

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE BOYS IN THE MOON

On the very far side of the moon, deep in a small crater opening, lived two boys just as you, with their family and people.

Although the opening was just hundreds of feet wide, the inside opened to a great cavern lit by incandescent creatures (Critters that glow all by themselves) that lived on the rock's surface. Bright by day...as they knew it and sleeping dim at night, but never completely dark.

How did they breathe, you may well ask? Well, that is a very good question.

You see... the rocks, just a few feet beneath the surface, are so full of oxygen as to supply the colony and all living things there with pure clean air. Only needing to carry one the size of a large pendant, and an extra one in their pocket, one may walk anywhere outside the envelope in which they lived as they had vast amounts there. The clothing they wore, thin and tough, it was of

such a special fabric, aided them in the cold to stay warm.

Taught to be careful, to watch the skies for extra terrestrials...you know..."Us!" they learned the art of blending in with the surroundings.

A young boy, twelve by as near as we can count, a little bit older old brother, a Mom and Dad. He was the adventurous one listening to the older men tell of when people from the next planet came and landed here, putting up sticks with colored cloth and leaving such a mess of things behind when they were done... but that was many years ago and since then haven't returned.

Even though, all children are taught to blend in with their surroundings and be ever watchful for any who would return to their home.

As on Earth, the area inside the giant cavern, where the moon people lived, had a greater gravity than on the surface. No one knew why but figured how to deal with the much lesser hold on them the top side held on them.

Able to walk or leap a hundred feet was no problem to a young boy or girl. Kids would have some really serious games of a form of throwing a ball. With a good arm, one could heave a rock

ball over a hundred feet! The hard part was that it came down slowly and was difficult to grab hold of.

Our young men named Li and Luc, lived well, as did all families here for the fact that all people were respectful of the feelings of each other. No war and few crimes that were more misunderstandings that may have gotten a bit excited.

Their time was used in study on how to promote advancement in production of food, water and most of all the general well being of everyone's health.

Now... back on Earth in a large room at the Space Center, many scientists were in a heated conversation with even more military people.

"We need to revisit the Moon," the scientists all said in one voice.

"Moon costs money, lots of it," this general shouted back at them, "What is in it for the military?" another officer asked.

"We believe a ..." "NO" another scientist interrupted, "Don't say another word!"

The Generals were now interested. "Tell me why we shouldn't just close down this whole section and put the money elsewhere?!"

"A new type of 'Natural Steel!' one of them blurted out.

O.k. now, all the military was pretty darn interested, moved to the huge table, ordered the secret holders to sit down and spit it out.

The leader of the group was strongly nudged, well, o.k., pushed to the front seat.

"Talk or we walk!" they were told.

"Well...while doing a routine examination on an old batch of Moon rocks, a minor fleck of something appeared." "When dug into further it turned out to be a metallic nodule, you know, like a small ball of the size of a pea."

"Go ahead" the general asked, listening much closer now.

It had the appearance of "Steel" which, as you know is a product of mixing Iron with small amounts of carbon and perhaps Chromium and..."

"Yes, thank you for the science class, but what caught your eye!" the general yelled.

"We...We could barely shape it."

"Are you telling us it's harder than Steel?!" one of the militaries almost spit saying.

The head scientist, Dr Henry Roberts said, "Oh...so much harder."

The military immediately all huddled together and started talking quietly.

"How much harder, in terms "We" could understand." the general asked.

Now it was the scientists turn to huddle. Some pulled out calculators, others these pads and one older one even a slide rule. You'll have to look that one up yourself!

Then came the answer..."Approximately sixty times the density" as the military's eyes opened..."at one third the weight." At which the standing Generals plopped down in their seats.

The next question was just what you'd think..."How much is this going to cost us?"

"Lots" was the answer.

"When can we get started the military asked."

"We already have." Dr Roberts smiled slyly.

After that, the two groups separated save the Dr and the General to hash over the check book needed to start this grand undertaking.

Meanwhile, the folks back on the Moon were studying playing and laughing, without a clue of who and what was coming.

END CHAPTER ONE

## CHAPTER TWO

### Just Another Day

### On the Dark Side of the Moon

Oh, by the way, they call home a word close to and Earth word...Pace...pronounced, "pa-che," meaning "Peace."

The "Olders" as they were called, heard the aliens call their planet, "Mune."

Now to Li and the adventure that was about to unfold to him in the near and uncertain future.

"Boy, these classes on 'Blending' really are boring," "I wish we could go out and do it instead of read about it, Luc."

We will soon, and I'll show you what I learned last term so to bring you up to speed and then you will be ahead of all the kids your age in class.

This made me smile as I watched and learned.

After class, we had time to pick and eat our lunch, then free time for well...whatever.

Luc said we should take a look at some of the spots that the "Olders" spoke about where the alien creatures landed and bounced around.

Off to the lit side they went in hundred foot bounds, getting there in good time.

"Luc...Look at all the neat stuff they left!"  
"Let's grab some things to take home."

