made a name for herself.

Narrator 2: The next day Imani searched the village and gathered twigs, leaves, sticky berries, and rope. Then she headed back to the tallest tree, sat down, and got to work.

Village Children, Nyoka,
Sokwe, Bundi: What's Imani the Tiny up to today?

Imani: I am going to touch the moon.

Narrator 1: As the moon began to appear,

Imani pulled her creation onto her arms.

Narrator 2: She spread her arms out wide,
and sprinted past the tallest tree as quickly as she could.

Narrator 1: Imani's wings caught a gust of wind.
She soared as high as the treetops.

Sokwe the Chimp: What are you-oooh doing up here?

Narrator 2: Sokwe the chimpanzee was confused to see a flying human.

Imani: I am going to touch the moon!

Sokwe the Chimp: You-oooh can't do-oooh that!

Village children: Give up!

Nyoka the Snake: Give up!

Bundi the Owl: Give up!

Narrator 1: Imani flew on. Then suddenly a strong burst of wind

Narrator 2: —too mighty for her delicate wings—

Narrator 1: sent her sailing into the tree with a . . .

Everyone: CRASH!

Village Children: The children laughed and left her behind.

Imani: I give up.

Narrator 1: Heading back home Imani heard her village gathered in celebration.

Narrator 2: The young warriors were performing the adumu, the jumping dance.

Narrator 1: Over and over again the warriors jumped high into the sky,

Narrator 2: their heads caressing the clouds.

Narrator 1: Cheers and chants rang from the proud villagers.

Everyone: (everyone cheers)

Narrator 2: One of the warriors jumped higher than any other.

Imani: This warrior seemed to fly.

Narrators 1 & 2: Imani could not look away.

Imani: She cheered the loudest for him.

Mama: After the celebration Mama and Imani returned home.

Imani: Too tired for a story, Imani went straight to sleep.

Narrator 1: Her dreams danced with visions of the adumu.

Narrator 2: The cheers and chants from her tribe still echoed in her head.

Imani: When morning broke, Imani went to the tallest tree.

Village Children: She's going to climb again!

Nyoka the Snake: But instead, Imani jumped.

Sokwe the Chimp: Imani jumped.

Everyone: One jump! Two jumps! Three!

Narrator 1: Each jump took her higher and higher and higher.

Narrator 2: Imani jumped all day.

Narrator 1: As the sky grew darker, Bundi the owl flew by.

Bundi the Owl: What are you-hoo doing?

Imani: I am going to touch the moon.

Bundi the Owl: Don't fool yourself. You-hoo won't make it!

Imani: But Imani jumped on.

Narrator 2: Her body grew tired. Her legs ached, her feet throbbed,

Village Children: and the children continued to taunt.

Narrator 1: But like a warrior she jumped higher than each jump before.

Narrator 2: In her mind she could hear only the cheers and chants of her proud village.

Everyone: (everyone cheers quietly)

Narrator 1: She could see only herself as one of the warriors, rising from the earth.

Narrator 2: She kept her eyes on the moon above and felt herself getting closer.

Imani: With a final push of her legs, Imani jumped once more, and soared through the night sky.

Narrator 1: and soared through the night sky.

Narrator 2: She landed on the face of the moon.

Imani: Olapa!

Narrators 1 & 2: Imani called.

Imani: I am here! I am Imani, and I have made it to the moon!

Olapa: So you have," said a voice in the wind. "Welcome."

Imani: Imani clapped.

Narrator 1: She laughed.

Imani: She sang.

Narrator 2: She rolled in the moon dust and danced with excitement.

Imani: As she celebrated she noticed something shiny.

Narrator 1: She picked up the thing that dazzled her eye,

Narrator 2: and turned it over in her hands.

Narrators 1 & 2, Imani: It was a small, round moon rock.

Imani: Her own tiny moon.

Olapa: A gift for you, Imani the Great.

Imani: Thank you, Goddess of the Moon.

Narrator 1: Feeling lighter than ever before, Imani jumped one last time,

Narrator 2: and floated from the moon toward the waiting earth.

Narrator 1: Down from the sky came Imani,

Imani: the small girl with the small moon in her hand.

Narrator 2: All was quiet.

Village Children: No one taunted

Nyoka the Snake: or hissed

Sokwe the Chimp: or mocked

Bundi the Owl: or hooted.

Mama: That night Imani called to her mama.

Imani: Can I tell you a story tonight?

Mama: Which one?

Imani: It is The Tale of the Girl Who Touched the Moon.

Everyone: Mama listened as Imani told her story.

Mama: Where did you hear such a tale?

Narrator 1: Imani opened her hands,

Narrator 2: and revealed the glowing moon rock,

Everyone: so small and beautiful.

Imani: It is my story, Mama. I am the girl who touched the moon,

Olapa: and was welcomed by Olapa.

Imani: I am the one who believed.