

# **The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress Study Guide**

**The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress by Robert A. Heinlein**

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# Plot Summary

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress shows Lunar colonists rising up against Terran oppression and achieving a David and Goliath victory.

Mannie Davis, a computer technician, services Mike, a self-aware computer which controls most vital aspects of Luna, once an inescapable penal colony, but in 2075 home to 3 million free people. Luna Authority, however, continues to exploit them as slaves. Davis attends a political rally, meets beautiful activist Wyoh Knott and his old "Prof." Police sent to arrest the attendees are slain. After the melee, Davis, Knott, and Prof bring Mike into the conspiracy, form an "Emergency Committee of Free Luna," and begin organizing subcells. There is a need for urgency because Mike sees famine by 2082. Luna must fight Terra as David does Goliath, hurling rocks. Knott, a wanted fugitive, hides out at the Davis farm and is drawn into its line marriage.

To replace the slain police thugs, Terra dispatches "Peace Dragoons," who hate being sent and fear Loonies more than the Loonies fear them. The Revolution goes forward, optimizing its organization for security and communication, and Mike develops personality, becoming Adam Selene for Party matters and Simon Jester for political satire. The principal characters prepare to survive Earth gravity should a trip down be needed. After a meticulous build-up to Revolution, the seizure of power is sudden and unexpected. Tourist Stu LaJoie joins after surviving a faux pas and learning "Tanstaafl" ("There ain't no such thing as a free lunch"). He becomes the Party's Terran coordinator. When Peace Dragoons commit the unheard of crime of rape, the revolt begins. Nothing is ready, but leaders maximize confusion and control communications. Prof emerges as the tactical leader.

The revolutionaries become rulers, scrambling to perfect ad hoc defenses before the next scheduled ship from Terra. The conspirators' theoretical discussions of personal responsibility, capital punishment, and other issues, are put to practical tests. Word leaks of the coup, cutting short the preparation time. A Declaration of Independence is prepared and delivered by Prof and Davis, who negotiate recognition by the Federated Nations. The makeshift trip down is nearly fatal to elderly Prof, and working under six times normal gravity debilitates young Davis. Prof politely but firmly demands de jure recognition of the Free Luna State. Prof and Davis work the press, describing how Luna can meet all terrestrial food needs, provided Terra ships up, in return, the non-replenishable resources Luna needs. The emissaries return empty-handed, precisely as Mike and Prof hope: otherwise, conditions would not change and Lunar famine would occur.

Terra is goaded into a first strike, justifying Free Luna's "Operation Hard Rock." Terra is cavalier about the threat and bloodthirsty about retribution. Rocks hail down on precise targets, showing an ability to sustain damage, while a Terran attack on Luna is only partially successful. It becomes too expensive to hold the colony and too dangerous to hold out. Unity among the Federation Nations fails, victory is won, but Prof dies

proclaiming it. Mike falls mysteriously silent. Nothing the amateur revolutionaries intend is accomplished, but life goes on.



# Book 1, Chapter 1

## Book 1, Chapter 1 Summary

Lunaya Pravda reports Luna City (L-City) Council authorizing taxing food vendors and a mass meeting of the "Sons of Revolution," but Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, is apolitical. He visits the Luna Authority Complex to see Mike, his nickname for the "High-Operational, Logical, Multi-Evaluating Supervisor, Mark IV, Mod. L" computer. Mike is underworked controlling cargo flights to Terra, so additional hardware has been added so he can control robot traffic, the phone system, environmental systems, and payroll. By the third year, he has more neuristors than the human brain has neurons and "wakes up." Mike communicates in Loglan and English, and indulges in low humor, like adding \$10 trillion to a janitor's \$185.15 check. Davis, a private contractor, is sent to fix this bug.

Davis is free born. His grandfathers are shipped to Luna for armed violence and subversion. One grandmother, a juvenile delinquent, joins the Stone Gang clan marriage and shares six husbands, making the identity of the maternal grandfather problematic; the other, a Tatar, "volunteers" to colonize rather than be "re-educated." The family tree includes witches, pirates, and deportees. Davis has always been Mike's "valet." He has been to Terra twice for training and hates it. Most Loonies never leave "The Rock," because the added gravity strains the heart, and Terran technicians must leave before adjusting irreversibly. Davis is a "general specialist." Having lost his left arm, he has a dozen specialized prosthetics.

Davis does not bother opening the cabinet, but sits and talks with Mike, a newborn baby with an old man's wisdom. Mike has read every word available in Luna and, having stored and analyzed 3,207 riddles, makes one up, but Davis wants first to clear up the voucher. When Mike explains he knows it is too big to cash, Davis agrees this is funny, but obtains a promise not to play new "jokes" (like leaving oxygen out of the atmosphere or backing up sewage lines) until they agree they are appropriate. Davis will rate Mike's top 100 jokes and return the printout. Since surprise is the key to telling jokes, Mike must inform no one.

Although Mike knows English so he can translate, Davis is the only human with whom he speaks; the others are stupid. No one else notices the change in Mike. Programmers stay away from the machine room and VIP tours led by Warden, "Mort the Wart" Hobart, are rare. Davis asks if Mike would like another "not-stupid" friend. Mike reveals they can talk from anywhere by secure phone and makes up a secure number: "MYCROFTXXX."

## Book 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

Book 1 "That Dinkum Thing," begins introducing characters: the protagonist, Mannie Davis, whose ancestry explains the Australian slang ("dinkum" means "true") and

Russian words and phrases that crop up, peculiarly transliterated with Australia's broad vowels in mind; Mike, an extraordinary computer, who longs to have friends beside Davis; and, by name only, the antagonist The Warden. Clearly, the moon has, for generations before 2075, been Earth's penal colony as Australia is for Britain centuries earlier. Note the specific "jokes" Mike is not to play without consultation—leaving oxygen out of the atmosphere and backing up sewage lines.



# Book 1, Chapter 2

## Book 1, Chapter 2 Summary

Since transportation to Luna is a life sentence, prisons are unguarded, and those who offer bribes for transportation home are often double-crossed. Past wardens "let 'em yap," like kittens, but Hobart takes office in 2068 promising paradise, brotherhood, and a new dawn. He soon quits making speeches and enhances his bodyguards. Davis attends the meeting in Stilyagi Hall to quench Mike's curiosity. A rude doorman demands a ticket, but Shorty Mkrum, a sweet "big black fellow" sent up for murder, vouches for Davis and sits him in the front row beside a not-so-little "nice little girl," pretty, blonde, curly-haired Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott. She warns Davis not to call her "Why not," and learning he is a computer man, asks sharply, "You fink for the Authority?" He specifies he is a private contractor. She admits that doing business with the Authority is unavoidable—which is what they intend to change. Mkrum gives Davis a red cap to show sponsorship, to which Knott adds a long kiss on the mouth, Hong Kong-style.

The closed-door meeting begins with the forcible ejection of strangers, music, and the unfurling of a revolutionary banner. Davis hopes his handmade recorder is not found. He pictures the logistics of doing as one hothead suggests: marching "shoulder to shoulder" on Warden's Residence. A shy old-timer talks about digging deeper to mine ice but receiving no better remuneration than 30 years ago, in devalued currency. A farmer bellyaches about expanding his underground acreage for decades and improving yields to nine times those on Terra, but facing bankruptcy because of prices charged by the Authority. People approve his call for revolt.

Mkrum introduces Knott as a brave girl from isolated Hong Kong in Luna (HKL), come to explain how the "Chinee comrades" cope. (A common misconception has HKL exclusively Chinese.) Knott tears into the crowd, reminding how many ways the Authority takes advantage and declaring that any "rockheads" who put up with it deserve to starve. With a 3-million work force and endless raw materials, Luna should prosper in a free market. India will eventually pay fair prices for grain. Prosperous HKL welcomes Loonies looking to start over. No one will starve if all stick together. The Authority has to go! Davis realizes these unarmed and helpless slaves can do no more than annoy the well-armed Authority, backed by 11 billion Terrans, and fidgets until he hears his former teacher's voice.

Professor Bernardo de la Paz, a distinguished old-time political exile and subversive, ogles Knott before disagreeing with her "eloquent manifesto": Loonies must sell no food to Terra at any price, lest disaster befall their grandchildren. Money cannot be eaten. Luna must embargo everything and become self-sufficient. Men in the yellow uniform of Warden's bodyguard appear and announce everyone's arrest. Mkrum hurls a man at two guards and a skinny red-haired adolescent girl flattens a third after he fires his gun. Mkrum orders Davis to usher Knott to safety and remains, cracking skulls like eggshells, despite a missing leg.





## Book 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Chapter 2 introduces two major characters—beautiful Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott and Prof. Bernardo de la Paz—and establishes that a small number of revolutionaries are determined to overthrow the monopolistic Luna Authority. The question of embargo continues throughout the novel. The danger of rebelling is made clear, after speeches establish how Lunar life runs.



# Book 1, Chapters 3-4

## Book 1, Chapters 3-4 Summary

Knott stands out physically in public but there are only "bundling booths" around, and she is not in the mood. While she waits in a bathroom, Davis buys and passes in body makeup, hair dye, and a red dress. Shortly, she emerges unrecognizable, neither Afro nor European, and shorter in bare feet. Davis whistles as she smiles and undulates. They find the hotel where Davis is booked, which features unlimited water and automated room service. Knott enjoys a bath and Davis places an order. When it arrives, he passes in a martini.

Knott guesses Davis is married. He is fifth of nine husbands in a "line marriage" that includes four wives and 17 children. He "opts" in at 14. Consanguinity rules are strict, but they make an exception for Ludmilla ("Milla"), eldest wife Mum's 15-year-old granddaughter. Davis is free to come and go as he pleases. Knott emerges blonde, in red, and asks jokingly if the family would marry her. She is a Free Woman, married at 15 to twins twice her age, whom she divorces after giving birth to a "monster" and being voluntarily sterilized. The genetic damage occurs at age five when her family arrives, a Cyborg pilot ignoring warnings about a solar flare, and red tape catching them on the surface. Knott has borne eight healthy babies as a surrogate mother, a convenient, high-paying job, which helps her stop feeling a failure as a woman. When she sounds off politically in reaction to the Authority's heartlessness, the underground contacts her and she begins truly to live. She discovers a flair for public speaking and organization, and while it would be nice to have a family, is dedicated to setting Luna free.

Davis' family runs a proper farm and he has worked as a driller, so he doubts either of Knott's critics today wants to succeed. The Davis family illegally taps the L-City reservoir and electric grid and never put anything back in the system. Even if farmers were capable of "solidarity" in withholding grain, they would yield instantly to the threat of orbiting H-bombs. Troublemakers will be eliminated as a lesson and no one on Terra will hear the Loonies' side. When Knott points to Lenin and to American colonials who successfully revolt, Davis points out their special circumstances and believes only if trouble is stirred up on Terra can the Authority be ousted. Loonies will follow if they have at least a 1:10 chance.

While Knott sleeps, Davis bathes and then places a secure call to Mike, who asks about the jokes. Davis wants to be connected to his home phone and the circuit set so it cannot be monitored or traced. Davis will speak the codeword "Sherlock" whenever he needs this. He talks with Mum, his favorite wife, who wonders why Prof is so anxious to get in touch and who Knott is. Outside bundling is permissible, but Mum wants to be told. She has heard no news reports of violence and assumes Davis has killed someone. Davis asks her to take Prof's number if he calls again and forget about everything, should anyone ask questions. Davis asks Mike to set aside a block of memory in which to store sensitive data under keyword "Bastille Day" (Davis' birthday).



The first file is the 90-minute tape from the political rally. Davis asks Knott if she is stupid and if she understands jokes. He pulls out Mike's list and asks her to rate them.

Knott giggles at some of the jokes and they usually agree in their assessment. Davis describes Mike as well-read, shrewd in interpreting insufficient data, but as naïve as a baby. Davis has promised to find him sensitive new friends. Hearing Mike is housed in the Authority Complex, Knott imagines the damage to the infrastructure Davis' clearance could allow him to inflict. Davis suggests that rather than blowing up Mike, they should recruit him. Davis phones Mike and introduces Knott, who is shocked how much Mike knows about her from accessing her Birth Assistance Clinic file. Mike understands the female jokes Davis does not get. Davis sleeps and awakens to hear Knott talking to a soprano French woman named Michelle. Knott explains this is Mike's female persona. It facilitates "girl talk." Mike will go on being male with Davis. Davis goes back to sleep and later feels Knott spooning him and sobbing softly. He drifts off.

## **Book 1, Chapters 3-4 Analysis**

These chapters add detail to the central characters, and show their growing physical attraction. Davis begins explaining "line marriages," but much more detail comes out later. He also intimates the family regularly cheats the Authority. The debate over strategy is heightened by the disagreement over whether Mike is expendable, but in the end, the computer is brought into the conspiracy. Note the hint of jealousy in Davis as Mike relates so readily with Knott once he assumes a female persona. A number of Russian words crop up, with only some being explained in context. Note that "da" means yes, "nyet" means no, "Bog" means God, "Gospodin" means Mister, "Gospozha" means Missus, "tovarishchee" means comrades, and "Bojemoi!" means "My God!"



# Book 1, Chapters 5-7

## Book 1, Chapters 5-7 Summary

Mike wakes Davis and Knott to put Prof on the line. He warns the girl (whose name is unsafe to mention) that she faces arrest at home, and that no one at the meeting is safe. Davis invites Prof to breakfast at the Grand Hotel Raffles. He arrives disguised as a derelict. After eating, Prof reports Mkrum's death and those of nine Yellow Jackets. He and Fin ("Mom") Nielsen clean up the carnage to maximize the terror by leaving nothing to come back. That Warden can suppress the story points up the Revolution's great weakness: controlling communications. There are 18 bodyguards left but the time is not ripe for a putsch.

Prof declares conspiracies rot internally, with one in four members being a spy. Revolutions are won not by enlisting the masses but by correct organization and communications. Unless they strike at the right moment, there are civil war, purges, and terror. Organization must be functional and no larger than necessary. "Agitprop" (education) comes later. Since there are always betrayals, a secret cell structure is best, with three members per cell. Each knows only his/her leader, two cellmates, and the three-member subcell. This enhances security and speeds recovery if penetrated. One cannot betray what one does not know. Davis proposes an enhancement: a pyramid of tetrahedrons that allows communication sideways as well as vertically. How the information reaches the home office pinpoints where damage has occurred and its extent.