"Not a chance. If Mom and Dad find out we even "Talked" about this place, let alone came here, it's a whippin' we'd get!" Luc warned.

"Awww, Mom and Dad never lifted a hand to either of us." I said.

"For this, they would make an exception!!"  
Luc said. "It doesn't mean we can't take a few things back to the other side and hide them to study."

"Yeah!" I said drooling over all the shiny objects all over the place.

"This looks neat. Look, this bar makes the round thingies light up and turn off." Li said. (It looked like a radio to receive and send when another was in range)

"Here is a thing with chairs in it and a dish on a stick!" Luc called to me while he sat in it and played with the knobs and metal push

things." All of a sudden, the whole inside lit up in many colors.

"Whoa...look at this Li!!" "The wheel moves too," "Hey, look at these things on the floor, as he pressed the power pedal down, he spun it from it's lodged in the dust and rocks spot, as the battery, constantly being charged from solar power, kicked in and turned the rover half way around! Luc jumped out and it stopped for his foot lifted.

The rover stopped, not Luc's racing heart.

"Did you see that?!" he said to Li. All Li could do was shake his head rapidly and not say a word.

They both stood there befuddled at a moving seat. "Shall we try that again? Luc asked his somewhat back offish brother.

"O.k., but this time, let's both sit in it."

Down plopped their nervous butts. Luc grabbed hold of the wheel. After a bit of playing around, figured out that it controlled the wheels. "Then the pedal on the floor must make it jump and move," he said. Li just shook his head "Yes" and grabbed on as his brother lightly pressed the pedal.



The vehicle hummed and moved forward at a slow pace for its capabilities, but way cool for the boys who were holding on for dear life!

It didn't take any time at all to figure out speed and turning for the boys to be making big circles in the Moon's dust.

"I don't know what these other thingies on the front board are, but we've done enough for today on this "Mover," as he called it.

Driving the "Mover back to the landing sight, they parked it and started to take a look at all the other remnants left by the aliens.

This thing on a stick with three legs had a pointed tube coming off of a small box connected to a dish like on the Mover but way bigger.

Li figured out it was his turn and started to fiddle with the switches, knobs and..."What have we here?" Luc heard him say, right before the bright red flash!

Both boys dropped and bounced a bit, but were plenty shocked.

"What the heck did you do?" Luc asked.

"I just pressed "That" button there, pointing from a sitting position.

As they got up and ooched closer, they decided to press it again.

Another bright red beam shot out towards what we know as earth, a "Laser Beam" we know, but they decided to stop for now and look in other piles.

Back on Earth, there were scientists having a "Fit" about receiving a Laser shot from the moon without first starting it from here.

One said, "Must be a short or bad wire and perhaps a small meteorite struck nearby and caused a spike."

Just then, another scientist watching the monitor raised his hand to the bunch of other ones babbling saying ..."Ah, excuse me."

**"EXCUSE ME!"**

At which point everybody stopped talking and turned towards the seemingly confused monitor watcher.

"Not one," as the head person looked concerned at him...."TWO!" At which point all of them rushed to the screen to see a replay making sure.

"Two...Two!...what can it be?" Then, in came the military. Captains, Generals...heck, there was

even an Admiral who then scurried all but a few scientists out of the room.

"This has been now put up to "Top Secret Status!" "No one speaks of anything about what we know outside of this room.

IS THAT UNDERSTOOD!?"

he growled. All those there shook their heads and just stayed silent while the Military talked between themselves.

The space people could barely hear the officers mumbling between them. "Admiral, do you think....?"

"What else could it be?" one said.

"Maybe, "You know who!" another muttered.

The head General stood up and said, rather loudly, "Anybody could be "You Know Who," now days!" "Now, less guessing and more facts. Everyone grab a scientist and go to work."

Back on the Moon, Li and Luc were getting hungry and got an Idea. "Let's use the Mover to get close to home, hide it and jump the rest of the way." Luc said with the biggest grin.

Li said, "I wanna make the bright red light one more time, ok?"

"Go ahead. Now we know it does nothing, it can't make any difference." said Luc.

"Zap!" went the beam, right towards Earth, to the hysteria of everyone there who saw the third spike.

END CHAPTER TWO

## CHAPTER THREE

### And the Race Is On!

Back on the Moon has the boys driving the lunar rover, "The Mover," towards home on the other side with a swerve here and a curve there, but not too bad, for a first time driving.

"Hey Luc, we're getting close and we need to find a great hiding place."

"I remember a little cave about 30 leaps from the entrance (About 3/4 mile) where no one would ever look."

"I know the place," Li said as they came over a hill and saw it.

Tucking it away nicely, they jumped off to home and their family.

"Hi fellas," Dad said as we walked in the front door. "Any fun today?" "What did you two do?"

Luc grabbed my hand as I started to stutter and said, "We ran and jumped." "Exercise is important you know," he said with little beads of sweat on his brow.

Dad, although confused by such an answer from "His" boys, smiled and said "Super," but you've missed mid day meal and the late meal is almost ready." "Wash up and come to the table." Off we went giggling to each other to our Dad's head shaking.

