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Destination Moon

By Alford Van Ronkel

There it is, General.
It's your vindication.
Profit without honor, heh?
Well, at least I'm still alive
to see this.
They'll break their necks to get you
back when they see what this can do!
21...20...19...
18...17...16...15...
14...13...12...11...
10...9...8...7
6...5...4...3...
2...1...Fire!
Sweeney!
Stay in here!
There may be more explosions!
What happened, Charles?
What went wrong? - I don't know!
There couldn't have been anything
wrong with the design aeronautically.
No, it was the motor.
Why? Why after 4 years
of development and tests?
It seems impossible but I can
think of only one thing...-What?
Somebody tampered.
- Sabotage?
That's for intelligence to find out
while we build another.
I'm afraid you won't, Charles.
- Of course we will!
Do you think this failure will make it
easier to get new appropriations?
Things like this mean military cuts.
Research is going back to the
laboratories. - Then I will too.
I'm not quitting!
First, I want to re-introduce myself
to my wife and kids.
Mow the lawn, fix leaky faucets,
paint fences and...
...read a few detective stories
in the bathtub.
Then get on with the problem and a

few others I've neglected.
A satellite to circle the Earth
forever at 12,000 miles above sea level.
What did I call it just before
it was fired?
Your vindication, General?
I'm sorry. I'm sorrier
about that than anything else.
For your years of crusading all I've
given you is...
...the most expensive pile of junk
in history.
General Thayer is here, Mr. Barnes.
- Fine. Send him in.
Don't forget to wash behind your ears!
How was your trip, General?
- Very smooth.
I flew in on one of your Skyliners.
Nice ship, Jimmy. Very nice.
Whenever you start with a compliment,
you're after something.
That's hardly civil, Jim.
I haven't seen you for 2 years.
Did I ask you for something the
last time I saw you?
You certainly did!
You wanted a shoulder to cry on
because Cargraves' rocket fizzled.
Glad to see you anyway.
I'm not wasting time crying
about that anymore.
After the way you sold me...

Quote:

necessity."
"If any other power gets one into
space before we do...
...we'll no longer be the United States,
we'll be the Disunited World, etc..."
It's twice as true today.
You proved that a satellite rocket
isn't practical.
It blew up, didn't it?
Did it blow up, Jimmy?

Or was it blown up?
Blown up?
Why ask me?
Army Intelligence might know.
They know.
What's your pitch, General?
I'll tell you!
- Wait a minute...
I think I can put this together myself!
You're a satellite rocket man...
You crusaded yourself right out of the
service and you kept on crusading.
Finally they took up the Cargraves
project and it fizzled.
Now, following the course of old
established habits...
...you'd like to drop it
in my lap!
Well, I love you General...
...but I'm just a plain manufacturer,
not the Dept. of Defense!
The answer is no!
Don't light that cigar,
we're going to lunch!
Who said you're anything but a
manufacturer? That's why I came to you.
Building rocket satellites is big stuff.
I couldn't begin to finance one....
I'm not asking you to rebuild
the satellite.
Cargraves spent 4 years
on that project!
That rocket could have and should
have done everything we anticipated!
There's no time nor need
to repeat that experiment.
Then what are you driving at now?
- The moon!
Okay, I'll listen.
Tell me.
I did tell you! The next rocket
we build is going to the moon!
Let's go to lunch.
- I'm serious, Jim.

You can't be! It's too fantastic!
The Moon? Impossible!
Even with an atomic energy engine?
Exhaust velocity potential
of 30,000 ft/sec?
A thrust of 3,000,000 pounds?
Why, even Guesstly's atomic engine has
only limited use. He has no mobile unit.
Cargrave's has spent the last 2 years
on it. He designed and tested it.
His scale model ran for an hour and 23
minutes before it blew up!
Incredible!
- I saw it, Jim.
And the government hasn't taken
that over?
It's peacetime. The government isn't
making that kind of appropriations.
They'll need to rocket one day
and they'll turn to you!
To private industry. Government always
does that when it gets in a jam!
This time, I figured we might be ready
for the government!
Preparedness isn't all military, Jim.
What about the money?
That's not the problem!
It's production. That's why I came
to you. You're a production man.
The problem right now is
one of research.
Designing, special materials...
the pooling of resources, specialized
skills, engineering brains....
industrial capacity.
No single company could
possibly do it.
But combined American industry
sparked by Jim Barnes...
could put a rocket on the moon
within a year.
What do you say, Jim?
Do we go to lunch?
Or do we go to the moon?