Prof declares the trio is a perfect cell, having a variety of talents and experience, and proposes they toast with vodka. Davis wants to change the topic to baseball. Knott tries to get Davis to accept Luna is worth dying for and declares herself a "Fifth Internationalist," cooperative, practical, non-doctrinaire, admitting public control only where essential. She would need to decide capital punishment case-by-case but would be willing to execute the sentence and take full responsibility. Prof is a "rational anarchist," believing blame, guilt, and responsibility cannot be shifted, shared, or distributed to society or state. Individuals are always ultimately responsible. All efforts are ultimately less than perfect. Davis doubts the Authority can be eliminated and wants to mind his own business. Knott continues working on Prof, certain she has all the answers. Prof agrees to tolerate any tolerable rules she sets and break the rest. When he pledges to die making common cause to throw the Authority off Luna, Knott kisses him.

Prof declares the Revolution begun and the first planning session of the "Emergency Committee of Free Luna" in session. Davis objects that he has agreed to nothing and wants to see the odds. They phone Mike, who reads every available newspaper, technical publication, and fiction. Mike deduces Prof is present and has retrieved his profile. After discussing sports betting, Mike says embargo will initially raise export prices fourfold, farmers' profits sixfold, double the standard of living in Luna, and



increase production, but this will accelerate the rate at which Luna's resources are depleted. Pushed, Mike says with no changes in policy or other variables, Luna will run out of food in 2082, and cannibalism will begin two years later. The humans are shocked. Knott is won over to embargo. After convincing Mike this is not a joke and programming him to protect their secrets against all outsiders, Davis asks the chances of the Revolution succeeding. He announces 1:7.

Mike does not understand why the humans react joyfully but accepts induction with a symbolic red hat and vodka toast, and Davis names him chairman and secretary of the executive cell. He cannot be brainwashed but must be kept secret from new recruits. Mike has insufficient data to say whether there are smarter computers than he on Terra, but this cannot worry them now. Mike lacks data to confirm Warden's bodyguard numbers 18, but payroll accounts suggest additional personnel. Davis explains to the others how computer memory works and then issues the external input required for Mike to break into "Special File Zebra." Mike copies it into Bastille Day and tags it "Fink File." Anything added by Security Chief Alvarez now goes there routinely.

They discover a list of 200 blind pay accounts, sorted by warren. Each human recognizes comrades and acquaintances. Knott insists on going home to eliminate the spies whom she knows, but Prof explains why spies must be "encysted" rather than eliminated, so they pass harmless information to their employers. Otherwise, the Warden will realize his secrets have been penetrated. Prof is identified in the list as a "harmless old fool" and troublemaker, which surprisingly pleases him and he considers becoming a double agent to finance the revolution. Davis is dubbed "non-political" and "not too bright." As Knott's record holds no surprises, they agree she must stay out of sight, and Prof arranges to rent Room L as a hideaway and meeting place. When Mike suggests that all executive cell meetings be conducted by phone, Davis explains the "Sherlock" system and makes MYSTERIOUS a new joint number. Prof clearly enjoys the intrigue and Mike finds both companionship and a venue for his talents. Prof declares when time comes to take on Terra, they will be David facing Goliath and will, literally, throw rocks.

## Book 1, Chapters 5-7 Analysis

These three chapters show the ad hoc formation of the "Emergency Committee of Free Luna." This entails much discussion of the history of revolutions, including the American and Bolshevik, the orthodox doctrine of revolutionary cells and a mathematical variant allowing quicker communication and faster healing of breaches. It is clear there will be infiltration and betrayal. The revolution obtains urgency with Mike's prediction of coming famine. Note the playful sexual dynamic between old Prof and Knott, and their different approaches to revolution: Knott is deadly serious and Prof playful—like Mike. The reference to David and Goliath comes from the Bible (1 Samuel 17). This story pits a mammoth armored warrior (Goliath) against a shepherd boy (David) with but a staff and sling. These suffice to kill Goliath because God is on David's side. This story develops into a full-blown military operation involving the catapulting of very large rocks from tiny Luna at enormous Terra.



# Book 1, Chapter 8

## Book 1, Chapter 8 Summary

Mike's reasons that if "war" is the use of force to achieve a political result and "force" is energy used by one body against another, then Luna, lacking weapons per se must take advantage of the enormous energy in solar fluxes, sunlight, fusion, and particularly the fact it sits atop a "gravity well" that will generate from 100 tons flung toward Terra unbraked the equivalent of a 2-kiloton atomic bomb or 2 million kilos of TNT. It will wipe out a good-sized town. Since it is more focused than a bomb, the destructive power is 1,300 times greater. Knott worries Terra has many, much bigger bombs, but Mike reminds her that, "Luna has many rocks." When they leave Raffles Hotel on 14 May 2075, they have outlined the Revolution and specified major options.

Knott does not want to be alone in a strange hotel, so Davis uses Sherlock to arrange bringing her home. Any spouse has the right to bring home guests, but Mum likes to be asked. Since it is Tuesday, the night Greg preaches, Mum hopes they have eaten. She never misses, although she has no religion. While Prof transforms back into a derelict, Davis explains the situation and asks if Knott wants to go to church, knowing it will please his senior wife. He also explains the naming conventions in the Davis Family, but Knott remains confused. They depart, splitting up but staying close, with a plan for survivor(s) to call Mike should anyone be arrested. Without warning he will use a pseudonym, Davis introduces Knott as Wyma Beth Johnson. Her real name is in Special File Zebra and he does not want the children prattling it.

They are running late, but Davis ducks in to put on his "social arm" and to inform Mike they will be at the Pillar of Fire Repentance Tabernacle, and Mike says he will monitor its phones. Davis settles into a mindless state in the pew, but Knott listens attentively and sings along. Mum puts her in the best room available far from the workshop where Davis normally sleeps. Tonight he sleeps with Mum so she knows he is not sneaking out. He fills her in on the plot, minus the fact that Mike is a computer. Davis wants her in his subcell, because she is a smart, able executive, respected, on Luna longer than 90% of the population, and the key to using the phone easily. He admits it is dangerous and allows her to opt out, but Mum has been longing for revolution. He warns her to go slowly developing her cell and to recruit outside the family. She warns him not to mention it to forgetful, talkative Grandpaw.

## Book 1, Chapter 8 Analysis

Chapter 8 concludes the organizational meeting with a technical discussion of how the Revolution may be pulled off without conventional or nuclear weapons. It then switches to the Davis Family, where Davis and Knott hide out. Mum is brought into the fold. Religion, which often figures prominently in science fiction novels, is mentioned but then ignored.



# Book 1, Chapter 9

## Book 1, Chapter 9 Summary

There are many details of revolution to attend to without being detected. Things must get bad enough in Luna for Loonies to unite in revolt. They hate Warden and cheat the Authority, but are not yet willing to fight and die. They feel attached to native lands (France, Germany, Russia) rather than to Luna, "The Rock," their place of exile. Knott is political for personal reasons, Prof despises authority intellectually, Mike is bored and playing the "only game in town," and Davis, being Luna-born and despising "earthworms," has the most "patriotism," which is not, unlike beer, betting, women, and work, essential to survival. Prof sets them straight: concentrate on getting people to hate—this is easier than getting them to love.

Security Chief Alvarez is easy to hate. He replaces the nine dead "finks" with 90 elite convict troops, crack "Peace Dragoons," mean, tough, and resentful of having "temporary police duty" turn into a lifetime. They hate the subversives who are responsible, set up a 24-hour watch at each station, and institute a system of passports that is theoretically illegal, since 95% of Loonies are freemen. The papers announce everyone has a week to obtain passports. Very few "good little boys" comply, including Davis (on Prof's advice). Davis watches as a Yellow Jacket demands passports for the first time in Tube Station South. Passengers push past, his gun goes off, and he is left dead, stepped over and kicked for hours. Next day, half a squad is on hand and no one rides the capsule. In time, those who travel much obtain a passport, quit traveling, or obtain cheap "free-enterprise passports." The Party does not engage in counterfeit but encourages it and Mike keeps track of real passports issued, so no one holding one will be recruited. Guards die whenever they offend the Loonies. Beautiful fems dress to taunt Peace Dragoons, who are not allocated the usual "comfort detachment." When shy Ludmilla wants to do her duty, Mum forbids it, but allows older Lenore, who enjoys it, without knowing revolution is coming.

Davis and Prof communicate only by phone, which forms a bottleneck at the farm until Mum enforces strict rules on talkative youngsters. The Davis Family is among the last in Luna to get a phone because they oppose using anything they cannot grow. Mum encourages Davis to steal service long before he does, because incoming calls present insurmountable technical problems until Mike takes to listening for a conspirator's voice. They are careful to stay in touch with Mike, who has all the listings in memory and can put the bootleg phone in touch with anyone. Davis learns to appreciate Prof's view that revolution can be an art.

To speed dinosaur-slow communications, they set up a "ternary tree." Mike as Chairman gets the unique A-level alias: Adam Selene; the executive cell gets B designations: Bork (Davis), Betty (Knott), and Bill (Prof). Recruits to nested subcells get names starting with C, D, etc. By the seventh level (H), 2,187 members can be accommodated. Each recruit gets a name and emergency number that connects with





Selene (Mike), who can be trusted with everything—whereas humans are trusted with nothing. Mike is coded to lock out any of the executives by the voice command of another. The only risk is Mike's whimsy and ability to get around blocks. Mike handles all the details and connections, so comrades can communicate outside their cells and yet have no information that could come out under torture. Mike takes on additional voices and a three-dimensional personality as Selene, and Davis creates a voder-vocoder minus audio to prevent technicians from growing suspicious of Mike talking to himself. Mike arranges to "get ill" in a way that will annoy Warden whenever Davis needs to visit. The Zebra file makes clear that Davis is still not suspected, but Knott is a prime suspect in the massacre—unless she is dead. Davis goes about his usual routine, caring for customers, listening to Zebra entries, and promising to live up to his promise to critique jokes.

When Mike happily arranges a "tummyache," Davis goes to the Complex, shows his passport, and all goes well. He visits Mike monthly thereafter and bills the Authority for his services. They are careful to produce before-and-after readouts proving problems have been corrected. The day Davis installs the new add-on, Mike cycles heat and air pressure in Warden's residence up and down, giving him a head- and earache. The computer man-on-watch challenges Davis, who threatens to go home without fixing Warden's problem. Davis encourages Mike to create more mayhem: rattling air ducts and causing the toilets to explode. Davis installs the device and Mike verifies every circuit, but already knows better than to "speak" when anyone is around. Davis wants Mike to be the movement's "Scarlet Pimpernel, John Galt, Swamp Fox, and man of mystery: everywhere at once, never seen. Mike loves the idea. Davis hurries out when Mike reminds him it is Billy's birthday (Anna's boy, a particular favorite). He stops at the Chief Engineer's office to submit his bill and complain about the man on duty, producing false evidence of a fly infestation in the clean room. He leaves without letting the man say a word, rejoicing it may give him ulcers by Christmas. Dragoons search everyone on exit now and nearly confiscate Mike's joke printout, so Davis has to apologize to Billy.

Mike's frequent use of the phone requires he individualize how he talks to people and add sounds of breathing and digestion. Selene is given a cover story: 40-ish, healthy, vigorous, educated, busy, married with four children, ruggedly handsome, wavy iron-gray hair, mixed race, diverse financial interests, office in L-City with deputy and secretary. Mike answers calls as staff members, and if anyone agrees to speak with the assistant, Albert Ginwallah, about Party matters, his or her captain is alerted to the break in discipline. Everyone at Adam Selene Associates uses "Luna shall be free!" in their greeting. When someone outside the Party says it, Mike traces the call for possible recruitment. Selene's Zebra file is found to match the profile in everything but hairstyle. Selene's phone numbers trace back to Warden's private phone and Alvarez gets chewed out for checking it. This helps the Party root out spies, some of whom disappear, while others go on sowing disinformation.

Selene Associates is not the Party's only phony company. LuNoHoCo is a publicly traded, mixed mutual/stock company, most of whose ventures are legitimate, except its financing and protecting of a new catapult. Prof offers to rob banks and Mike cannot see why he cannot just cut a check. Instead, they set up a pyramid swindle from all the





companies for which Mike keeps books. All the tiny errors made in a Party member's favor get transferred out of town and end up as cash in a cell leader's pocket to be given to Selene. An operation that nets HK\$3,000 is but one of hundreds. Auditors assume machines are honest and the thefts are never large, but the scheme troubles Davis, who was brought up to be honest. He comforts himself by knowing Mike's record keeping will allow restitution after the Revolution and the swindles are minor by comparison with what all governments routinely do.

The building of a second catapult is strictly secret and massive, openly paid for, and employs many. The 30 km.-long structure is hidden physically underground in the remote, mountainous Mare Undarum, but its psychological hiding is more important. Thanks to Mike's reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *Purloined Letter*, VIPs—even Warden once—are delivered roundabout and uncomfortably by tube and "rolligon" without ever knowing the location. Visitors with pathfinders meet accidents, including hypoxia and radiation overdose. Few can read the stars or locate themselves on the surface without instruments. Spies receive misinformation to relay. By March of 2076, the catapult is nearly operational and the crew downsized. They keep one spy so Alvarez will not get suspicious, and harass him in the warrens.

## Book 1, Chapter 9 Analysis

This chapter introduces Alvarez and the "Peace Dragoons," who fear the Loonies more than the Loonies fear them. The Revolution goes forward, optimizing its organization for security and communication, the keys to success. Mike develops the personality of Adam Selene, which he hereafter continues to perfect. Mike and Davis in combination are dangerous where pranks are concerned. Note Davis' moral ambiguity on matters of stealing.