Now, at the rocket center the head rocket master, Dr. Bruckner said, "Generals and Admiral. In order to make a trim back to the Moon in she shortest period of time, I suggest a small crew of "Two" that will enable us to cut back on everything and promote a promising launch."

"So...less is more!" With the "Lag" time shortened (meaning not any time wasted) just how fast can we send these two pilots up?"

Six little guys with calculators, pocket protectors and slide rules, all gathered around a seventh just slamming his computer keys like he was having a fit!

Three minutes later, and a lot of mumbling, Dr Bruckner stood straight and tall in front of all the others and said, "Six days!"

"SIX DAYS!!" the generals all said like a hysterical choir. From the middle of the group, someone asked, "How in Sid Days?"

"We always knew it was only a matter of time, so we have had the plans and most of the parts hidden here and there for years just waiting!" the good Dr said.

"Will ya git aloof of that." was all that was answers from all the military.

With the "Go Ahead," the space crews of workers dug up all the plans, parts and extra cash from the military and believe it or not, had the rocket done in six days to the minute!

All the others just stood in front of this compact but powerful Moon ship and simply scratched their heads in amazement.

The admiral looked at one of the lower officers and said, "You owe me twenty." "told you once these brains get to movin', they're unstoppable. Now pay up!"

With the ship built and up it was time to go over the last of the pilot's who would fly to the Moon.

Astronauts, Henry Roberts from Pacifica in Northern California and Lorenzo Maximilian, an Italian entry from the small town of Positano in southern Italy were chosen as the best of what man had to offer. Smart, strong but yet

understanding and able to make the right decision when it came down to it.

Their training had always been on going, so for the most part, except getting used to the smaller rocket, they were ready to go.

As the two of them finally stood in front of the ship that would carry them so far into space and onto the Moon, they stopped, turned to each other and shook hands. "Let's do this," Lorenzo said to Henry, who smiled and nodded yes, then into the capsule they went.

END CHAPTER THREE



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Hey Li... What's This Twisty Thing?

The next day, with homework and chores done, the two boys made straight for the Mover and back to the landing sight.

While driving back, they hit a big rock, in one of Luc uncontrolled swerves, and in regaining his balance, Li kicked the dash board and it lit up like a Christmas tree.

Luc took his foot off the "go" pedal as he called it and they came to a stop.

"Look at this button on the panel. Just like the one on the red flash machine." Li said.

"Don't touch it!" Luc said..."I will."

As his finger slowly pointed closer, he pressed it and....."Nothing!"

Then the dish on the back of the Mover started to turn back and forth till it seemed to lock tight. Then the bright light shot right out of it and into the sky.

"Hey, Me too." as Li tried it with the same results.

With the events of a week ago, the scientists were pretty well in spastic mode because of the two signals from the laser response meter.

One could hear the scream from the outside of the locked down cement blockhouse of a building when two new spikes showed up and this time from the Lunar Rover.

This had the scientists running almost in circles trying to figure what it could mean.

Then back, came the General.

"What's this I hear of "Another" signal...and this time from the Rover?!!"

"We have no idea what to make of "This!" said Dr. Bruckner.

"We have to have a launch A.S.A.P!" they were told.

"Day after tomorrow, 8: a.m. will be the moment of ignition." "We will ready the Astronauts." answered the Dr.

The morning of lift off came and as the ship's two pilots prepared to enter, the Head of all the Generals pulled them aside.

"See if there is any threat to our security, and if we need to send troops to control the situation!"

Both of the men looked at each other, nodded to the General and got onboard, locking down the door.

Lorenzo looked to Henry, holding his hand over his microphone, "I thought we were going there to see if we could find intelligent life...not find them and ...well you know."

Hank said, "We will do what is right!" then laughed, "Who will be there to say different?"

Lorenzo grinned, taking his hand off his microphone saying, "Maximilian to base, ready for instrument check," and through all the checks they went perfectly.

Henry looked to Lorenzo, as the clock ticked off the last seconds saying, "Hold onto your Heinie Hank. I'm lighting her up!!"

A blast of flames and a pressure which was completely different from the training machines, and they were off! Shouting from the G-Force and more so...the "Excitement!"

END CHAPTER FOUR

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Hank...What Will You Say to Them?

The void of space seemed to bring a peace to Lorenzo as he asked Hank, "What will you say to them, "If" we 'Do' meet someone up there?"

"You know, Lorenzo, I think that right after I get up from fainting, I would just nod my head and smile."

"Sounds like a plan."

Space center kept them pretty busy with all the checks and re-checks they were made to do that the trip didn't really that too long. The new rockets, and the ships smaller size allowed for much greater speed in the flight to see what they shall see.

The moon, through the port hole windows got ever larger by the hour, until it filled the whole window.

"Moon pilots to base." "Moon Pilots to base."  
"We have arrived at the point of preparation for touchdown." "All systems "Check!" Hank said.