The moon, huh?
Here's the control room.
All this space below carries the working
fluid, the reaction mass.
Water heated to dry steam by the atomic
pile and expelled by this jet.
Here we have the shielding to
protect the crew from radioactivity.
Here are the gyros that can be used to
turn the ship to any desired attitude.
I admit, gentlemen, that this
enterprise appeals to me!
I've always been attracted by
progressive forms of transportation!
I'm not known as a
"horse and buggy" man!
I'd like to have a finger in this
new devil.
Though nothing would tempt
me to ride in it.
But can we afford it?
I've been told you can, Mr. La Porte!
Now listen, I've known you
from way back...
Two engine planes weren't fast enough;
you had to go in for four.
Then props weren't fast enough;
you had to go in for jets.
Now, you've got something else.
Something that will go higher and faster
than anything before it.
You can't swing it alone, so you're
trying to rope us in on it.
Before we go along with you, you'll
have to tell us...what's the payoff?
Dollars and cents?
I don't know.
I want to do this job because it's
never been done, because I don't know.
It's research, it's pioneering!
What's the moon?
Another North or South Pole?
Our nearest neighbor in the sky!
- But why go there, Jim?

We'll know when we get there.
We'll tell you when we get back!
It's a venture I don't want to be
left out of.
I like our viewpoint, Jim. But there
are those here who won't see it.
They don't even understand it!
I've got a first reader lesson
for them.
Sit down will you fellows?
Gentlemen!
May I have your attention please?
If you'll be seated, I'd like to show
you a movie prepared for this meeting.
We have one of Hollywood's best known
actors to play for you!
Alright, Sam!
I'm a busy man.
Dragging me all the way here
to talk about a rocket to the moon!
It's ridiculous!
Comic book stuff!
Comic book stuff, eh?
Life Magazine doesn't think so!
Nor Look, nor Pic, nor Collier's...
nor your biggest daily newspapers!
It'll never get off the ground!
No propeller!
Rockets do not employ propellers.
They use jets.
So do gas stoves, but they
don't fly to the moon.
Obviously, you know nothing
about rockets.
Now, let's pretend that umbrella
of yours is a shotgun.
Shoot it!
Who pushed me?
- The gun, Woody.
The charged not only fired out of the
muzzle,
it kicked back with equal force
against the barrel.
It wouldn't happen again in a

hundred times!

Shoot it at the ground a few times quickly and see what happens.

That same principle applies to rockets.

It is the same shotgun kick of the explosives...

that throws the rocket forward.

That kick is independent of the air around the rocket.

It also works in a vacuum or in outer space which is a vacuum.

The moon is easier to reach than you realize.

Oh sure, it's a cinch!

Only 240,000 miles!

Paved highway all the way and a gas station at every intersection!

Fuel is no problem, Woody. The engines do not have to blast all the time.

Just long enough to get away from the gravitational pull of the Earth.

Following which you fall wherever you are headed for.

Get in and I'll demonstrate!

Let me out of here!

Help! Help!

At the start, the jets blast powerfully enough...

to counteract the gravitational pull of the Earth.

Once out of the Earth's atmosphere, the rocket just keeps on going...

encountering no resistance to slow it up.

The rocket does not appear to be traveling...

but the high speed or escape velocity as we call it...

is about 7 miles a second.

It keeps falling in outer space in the direction in which it was started.

Now as it nears the moon,

that planet's gravitational field

begins to pull it toward it.
Can't hear you, Woody! No air
remember. Turn on your aerial!
Hey, no brakes on this thing!
I'm going to crash!
How do I land?
Very simple. Just reverse the takeoff.
But what about the wings?
Can't use them. The moon has no air.
Now he tells me!
Turn the ship around. Use the shotgun
kick of the exhaust to break the speed...
and set her gently on her tail.
Se we made it!
But how do we get home from this
piece of cheese?
Shooting a rocket from the moon
to the Earth...
is a great deal easier than shooting
from the Earth to the moon...
because it's downhill
almost all the way.
The V2 rocket could do it today.
On the return trip, we use the wings
to glide in.
And for economy's sake, we finish
the landing like this.
Sensational!
I'm sold!
I'll back it to the hilt!
Here's my 2 bucks!
Well, when do we start building?
Well gentlemen, when do we start
building?
You've examined our model;
you've seen our little picture.
I hope we've succeeded in dispelling
your original skepticism.
Mr. Barnes can you imagine me going
before a meeting of my stockholders...
and reporting that I'd put millions
into a trip to the moon?
Why some would lynch me!
I doubt it even in Texas,

when you tell them why.
It just happens we have no choice.
If we want to stay in business,
we have to build this ship!
Did you say "have" to build it, Jim?
That's what I said!
- If it's that important a project...
why doesn't the government undertake it?
The vast amount of brains, talent,
special skills, research facilities...
necessary for this project are not in
the government!
Nor can they be mobilized by the
gov't in peacetime without fatal delay.
Only American industry can do this job!
And American industry must get
to work now!
Just as we did in the last war!
Yes, but the government
footed the bill!
And they'll foot this bill too if we're
successful. You know that.
If we fail, we'll take a colossal
beating, so we can't fail!
Not only is this the greatest adventure
awaiting mankind...
but it's the greatest challenge ever
hurled at American industry!
And General Thayer
is going to tell you why!
The reason is quite simple...
we are not the only ones who know
that the moon can be reached.
We are not the only ones
planning to go there.
The race is on!
And we'd better win it because...
there is absolutely no way to stop
an attack from outer space!
The first country that can use the moon
for the launching of missiles...
will control the Earth!
That gentlemen, is the most important
military fact of this century!