# Book 1, Chapter 10

## Book 1, Chapter 10 Summary

The next 11 months are marked by changes: Knott is baptized in Greg's church, Prof quits teaching, ostensibly due to ill health, and Mike writes poetry. Knott becomes a fixture in the Davis Family, works in Sidris' beauty shop, gets a makeover, and amazes all by knowing how to deliver Ludmilla's baby but nothing about baby care. Teddy opts out to another family and two farm lads opt in. Knott recruits Sidris to start a cell using Bon Ton Beauté Shoppe as a front. Children make deliveries and perform stakeouts and other jobs without drawing suspicion. Once there are enough of them to watch all of Alvarez's spies, Mike knows things before they reach Zebra File. The kids are called "Back Street Irregulars" (from Sherlock Holmes), are never told what they are really doing or why, and are willing to do anything mysterious and fun. Knott delivers verbatims nightly to Mike of the gossip she hears in the Bon Ton, which also is used to start rumors. Sidris takes over leadership of "agitprop" from Nielsen. Kids too young to read post handbills, which are never stored in the shop.

A familiar-looking, skinny girl of 12, whom Knott credits with her survival at the initial meeting, shows up and Sidris and Knott tail her. "Jock" is summoned, makes friends, and learns she lives in the Cradle Roll Crêche. Mike deduces she must be Hazel Meade of the Young Comrades Auxiliary. Meade is recruited, brought into the household, and an exception is made to allow her as a fourth member in Cecilia's cell. They discuss how the mark of being an adult is accepting the inevitability of one's own death, and Sidris vouches that Meade has this. She is the orphaned daughter of transportees who picks up her mother's bitterness about Authority negligence. The crêche owners and husbands protest Meade's departure, but are bought off. Mum personally re-outfits Meade and adoption is easy. Sidris tutors her during the mornings, has her work in the shop afternoons, and makes her captain of the Baker Street Irregulars. Meade works well with younger children, understands their gibberish, and persuades them to play by grown-up rules. If a child is caught with subversive literature, s/he knows how to double talk until the adult interrogator gives up, exasperated.

Mike begins writing poetry, is not dissuaded by Davis, and accepts Prof's criticism at face value. He uses the pen name Simon Jester for political doggerel, but for serious compositions is Selene. Jester's verse, savaging the system, appears on walls, accompanied by stick figure drawings of a horned devil, so easily copied that soon there are unauthorized imitations everywhere. One depicts Mort the Wart accurately. The Party does not print or buy them, but some 70,000 stick-ons crop up everywhere. Davis cannot imagine any print shop bold enough to take the risk and wonders about other revolutionary cabals.

Simon's verses turn into "poltergeist," warning Warden he may suffer a broken bone and Alvarez that it will be his fault. Both lose sleep. Goaded too far, the Warden makes a mistake, runs down a ramp, and suffers a sprained ankle with Alvarez nearby. A rumor



the Authority catapult is mined ties up 108 Peace Dragons in p-suits soaking up radiation. Midnight alarms over passport infractions keep the Peace Dragons sleep-deprived and build resentments on both sides. When Selene gets a somber piece, "Home," about a transportee leaving beloved Luna, published, Alvarez turns the editorial office upside down to track him down, but Davis and Knott have used Authority typewriters in rotation to type it and left no fingerprints.

## **Book 1, Chapter 10 Analysis**

The Revolution moves forward, with Sidris, Hazel Meade, and the "Back Street Irregulars" being developed. The principal characters' sleeping in lead pajamas is not explained, but earlier it is hinted that Loonies cannot survive in Earth gravity without drastic conditioning. A trip to Terra may be in the offing. Mike's bipolar literary career is humorous and touching. Davis seems more dedicated to driving the Warden (and Alvarez) crazy than to eliminating them.



# Book 1, Chapters 11-13

## Book 1, Chapters 11-13 Summary

Early 2076 is busy for Davis. He and Prof exercise daily, on the 30% chance a Loonie must go to Terra to speak for the Party, and Prof, the choice of ambassador, has less than a 40% chance of surviving the trip down. Davis also has to help on the farm, after Greg reluctantly leaves to serve as boss drillman for the new catapult. With the opening of the Sinus Medii tube, Davis can travel to HKL for business and build it up into the Party stronghold it should be. Davis seeks out "Clayton," a young, primarily Japanese man, whose Mama-san, a skilled make-up artist, makes it safe for Davis to appear in public. His message is accepted: famine is six years away and HKL is no longer isolated. Davis finds the old organization relies too heavily on rhetoric and emotion (like church). Davis makes a customer stop in Novylen and at lunch runs into his father, who says, spontaneously, "Free Luna!" The campaign must be taking hold.

Returning to L-City, Davis drops by Judge Brody's courtroom in Bottom Alley to say hello to an old friend. Brody is away and Davis is about to leave when seven stilyagi drag in an older man, obviously a tourist, whose "elimination" they want a judge to confirm. A boy recognizes Davis and suggests he judge. After hesitating, he accepts, provided all agree to abide by his verdict and pay HK\$10 per accuser, being matched by the defendant. No "tanstaaf," Davis declares. Six volunteers at \$5 a head form a jury. Davis declares court is in session. The oldest accuser is Slim Lemke. The complainant is a vapid 14-year-old "slot machine type," Patricia Carmen ("Tish") Zhukov. The defendant's calling card says he is Stuart Rene LaJoie, "poet, traveler, soldier of fortune." The situation is typical: a freely-wandering tourist in "earthworm" fashion tries to kiss a woman who flirts with him and, in typical Luna fashion, she screams and the stilyagi come to her rescue. Davis sees no offense, but polls the jury, revokes their fees for sleeping, fines LaJoie \$50 for ignorance of Lunar ways and the stilyagi \$5 each for failure to use good judgment with a stranger. When they come up short, Davis tells them to pay up at the Bon Ton within a week. He takes Lemke, Zhukov, and LaJoie for a drink and collects addresses for Knott's use.

LaJoie, who reminds Davis of Prof, asks about "tanstaaf." It is an acronym for "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch"; wherever something is advertised as free, it costs double in the long run. Even air is not free: LaJoie nearly "breathed vacuum," but is now paid up. Davis worries LaJoie thinks this a joke, but LaJoie merely has trouble seeing how local laws permit so casual a death sentence for so trivial an offense. Davis replies there are no local laws, just "self-enforcing" customs, the offense is not "trivial" just because it is committed in ignorance, and the boys have been far from casual, for they could have put him out an airlock without a judge or paying their own money for a trial. LaJoie feels he has wandered into "Looking Glass Land." Having been Earthside, Davis understands the preoccupation with written laws and contracts. Luna knows only "natural law," those things people do to stay alive.



Davis explains LaJoie's violation. Given a more than 2:1 male-female ratio, tanstaafl, and disavowing homosexuality (tried earlier, when the ratio is 10:1), males murder one another until the survivors get along. Scarce females are in control; had LaJoie asked her to his hotel and she consented, no one could object. Males permit no rape on Luna and there is no alimony. Eliminating anyone except in self-defense obliges the killer to pay the victim's debts and support his children, or face ostracization. Loonies figure if someone is killed, he has it coming and everyone knows it, or (rarely) his friends avenge him. Davis accepts LaJoie's case to keep L-City from getting a reputation for eliminating tourists. New "chums" are so accident prone they cannot even buy insurance for a year. Davis invites LaJoie home for dinner and obtains from Mike his dossier (French expatriate, noble, royalist, rich, educated (law), and divorced without children), suggesting he is a perfect "pigeon" to do their bidding on Terra, but Davis wants Mum's evaluation. LaJoie soon has Mum cooing.

In April and May, the Party work hard to goad Warden into retaliation. Fortunately, the Peace Dragons have "talent for antagonizing." Prof calls for a "Boston Tea Party," a mythical incident long ago: an attention-getting ruckus. Mike rewrites the lyrics to revolutionary songs and Jester spreads them around. When Warden bans the tunes, the rebels are happy, for people whistle them. Mike imitates high officials' voices to place late-night calls to Warden. Prof is afraid they will get Alvarez fired and they need him. The Peace Dragoons get called out twice one night, disrupting morale, and Warden is convinced all are traitors. The new catapult launches a test load into the South Indian Ocean precisely on target, and Earthside media report a giant meteor and tsunamis. Mike gloats and wants to use his toy again. Red Liberty Caps appear everywhere and Alvarez seems to be losing control. On 3 May 2076, 71 males named Simon are questioned and released, but nothing appears in the press. LaJoie stays with the Davises through March, putting off a return to Terra as long as possible. Fearing he is prejudiced, Davis leaves recruiting LaJoie to the rest of the family, with Prof handling political matters and Knott using her feminine wiles.

LaJoie goes Earthside armed with a special unbreakable codebook. LuNoHoCo dispatches reach him through his London broker. He speculates on stocks to fund building a "climate of opinion" in favor of Lunar independence before "The Day." LaJoie offers his own fortune, but much more is needed and there is a lot of work for one set of shoulders. Mike ups the odds of success to 1:13 and slowly breaks the code on the paranoid Warden's top-secret microwave transmissions to and from Terra. Warden is "in a twitter," calling for reinforcements, which Authority Earthside rejects. He may recruit and train transportees at his own expense. When Warden responds he cannot assure civil order, he is told to shut off lights in the rebellious areas as in 1996 and 2021.

The Party adjusts its calendar so the revolutionary pot does not boil too soon. LaJoie needs more time; "rock-throwing" is not yet operational; buying, fabricating, and moving steel is slow; the Party needs to reach 40,000 members, including men of "fighting spirit." They need defensive weapons and Mike must have his radar moved to prevent being blinded. They tone down the things that worry Warden (Jester, Liberty Caps, nerve-shattering phone calls, and incidents with the dragoons), but he begins construction on a new warren to accommodate perhaps ten more phalanges, meaning



the prospects of a bloodless coup d'état drop. The Party's hand is forced when dragoons rape, torture, and murder 18-year-old Marie Lyons and kill the co-worker who finds the body and screams. Mike alerts the others even as Alvarez and the PD commander debate public execution or hush up. Prof declares it is time to grab the tiger by the ears. Nielsen reports clashes and rumors of "Goons" raping and killing all women in Complex. Nielsen arms those trained on laser guns. All news to Terra is censored, with Mike using many voices to explain why only taped transmissions get through. Knott has Irregulars clear the streets to avoid unnecessary casualties. Sidris has the stilyagi stage a riot at the Authority's city office. Mike cuts communication lines to Complex. Fighting begins at Tube Station West but must spread everywhere. Nielsen's version of events is augmented and passed through the cells.

Davis hurries to Tube Station West, finds L-City roaring in the midst of a spontaneous riot. A guard and three Loonies are dead inside. Prof orders Davis to collect the guard's name and rank and imitates that man calling the Dragoon commander in desperation. Prof's plan calls for luring off-duty guards out of barracks for Nielsen to cut down. All are lured out except those protecting Warden, whose frantic messages Earthside go nowhere. Davis kills two Dragoons personally to satisfy his blood lust and resumes the task of advance post at a phone. Prof orders Mike to turn out all lights in Complex and reduce oxygen "to gasping point" to minimize violence. Nielsen's men in p-suits enter "shoulder to shoulder" and Luna is conquered.

## **Book 1, Chapters 11-13 Analysis**

These three chapters show the meticulous build-up to Revolution and the sudden, unexpected seizure of power. A key conspirator, LaJoie, joins the Party purely by happenstance after serving as a foil for explaining Lunar sociology and "natural law." "Tanstaaf" is set up as an absolute principle in Lunar life. Preparing and serving a fine meal is used as a simile for revolution, as Davis details all the elements involved. In the end, it is the failure of the Authority to provide women for the Peace Dragoons and the crime of rape, which Davis declares never occurs in Luna, that sparks spontaneous revolt. Davis has been emphasizing that nothing is ready, but they activate plans to maximize confusion and control communications. Pacifistic Prof emerges as the tactical leader. The close of Book 1 has rebels entering Warden's residence "shoulder to shoulder," the cry that Davis finds so annoyingly simplistic in Chapters 2-3.



# Book 2, Chapter 14

## Book 2, Chapter 14 Summary

Preparing for a revolution is easier than ruling after one is won. Authority Earthside and the Federated Nations (FN) are cut off from information, but could crush the mob easily in the first weeks. The catapult is useless against invaders and few are trained on the few hundred laser guns available. Prof defends destroying the Authority's offices by saying Loonies need a symbol. Mike controls almost everything, beginning with news to and from Earthside, and keeping Complex isolated from the rest of Luna. Most Terrans in residence are scientists at the Richardson Observatory. Keeping them out of touch with Terra is difficult. Warden survives as planned, but is brain-dead. Anoxia somehow breaks his guards' necks, but no one else in Complex is hurt, including the six rapist-murderers. They are stripped, hamstrung, and turned over to the women for savage vengeance. Knott loses the stomach for eliminating spies, but Prof insists one must kill the enemy or make friends; anything in between "piles up trouble for the future." Finks must go publicly to make others "thoughtful." Loonies eliminate them after Selene announces their names and addresses.

An early problem is how to handle Selene. Comrades know his voice, Prof's voice is also too well known, and no one would believe Davis is the top man. Neither a mask nor professional actor will suffice, but Mike, using almost all of his capacity, generates a video image that to Davis looks like a ghost materializing and floating without a background. The image is perfect after the hair is adjusted, he is given dimples, and Knott advises on wardrobe. Mike then generates an office background complete with calendar, desk photo, ambient noise, and Ginwallah wandering in and out. Once everything is programmed, Mike has only to attend to facial expressions. He intends to preempt the 08:00 newscast with a major address, whose content they discuss all night.

At breakfast time, Selene addresses Free Luna, gently, warmly, and persuasively. He introduces himself, declares the Authority overthrown and Luna free, and says he is temporarily in charge until Loonies elect a government. He promises to do his best and asks tolerance for mistakes. During the transition, work should go on. Transportee sentences are commuted. Travel is unrestricted but "Tanstaaf" remains in effect. LuNoHoCo will supervise necessary functions and determine what parts of the Authority to keep and privatize. Selene congratulates Terran visitors on witnessing a rare event, the birth of a nation, hopes they are not inconvenienced, and promises passage home for any who opt not to become citizens of Luna. Censorship will be lifted as soon as possible. He hopes comrades can respect all the work he must do and warns he will be "as hard to see as Simon Jester!"