"Preparing to separate from mother ship and land Lunar craft as near our beacon site as possible.

Punching the release button caused a good sized bump, they both clenched their teeth till all was complete.

Without atmosphere, power landings were necessary as there was no "Air" to glide on.

The old signal from the landing sight had been activated giving them a pin point spot to shoot for on the surface.

Port rockets (The ones on the left side cause "Port" means left in Military speak) were lighted to turn the ship to a butt first landing position before firing the retro-rockets which would slow the "Lander" to a stop on the Moon's surface.

After all those miles, they stop with a mild "Thump."

Through the "Starboard" window (That's 'Right' in military speak) they could see the red on light atop the laser signaler, showing that it had been recently activated.

Suiting up, they stepped into the exit chamber and sealed the inside door to allow them to pop the outside one.

Out and careful they stepped down the ladder.

Lorenzo took a walk around the area taking store of what was left, checking it against the list from the Space Center.

He stood in the center of the leftover camp and stopped. Looking down at his list, then up again around the site and waved excitedly to Hank.

"Is anything obvious missing?" he asked of Hank.

Looking around, himself, stopped in his tracks. "The Rover!" ... "It's gone."

His partner just nodded and wrote something on his message pad. It read, "Don't say anything, yet, to Central. Let's investigate further before anything so monumental...o.k.?"

Hank gave him the "Thumbs up" for a yes answer.

Measuring and going over every last thing on the list of left items, the only thing missing was the Rover.

Hank was waving to me and then to the ground at tracks. One's going off away from the site.

In "Our" module, was a compact but high battery Rover of our own. Faster and with a much farther range before needing to re charge.

It took a little assembly, sort of like my seven year old son's bike, but with a few more and expensive parts.

After an hour, replenishing our oxygen tanks and stocking a few more on the back of our Rover for emergencies, we were off in pursuit of the rogue vehicle.

Half an hour, at pretty much full speed, we came on a small hill to a crater.

Slowly driving up to the crest and a bit over, we could see the tail of the Rover sticking up from behind some rocks.

Lorenzo gave me the "What the Heck" look as we got off and started to walk down the hill towards the semi hidden machine.

That's when things got a bit weird but very interesting all at once.

END CHAPTER FIVE

## CHAPTER SIX

### "We Come in Peace" and In Serious Confusion Too!

Out of the corner of my helmet, I swore I saw two teen age boys just a walking over the crest on the other side of the crater about two hundred feet away.

I grabbed Lorenzo by his helmet and spun him around. No words were said at that point.

We backed up to a rock pile to keep out of sight.

I whispered to Lorenzo, "How can we approach them in these getups, while they're in pants and a shirt like a walk in the park, without scaring the Beejeebers" out of them?" (You have to figure out that one by yourself)

"How about we walk close and sit down. Nobody attacks from their seats, do they?" Hank said.

I thought that it sounded crazy enough to work. "O.k."

Out from behind the rocks and into the open we slowly moved, then just sat on a low rock.



Hank threw a stone at them. They looked up as he did another.

Right at us the looked eyes in horror. Then I waved my hand slowly as Hank did a small American flag.

Now...their look changed to "What the heck?"

I guess the spirit of youthful curiosity and sheer crazy bravery gave them the will to walk towards like we were friends of theirs.

As they stood in front of us, I spoke. "We are visitors from Earth," as they smiled and shook their heads in a "Not a word understood" fashion.

With good old sign language, we pointed to our flag patches, the Earth and tapped our chests. They shook their heads and beckoned us to follow them. We nodded yes, I guess that works everywhere, and walked back up to our vehicle as the two boys waved us on and took one heck of a leap.

"Did you see that?" Hank gulped.

"Has us beat ten to one in the leaping department" I laughed as I hit the gas...ahh...Electricity and sped to keep up with them.

We were heading for the dark side. That's why no one has ever seen anything. Too big an area, too little light.

Then we saw the glow.

They had stopped leaping right at the edge of the warm soft light.

We drove up and they pointed to an ancient stairway that spiraled downward. As we started down, we could feel weight on our bodies.

Half way down, and around a cliff in the wall, we came upon an amazing sight.

They turned to us, speaking in some semblance of English!

Yep, could have bowled us over with a feather at this point.

"Our parents are teachers in the higher schools. Teaching methods of planting, raising and bettering our food crops to enable all to have a table of plenty." "What do they teach on the... "Eardt"?

""Ear-th" We call it the "Earth.""

"Ah yes...Earth" they said in unison.

"As we descent farther into our land, you will see a completely different and beautiful place of flowers and trees, fruits and much

green. Water flowing from the walls into large pools where we raise swimming creatures for food." "Is this how the "Earth" is.

"Very similar" Hank said, but on a larger scale."

The boys looked but didn't understand.

Lorenzo say the confused look saying... "We have much of the same only on a much more, that's all," and to that the boys smiled, nodding their heads as farther they went into the crater. (After shedding their suits and changing)

As soon as we approached the inner cave opening to the boy's world, we were met with an explosion of color, great smells and I could swear a cool wet mist across my face.