Gentlemen!

I see no need for further discussion!

It's our job!

Well, all I got to say is we better
build it in Texas.

It's the only state big enough
to hold it!

If you can increase the initial velocity
only 600ths of a mile per second...

you can make the trip in
2 days instead of four.

We'll have to compute what that
means in reaction mass.

This is a case where pounds of ship
costs many pounds of reaction mass.

Try titanium!

That's exactly right as far as
appearance goes.

All that remains now is to test it.

It goes for it's atmosphere chamber
test this afternoon.

I've added one detail, Charles.

What is that for?

The chaffing suits we wear over our
pressure suits are in different colors.

Why?

- For identification.

We'll use these 4 colors for the 4 crew
members then nobody can get lost.

The moonscape is pretty drab.

These bright colors

will give us high visibility.

Your right if no one minds looking like
a carnival balloon!

Hey, Brownie!

What do you want?

Have you taken a look down from here?

No, I never liked high places. Why?

You're halfway to the moon already!

It's the other half that's tough!

- I wouldn't worry about that!

How come?

Who are you kidding? This thing

is as close to the moon as it'll get!

I never felt so silly in my life as I
have since you sent for me!
You show me all your nice plans for
instruments to navigate to the moon.
I help you build them.
We install them.
You teach me how they work
and I understand how they work.
But nobody tells me
how the ship works!
This thing is built like
the Washington Monument!
You could stick an atom bomb under it
and it wouldn't go!
What's the matter, Brownie?
It's nothing. Just a bellyache.
You been eating green apples?
I haven't been able to eat anything.
I tried to get you before you left
Washington. - Is anything wrong?
It's not the engine, is it?
Have you tested it?
Not yet and it doesn't look like
we're going to.
"I'm directed to inform you that your
petition to test an atomic engine...
is regretfully denied."
Denied?
"It is our opinion that a danger exists
should the engine fail structurally."
"There is a possibility of dispersal of
radioactive materials."
We've told them a dozen times the area
is cleared for 10 miles around.
"While it is admitted that no real
danger of atomic explosion exists...
a belief in such danger does exist
in the public mind."
"It is the policy of the Commission..."
- Policy, my foot!
Somebody's throwing a monkey wrench!
- Wait, there's more.
"The test is authorized at the Special
Weapons Testing Center in the S. Pacific.

South Pacific?
That's nice of them!
What's the matter with the North Pole
or Little America?
What's a few months delay?
There trying to protect their own necks.
You can't buck public opinion!
Have you seen this?
That isn't public opinion,
it's propaganda!
You're right it is! Manufactured
and organized with money and brains!
Somebody's out to get us.
Stops us in our tracks anyway.
We'll have to reschedule.
- With what?
What do you mean?
What are we going to use for money?
We've pushed our resources to the limit!
Every day of delay costs!
Hey, Doc...
The ship's about ready to take off,
isn't she?
Except for tests
and minor adjustments.
What's the next favorable time?
About a month from now.
- I don't mean that.
What's the next favorable time
this month?
The only favorable time this month
is about 17 hours from now.
That's it then.
We take off in 17 hours.
Are you out of your mind?
I will be if we run into any more
red tape. Now look...
There's no law against
taking off a spaceship.
It's never been done, so it's
not been prohibited.
If we ask for permission, they'll find
a way to block us. So we go now!
In an untested ship?

How do you test a thing of this kind?
It either works or it doesn't!
It's a one time deal!
Doc, any worries about the engine?
None, but we haven't trained a crew!
So we don't. The takeoff is
fully automatic.
The General and I will run the ship.
You'll be the Engineer.
Brown has known from the beginning
that he'll handle the radio and radar.
What about ballistics?
That's where we're stuck. The takeoff
wasn't planned for this month.
It's a week's work!
You think Dr. Hastings is pretty good,
don't you?
The best in the world!
- Give him the job!
And all the black coffee and assistants
he can use!
You all set, General?
- All set! - Then it's settled.
We'll all be heroes or angels
so what can we lose?
We'll takeoff tomorrow morning
before dawn.
We've a lot in 17 hours!
Get me my home.
I'd like to talk to Mrs. Cargraves.
All roads have been blocked.
Because of the danger of radioactivity,
the area is being cleared of spectators.
Do not attempt to approach
the site of the spaceship!
The public is asked to stay away.
I shall repeat this warning...
Do not attempt to approach
the site of the spaceship!

Correction:

Yes?
Mr. Brown still cannot be located,
Mr. Barnes.

Check with the main gate, the store,
everywhere. Keep calling me back.

What was the last one?

- 32.1

Yes?