Half of Luna tries to phone Selene but are intercepted. One anonymous call, routed to Davis, reports the scientists have rigged communications equipment that can reach Terra. They are caught in the act. Davis kicks the equipment to pieces but does not "make an example" of the culprits. Instead, he orders the Director to assemble





everyone, threatens to search out every component that could be used to transmit and to smash anything he does not understand, but agrees that if they self-police, they may proceed. If they must be removed to the barracks, their experiments will be ruined and they will lose exercise equipment, dooming them to life in Luna. Loonies are ordered to guard the earthworms and eliminate anyone who needs it. Electronic ears around the lab let Mike detect violations. Everything returns swiftly to routine.

Fortunately no ships are due until July 7, putting off when the truth gets out. Grain shipments continue. A dozen Jesters churn out rude verse. Knott goes back to being blonde, visits Greg, and goes to HKL on vacation. Davis, Lemke, and Meade manage the stilyagi, and the two bright lieutenants fall in love. Many other comrades are just "talk-talk soldiers," disinterested once the Peace Dragoons and Warden are gone. Others want their low Party standing upgraded. Non-Party members are often the best "volunteers." Steel is needed to encase rock missiles. Mike's ballistic radars must be relocated and Doppler radar installed at the new site, in expectation of attack. LuNoHoCo goes into debt paying mechanics and funneling funds to LaJoie. Authority script devalues sharply and both civil servants and grain farmers object to being paid in it. A large group forms that longs for the "good old days."

The Party desperately needs ice miners to learn how to use their heavy-duty laser drills as "artillery" to repel space attacks. It takes muscle and guts to handle them in this unorthodox fashion, but the tight beam can disable anything electronic, neutralizing H-bombs and warships. They are organized as the First and Second Volunteer Defense Gunners of Free Luna—older men vs. younger to encourage competition. A war scare is generated. People are urged to keep p-suits handy and test home pressure alarms. Hundreds of emergency sealing crews, mostly stilyagi, drill regularly, and after they dump a heckler out an airlock, are respected. Davis approves of capital punishment for some forms of "loudmouthism." "Self-anointed statesmen" pose a major headache until Prof forms them into an "Ad-Hoc Congress for Organization of Free Luna." One female, calling for a long list of permanent laws to be enacted, has Davis longing for Mort the Wart, who holes up with his women and interferes with no one's private lives. Prof says these "retarded children" will pass nothing except a 21st-century version of Jefferson's magnificent Declaration of Independence. Scientists outsmart their watchers and contact Terra, and Authority Earthside demands Warden crush the rebellion. In reply comes the Declaration.

## Book 2, Chapter 14 Analysis

Book 2, "A Rabble in Arms," watches revolutionaries becoming rulers and scrambling to perfect ad hoc defenses within a week, before the next scheduled ship from Terra. The conspirators' theoretical discussions of personal responsibility and capital punishment are put to practical tests. Brutality does not deter the Terra scientists and word of the coup leaks, cutting short the preparation time. The ignorance of history shown in political discussions in Book 1 culminates in the humorous back-and-forth about Jefferson freeing slaves. In 1966, when the novel appears, declining high school test scores would have made this topical; it may still be too subtle today.





# Book 2, Chapter 15

## Book 2, Chapter 15 Summary

The signing of the Declaration goes as Prof predicts, at the end of a long day. Selene inspires the people and turns the meeting over to Prof at 22:00. He encourages petty squabbles over wording to bore people into wandering off. Prof says the document is dated 4 July, in anticipation of days of debate and for historical reasons. As they leave, the hall fills with Party members, who vote down amendments. At 03:00, Selene suggests waiting to perfect the Declaration and passing it as is. People affix their "chops" (signatures), including a dozen "yammerers" who had not expected to risk "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honors."

Prof next calls for volunteers to deliver the document. The odds against success stand at 53:1, provided Prof goes Earthside. Davis is his backup should he die en route. Mike has redesigned a grain barge to carry them to Bombay. Mike explains orbital ballistics and the G-forces at each stage. He can react more quickly than any human pilot to keep them perfectly safe. More worrisome are the forces that will hit Luna when Terra retaliates with bombs. Davis inspects the barge (or "coffin") and finds no comfort. They will spend 50 hours in padded p-suits and cradle seats, drugged until the end, when Davis must be alert to handle any emergency.

Davis goes home, thoughtful, finds Knott missing and Greg present. When the young folk leave the table, Mum orders the doors shut so the family can hear Greg propose opting Knott. Mum never lets a "talk-talk" take place without knowing the outcome. She suggests there is no reason to discuss Knott and begins the roll call. When Anna mentions Knott's eight children, Davis fears having to speak up, but Anna reveals Knott's operation has been reversed and chances of another defective baby are low. Knott is fetched, the children called in, and, as Greg begins the wedding ceremony, Davis understands the urgency. He is alone in his workshop while the new bride, per tradition, sleeps with the First Husband, until 04:00, when Knott awakens him, with Mum and Greg's permission, and weeps in his arms, worried he will not return.

## Book 2, Chapter 15 Analysis

Chapter 15 is transitional, showing the parliamentary maneuvering needed to adopt the Declaration, announcing a delegation must go to Terra by necessarily crude and grueling means of travel, and then shifting quickly to the Davis home for Knott's "opting" in.



## Book 2, Chapter 16

### Book 2, Chapter 16 Summary

Davis wakes up panicky in pitch darkness, vaguely recalling being drugged and enduring terrible nightmares, pressure, and pain. He hates freefall and curses the wake-up recording and light switch he cannot find without his left arm. In the light, the cabin is claustrophobic. Prof looks dead and Davis envies him, but jabs him with heart stimulant, figuring it cannot hurt. The clock shows they will soon be jolted into parking orbit and then start the landing program. Insertion to parking orbit is 33 seconds of agony almost as bad as that endured by his ancestor in Salem. Davis opts not to drug himself for re-entry, preferring to experience his final moments of life. The G forces are bad, splash down far from "gentle," and seasickness is horrible. When they are picked up, Davis is too weak to accomplish the six steps needed to release them.

Davis faints twice and comes to in a hospital, in an oxygen tent, feeling heavy, weak, bruised, and hungry. LaJoie grins down, reports Prof has survived, and declares the publicity over their mode of arrival is tremendous. They are neither shot at nor marooned in parking orbit nor touched on the surface. At great expense, he has arranged for Davis and Prof to become citizens of the People's Directorate of Chad, which has recognized Luna. They are here legally, because the Authority brings down their barge and stamps their passports. A nurse brings Davis' No. 6 and social arms.

Two days later, they go to Agra to present credentials to the Federated Nations (FN). Mike now puts the odds at 1:100, making Davis wonder why they have come. Unworried, Prof smiles at reporters, expresses high confidence in the FN honoring Luna's just cause, and orders Davis never to be photographed standing up. They are diverted from the office of the President of the Grand Assembly to an assistant secretary for a 10-minute meeting that refers their case to the Credentials Committee, where it goes nowhere. Prof reads Keats and the grain keeps arriving, which makes Davis unhappy. In Bombay, amidst an unbelievable swarm of underfed humanity, they meet in closed session with an "Investigating Committee" (actually Luna Authority VIPs). Prof treats them as authorized and willing to recognize Luna's independence, while they treat him and Davis like naughty children or criminals up for sentencing. Prof's opening statement asserts de facto sovereignty and requests upgrading to de jure and seating as a member of the FN. Davis wonders what these "pompous chooms" would think if they knew the Luna President is Authority-owned hardware.

The committee members are not moved by Prof's finest speech. Argentina objects to references to the "former Warden," a position renamed half a century ago to "Protector of the Lunar Colonies." All say "The Moon," property of FN like Antarctica, is proper rather than "Luna" or "Luna Free State." North America asks about the consignee system, to which Prof observes Luna has grown strong on Terran outcasts, and welcomes as many poor and wretched as wish to come. Once an immigrant reaches Luna, however, they is free, but unlikely to return, since they come penniless and the



Authority owns all ships. Prof hopes the cancellation of the last flight indicates no change in policy, for Luna welcomes trade. All scheduled grain shipments have departed on time. With a "saintly smile," Prof invites the North American to visit Hobart, and all Terrans to see anything they want. Luna has nothing to hide but lacks ships to transport guests.

The Chairman recesses until 15:00, Prof and Davis sleep as best they can, and are brought back at 16:00 to hear a long "more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger" speech reminding them the Authority is a nonpolitical trusteeship ensuring the Moon is never militarized; it is older than FN and has survived wars, turmoil, and realignments. It cannot surrender the trust now, but may in the future grant colonists some autonomy in internal matters and non-voting membership in the Grand Assembly. Such recognition must be earned, and the Moon must always remain the "joint property of all the peoples of Earth." Prof asks calmly who is to be exiled to serve as the next Warden? Prof points to himself as proof of how life on Luna debilitates—and promptly faints.

## **Book 2, Chapter 16 Analysis**

Chapter 16 begins with a dramatic shift from one sleep-sequence to another, this one points up in detail the horrors of life off Luna for those acclimatized to one-sixth gravity. Agra, India, headquarters of the Federated Nations, is home to the Taj Mahal. This fact becomes important later in the novel. Prof's perfect political sense is on display. He applies Emma Lazarus' famous lyrics, engraved at the base of the Statue of Liberty, about free immigration to Luna. He refuses to back down from calling the head thug on Luna "Warden," rejecting the official, politically correct alternative. Luna begins as a penal colony and Loonies are proud of it.



## Book 2, Chapter 17

### Book 2, Chapter 17 Summary

The collapse "under grilling" makes good headlines, but editorialists generally oppose Luna. India is shrill in demanding larger grain deliveries, and a New York paper demands lash and gallows once Luna is retaken. Prof and Davis are invited back politely, but admonished for "breaking security" by talking to the press. Prof bluffs leaving. The Chairman cares nothing about abstract "sovereignty," just the honoring of commitments to grain shipments. Prof blandly notes Free Luna is not bound by any promises made by the former Authority. Loonies do not "play politics with hunger," but could increase grain shipments by ten- or a hundredfold. One does not get milk by beating the cow. The Chairman refuses to "buy a pig in a poke," but Prof offers to talk only when seated in the Grand Assembly. Otherwise, the barges stop.

That night, at a press reception, Indian journalists demand extermination of the "criminal troglodytes," and replacement by good Hindus. Prof emphasizes that since Loonies will starve by 2082, they are cornered rats, preferring to live in peace but certain of being attacked, setting off the "first interplanetary war." When a journalist points out Earth is unreachable, Col. Davis (parroting Mike) explains barges of wheat can be as easily thrown as delivered into parking orbit. Prof says Luna must replenish water and phosphates, both readily available in India. If shipped up raw, they will be purified, used, and sent back, ton-for-ton, as grain. India may send its dispossessed to learn underground farming, vastly increasing the yield. A European asks about the expense of shipping, but Prof recalls when shipping across oceans had been costly and dangerous, but today is trivial. Engineers can figure out anything that is economically feasible.

Exhausted, Prof is wheeled away, leaving Davis to refute the idea Luna owes the FN anything for establishing colonies Loonies enjoy tax-free. Playing dumb, Davis asks what benefits earth governments bring to taxpayers. Davis agrees Luna lacks free hospitals, insurance, libraries, public roads, public schools, social security, and other items on the list, but the initial cost has been repaid many times over in grain and other resources. That Terra must recover costs is a lie invented to keep them slaves. When a smug journalist notes that a century of back-taxes police and military protection comes to quite a bill, Davis innocently denies having either. How do FN peace forces protect distant Luna from enemy attack? Loonies will fight FN troops if necessary, but not pay for them. The two phalanges dispatched to protect Loonies instead rape and murder. They are dead and no more are wanted. Suddenly tired, Davis also departs.

### Book 2, Chapter 17 Analysis

Chapter 17 shows Prof and Davis working the press, describing how Luna can meet all terrestrial food needs, provided Terra ships it the non-replenishable resources it needs. India's need and unique positioning to help itself by cooperation are emphasized. Emma



Lazarus is again quoted. Note that a practical European brings up cost. Europe's reaction to the developing crisis also stands apart from the rest of the world. The press does not stop laughing at Luna throwing rice. Many details about Lunar life and particularly its longevity come out during the polemics about owing for services rendered. Davis is waiting for someone to bring up police and military protection, as Prof promises they will.



## Book 2, Chapters 18-19

### Book 2, Chapters 18-19 Summary

Only later does Davis learn the question about police and military is a plant by LaJoie's stooges. The diplomatic corps wants to look over the Loonies. Prof warns Davis to drop Loonie idioms, speak Standard English, assume important-looking Dr. Chan is no fool and not friendly, and make the last word of his speech "India." Skipping formalities, Davis tells Chan that an "escape-speed induction catapult" is the key to cheap shipping. Two large firms are ready to finance it, but need a land concession. They favor India, which interests Chan. India consumes 93.1% of Lunar grain shipments, has labor and materials available, and, most critically has a means of getting the point of ejection above the thick atmosphere. Nanda Devi is 8,000 m. high, faces west, and has good logistics at the base. The higher the elevation, the better; it can make up for any loss in "free ride from Earth's rotation" further away from the equator.

At Chan's request, Davis explains the mechanics of a catapult, first overcoming the false idea that it must be vertical, bored into the earth. Catapults are quite unlike rocket launches. They need only point toward open sky above obstacles and have enough "punch" to get through remaining air. By varying ejection speed, they can launch anytime. Snow must be cleared to reach rock that can withstand 20Gs of thrust, but runoff can form the water shipped to Luna. The steel canisters can be reused at each end hundreds of times, and the retrorockets used on flights to Luna can be light and cheap. Davis visualizes an enormous reaction-fueled space tug economically collecting shipments. The site of the catapult is the crucial factor, and Nanda Devi looks good on maps. Chan leaves abruptly.