Ten steps into this lush place, the boys pointed behind us as Hank and I turned to look.

Off to our right was a waterfall, hundreds of feet high. Now I know why I felt the spray.

"Almost a shock to the system" as Hank said to me to see such lush growth and water running around and through town, farms off in the distance with Lord only knows how many of

"What" species and those fruits with a rainbow of colors were a sight to behold.

A lit city of thousands lay before us in the valley below.

As we labored to the end of the stairs, the boys beckoned us to explain the helmets and suits.

We signed the best we could showing how we breathe from the tanks, even quickly pulling off an oxygen line and blowing it in their face.

The older boy waved his hand "No" and signed for us to take off our helmets and inhale.

Hank... being the way crazier of us, popped off his mask and sucked in a full lungs worth of air, smiled at me, helping me off with the suit.

The temperature was normal here, even a bit warm and the air sweet.

We grabbed the boys and jumped around laughing, and so did they!

Waving us on, we followed them without suits or oxygen tanks, to the edge of the city.

END CHAPTER SIX

## CHAPTER SEVEN

"Hey Mom...Look What We Brought Home!"

As we walked through the streets, it seemed no one really noticed us walking with the two of them.

A short way up, we got to a tall stone home. The oldest motioned for us to wait outside and they would return.

It was then we heard the excitement bordering on mild hysteria.

An older woman came running and yanked open the front door at a full run, slammed into the imposing figure of Hank. He moved a bit, but she bounced off of him like a ball!

Saying something, which was completely not understandable. We smiled and waved. Seemed to work before.

We were seated in an interior room as the boys stood on our sides.

The lady left the room and re-entered a few moments later with a box and a roll of wire in her hands.

Giving us the "Just sit there" motion, we relaxed into our chairs.

She connected the wires to the box and in gesture, asked which one of us wished to be first.

Hank looked at me, smiled and raised his hand, so she hooked his head up and put in a crystal then Hank jiggled a bit and laid back in his chair in a super relaxed position.

Before I was to get mine, of whatever it was, I needed to talk to Hank.

I shook him till he was more with us and asked, "What happened?"

"Sort of a quick education on their language, used to teach the kids!" he said. Oh, by the way, she's their Mom.

I smiled, sat straight up and leaned my head towards her, annnnd...zap!

Several minutes later, we were both back up to speed and heard her ask, "Are you hungry?"

Hank was the first to answer, as Lord knows, he was always hungry. Had to bring extra sealed bags on board just to keep him happy.

Something similar to sandwiches were served and Hank ate two.

"Now, since my boys think last and act first, may I ask, "Where" are you from?"

I said, "The Earth" which drew a confused look. "Do you have anything to draw on?" I asked.

She brought back a pad of clear sheets and a metallic stick.

"Rotate the writer to make different colors." she said.

"Hey, pretty neat. So, I proceeded to draw our solar system, pointing to the Sun and getting a nod from her. Then to Mercury and Venus, with some different looks, but they knew "Earth." Not by that name, but knew it none the less.

"We are from here, as I pointed to the Earth."

"Have all the aliens been from your Earth."

"We believe so. Have any people here seen different kinds of aliens?"

"Not as I would know" she said, "The landings were seen by so few as not to be discovered." she answered.

"Oh...please excuse me. My name is Dia. My two impetuous sons are Luc and Li."

"We are Lorenzo" as I pointed to myself, "and Hank," pointing to him.

"We both have children." I told her, which seemed to make her more at ease.

"My husband will be home in moments."  
"Please sit till I have explained you both."

We shook out heads yes as Hank had his third sandwich followed by the second large glass on who knows what but was smooth and sweet.

Hearing him arrive in the other room, we could make out some excited talk and quick steps towards us.

There he stood, and here we sat. Well it worked before, so we just smiled and waved. He simply looked at us, pretty stunned and did the same.

We started to speak, well, he jumped in asking how we knew his language. His wife pointed to the learning box, where he, a Doctor, said, "You must be of the same species or it would not have worked."

Our most ancient of writings say, we were once only one place...your and our land." Li's Dad said. "The came the great collision, tearing us away with the making our own orb." "For an unknown reason, air thinned faster than our ancestors could adapt. With that, plants and



animals died, water dried up and many perished before we found this sanctuary.

In we brought the remainder of all animals, transplanted trees and acquired all spores and seeds available everywhere."

"May I tell the rest Dad?" Li interrupted with.

"Most certainly, my boy."

The air didn't go away, it just laid below the surface able to be mined and used." "Within, a great pocket of air was trapped and is replenished by our plants and water." "Was that right Father? Li asked.

"Perfect to a word." His Dad said.

"Wow, what a history your people have," Hank said.

"An amazing will to survive and prosper says much for the people of any land, " I told their Mom and Dad, as they smiled and took our hands in a warm friendly manner.

We all sat down, asked a couple of hundred questions and things got a lot more clear, but that will have to wait.