Mr. Sweeney is here to see
General Thayer.

Send him in.

What's up, Joe?

- It's Brown, sir.

They've taken him to the hospital.

- The hospital? Is he alright?

He will be after they
cut out his appendix.

What will we do?

Say, Joe. Joe!

You can handle the ship's radio
and radar equipment, can't you?

You know as much about it as Brown.

Will you take his place?

To the moon?

What's the moon got
that this desert ain't?

Besides...

- Besides what, Joe?

I got a date with a nice little chick
tomorrow.

No thanks!

Joe!

Unless you come with us, we're sunk!

You're the only man left who knows
how to handle the equipment.

Mr. Barnes, mind if I sound off a little?

What do you mean?

- You're pretty smart men...

you and Dr. Cargraves and the General.

I don't know as much as you do, but...

- What's on your mind?.

You're all wet!

- In what way?

The thing won't work. It can't!

It's crazy! Figure all that weight.

It won't budge an inch.

And what do I see them putting

in the fuel tanks? Water!
You're all going to look like
a bunch of dummies!
If you believed that, you'd come along.
Yeah, but I don't want
to look like a dummy.
You wouldn't. We're entirely
responsible for the whole thing.
You don't think it could blow up?
We'd never get in it
if we thought that.
Joe...
You have confidence in Dr. Cargraves,
me, the General...
we wouldn't ask you to do anything
we didn't believe in.
Would you like to go?
Okay.
I'll sit up there with you and twiddle
the knobs, just for laughs.
Fine, Joe.
It'll never budge!
- Be sure you twiddle the right knobs!
You guys are really serious, ain't ya?
Dead serious.
Hey, wait a minute!
I've got to get through!
Sorry, nobody passes here.
- You have to take me through!
I've got a court order here
forbidding them from taking off!
I'm sorry you couldn't
bring the boys, Emily.
I couldn't; you gave me so little time.
Like to go in my place, Mrs. Cargraves?
Who me? Oh, dear no.
Don't worry ma'am.
We won't get very far.
Coming Doc?
- In a moment.
It's about time, Charles.
Bye, Mrs. Cargraves.
We'll take good care of your husband.
Try not to worry.

Mr Barnes, there's a joker back there
trying to crash the gate!
He has a court order
and it says you can't take off!
Darling!
Come back to me, Charles.
Doc, come on!
Hastings, I wish you had room
for me in the ship!
You've got to stay here
and make sure we get home!
Goodbye and good luck.
Alright, take it away!
Barnes! Cargraves!
Stop!
Come back here!
We can't hear a word you say!
Alright, Jim.
You're the skipper, take over.
First time I outranked a general.
First time I've heard you admit
you were outrank by anybody.
Am I the only one who's scared?
This thing might work!
We're all scared.
Alright, gentlemen.
Takeoff stations.
Communications?
I'll have it all cooking in a minute.
As soon as the TV screen is operating,
check clearance at base of ship.
Then phone check the Tracking Center
at Dry Wells.
Cut in the boys at the traffic shack.
Calling traffic shack, over.
- Traffic to ship, over.
Official designation of ship is Luna.
L-U-N-A. Luna, over.
Luna, roger.
- Tell them to clear for firing.
Clear firing area in preparation for
departure, over.
Roger.
Spaceship Luna calling

Dry Wells Airfield, over.
Dry Wells to Luna, over.
Making preparations for firing, over.
Dry Wells is ready for tracking, over.
Dry Wells reported.
Traffic reported.
Power Station report.
- Power Station ready for firing.
Communications?
Everything's just dandy, Skipper.
Co-pilot?
Instruments okay.
Automatic pilot tracking.
Give warning signal.
Need time from the integrating computer.

- 03:

Two minutes to go.
Traffic to Luna. All clear, over.
Roger.
Tell them to stand by to
count off for firing.
Stand by for count off and firing.
- Roger.
Check. 34840
Check.
Pickup count off at 3:49:30.
- Count off at 3:49:30
Check Dry Wells.
- Dry Wells, roger.

Count off 3:

30 seconds coming up.
Standby.
30 seconds.
29...28...27...
26...25...24...
23...22...21...
20...19...18...
17...16...15...
14...13...12...
11...10...9...
8...7...6...
5...4...3...

2...fire!
What's happening?
What's the matter?
Nothing's the matter.
Just passed the speed of sound.
Joe...
switch on view aft.
I can't move a muscle.
I'm froze solid.
Do it!
We're falling.
It's alright, Joe. We're weightless,
in free orbit that's all.
Weightless?
Free orbit?
Just where are we?
You mean this thing is working?
We're...no, sir! Not me!
Nobody ever told me this was practical!
Turn this thing around!
Take me back!
I ain't going to no moon!
That's just to look at!
I'm sick.
Grab hold.
Hang on.
What happened to me?
You're alright.
In free orbit, everything is falling
at the same speed.
Everything unfastened just floats.
There's no up or down.
Tell that to my stomach!
It says there's nothing but up!
Oh, boy!
Am I seasick!
You're not seasick, you're space sick!
I'm sick of that too!
Take one of these pills.
It'll settle your stomach.
I can't swallow. It won't go down!
It'll take practice without gravity
to help. You'll manage.
General, how are you feeling?