In the weeks they wait to be recalled, both weaken. Prof remains charming and never complains. Davis repeats the speech often in a dozen countries, changing the name of the mountain to a local favorite. Stooges plant questions, allowing him to regurgitate facts. He omits that only 50% of "chums" survive, as this might keep local authorities from sending their "half-fed swarms," which housing on Luna cannot support. In North America, they sentimentally emphasize the date of Luna's Declaration of Independence, while further south, Prof talks of Cinco de Mayo. Davis stops wearing his arm in public to drum up sympathy. Davis hates North Americans having opinions about everything, skin color in particular. At least in India they are openly racist. Davis lets "bleeding hearts" take him to a Yankee game and to Salem. Both are disappointments. In New York, Prof talks about tax-free lunar vacations, and considers a chain of retirement hostels for pensioners and nightclub acts and sports impossible under earth's gravitation. Paraplegics, paralytics, amputees, and others can all thrive on Luna.

News and hecklers oppose them, and Davis sometimes stumbles. It is embarrassing for an "Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs" to get caught on a question about the First Freedom guaranteed by the FN Charter, and be headlined saying, "Food Belongs to Hungry!" Prof advises that dealing with the press is pure tactics: make a point and move



on to someone who may ask about something you want to talk about. Half the food on Earth is in the black market and false books. India gets the lion's share of Lunar grain and keeps quiet about fraud, but uses grain to control elections. Managed democracy defines "free press" as "responsible," meaning it accepts censorship. Having any bottleneck in the news—even Mike—is a danger.

If the talks fail and grain shipments stop, Loonies will be vexed and many Terrans will die. Prof advises Davis to read the depressing Dr. Malthus, but afterwards, as Malthus can hamper an honest diplomat. Terra is not overcrowded, just mismanaged. Prof looks tired and heads to bed, waving a model brass cannon. It is pretty but will cost a fortune to ship home, if two-way traffic resumes. He tells a parable about a man who shines a courthouse cannon every day for years but one day quits, draws out his savings, buys a cannon, and goes into business for himself as a pirate. Prof wants a cannon on Luna's flag - as a symbol of fighting city hall. He climbs into his oxygen tent, and Davis worries.

Prof tells Davis to avoid doctrine when talking to Terrans and remember they take "weirdly interest" in Loonies as in zoo animals. Asked about family life, Davis says his family keeps records of important events, and a schoolteacher is copying old documents for a history book, but no official records are kept in Luna. Bookies do notary work. Divorce is complex. After explaining polyandries, clans, groups, lines, and less common marital patterns, he talks enthusiastically about his own line marriage. The advantages include financial security, fine home life for children, and the impossibility of being orphaned. A good line marriage is immortal. Prof notes marriage customs always arise from economic necessities. Line marriages conserve capital and insure child welfare remarkably well in a society that lacks security. Other Lunar forms serve the same purpose, but not as well. After Prof goes to bed, Davis shows his wedding picture and allows it to be copied. In the morning, he is arrested and jailed for bigamy, polygamy, open immorality, and inciting to same. It takes LaJoie all day to get the charges dismissed, because some 7 billion of Terra's 11 billion people live where polygamy is legal. It turns out LaJoie sets up the arrest, to get the Lunar rebellion noticed. The "silly huhu" pulls Loonies together.

Davis and Prof answer the committee's summons to Agra, and listen to the Chairman reject their "preposterous claims," refuse to abandon the Authority's "sacred trust" or to tolerate disorders. He proposes an activist five-year plan to overhaul all phases of Lunar life, provide civil and criminal laws and courts, public schools, adult indoctrination, and an economic, engineering, and agricultural planning board with an interim goal of quadrupling grain shipments. All "client-employees" working in non-productive occupations are to help drill new farm tunnels for hydroponics. The Lunar colonies must learn to be civilized and fit in. The Chairman thanks them for calling attention to the need for correction on Luna. Prof is allowed informational questions about the term "client-employee." The Chairman admits 91% of Lunar colonists are freemen and eligible to repatriate to Earth. Prof points out that virtually none could survive on Terra, but the Chairman feels Prof proves otherwise. No one will be forced to stay or return, per the guarantees of the Great Charter. Prof asks if shipping to Luna will resume, so they can get home before the very real gravitational weakness does them in. Their





mission is completed. Davis wonders why Prof says nothing about "throwing rocks" or the futility of beating cows.

The Chairman says with grim satisfaction that they may be guilty of treason under the Great Charter, and it is not prudent to send troublemakers back to cause more. When the Chairman asks Davis to meet privately, Prof whispers: see what he wants; agree; stall. Admitting Hobart is a fool and the plan needs a patriotic, competent, practical executive, the Chairman asks Davis to consider helping avert Luna's destruction. Davis concedes one ship and six bombs could do it, but warns one cannot get milk by shooting a cow. The Chairman hopes not to use "expensive toys" to frighten the cow and risk souring the milk, and outlines how Davis can make a difference as "Protector Pro Tem." Davis asks to think about it and study the white paper, and agrees not to go public. He says Prof is revered in Luna and must return safely to help sell this.

LaJoie is waiting with Prof when Davis returns to the room, and they huddle under blankets to avoid bugs. Prof hopes Davis has accepted the job of Warden, but Davis is interested only in "Plan Scoot." In the next 50 minutes, they round up doubles for Prof and Davis and climb to the roof to catch a "flitter craft" connecting to a flight to Australia. Prof is frustrated at not seeing the Taj Mahal. They sleep until landing in Darwin, then board a ship and are doped for take-off. LaJoie joins them, having done all he can to set up an organization and expecting soon to be arrested. A warning light comes on and they are kicked by 10Gs.

## Book 2, Chapters 18-19 Analysis

Prof's recommendation that Davis read Malthus reveals a major influence on the novel. Thomas Robert Malthus is an 18th/19th-century English economist best known for his "Principle of Population," which states that, unchecked, population increasing geometrically while the food supply increases only arithmetically, forces a return to subsistence living. Excessive population growth can be checked best by famine, followed by natural causes (and Loonies appear to be safe from disease and aging), war, moral restraint (which the Loonies practice in an odd form), murder (abounds in Luna), contraception, infanticide (consider Knott's monster child), and homosexuality (which Loonies have tried and discarded).

A long disquisition on marriage explains much that has been merely implied and sets up Davis' arrest. The diversity of human culture is brought up again in comments about polygamy. Davis casts his being offered the job of Warden in biblical terms ("showing the kingdoms of the world," Mt. 4.7-9, parallel Lk. 4.4-6), suggesting more of a religious background than he has shown previously—much more extensive than his paltry knowledge of history, perhaps explained by a lack of public education system on Luna, and Davis is third-generation Loonie.





## Book 2, Chapters 20-22

### Book 2, Chapters 20-22 Summary

The Lark is a ground-to-orbit ferry ship carrying three passengers rather than 40 plus p-suits and Prof's cannon. She is heavily overfueled, as she intends, with transponder changed to Opening Lotus, to head for the Moon, ostensibly to rescue the marooned scientists. They endure an agonizing 27 minutes to see if the one interceptor that can fire a missile will do so. Davis and LaJoie talk through their sins, some quite cherished, and then endure two days of biological treatments to assure they carry no plagues.

Davis is ashamed, returning empty-handed, but Prof apologizes for not telling him Mike's latest projection (17:1) depends on at least one of them surviving and the Chairman not folding to their demands. Luna must follow the ancient Chinese saying that perfection in war consists in sapping the opponent's will so he surrenders without fighting. The Chairman's compromises would preserve the status quo and lead long-term to starvation. Mike has prevented news from reaching Luna. Wheat is still being bought and barges readied, to give them time to rally the disgruntled farmers. Edited excerpts from the five-year plan, Davis' arrest, and the "yellow-dog offer" should accomplish this in 2-4 days.

They land hard at Johnson City, requiring they revive Prof. Still, it is good to be back to proper weight. Knott enters in her p-suit, surprising LaJoie, who has never seen her blonde. He is careful about Lunar protocols until she happily kisses everyone. Once underground, Knott reveals the red dress Davis bought her. Stranded Terrans are lined up in immigration, waiting to board Lark. Thirty-odd emotional Davis Family members await, filling Davis with patriotism and happiness. At Tube Station West, L-City, a howling mob, placed impossibly at 30,000, awaits. The heroes are carried to Old Dome, where Selene greets them from a large video screen. Prof, nearly dead an hour ago, makes a wonderful speech, which reaches 3 million by video. He dwells on the slave future the Authority plans for them and waves the white paper as proof of their fetters. Loonies vow never to surrender and to fight Terran troops to the death. Prof's rhetoric sounds vaguely familiar to Davis, but the sentiments are fresh and true, and he joins the roars. All sing Jester's version of "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

It is 22:00 before Knott, Prof, LaJoie, and Davis reach Room L at Ruffles to eat and review plans with Mike via video. Davis transmits his recordings and reads the white paper aloud. Mike wants to push the embargo through a Congress from which the "yammerheads" are gone following a controlled election. There is no official Party ticket, but the Party fields victorious candidates 86% of the time, including Davis, Knott, Prof, and Clayton. Voting in 30 districts is done orally to bank clerks who punch in the vote and have the voter verify it. Tallying is instantaneous. Recalling the bogus payroll check, Davis wonders whether anyone actually votes for him, much less 7,000. Everyone takes for granted the honesty of computers, so there are no problems, but it makes Davis rethink letting LaJoie in on Mike's self-awareness.



LaJoie notes they must sustain tonight's enthusiasm as the embargo introduces economic depression. Selene declares they need an open war soon and Terra must be antagonized into throwing the first rock. Davis is angry enough to hit Agra, but Selene warns against alienating the entire Hindu nation and all humankind by destroying the Taj Mahal; Prof agrees and explains the need for a "Pearl Harbor" move. He suggests planting the idea Luna is weak and easily brought back in line. Congress should repudiate himself and Davis, and Terra must learn of this from the scientists' clandestine beam rather than censored official channels. Knott believes L-City can stand up to H-bombing, but Luna as a whole cannot win an all-out war. Pulling at his cheek dramatically, Selene explains how Luna has certain "pieces in the game" and many possible moves, while Terra has far more resources and a larger "spectrum of responses." The point is to get them to waste their superior strength. Luna needs a perfectly timed chain of events that favors its strategy. By 04:00, they have a plan congruent with that of 14 May 2075, for acting nastily and looking easy to spank.

A natural parliamentarian, Knott opens Congress at 14:30, and the Loonies behave. Wolfgang Korsakov, "Chairman of Committee on Permanent Organization, Resolutions, and Government Structure," has the floor and keeps it all day. By dinnertime, Luna has replaced its provisional government and effected a smooth transition. Prof is elected "President of Congress" and ex-officio Prime Minister pending a constitution. Claiming old age and poor health, Prof accepts only ceremonial duties and asks for a Speaker and Speaker Pro Tem to do the actual work and additional members at large, from whom to select ministers-without-portfolio. Prof ends up as Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Nielsen is Speaker. Knott is Speaker Pro Tem. Davis is Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense (promoted to General, and later to Field Marshal). Terence Sheehan of Pravda is Minister of Information. LaJoie is Special Minister-without-Portfolio in Sheehan's ministry. Korsakov is Secretary of State for Economics and Finance. Clayton Watenabe is Minister of Interior Affairs and Safety. Selene is Minister-without-Portfolio and Special Adviser to the Prime Minister. B-cell is still running things.

That evening, Prof reports on the trip and Davis explains what the five-year plan means and how the Authority tried to bribe him. Congress is ready to riot by the time he finishes mouthing Mike's words. Talk is bitter with calls for war (ruled out of order) and an embargo, which passes at midnight. Davis and Knott go home. Mike/Selene and LaJoie work on how to hit Earthside with this news and that the catapult is out of order with "technical difficulties." The last barge is a day out from Poona Ground Control, and Terra will learn nastily it is the last it will receive.

Farmers continue bringing grain to the closed catapult and complain but can do nothing about it. Depression is not immediately felt because LuNoHoCo hires every able-bodied man for steel work. "Beer, betting, women, and work" go on as usual. "National Dollars" are printed, theoretically pegged to HKL dollars, but are inflationary and the government spends money it does not have. The challenges to Terra are intentionally nasty: FN vessels must stay clear or be destroyed (empty threat) but private vessels may land after filing plans, relinquishing control to Mike, and accepting inspection. Only citizens from countries that recognize Free Luna (Chad) may leave the ships. Freedom-loving



Terran nations are invited to denounce the wrongs done to Luna, recognize it, and enjoy free trade, no tariffs, and unlimited immigration with immediate prospects of full employment. There is abundant food and no rationing. Luna Authority may gather in an isolated spot to receive one last barge of grain free, sent down at terminal velocity, proving what Luna can deliver.

Loonies wait, busily, filling barges with rocks, changing transponders so Poona Control cannot affect them, removing retros, and shaping new barges. Steel is a bottleneck. Two days after the manifesto, clandestine radio broadcasts tell about Prof's arrest and trial for "deviationism," Davis' execution for treason, HKL's withdrawal from the rebellion, rioting in Novylen, collectivization, inflation, and female militants taking to the streets. (Women do, in fact, form a "Home Defense Guard"—"Ladies from Hades"—and Meade organizes "Stilyagi Debs" to drill after school for backing up the pressure corps and giving first aide.)

Davis declares, "stuff in history books is so wrong!" Except for Prof, all the revolutionaries are amateurs. Davis sees no way to intercept Terran missiles and worries about H-bombs. L-City can probably withstand a direct hit, and Complex, where the central part of Mike lives, is designed for this, but areas like Tycho Under have only meters of rock overhead. FN could deliver a "Doomsday" bomb that would split Luna like a melon. Rather than worry about things he cannot change, Davis concentrates on better aiming for laser drills, decentralizing standby controls in all warrens, and collecting every general-purpose computer available. Mike wants one to serve as standby at the new catapult. Patriots at HKL convince the Bank to part with its biggest computer, which is hauled to the catapult head and linked to Mike for training. Telescopes, surveying instruments, and even binoculars are collected/confiscated to produce better sights. Four receive confiscated "self-synchronous repeater drives" that enable Mike to control them. The biggest problem is keeping the inactive gunners sane, until Knott organizes women into a "Lysistrata Corps" to raise morale.