Back as the Space Center...

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"Where "ARE" they?" "Why no response in these last hours?" Dr Bruckner kept repeating. "Strengthen the signal and keep it going!" the General ordered. Only, where they were, no signal could reach.

**END CHAPTER SEVEN**

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Let's See Central... Just Where 'Have' We Been?

Figuring that The Center was pretty much going crazy by now, we asked if it would be alright if we went back to our ship but returned again to speak and perhaps get a tour of their city.

Both Li and Luc's Parents were happy to agree and told the boys to lead us back but "Be careful, for all of you."

They were all too happy to go back with us.

Out of town and up the winding stairs, we reached a point where we could feel the coldness and lack of oxygen to make putting our suits back on quickly necessary. The boys didn't seem to be affected by the temperature change, other than a thin type of armed cover they put on and the mysterious rock necklace around them.

"The rock you wear about your neck...how long do they last?" I asked Li.

"Under normal use about two days. That's why we keep an extra on our person, but when under the waters of the pond to capture food, no more than half an hour."

"How do you use them underwater?" Hank jumped in with.

"Like this," Luc said as he put the small disc in his mouth. "Takes the young ones a few times to learn to breathe with their mouth, but it's rather easy," Li said, "You just sort of open your throat and the air slides on down." "Bubbles still come out of your nose," he said with a laugh.

Well...more questions for next time. Now we must figure out what to tell the powers that were back on Earth.

As we drove, and the boys leapt, we talked. I said to Hank, "Do you think it is right to tell them what we have found before we fully understand it?"

"We have five days and I believe a few to figure which is better ...to tell or to .... ?" Hank answered back.

We popped "Knuckles" in agreement as we approached the ship.

As we got to the ladder, the boys gestured permission to come aboard.

I, with some crazy hand motions showed how small inside would be but they nodded and in we went.

Once the oxygen lock closed, Li asked, "You guys came "How" far in this thing?"

They told us how they pushed the buttons on the laser emitter and on the Rover. This made sense and "Now" we needed to come up with some answers for Space Central.

I asked Luc if they would come by when they next awake and take us back to their city as we had work to do. Explaining how we had to put them in the air lock so we would be safe they nodded and said they had something very interesting to show us tomorrow.

They left, and Hank looked to me with that look of... "What do we say now?"

"Leave the first part to me and jump in with any help." I said

"Lunar Lander to Space central, Over."

The General responded first, more than a bit agitated.

"Where in the name have you both been?!!"

"We drove for hours, checking rock outcroppings and small craters to see if we could find any traces of the metal the scientists found."

"To Blazes with the rocks. What about the signals?!!"

Now he really sounded agitated.

"Oh, that, " Covering the microphone, I looked to Hank just plain stuck. He switched over and said, "We found pitting and trike marks around the pressure button and its surrounding area as if a cluster of tiny meteoroids struck it setting off the laser." Then Hank smiled at me like saying..."Not too bad Huh?"

"TWICE!!" The general shouted as we could hear spitting in his voice, "and where's the .... where is the old Rover?"

Oh man, we really didn't give these answers enough thought at all. I had nothing for the old Rover and Hank had that "Got Nuthin'" look on his face.

I started to say, who knows what, when Hank grinned really big, grabbed the jack plug for the radio and started jiggling it, pulling it in and out giving the appearance of some sort of space disturbance. I raised my hands in quiet joy and smiled as he finally yanked the plug out.

"Well, that gives some time." He said sorta proud of himself, and I was of him too!

"We've given good reasons for no "Super Metal" as if it was a random meteoroid that landed and no more." The two signals were explained rather well, I may say."

"But the third laser spike and the old Rover." Hank said. "What about them?"

END CHAPTER EIGHT

## CHAPTER NINE

### We Have One Shot with the Story What Should We Say?

On Earth, the scientists were scurrying checking every signal, atmosphere and sunspot to find a way around this radio blackout.

The Military was naturally suspicious of everyone and everything, demanding all kinds of things.

One of the men on the computers leaned over and whispered to Dr. Bruckner, "The enlisted aides we have such a nicer personality, I wonder why."

"Well," the Dr. said, "They don't have as much pressure and responsibility as the Generals. But I think most of all, this General is a taste "Nuts." The computer processor shook his head yes and got back to work.

"Do we need to send a second ship and crew to see what has happened?" the General barked.

"Hive us a little time and we will reconnect with them," The Dr. said.



Figuring out what to say, they re-contacted Earth base.

"Maximilian to Earth Base, Over."

The next voice he heard yelled out, "Where have you been?!!"

"Well General, this area seems to get pelted by little to marble size meteoroids pretty frequently. We found the old Rover three quarters of a miles away with bang marks all over it from those little things pelting it which is how it probably turned on and ran till it hit that crop of rocks and dug itself in." "We're going out tomorrow to dig it out, bring it back and study it. Maximillian, over and out."

"Well, that stops the theory of Martian joy riders" one of the scientists whispered to a colleague, although not quite quiet enough, as it drew a sneer and a very deep growl from the General.