You got another one of those pills?
- Here's a whole box full.
Let's see if I can swallow better
than Sweeney.
Unless these pills work, space travel
isn't going to be popular.
Don't!
Think of the condition of my stomach!
Shoes, General?
- Thank you.
Let's get these on you. They've got
magnets in the soles.
How do you feel now?
The way I did when I tried
my first smoke.
You'll be alright in a minute. Put that
one on and try to get Dry Wells.
Spaceship Luna calling Dry Wells.
Spaceship Luna calling Dry Wells, over.
Dry Wells to Spaceship Luna.
Man alive, I can't believe it!
Your takeoff checked out according to
flight plan.
We are now tracking you by radar.
You are in your calculated orbit.
We will continue to track you
as long as we can. Good luck, over.
Thank you, Dry Wells and roger.
Doc, General. You've got to see this.
Gosh, ain't that something!
I thought I'd seen everything.
Just look at those cities!
Is that Los Angeles?
- And San Francisco.
Sure! That's Los Angeles.
That's New York!
Can you see Brooklyn?
Sure there's Brooklyn.
I wonder who's pitching?
Joe!
I want to test the radar.
The antenna seems to be stuck.
Stuck?
I don't understand it. I was

particularly careful when I greased it.
Greased it?
No wonder it's stuck!
It's exposed to outer space! It's frozen
solid! You should know better than that!
I'm no scientist!
Didn't you bother to read
the engineering instructions?
Arguing won't get us anywhere.
The radar has to be fixed.
To try to land blind would be
our finish.
How do we fix it, Doc?
Somebody has to go outside and free it.
- Outside?
You mean go outside the ship?
- It can't be done any other way.
We'd be swept off!
- No, you can't fall.
Outside, you'll be in the same orbit
and trajectory as the ship.
The worst that could happen is that
you'd drift away from the side.
We avoid that by using safety lines.
Let's do it!
No Jim, I'll go.
I want to inspect the rocket jet anyway
to see how it stood up on the takeoff.
I'll tag along.
- Me too.
I fouled us up and if you guys
go out, so do I.
Coming, General.
- No.
I'm not curious.
You boys go have your fun.
I'll stay and write up the log.
Green is just the color for you,
Sweeney.
Ready to put on the helmets?
I won't be able to breathe in here!
You won't be able to breathe without it.
Hook up your air hose.
You forget there's no air outside.

There's plenty of room for it!
Check radios.
Check instruments.
Check air.
Let's go!
I'm going to get another line!
Now it will open.
Close it, Skipper!
We'll fall out!
Get this through your head, Joe.
You can't fall.
Let's go!
Hey, we're stuck up here!
We ain't moving!
It only seems that way. We're really
traveling thousands of miles per hour.
Here in space, all comparisons
are lost.
Take a look behind you.
Wow!
The geography books are right.
How do you feel now, Joe?
Weird.
Thousands of miles an hour
and not a breeze.
It's more beautiful than
I ever dreamed.
We will never be able to
describe it to anyone.
I'm going aft. See you shortly.
Wait until we finish this.
I'll go with you.
You stay here and take care of
the radar. Give me a rope.
Help yourself.
I'll be back in a minute.
Skip! Joe! Help!
I'm adrift!
I can't get back!
Tie it off to the ship.
- Where?
Off the stern. Come on!
Jim! Joe! Help!
Can you hear me?

I'm adrift!
Coming, Doc!
Hurry! If we can't get him,
he will float forever!
Get a rope to him!
Captain, towards the stern!
We're working towards you, Doc.
We can see you.
Jim, Joe! Is he alright?
Can you get him?
We've go to get him!
- I'm coming out!
Steady, Doc.
We're going to get a rope to you.
Steady, Doc!
Here it comes!
Catch!
I can't reach it!
We'll try again.
General! Can you hear me?
Bring out an oxygen bottle!
Hurry!
Hurry, Jim!
Joe, help!
General! That oxygen tank, hurry!
Where is he?
Way out there.
What are you going to do?
Get him!
I hope it's got enough kick!
General, grab him!
We'll lose him too!
I almost didn't make it.
Can we get back?
If we don't, we'll tour the universe
together! Hang on, I'm going to turn it.
Pray there's enough gas to get us back.
He's got him!
Give me the rope!
You okay, Doc?
- I didn't think we'd make it!
Come on, boys.
Let's go inside.
We're getting close.