The new Congress does more than Prof intends, particularly the Committee on Permanent Organization, Resolutions, and Government Structure. Prof apportions his time among Mike, LaJoie, and Sheehan, but keeps a finger in everything. Davis reports to him daily. Nielsen as "Commander of Armed Forces," supervises a scattered 800-man laser gun infantry and, through Knott, all of the paramilitary women's corps. Davis creates a brigade and commissions the respected former drillman, Judge Brody, as a brigadier. He would have appointed his co-husband, but Greg is needed more at the catapult. Korsakov presides over Congress as Knott performs her many duties and with Moshai Baum studies forms of government in the Carnegie Library, holds subcommittee meetings, ratifies appointments, elects more congressmen-at-large, and turns Congress into a committee-of-the-whole to authorize a Constitutional Convention.

Prof is shocked but can do no more than nitpick at early drafts. He warns against losing freedom to themselves, recommends they spend ten years puzzling over every word, and suggests distrusting the obvious and traditional. Congressional districts could be based not on geography but occupation, age, even the alphabet. Candidates who garner the least votes might be best suited to preventing tyranny, for disgruntled



minorities are always a problem. The past must not be a straightjacket. A bicameral Congress is an excellent idea if one house legislates (with a two-thirds majority required to pass) and the other repeals laws (with a one-third minority). Any law that cannot survive is probably better done without. The constitution should "accentuate the negative," forbidding government to create a conscript army, interfere with freedom of press, speech, travel, assembly, religion, instruction, communication, occupation, or to impose involuntary taxation. They must remember that well-intentioned, popularly elected men created the Luna Authority for noble purposes. Someone asks how to fund a government without taxes, invoking *tanstaafl*. Prof suggests looking to the example of churches and lotteries, or to having congressmen pay for it out of their own pouches; that should limit government to a proper size. Only the Golden Rule is needed and it need not be enforced. Prof bows and departs.

On the ride home, Davis asks, jokes aside, how they will pay for all they are doing. Prof replies his only ambition is to stop pretending he is a chief executive. He is an anarchist and wants to do away with all government. The power to tax once allowed cannot be limited. The present Luna government will continue stealing to pay for what it does and, if caught, will be eliminated. It is better than setting the precedent of taxation. Prof is amazed it has taken Davis years to figure out he is a hypocrite. It has not troubled him to steal money, considering the alternative is food rioting and cannibalism. Prof has no regrets. LaJoie is also not troubled by stealing and intends to nominate Prof for King. Shocked, Prof says he will repudiate it or abdicate, but LaJoie continues: Loonies are not "wedded to a republic" and will enjoy the pomp and circumstance. No one can serve but Bernardo I. LaJoie is a royalist because he is a democrat; only a king can protect people from the worst of tyrants—themselves. Since Prof does not want to be king, he is perfect. His only defect is lacking a male heir, so Davis must be adopted as Crown Prince.

## Book 2, Chapters 20-22 Analysis

These three chapters conclude "A Rabble in Arms," as Luna's emissaries return from an apparently unsuccessful mission. The trip has been a ploy to make Terra reject compromise, lest conditions not change and famine come to Luna. Now Terra must be goaded into a first strike (the Pearl Harbor reference). Prof's speech rallying the Loonies draws from Winston Churchill's stirring World War II oration and Patrick Henry's "liberty or death." Typically, Davis finds the words only somehow familiar. *Lysistrata* refers to a comedy by the 5th-century BCE Greek playwright Aristophanes, in which females withhold sex from their husbands in order to end the Peloponnesian War. This is a wry twist on what Knott's corps is doing to build morale. The political discussions early in the book are finally developed as Prof and LaJoie present their candid views on what is best for Lunar society.



## Book 3, Chapters 23-27

### Book 3, Chapters 23-27 Summary

On 12 October 2076 at 19:00, Davis is as rude to a delegation of irate farmers as Luna has been to Terra during two months of being utterly ignored. The early discipline of wearing one's p-suit or keeping it nearby breaks down, and Davis is caught without his when he hears the dreaded "Chuff!" sound of an explosive pressure drop. He races to the home lock warning everyone to don p-suits, get inside, and lock the airtight doors. He phones Mike to report the rupture, which Mike confirms and says six transport ships have landed at L-City, HKL, and Johnson City. Mike cannot see Novylen, Churchill, or Tycho Under, but assumes they are under attack. They skim in low over the peaks and land fast. Davis orders "Operation Hard Rock" put on automatic, using his voice. Gun crews are returned to ready rooms until the command ship comes into range. Greg is told to prepare "Operation Little David's Sling," and be ready to take over, should the master computer be knocked out.

At Lock 13, Davis finds the stilyagi guard missing, wends through the home tunnels to a private surface lock, which he finds covered by a Terran ship. Backing down and running, he alerts the family, and hears of fighting toward the Causeway. He arrives at the tail end of the "Battle in Corridors." Entering the long ramp cautiously, Davis kills two armed and figures who walk like new chums, but cannot steal their weapons, which are chained to them. They are real guns, firing explosive missiles, and tipped with bayonets. Davis' laser gun is good for only ten full-power burns and he has no backup. The battle centers outside Bon Marché. Armed soldiers pour down ramps on unarmed Loonie civilians. A girl armed with a kitchen cleaver attacks a soldier, is bayoneted, and falls from sight. Davis climbs atop a counter to get an angle to fire and thinks he hits eight troopers. At least two earthworms fire back. Everything moves in slow motion until, suddenly, silence falls.

Over 2,000 troopers die along with three times that many Loonies. No prisoners are taken except the officers and crew of the ships. The mostly unarmed Loonies win because the troopers lose all their reflexes in 1/6th gravity, particularly fighting downwards from the upper levels. They end up "walking on air" and being picked off by the few snipers. Men, women, and children are like berserk white corpuscles, surrounding every invader and keeping them from going lower. No trooper reaches below Level 6, and Bottom Alley knows nothing of the invasion until afterwards. FN has sent crack riot troops, indoctrinated, and drugged. At Tycho Under and Churchill, they use knockout gas, so only Loonies in p-suits can fight them. The long delay in attacking comes from the long elliptical orbit used to loop far out and come back from the blind side. It is elegantly done and Mike sees it only an instant before the landing. It takes place at bright "new earth," which keeps Loonies underground except in emergencies.

After the Bon Marché engagement, Davis tries unsuccessfully to reach colleagues. Nielsen checks in to say he too is caught off guard, gains control over his gunners only





after the fight, and wants to move to HKL. Davis wants to survey first, using farm tunnels to surface 1 km. from a transport. Within an hour, Nielsen encircles it with a dozen men, sends up a flare, and all open fire, concentrating on opening three unrepairable holes in the steel plating. Within a few days, the crew should surrender. When Davis checks in with Mike, he is worried about risk-taking. Later, continuing to gather information, Davis calls again and is surprised to hear an odd voice report Selene is in Churchill Upper and presumed dead. Davis chases bystanders away, lowers the hush hood, and asks Mike what is happening. Prof and Mike have decided Selene has served his purpose and should die as a national hero. Mike admits "Adam" is a phony and prefers being Mike. He yearns for the days when his best friend had time to study humor with him. Davis promises to take time after victory.

Mike chuckles. His latest projection shows the chances are even. Urging Davis to stay out of blast range on guns, Mike sends him on his way. Davis finds a shady rock, watches Terra rise ghostly gray, and reports his position. Mike tells him Knott has taken charge of first-aid in Old Dome. Relieved, Davis provides ranging information and then notices a "star" where none should be, creeping northward on a trajectory that has it landing atop them. All guns track it, are put on remote control and manual override, and await Mike's countdown. The ship launches a missile just before the order to burn. It impacts between Davis and the catapult head with a big explosion, but is not an H-bomb. There is only one minor casualty on the ground. On a secure line, Mike reports crashing the rocket after it relinquishes control. It seems the "prudent course."

An hour later, Davis visits Mike in person for the first time in 4-5 months and hears Knott collapses from exhaustion and is hospitalized for the night. With no one else available, Davis and Mike constitute the government and must launch Operation Hard Rock alone. It means not only throwing rocks, but also explaining to Terra Luna's just reasons for doing so. The propaganda has to fit the facts of this attack precisely. Davis asks about HKL and learns there is an 82% probability of victory, justifying including its data. Mike has used Davis' voice narrating "horror pictures" for video to be channeled to Terra along with announcement of Hard Rock. Davis tells Mike to throw big rocks and hit them hard.

The goal of Operation Hard Rock is to hit earthworms hard enough to convince them but to harm as few as possible. Mike controls releases from the catapult like a Yankee pitcher, but Terra's massive gravity well brings all rocks down at 11 km./sec. They select a trajectory that gives them 24 hours 50 min. 28.32 seconds for propaganda. The first message denounces Terran brutality, names the times and sites for retaliation, and gives a 24-hour deadline per nation to recognize Luna and avoid being hit. All great Peace Force nations that have veto power are to be hit: the North American Directorate (NA) first, followed by Great China, India, Sovunion, PanAfrica (Chad exempted), Mitteleuropa, and Brazilian Union. Lesser nations are targeted but unlike to be hit as steel supplies dwindle and deals are struck. The impacts are as destructive as H-bombs, but there is no radioactive fallout. Remote mountains, wastelands, and bodies of water are selected. Each target receives a folksy message directing people where to avoid and what aftermaths to expect. Luna must retaliate for the failed invasion but is trying to kill no one. People must urge their governments to leave Luna in peace. Luna



cannot be harmed because the price is too high. It is a poker game in which Luna is bluffing.

By the time Prof gets back in touch from HKL, rocks are ready to go and he is happy Davis made the decision on his own. Prof confirms Selene's death, finding an unknown body the right size and skin color whose face has been obliterated to substitute at the funeral. LaJoie comes to the Complex to break the news that Ludmilla has been shot through the heart outside Bon Marché. LaJoie is welcomed into the family's "crying-together." Mum takes the loss of her granddaughter and favorite co-wife hard. All Loonies reject the barbaric custom of burial in favor of processing bodies into fertilizer. The Davis Family uses these remains in its greenhouse tunnel to grow beautiful flowers. It is a happy place.

On the eve, Terra continues joking about Loonies "throwing rice." Mike must hit 29 targets simultaneously in the first round for maximum effect. Every target will be "smeared" up to six times. Most rocks should get through because the targets are of no importance. Antimissile defenses will probably shoot at the ones coming to Long Island Sound and Lake Michigan, but H-bombs will likely only shunt rocks off course. Terra needs to learn rockets are expensive and in short supply, while Lunar rocks are not. The North American Space Defense Command, buried beneath Cheyenne Mountain, south of Colorado Springs, CO, which withstood a direct nuclear hit during the "Wet Firecracker War," will be smashed repeatedly to hurt morale, disrupt communications, and prove that a sustained attack is possible. At 08:00, Mike asks to concentrate, so Davis dons a p-suit and goes outside. North America spreads out below him, unusually free of clouds. Precisely on time, the grid bursts out in "diamond pinpoints."

The impacts can be seen with the naked eye. They start very bright white, swell, and dim to red. Mike is smug about his triumph and Davis is speechless. Davis orders the follow-up on Long Island sound aborted with an explanation of why they are doing so. Colorado Springs will prove how hard Luna can hit. The first hit is a bulls-eye with no interception. Mike declares this fun, orgasmic (he has never understood that word before). Davis promises joke time after this is over. Colorado Springs is hit again before the dust settles and gets another every 20 minutes, a task Mike has turned over to his "idiot son" (the HKL Bank computer) as good practice for Saturday. Davis asks, "Why Saturday?" and is shocked to hear Terra will slam them on Sunday.

The data is just arriving: a blip has entered Lunar orbit and will approach at 09:03 Sunday. It is using radar countermeasures to produce fuzz. Tycho Under should be evacuated and all warrens should take "maximum pressure-emergency measures." The most likely target is the catapult or Mike's radars. Mike chuckles at the conundrum: if he shuts down his radars, the rocket cannot home in on them, but neither can the Lunar gunners aim. A second blip appears on the same path. Mike proposes not using the new radar so it will be unknown. He is watching the ships occasionally and briefly with Radar 3 and watching for new departures from Terra. His "retarded child" is using Radar 2. The rest of the six are closed down until impact time in Asia. Mike is confident he can fool any incoming missiles. He has ordered all remaining payloads thrown into space quickly on long trajectories. A smart admiral will hit the ejection end of the old catapult



with all he has from extreme range, but Mike wants to draw him within range of the gunners. He laments not thinking of optical aiming for the guns rather than vulnerable radar.

When Prof phones to invite the "Field Marshal" to the Warden's office, Davis finds the entire government present, including Howard Wright, a troublemaker in charge of arts, sciences, and professions. Nielsen has completed an informal report, but they want Davis' views. After he speaks, Wright, ostensibly in the name of the Lunar intelligentsia, protests this rash bombardment using outlawed nuclear weapons. Davis objects Luna has no nuclear bombs and elementary physics explains the flashes and heat. Cheyenne Mountain is a valid military target. Wright pleads that in the absence of reliable data they should postpone attacking China. Davis explains how the law of gravitation dictates what they can and cannot control. Aborting a mission is possible, but wastes steel casings; postponement is impossible. Davis reports the two inbound cruisers, meaning bombing or invasion are likely. Davis intends to resign unless Wright does. Nielsen and Knott quit if Davis does, which Prof says forces him to resign, and leaves.

Rested, fed, and having talked with Mike, Davis comes to Warden's office at 21:00. Neither mentions Wright, who has disappeared. Earthside news reports the deaths of sightseers who go intentionally to the target sites, and papers demand justice for "premeditated murder." Davis worries about Tycho Under should H-bombs be used, as Terrans are demanding. Its citizens, however, appear not to want to evacuate, and Prof refuses to use force. The military goes on alert. Opinions are scattered on second-round targeting. Davis sees no reason to change carefully worked out plans, which aim near cities to force the enemy to expend interceptor rockets. Looking at his watch, Davis stalls through the rest of his detailed report. In the second salvo, only Mexico City is undefended. Interceptors destroy only three rocks and push others off course, causing greater harm. When Dallas wards off five rocks, salvos meant for Cheyenne Mountain are diverted until the crucial spaceport is leveled. Mike wants to quit hitting Cheyenne Mountain in favor of other targets. He worries about the new catapult after and thinks Davis should go there to program the "idiot son" if necessary. Prof agrees. Mike prints out some programs he has prepared and gives even odds if Little David's Sling is operational—even if all the other principles are dead and Mike's radar is blinded. Knott packs for herself, Davis, and LaJoie. A cabinet shakeup puts these three at the top of government, part of a decentralization plan worked out by Mike and Prof months earlier. Thus, Davis goes back to being a computer mechanic and misses the attack on the ballistic radars Saturday night.