Back at the landing site. "Let's get as many checks and inspections of everything we can think of to show we didn't use time with you know who on the dark side." Lorenzo said. So, they worked half through their sleep cycle piling up reports and taking specimens.

The next morning, well for the boys, was met with Hank and Lorenzo waiting for them at the old Rover site raring to explore.

Here came the boys, hopping like super kangaroos and stopping a few yards from them.

Waving us to follow wasn't even necessary as we were right up with them. Laughingly, they hopped, and we drove quickly.

By the crest to their entrance and stairway, we parked, started to walk and got anxious to shed ourselves of these suits.

A short way down the long range of steps, the boys gestured it would be O.k. to take them off. Open went the face plates to clean warm air, followed by the suits, then down the stairs we flew, even passing Luc and Li for a moment, arriving at their home to their waving and smiling parents.

Invited inside, we sat at a rather large table while the Father served some wild looking fruits that tasted out of this world. I wrapped some seeds up in my handkerchief. Darn bottled oxygen gave me the sniffles.

"How did you come to be here?" I asked.

"Legend has it, so long ago, a...and she drew and described a comet, struck the nearest orb, ripping off a piece to become Alai.

The primitives who inhabited the chunk experienced the atmosphere changing and the food supplies dwindling, until they found this place. Water breathing, and food abounded. They knew no other place could allow them to live so some decided to take theirs and others' too. Horrible times were upon us for many generations till one day a pair, husband and wife, came into the middle of the fighting sides, raising their hands.

"We can show you all how to have more than both your side things altogether. A way to live, see your children reach old age and most of all, smile again."

"The two sides stopped, listened and were shown, how planting, building and keeping well what we now have is the way to complete happiness."

"Then you have no "Wars" here? Hank asked.

They looked at us, not even knowing what that word meant.

"I guess not." I said to Hank. "We've found it.....Shangri-La, a place where peace and harmony, love and plenty are the orders of life."

"There's not a chance we could tell anyone home about what we have experienced and found here." "Future expeditions would fight over it till it ended up a burned out cinder."

"I only wish I could have my family here with me." I said.

"Me too," said Hank.

We walked with them to their city. Strolled through their farm land and sat in their hall of knowledge, reading parts of their books.

Looking back at Hank, I said, "I do believe we must go back."

"To the ship," He asked?

"No....to earth, and have a heck of a tale "Why" we remember none of this." I said.

Luc and Li's parents understood, I do believe, and Hank pouted out his bottom lip, hung his head saying, "I know that's right."

Up to the stairway we walked, accompanied, this time, by all four of them, this time.

Up the way to our suits, Mom and Dad stayed there as we snapped on our helmets.

Just before I closed my face mask, I blew my nose and said goodbye to the lovely Martian parents of two adventurous boys.

Up and into the Rover we went, followed by the bounding boys, all the way to the ship.

All of us went in and I had several things to say to them.

"Li and Luc, you are great adventurers, never lose that quality, but whatever you do, "Don't" press those bright light buttons again!" We all laughed, then Hank looked at me, pulling his American flag, Moon patch from the arm of his suit as did I and handed them to the boys as souvenirs telling them to be careful of who they talk to on the bright side.

They left, then we started to button everything up for the trip home.

"Base from Moon...Base from Moon." "We're ready to prepare for home trip." "Checking."

The responder went over the settings, steps and procedures, as usual, but this trip was a far from usual as you could get...I would say.

"PREPARE FOR COUNTDOWN," was the order.

5....4....3....2....1....

Ignition, Liftoff, as we shot from our place into the starry sky.

From the "Aft" (rear) porthole, we could see the boys distantly. I waved...no one saw, but I smiled anyway, Hank said.

We didn't speak for hours on the trip home. Hank turned to me saying, "Buffeting in this new ship is unknown. First flight, perhaps re-entry is to be so rough it bangs us up severely. Give me your helmet."

Hank took a spanner wrench and gave the side of it a "Whack" like he was hitting a home run, turned to me and smiled, handing me his.

"Where do you want the concussion?" I asked. He grinned, pointing to the middle of his forehead, and I whacked him too.

You know, the landing wasn't too far from what we were going to pretend. While re-entering the atmosphere, we were buffeted something horrible and my face shield was really shattered. Glad the outside held up!

Then something really un expected happened.

Just as we thought the re-entry was going as per normal, one of our slowing rockets started to sputter and not reducing our speed to what was needed for a safe landing, so it was back to the dreaded "Manuel Landing" instead of the computer doing all the highly difficult calculations that we would be doing, hopefully perfectly.

"Lorenzo...We're going to over shoot the landing area by many hundreds of miles." Hank said, as he muscled the controls in order for us not to burn up on re-entry.

My charts show a landing in the ocean about ten miles off the coast of the Eastern tip of Florida. The water should be fine if we can come in at a steady angle. I said.