- Standing by, ready to fire.
Here goes the turn.
We're going backwards!
Yes, we're going to use the firing
as brakes.
Stand by for acceleration.
Tracking as predicted.
Good. Radar report?
Altitude 108000.
Closing as predicted.
- Power?
Plant okay.
That didn't slow us! We're going faster
than ever! - No we're not!
It seems that way because we're
close and heading in.
I just decided I don't want to go
through with this thing. Let's go home!
Cut it out, Joe.
Give me the view aft.
View aft.
Power plant?
- On manual.
Ready now...
Holy smoke! We can't land on that,
we'll be splattered!
Quit worrying. We're landing
in the smooth plain short of there.
I'm going to kill our forward speed.
Stand by.
Acceleration!
You missed, Jim!
- I know it! Emergency!
Pick her up, Jim!
Give us some lateral!
Too late! Too much firing
and we can't get home.
I'll have to use the drift we've got.
You going to chance it, Jim?
- Have to!
Automatic landing!
- Automatic, it is.
Co-pilot!
Tracking in on automatic.

Tracking now.
Cover me at 830 feet.
Covered at 830.
- Correction...cover at 870.
870, right. Can you miss those peaks?
- Got a prayer in your pocket?
Correction...860!
- 860!
Tracking steady.
All hands brace for crash!
We're down.
We're down.
Cut out your gyros.
Okay.
Fine landing, Jim.
That was a terrible landing
and you know it!
I mean for a first one.
I wasted reaction mass we'll need to
get back. If we get back.
Worry about that later,
we just got here.
Here...
On the moon!
Jim, Doc...
We're on the moon!
And we're alive!
Holy cow! The next time you tell me you
can get to the moon, I'll believe you.
You waited a long time for this, Doc.
- All my life.
Sweeney, how about trying
to raise Washington?
You bet! Wait until I tell them...

First race:

way out in front!
Doc, Jim. You two go down and
set foot on the surface.
That's something I want to enter
in my log.
No, I think we should all go together.
- Nonsense, you made this trip possible.
Spaceship Luna calling Washington.

Come on then, Doc.
This is your moment.
Let's get into our spacesuits.
Let's go.
Come on.
Claim it, Doc. I'm your witness.
Claim it officially.
By the grace of God, and in the name of
the United States of America...
I take possession of this planet on
behalf of, and for the benefit of...
all mankind.
Dr. Cargraves!
Mr. Barnes!
Yes? - I'm in contact with Washington.
There's terrific excitement on Earth!
We're hooked up to all the networks.
They just interviewed the General.
They want to interview you two. I've
patched your radio into the transmitter.
I hooked up our receiver too. You can
have a two-way conversation with them.
Okay, go ahead Earth!
Hello! Hello on the moon!
This is Carl Zurski, greeting you
from the Earth.
The people of the world congratulate
you for your epoch-making achievement!
Thank you.
I must explain to the listeners of the
lag between...
my voice and those from the moon is due
to the vastness of space.
It takes 3 seconds even at the speed
of light, for radio waves to travel...
between the Earth and moon.
Can you tell us where you landed?
The astronomers at Palomar say they
could see you if they knew where to look
We landed in the crater Harpalus...
which is in the upper NW quadrant of
the moon as seen from North America.
Is Dr. Cargraves hooked in?
- Yes.

Can you give us your first impressions
of the moon, Dr. Cargraves?

Well, I'll try.

The first impression is...

one of utter barrenness
and desolation.

Then the silence...

As there is not air, the only sound
we hear comes through our radios.

The sky is...

black.

Velvet black and pierced by the most
intensely...

brilliant stars anyone ever dreamed of.

Hanging over the mountains in the
distance, I can see our own planet Earth
many times larger
than the harvest moon.

I see most of the Western Hemisphere...
and I can also see it's about sunrise
in San Francisco.

It's afternoon here...

and will be for a couple of more days.

Now perhaps, Jim Barnes
can add something.

As a matter of record...

may I report that the moment he sat
foot on the moon...

Dr. Cargraves claimed possession
in the name of the United States...
for the benefit of all mankind!

This is great and wonderful news for
the people of the Earth! Thank you!

The Naval Station in Washington will
stand by 24 hours a day for....

further signals from you.

Goodbye and good luck!

Roger.

Doc, I'll never get use to this.

This must weigh 500 or 600 pounds!

On Earth it does. Gravity here
is about 1/6 as much.

That means things weigh 1/6 as much.

I know it, but I can't believe it.

General, look!
Sweeney, cut that out!
What's the matter? If I could do that
back home, I'd be an acrobat!
We've got too much to do and too little
time for any more clowning.
Let's get on with our schedule!
I'm suppose to help you with the
astronomical photos, Doc.
I can't for a bit. I've got to Earth
and get Hastings to give us...
revised figures for our trip back.
Well, I'll just have to wait for you.
- Joe, you help him.
I can handle the radio.
Joe was going to help me with the
mineralogical survey!
You can get along without him.
You've only got one Geiger Counter.
But don't lose sight of the ship!
That's a rule for everybody!
Okay, Skipper.
I'll help you later, General.
I'm for seeing what there is to see!
I don't figure on staying here too
long anyway. Do you know why?
No beer, no babes, no baseball!
- You got it!
Well Doc, I'll pack this little gadget.
I'll join you after I talk to Hastings.
Say Doc, there is one thing I'd like
as a souvenir of the trip.
How about taking a picture of me up
here alongside the camera?
Sure Joe, that's not too much to ask.
Give me the little camera.
Move a little closer!
That's it!
Wait a minute, I have a better idea.
Come over here.
Now turn around...
Now hold your arm up.
Bend your elbow as though you were
holding a heavy weight.