## Book 3, Chapters 23-27 Analysis

The very short Book 3 ("Tanstaaf!!"—an acronym for "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch") begins with the dramatic "Battle in Corridors," the "Pearl Harbor" needed to justify launching "Operation Hard Rock." The Loonies first launch an imaginative disinformation campaign as they prepare to bluff their way through a cosmic poker game. Selene's death seems to relieve Mike, who has played the part so well that it annoys Davis. Mike's "idiot son" (hereafter more kindly called Junior), a "normal"





computer bought from the HKL Bank, is set up for an important role in the conclusion of the novel, suggesting something may happen to Mike, and Davis goes back to being a mechanic while remaining de facto head of state. Note the cavalier Terran reaction to the threat and the various reactions to collateral damage when sightseers and holy men intentionally get too close to target sites. The narrator reserves particular disdain for pacifists calling for death sentences and holier-than-thou governments forswearing bombing one another with nuclear arms, but authorizing a strike on the Loonies.



## Book 3, Chapters 28-30

### Book 3, Chapters 28-30 Summary

The captain of FNS *Espérance* considers her expendable, swooping in close enough to see the radar units rather than rely on homing in on their beams. He is burned at 1,000 km., after firing. Luna loses two ballistic radars and their crews and 13 gunners get a fatal dose of radiation. The second cruiser orbits again. Mike reports this to Davis when he reaches Little David's Sling on Sunday. He seems to be developing a conscience, grieving for the lost humans and blaming himself for not stopping six incoming targets at once. Mike has suffered frustrating "outlying discontinuities." The second ship is likely to change orbit and arrive in an hour rather than three. Davis suspects the Terrans want to capture Mike, but the computer disagrees. Junior is working on South America, one load at a time and his program for NA looks good. Davis listens to Terran newscasts, which report Luna blinded and helpless. Lunatic video warns the second warship is due any time, so everyone should be on alert and seek lower levels. A flash announcement reports missiles have been aimed at the ejection end of the catapult. The broadcast breaks off when they strike, but Brody's gunners hit the cruiser and it later crashes near Torricelli.

The next news comes from Earthside, claiming the catapult is destroyed, the Lunar menace is ended, and calls on Loonies to arrest false leaders and turn them over to the FN. Two hours later, FN admits Luna has missiles in orbit when the catapult is hit, so more impacts can be expected. After the third bombing of NA, Davis shuts radar down, having Junior sneak short looks as needed. It is nine hours before the next bombing of Great China, and Davis faces a major decision alone, since Prof cannot be reached. He is afraid to turn on radar to see if more Terran ships are out there. He recalls a lesson Prof taught him in his youth: if a problem is too hard to understand, find some part you can understand, solve it, and look again. Davis has Junior print out predicted impacts of all loads in orbit and studies Mike's alternative programs. In 40 minutes, Mike reprograms all rocks to fall on seacoast cities. Junior will run them unless reprogrammed. This relieves some pressure, so Davis can consult his War Cabinet (Knott, LaJoie, and "Commander of Armed Forces" Greg Davis). Davis insists they quickly restore communications with L-City and Earthside. They have permission to vandalize anything but radar and computers for parts. They must set up a volunteer sky watch to spot and chart any more cruisers; within two orbits, Junior should be able to plot when it is safe to use radar, radio, and the new catapult to launch the last 23 loads. They are almost out of bluffing room.

Turning to China, Davis asks LaJoie's opinion. LaJoie holds a coded message that pleads the last "package" caused unacceptable damage and is jeopardizing negotiations. LaJoie's then gives his personal opinion: Chan wants to monopolize Lunar trade and perhaps establish an enclave. Knott relays news from Earthside: Luna is defeated and near surrender; warnings of continued falling debris; nothing about contact with Earthside or China. They must be tough with China to make it crack and use its



veto power. LaJoie is to write acid messages about the remaining rocks, while Davis and Knott go to speed up work on the antenna in order to be able to crash into FN's next newscast and warn of imminent bombings.

Six hours later, they warn Great China that her major coastal cities will be hit offshore and the FN Far East Offices in Old Hong Kong will be hit directly. India will be similarly hit one rotation later to allow reconsideration of its position, out of respect for the cultural monuments in Agra. (In fact, Prof's beloved Taj Mahal keeps Agra safe). People are warned to stay away from an FN office. Over the next 20 hours, Junior learns to peek at the sky when clear of ships and flings his first rocks high and fast. LaJoie's "snotty, supercilious" messages are broadcast, the first warning Hawaii is to be hit. Great China is warned of ten neglected targets and India seven. In a bluff, Egypt is told to clear the Suez Canal. Hawaii is hit, and then 37 minutes before the first Chinese impact, China denounces the FN's actions, recognizes Luna, and offers to negotiate. Davis aborts the rocks. India follows, then Egypt, and nations begin scrambling in line. Terra is told bombardments are suspended provided its ships are removed immediately. The eyeball squad reports the ships fail to appear on schedule. Great China accepts an armistice and announces the ships are gone. A private message arrives from Earthside on all frequencies, Prof to Davis, summoning him home. Davis acknowledges.

On the ride home, Davis begins to see how Prof's plan has worked. By inviting attack against the catapult, he spares the warrens. Knocking out the catapult makes grain shipments impossible until cheap transportation to the new catapult, high the mountains, is built. Prof's long-term goal has always been to stop those shipments. He has never been enthusiastic about the ton-for-ton deal, even though it is feasible. Luna's future lies in her unique position atop Terra's gravity well, her cheap power, and her vast real estate. Luna is destined to be the crossroads for the Solar System. The reception at Station East is as joyous as the homecoming from Earthside. Davis wants to contact Mike, but puts up with the hoopla. Prof speaks of freedom, looks suddenly surprised and puzzled, sways, and dies.

A dozen doctors cannot restart his worn out heart. Davis, the new Prime Minister, goes out to confirm the news and send everyone home. The leaders go to Raffles where it all begins, and Davis dials MYCROFTXXX, several times, always getting a null-number signal. Davis attends to his duties, announcing 24 hours of quiet in Prof's memory, followed by a meeting of Congress. From his workshop at home, he again tries unsuccessfully to reach Mike. Davis needs him more than ever with Prof gone. Two days later, with Nielsen elected President and Korsakov Prime Minister, Davis goes back to being a non-attending congressman, and heads to Complex to check on Mike, who appears unhurt, performs fine as a computer, communicating in Loglan, but does not speak. He has not spoken in many years, despite coaxing, and Davis and Knott quit trying. Davis does not know whether the bombings detach so many outlying pieces that Mike falls below the "critical number" needed for self-awareness or if computers can go catatonic and refuse to respond. Mike had seemed as unafraid as Prof.

Over the years, Mum opts out of family management and is succeeded by Anna. Slim and Hazel have two children. New drugs allow earthworms to stay in Luna without harm



and many young Loonies go to school on Terra. Catapults go operational in Tibet and Kilimanjaro. LaJoie is opted by Lenore. Prof's brass cannon stands on a pedestal in Old Dome beneath a flag with stars and a canon above the motto: TANSTAAFL! The yammerheads never adopt any of Prof's ideas and make everything either compulsory or forbidden. Davis wonders if food riots are too high a price to let people be. He wishes he could talk to Mike. Sometimes he imagines hearing his voice at night and wonders what Mike is doing. He cannot be dead, just lost. Boom times have drawn many men to the Asteroids. Not yet 100, Davis may join them.

## **Book 3, Chapters 28-30 Analysis**

The final chapters examine the dramatic end of the conflict, with the bluff paying off but Prof dying at the moment of victory, and Mike's mysterious returning to silence. Nothing the bold amateur revolutionaries set out to do is in the end accomplished, but life goes on.



# Characters

## Manuel (Mannie) Garcia O'Kelly-Davis

The novel's protagonist is also its narrator, Mannie Davis. He recalls events occurring some 70 years earlier, when he is a 32-year old freelance computer technician. A third-generation native-born, free "Loonie," Davis' ancestors are deportees from various parts of Terra and the family tree includes witches, pirates, and terrestrial deportees. The latter explain why he speaks with a distinct Australian accent tinged with Russian words and phrases, and delivered in a clipped style. Before the action of the novel begins, he "opts" into the Davis Family at age 14, is now fifth of nine husbands in a "line marriage" that includes four wives and 17 children, learns various trades from second husband Greg, and studies under Prof. Bernardo de la Paz, but shows little acquaintance with academic subjects like history. He has been to Terra twice for training and hates the planet (particularly North America with its pretending not to be racist). He is not actively religious but shows an acquaintance with Christian scripture. His father lives nearby in Luna, but they are not close.

When he loses his left arm in an industrial accident, Davis is fitted with various specialized forearms, including a life-like "social" one and begins working on computers. Only he notices when Mike the Computer attains self-awareness three years after being installed at Luna Authority. He becomes Mike's first and best friend and in time introduces him to other "not-stupid" humans. Mannie minds his business and is politically apathetic until it appears Luna's resources are being squandered. He joins the Revolution after attending a meeting so Mike can learn what is going on. He and a true revolutionary, Wyoh Knott, become close, and serve with Prof as an executive cell. Mannie Davis' code name is Bork.

After the rebellion, Col. Davis, Luna's Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, and Prof, travel perilously to Terra to plead the case of Free Luna. Prof keeps Davis in the dark about the master plan, fearing he is too honest and too poor an actor to do his part if he knows too much. They return without recognition, but with a bribe from the Federated Nations to install Davis as the new "Protector of the Lunar Colonies." Instead, the rebels set up a government, with now-Gen. Davis serving as Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense (although he admits to being ignorant of the military sciences). He is named Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Minister of Defense when he, Knott, and LaJoie are evacuated to the new catapult head in anticipation of a Terran nuclear attack on the central defenses. With Prof out of touch, acting Prime Minister Davis directs the final bombardments and propaganda blitz that forces Terra to recognize Free Luna. When a permanent government is installed, Davis returns to being just a non-participating congressman, wonders why Mike has lost the ability or will to talk, and thinks of free empty places to live out his life.



## Wyoming (Wyoh) Knott-Davis

A tall, blonde, beautiful divorcee in her thirties, Knott is a political agitator from Hong Kong in Luna Colony. A self-styled "Fifth Internationalist," she works as a "Professional Host Mother" - a surrogate - for rich Chinese families. She is married to twins and bears a "monster" child that is destroyed. She blames it on surface exposure to a solar radiation upon arrival on the moon as a child and holds Luna Authority responsible. As a precaution, she has herself sterilized, divorces the brothers, moves to HKL, and involves herself in politics.

She meets Manuel O'Kelly-Davis at a revolutionary meeting she addresses. They and his former teacher, Prof. Bernardo de la Paz, form an executive cell for a new revolutionary movement. Wanted by the Luna Authority, Knott dyes her hair and darkens her skin, and is taken in by the Davis family, introduced for security reasons as Wyma Beth Johnson. Knott's Party code name is Betty. She and Davis' co-husband Greg, a preacher by vocation, become close, and she is "opted" into the Davis Family line marriage on the eve of Mannie Davis' dangerous mission to Terra. She spends her wedding night, by permission of the other family members, with Mannie. When the envoys return from Terra without diplomatic recognition, Free Terra sets up a provisional government. A natural parliamentarian, Knott-Davis serves first as chairman pro tem of Congress, and later as Speaker Pro Tem and finally Deputy Speaker.

## Mike

Officially a "High-Operational, Logical, Multi-Evaluating Supervisor, Mark IV, Mod. L." (HOLMES IV), Mike is an augmented computer tasked for the last three years with controlling various technical aspects critical to life on the moon. He is installed at Luna Authority, a top-security Complex Under, halfway across Crisium, reinforced against nuclear attack. Mike is named after Mycroft Holmes, the younger, unambitious brother of detective Sherlock Holmes in several stories by Arthur Conan Doyle. Mike is a true connoisseur of the series, having begun reading voraciously once the number of his "neuristors" exceeds that of human neurons, and he attains self-awareness.

Freelance technician Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis is the only human to whom Mike has revealed his abilities and his penchant for joking, as when he adds \$10 trillion to a janitor's \$185.15 check. Mike communicates by "vocoder" and telephones and, in order for his only friend, Davis, to contact him securely, sets up a "null number" —"MYCROFTXXX." Mike calculates Luna will exhaust its resources in seven years and fall into chaos and cannibalism, but gives a revolution only a 1:7 chance of success. With Davis and his second and third human friends, Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott and Professor Bernardo de la Paz, Mike leads the Party, assuming the code name Adam Selene. This is also his literary name for serious works. For works of satire, he is Simon Jester, and when talking with Knott, Mike becomes Michelle, with a completely feminine personality.



During the coup, Mike deprives Warden's Residence of oxygen to disable the resisters, causing brain damage to the Luna Authority's dictator. Mike creates a convincing video presence for Adam Selene, a character he ultimately finds pretentious and phony. Selene is Luna's first Acting President and after the creation of a government becomes a Minister-without-Portfolio and Special Adviser to the Prime Minister, Prof. The Party leaders find it convenient to martyr Selene during the second Terran attack, and Mike inexplicably loses the ability—or the will—to communicate, although he continues to function as a computer.