Coming on it quickly and we could now again get central on the radio. Telling of our landing plans, they were worried if we sink, they're would be insufficient oxygen were we to go into deeper waters.

"Send the airborne Choppers and we will have to just wait...but hurry, O.k.?" Hank asked.

The landing banged the heck out of us as we bounced over the water like a twelve ton flat rock I used to skip at the lake as a kid.

"Don't quite remember skipping stones that hard!" Hank said as we came to a stop. I tried to laugh but noticed right quick, that the ship wasn't as buoyant as we hoped it would be.

I looked to Hank saying, "Wasn't designed for a water landing...we're gonna float like a "Rock...a lead Rock!"

Down we went in what we could figure by gauges and pressure to about a hundred feet.

Our radio antennas were either burned off when we started changing course or slammed off by the ocean in that high speed skid "How much Oxygen do we have, Hank?" I asked not really wanting to know the answer.

"Four hours including the suit tanks." was the response I did "Not" want.

"It shouldn't take them too long to find us... let's see ...Scrambling, pinpointing our position and retrieval. Well..." Hank said.

"Well what?" I asked a bit on edge.



"They should get us up about an hour after we run out," and we both sort of slumped a bit in our seats.

"We'll have to just wait and see." I said as I released the buoy with the short wave radio in it which was only good for signaling a beep with a five mile radio for close contact.

Thinking of alternatives, the thought of suits came up to swim to the surface, but the idea soon went by the way side as too heavy and unwieldy. We waited....and waited.

Time ran out for cabin oxygen so the last few minutes were used from our suit tanks, till I reached into my pouch and felt the stone medallions Li and Luc gave us and waved them at Hank. "Remember him saying the oxygen would last for no more than half an hour. More than enough time to go one hundred feet!" Hank shook his head yes and we set the door to blow open setting for a rush of incoming water.

"Hold it on your tongue and he said to breathe through your mouth, I know it sounds weird," as I got a thumbs up, but not quite sure

how till we placed it on our tongues and oxygen just poured into our lungs.

The door blew and in came a lot of sea. When the room filled, we were able to exit.

It was still difficult to take that first breath underwater...but then it went fine all the way to the surface.

Thank goodness for a pretty calm sea as it took another thirty minutes or so for the choppers to get there and another two hours to get divers down and pull the ship up.

Back at base, the de-briefing went as we had expected. Telling them, we couldn't remember all of the trip, gave safe haven to the Alai people. We said that we kept great records and brought them back so many samples, it kept them happy and busy.

The General, after all was said and done, still gave us the "Stink Eye" as my kid calls it, and never really knew whether or not to believe us.

Such is life.

That next day, we were home. Safe in the old arm chair my dad left to me, having some ice

cold lemonade my son made me as a welcome home cocktail, as he knew I truly love it.

My wife Jo sitting in the big chair with me, I pulled out my handkerchief to sneeze. As I did, six strangely triangular, rainbow colored seeds fell from it.

My son picked them up carefully, knowing I plant anything I can get my hands on, on the farm, and stared carefully, then asked, "Dad, I've helped you all my life..."go listen to him...all his life", he's fourteen, but back to my boy..."and never seen, no, even heard of rainbow colored triangle seeds."

Well you know son... we'll sit down, you, me and your Momma, and I'll tell you just where they come from. But for right now, lets all go out to the greenhouse, sprout these suckers, and I will let you see and taste the most magical fruit this side...well, this side of the "Moon!"

*The End....for now,*

*Michael*

## Where, How and Why

This book came on me one night around the wee hour of 2:38. I wrote the title down, which was close to the one I had first thought of ...and jotted down a few ideas.

When I sat down to write what I really imagined, the story took twists and turns even to surprise me!

All I knew is I was a seriously curious kid who hasn't grown up yet...and so would they be.

This story was the easiest of tales to write as I felt a lot of myself in both the boys and the Astronauts.

I would just like to believe, human kind has a great side to it ....and given the chance to choose, will lean towards the good.

May this book find you always leaning that way.  
For you all.

*Thanks*

Please allow me to thank my grand kids  
for keeping me young....and sometimes  
sore.

For making me have to think of answers  
"Why water feels wet" ...and  
try my best to understand the language of  
babies under three who have their own  
dictionary of speech.

But most of all...when I'm gone, they may  
know how I was and would like them to  
be.

Lest we forget, my three children,  
Amy, Gina and Joshua... & my  
wonderful wife Joanne who allows me to  
go off in my own land to write.

The Great Art by....Heoh Kim!  
Who help make my words come alive in  
pictures.

Bless us all

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The Boys in the Moon by Mike Romano (page 55)

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Have book questions/suggestions? Contact Mike at: [mromano5150@gmail.com](mailto:mromano5150@gmail.com)

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Me and Amy, my first born,  
Gina, who gave me Li, Luc  
& Lorenzo

Josh who's, James & Olivia will be the  
heroes of future books

Thanks...To all of you I may touch, and  
to please have you write down any and  
all of your dreams.

Good bye...and till our next reading.  
Imagine on with me...

Michael