Now your hand...
That's it. Hold it!
Okay. That'll be something to show!
What is it Doc?
- You and the Earth.
You're holding it up
like a modern Atlas.
Hey, that's something Doc.
There's only one thing...
- What's that?
Nobody will know it's me
in this diving suit!
Hey, Doc!
Joe!
Over here!
Behind you!
Charles, I picked up clicks.
Here, hold this.
I picked them up a few yards back.
They are stronger in this direction.
Listen to this.
There's a trace, eh?
- What is it, Doc?
I'm not sure. - These mountains may
have a real deposit.
Uranium?
- It's possible.
Then you could blow up the moon too.
Ain't that dandy!
Check your reaction mass.
Point 8672.
What? Repeat that.
Yes, point 8672.
I wasted power making
a very bad landing.
I'll have to compute it,
but it looks bad.
We have to get you back.
Jettison every ounce.
All your forward tanks are empty.
Can you rip them out?
Not without tearing the ship apart.
She wasn't built for it.
I'll call at the same time 24 hours

from now. I'll give you the answers.
Be able to tell me how much you
lightened the ship...
and I'll tell you if you can make it.
I'll stand by 24 hours from now.
Just get us back home.
That's all I ask.
Hello, Jim!
We've got news for you!
- I have for you too. All of you.
This is right up your alley, Jim.
- Hold it, General.
Sit down the camera, Joe and Doc.
It's no use to us.
I haven't shot more than a half
a dozen plates.
That's all you'll be able to shoot.
- What's the matter?
I just talked to Dr. Hastings
at Dry Wells.
I gave our instrument readings.
Reaction mass, mass ratio...
checked our time.
Well?
- Our time is okay.
Nothing else is.
What are you talking about, Skipper?
Everything on the board is ticking.
I checked every instrument. All alive.
So are we. For awhile.
I don't get it.
We have to lighten the ship!
Our job for the next 24 hours is to
get rid of everything we can.
Or stay here ourselves.
Hastings will give me the answers at

07:

Well, let's not panic until
we've talked to him again.
Meanwhile... - We go back to the ship
and strip off everything we can!
Acceleration couch pad 4.
Serial number 706. Schedule B.

706 Schedule B, check.
And the schedule itself!
That's everything that you can get out?
3 of our spacesuits will be dropped
before takeoff.
One will be used in the airlock
to dump the others.
Skipper, I'll dump the stuff.
It'll take me 15 minutes to check again.
I'll give you the answer asap.
Here's the wash!
36 hours.
36 hours, what?
Until takeoff time.
It's then or a month from then.
That means never.
Spaceship Luna, Spaceship Luna.
Spaceship Luna, Barnes speaking.
Here's the total: you've taken out
almost 2 tons.
Before takeoff, drop all the oxygen
except what you need to get back on.
Before takeoff, you can drop
your remaining food.
You can hold yourselves to
a pint of water a day...
and throw the rest of your drinking
water into the reaction tank.
Have you got it?
- Right!
You'll have to get out another
1,000 pounds.
Another 1,000? Of what?
We're stripped!
Don't make me say this...
you have to or...
You don't have to say it.
We know....
or we don't get back!
I'm standing by.
You've got to work it out!
Hey, Sweeney...
is this thing bolted or welded?
Bolted.

Let's get to work.
Give me a wrench!
I guess we used this one up.
Doc, we'll be able to takeoff,
won't we?
Probably. Takeoff, at least.
What do you mean, "at least"?
If we're too heavy, we'll crash
or fall into an orbit around the moon.
Just keep on going around?
That's it.
Hey, Skipper! That's my radar!
- We won't need it to land on Earth.
You don't know how much work
I did putting this together!
Now, anybody with anything
in your pockets?
This too?
- Everything!
The 3 spacesuits then come back.
How much time we got?
27 minutes.
Another 110 pounds.
- What?
Another 110 pounds
and you can coast home!
We're stripped. We'll have to take
a chance as we are.
That's suicide!
You haven't enough power
to pull free of the moon.
You could be wrong, couldn't you?
I could.
I don't think the computer could.
Ask Dr. Cargraves.
We'll let you know, roger.
Well Charles, is he right?
I'm afraid so.
We're stuck here!
Who got me here?
I didn't want to come!
You can blame me, Joe.
You didn't think it would work.
Well, in a way, you were right.

What a sucker! What a dumb,
stupid blockhead I am!
I could have blown my brains out
or gone over Niagara Falls...
or found some other decent way to die!
Alright, Joe.
We're all in this together.
It's as simple as that.
One of us stays.
Of course.
I weight 180. More than enough.
- Now look here....
I'm the oldest. I've done my job.
- I'm the Skipper of this ship!
I give the orders on this ship!
I'm giving the orders now!
- Jim, nobody gives orders.
- Yes, they do. This is the order...
Doc is the engineer.
He goes back to his work.
The General pilots the ship when you
reach the Earth's atmosphere.
I can be spared on this trip. I have no
family. My job gets along without me.
Jim, listen to me. This is not a ship
at sea and this is not a plane.
This has been a joint undertaking.
The 3 of us did it together.
It is no ones duty more than
the others to give his life.
I've had my day. A great one!
I've shown that this could be done!
It's enough to make me glad I lived
and content to stay.
It's very noble, Doc,
but it's philosophy.
Skip philosophy! I'm the one who stays.
Why? Because I'm the oldest.
You two can tell them back home what
we've seen much better than I could.
Tell them how we looked up
and saw the Earth...
vulnerable and exposed forever.
Never setting in this lunar sky.

You know what you just proved, General?
You're the one man that must go back!
Are we going to end this in futility
because we can't make a simple decision?
I've reached my decision!
I'm standing by it!
Skipper, look here...
- Stay out of this, Sweeney.
Don't worry, you'll get back.
Right now it looks like nobody
gets back!
If your brains can't make up your minds,
why don't you do what kids do?
Match for it.
You know, draw lots.
Alright!
- No!
Jim, two against one.
- What do we use?
Anyone have paper, matches, coins?
- No, everything's overboard.
You've got buttons on your coveralls.
Match them.
Spaceship Luna...Spaceship Luna.
Dry Wells calling Spaceship Luna.
Spaceship Luna to Dry Wells.
We're are working it out. One of us
will stay behind We're drawing lots.
Only 110 pounds! There must be
something more!
Check time!

9:

Check.
We'll take off with three men.
Where's Joe?
He's gone!
What's wrong? You're not coming in!
It won't open!
He's not in there!
- Then he...he can't do that!
Spaceship Luna, Spaceship Luna!
He's left the ship!
- Stand by, something's happened.

Sweeney's left the ship! His helmet's gone! I can't see him!
There he is! He's dragging something!
Sweeney!
Sweeney!
Sweeney, can you hear me?
Sure, I hear you.
Come back, Joe!
And die in that steel death trap?
You won't die, Joe. Not you.
You're going home!
Not a chance. Goodbye, fellows. Remember me to the gals. Any gals!
Spaceship Luna, you're not coming in!
Here's Doc. Talk to him.
Something's happened! Joe's left the ship! - Are you taking off?
I don't know! We got to do something!
- Joe, we can't let you do this!
What do you mean let me?
You can't stop me.
I lightened your ship.
I gave you your chance, now get going.
Don't make a monkey out of me.
Come back, Joe! We're in this together.
If you don't, we can't takeoff.
You've got to or you'll be killing me for nothing.
Nobody's asking you to, you're killing yourself!
Takeoff, will you?
I want to see it.
A ship going back from the moon to the Earth!
Joe, i just thought of a way...
A way to what?
- Takeoff. All of us! Hurry!
What do you mean "all of us"?
Do just as I tell you.
I think we can make it!
You wouldn't kid me?
- Don't be a fool!
It's our lives too. We've less than 15 minutes!

What's the deal?

- Get back to the airlock fast.

Bring a screwdriver, knife and a file.

And a weight, an oxygen tank.

Tie the tank to the end of your safety line.

I'll tell you the rest when you're in the airlock!

Is he coming?

- He's picking up the things!

He's heading towards us!

- What's your plan?

Sweeney's spacesuit weighs 70 pounds, the radios 50. There's over 110 pounds!

We can't open the door to the airlock without his spacesuit.

We won't open it when he gets his spacesuit off!

He can drill a small hole in the door big enough for a safety line.

He ties the tank to the line and it hangs outside...

The line passes through the small hole...

There's a slow leak. He takes off his suit, ties it to the line and comes here.

We decompress the airlock, the door opens, the suit is dragged out.

General, watch for him.

He must be in the airlock. It's cycling.

- He's in there.

Pressure's up. I can open it.

Let me have a screwdriver.

General, unscrew the radio!

Sweeney, listen carefully...

Hastings! We're coming home!

All of us!

You won't hear from us again until you see us. I'm ripping out the radio!

Sweeney, listen carefully.

Put on the helmet, go to the airlock, decompress it and open the outer door.

Takeoff stations!

Sweeney, as soon as your strap's fast, television view aft.

Strap's okay here.

Power plant?

All ready to go.

No time for count off, standby!

Fire!

We're going home.