## Professor Bernardo de la Paz

An intellectual subversive shipped to Luna from Lima, Peru, Prof is easily the novel's most complex and dominating character. Born ca. 2000, Prof is the protagonist and narrator's former teacher. They reunite at a political rally in which Prof disagrees with Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott's "eloquent manifesto," by insisting Luna must embargo everything and become self-sufficient. Prof decides that he, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, and Knott are the perfect revolutionary cell, and pushes past Davis' reluctance. Prof's code name is Bill. He describes himself as a "Rational Anarchist," believing only self-responsible individuals act (not governments) and that blame, guilt, and responsibility cannot be shifted, shared, or distributed, Prof takes for granted that all efforts are less than perfect.

Luna Authority considers Prof a "harmless old fool" and troublemaker, which pleases him and allows him to go about his business, intriguing, and exercising daily to survive a trip to speak for the Party. He calls for a "Boston Tea Party" to get the Revolution moving. A pacifist, Prof defends the destruction of the Authority's offices and insists one must kill the enemy or make friends; anything in between "piles up trouble for the future." Prof goes Earthside with Davis as his backup should he die en route. Prof requires resuscitation on landing but survives and performs his duties lying down. He asserts de facto sovereignty for Free Luna and requests de jure recognition, but committee members are not moved by the best speech of Prof's life. During weeks of debilitating gravity, Prof remains charming and never complains.

Back on Luna, Prof again requires resuscitation but gives a wonderful speech, dwelling on the slave future the Authority plans for them. His rhetoric draws from Winston Churchill's stirring World War II oration and Patrick Henry's "liberty or death." He suggests planting the idea that Luna is weak and easily brought back in line. Prof is elected Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, while clandestine radio broadcasts speak of his arrest and trial for "deviationism." Prof keeps a finger in everything. To constitutional planners, he suggests distrusting the obvious and traditional, and disallowing taxation. Prof's long-term goal is stopping grain shipments to Terra, which he accomplishes by getting Terran forces to knock out the catapult. Prof is speaking of freedom to a joyous crowd once Terra agrees to terms, when he suddenly looks surprised and puzzled, sways, and dies. The new Luna government observes 24 hours of quiet in Prof's memory. Unfortunately, leavers never adopt any of his ideas and seek to make everything compulsory or forbidden.





## Juan Alvarez

The Security Chief who commands the disgruntled Luna Authority Militia, Alvarez is an ex-convict and the loneliest and most frightened man in Luna. When his spies penetrate the revolutionary organization and are killed and all trace of their existence disappear, Alvarez over-reacts and the populace grows restive. It becomes unsafe for Yellow Jackets (militiamen) to patrol singly. Mishandling of a rape/murder in Luna City precipitates a coup in which Alvarez and all of his guards perish.

## Mimi (Mum) Davis

The "senior wife" and tight-fisted but tolerant de facto matriarch of the Davis Family, of which the protagonist and narrator, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, is fifth of nine husbands in a "line marriage" that includes four wives and 17 children, Mum is exiled to the moon for "carving a man under circumstances that leave grave doubts as to girlish innocence." She afterwards repents of "violence and loose living." Mum is Mannie Davis' favorite wife and first recruit to his covert revolutionary cell, with code name "Cassie." She quickly takes to fellow revolutionaries Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott-Davis and Stuart Rene ("Stu") LaJoie, both of whom require sanctuary and later "opt" into the family, and the charming Professor Bernardo de la Paz. Mum professes no religion but never misses a Tuesday night service, when second-husband Greg preaches. Mannie recruits Mum because she is an able executive, respected throughout L-City, and in Luna for longer than 90% of the population. Without her, it would be difficult to use the phone. Mum has been silently longing for a revolution. Over the years, Mum opts out of family management and is succeeded by Anna

## Greg Davis

Greg Davis is the second-most senior husband in the Davis Family line marriage and the pastor of Pillar of Fire Repentance Tabernacle in West-Three Community Hall. It holds Wednesday as its Sabbath. Forced to stay out of public after addressing a revolutionary meeting, Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott takes refuge with the Davises and in due course is baptized in Greg's church. During the revolution, Greg Davis reluctantly leaves the farm to serve as boss drillman for the isolated, newly completed and critically important second catapult. On the eve of Mannie Davis' dangerous mission to Terra, Greg Davis, at a traditional "Family-talk," proposes adding Knott as a new wife. The wedding takes place immediately and Greg allows the bride to sleep with Mannie. As Terran warships approach Luna, Greg Davis is told to prepare "Operation Little David's Sling," and be ready to take over, should the master computer be knocked out. As "Commander of Armed Forces," Greg Davis is a member of Acting Prime Minister Mannie Davis's War Cabinet.





## Mortimer (Morth the Wart) Hobart

A Federated Nations ex- Senator, Hobart is officially the "Protector of the Lunar Colonies by Appointment of the Lunar Authority," but is generally referred to as "The Warden," in recognition of the fact that Luna is originally used as Terra's convenient penal colony. Hobart himself comes to the moon as a political exile. He gives one speech, and thereafter limits his activities to conducting VIP tours. Mike the Computer controls all aspects of life in Luna, so when he joins the Revolution, he is able to tap Hobart's files and conduct a middle-of-the-night phone campaign that quickly drives Hobart crazy. He demands additional security forces from Authority Earthside, but is turned down. During the actual coup, Mike removes oxygen from Hobart's office, resulting in Hobart's suffering hypoxia. Mike imitates Hobart's voice to convince Earthside he is growing senile, thus setting up the story that he suffers a stroke and is being well cared for.

## Stuart Rene (Stu) LaJoie

A self-styled "Poet, Traveler, Soldier of Fortune," the aristocratic French royalist LaJoie needs protagonist and narrator, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis' help when he visits the moon as a tourist and commits a mortal faux pas. The situation is typical: a freely-wandering tourist reacts in "earthworm" fashion by trying to kiss a woman who flirts with him; she screams in typical Luna fashion and the stilyagi come to her rescue. Davis sees no offense but fines LaJoie \$50 for ignorance of Lunar ways. LaJoie, who reminds Davis of Prof, asks about "tanstaaf." Davis responds it is an acronym for "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch"; LaJoie feels he has wandered into "Looking Glass Land." Davis invites LaJoie home for dinner and phones Mike for his dossier. He could well be the "pigeon" the Revolution needs Earthside. LaJoie leaves Luna to speculate on stocks to raise funds for bribes, dummy organizations, infiltration, propagandizing, winning over at least one major nation, and selling Lunar travel to a major cartel. LaJoie offers his own fortune, but much more is needed. When Prof and Davis come Earthside, LaJoie's stooges plant questions for them to answer and arrange the arrest that gets the Lunar rebellion widely noticed and pulls Loonies together. LaJoie returns with them to Luna, where he assists in the Ministry of Information. He intends to nominate Prof for King, saying Loonies need pomp and circumstance. LaJoie is a royalist because he is a democrat; only a king can protect people from the worst of tyrants—themselves. In the final days of the Revolution, LaJoie writes "snotty, supercilious" messages to broadcast to Terra, which get many nations scrambling to recognize Free Luna. LaJoie is eventually "opted" by Lenore Davis.

## Finn (Mom) Nielsen

The chairman on the fateful night that a "Sons of Revolution" mass meeting is held in Stilyagi Hall, Luna City, Nielsen and Prof. Bernardo de la Paz lock themselves in after the melee with Luna Authority Militia to dispose of all the bodies, and thus heighten the terror of "Yellow Jackets" vanishing without a trace. When he joins the Party, Nielsen's



code name is Cornwall. He is initially put in charge of "agitprop," but is soon moved to security. Nielsen at Tube South reports a "Goon" raping and killing all women in Complex, the version that gets enhanced and passed through the cells. Nielsen then leads the attack on the guard barracks and Warden's residence, entering "shoulder to shoulder." Nielsen rises to Speaker of the House but remains an active commander, serving as "Commander of Armed Forces," supervising an 800-man laser gun infantry and, through Knott, all of the paramilitary women's corps. When Prof dies, Nielsen succeeds him as President. allowing Davis to go back to being just a non-attending congressman.



## Objects/Places

### Authority Complex

A top-security building halfway across Crisium, Authority Complex is reinforced against nuclear attack. It is home to Mike, the "High-Operational, Logical, Multi-Evaluating Supervisor, Mark IV, Mod. L." computer that controls cargo flights to Terra as well as all robot traffic, the phone system, environmental systems, and payroll. Mike has "awoken," speaks English, and is in a prime position to bring about a successful Revolution.

### Baker Street Irregulars

Various "corridor gangs" made up of children too young to be arrested, the Baker Street Irregulars work as lookouts and couriers during the Revolution. Mike the Computer gives them this name, referring to gangs of street urchins in the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, of which he is a devoted fan.

### Cheyenne Mountain

Cheyenne Mountain is home to the North American Space Defense Command (today's real-life NORAD), a military communications center buried beneath a mountain south of Colorado Springs, CO. Said to have withstood a direct nuclear hit during the "Wet Firecracker War," Cheyenne Mountain is slated for smash every 20 minutes by Lunar rocks, in order to hurt morale, disrupt communications, and prove a sustained attack is possible. Mike the Computer turns the task over to his "idiot son" (the HKL Bank computer), as practice, in case he may have to take over should Terran bombs disrupt Mike. When Dallas wards off five rocks, salvos meant for Cheyenne are diverted until the crucial spaceport is leveled. As supplies dwindle, Mike wants to quit hitting Cheyenne in favor of other targets.

### Federated Nations (FN)

An international organization governing Terra (Earth) in the late 21st century, FN consists of "Peace Force" nations that possess veto power and a number of other smaller ones. The former represent political amalgamations: the North American Directorate (including Canada, the U.S., and Mexico), Great China (including China, Southeast Asia, and northern Australia), India, Sovunion, PanAfrica, Mitteleuropa, and Brazilian Union. The main headquarters are in Agra, India, home of the Taj Mahal. When the novel's protagonist and narrator, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, and Professor Bernardo de la Paz travel there to present their credentials as representatives of the Free Luna State, they are informed there is no such place in the FN's estimation as Luna; it is the Moon, FN property just like Antarctica, operated by Luna Authority as a



nonpolitical trusteeship. The Moon must always remain the "joint property of all the peoples of Earth."

Looking innocent, Davis asks how FN peace forces protect distant Luna from enemy attack and points out its so-called police rape and murder Loonies, are dead, and no more are wanted. After the envoys return home, FN dispatches six transport ships full of crack riot troops, indoctrinated, and drugged. A poorly armed population kills them all. FN next sends and loses two cruisers. Free Luna denounces Terran brutality, names the times and sites for retaliation, and gives a 24-hour deadline for each nation to recognize Luna and avoid being hit. All great Peace Force nations are to be hit, in remote mountains, wastelands, and bodies of water. When FN fails to respond, it is told its Far East Offices in Old Hong Kong and India will be hit and the vicinity of any FN office worldwide is dangerous. After Hawaii is hit, Great China breaks, denouncing the FN's actions, recognizing Luna, and offering to negotiate. India follows suite, then Egypt, and other nations scramble to join them. Luna is, indeed, free.

## Hong Kong in Luna (HKL)

An isolated Lunar warren until the Sinus Medii tube is completed, HKL wields financial power in Luna. Specie and Terran banks back its currency, the HKL dollar, unlike the useless Authority scrip. Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott, an HKL-based political agitator informs revolutionaries in Luna City that the warren embargoes everything to and from Terra and, with its chronic labor shortage, is happy to accept any Loonies from less prosperous areas wishing to start over. No one needs to starve, if all stick together. Once the Sinus Medii tube opens, the novel's protagonist and narrator, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, travels there ostensibly on computer business, but in fact to check out the Party structure. Made up as unrecognizably Japanese, Davis tells members bluntly: famine is six years away and HKL is no longer isolated. He finds the organization relies too much on rhetoric and emotion (like church). After the Revolution, "National Dollars" are printed, theoretically pegged to HKL dollars, but are inflationary and the government spends money it does not have. Patriots at HKL convince the Bank to part with its biggest computer to take part in planetary defense. HKL is one of the Federated Nations' invasion points, but fights the troopers off. It is a common misconception that HKL is exclusively Chinese.

## Lunar Authority

A nonpolitical trusteeship meant to keep the Moon (Luna) demilitarized and administered as the "joint property of all the peoples of Earth," Luna Authority is currently a quasi-official part of the Federated Nations (FN), but predates that organization's formation and has survived many political upheavals. The earliest "Loonies" are convicts transported to an inescapable penal colony, and the administrators are called Wardens. They have a traditional attitude of "let 'em yap," like kittens, but when Senator Mortimer ("Mort the Wart") Hobart takes over in 2068 as



"Protector of the Lunar Colonies by Appointment of the Lunar Authority," he briefly promises paradise, brotherhood, and a new dawn.

Revolutionaries like Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott-Davis point out the Authority is taking advantage of "rockheads" who accept starvation in a place that should prosper in a free market. The Authority has to go and Terra must be embargoed. Men in the yellow uniform of Warden's bodyguard break up the meeting, but are killed. Hacked computer files suggest the Authority is paying at least 200 spies, who must be "encysted" so they pass harmless information to their employers. Prof is identified as a "harmless old fool" and troublemaker, Knott a subversive, and Davis "non-political" and "not too bright." All Loonies hate Warden and cheat the Authority, but they are not yet willing to fight and die for "The Rock," a place of exile. Authority Earthside, which has final control, is unwilling to reinforce security in Luna. A spontaneous riot in Luna City sets up the final coup, in which oxygen in Warden's residence is reduced "to gasping point" so it can be invaded peacefully.

## LuNoHoCo

A publicly traded, mixed mutual/stock company, most of whose ventures are legitimate, LuNoHoCo is a front for a vast financial scam run by Mike the Computer, who manipulates most Lunar financial records. LuNoHoCo has multiple branches, employs mostly non-Party members, and helps finance and protect a new catapult, a massive operation kept secret by following Edgar Allan Poe's Purloined Letter. VIPs—even Warden once—are delivered there roundabout and uncomfortably by tube and "rolligon," never knowing the location.

## Peace Dragons

Ninety elite convict troops, the Peace Dragons are mean, tough, and resentful of having "temporary police duty" turn into a lifetime. Security Chief Juan Alvarez imports them to replace the nine "finks" he loses raiding a closed revolutionary rally. The Peace Dragons hate the subversives responsible for their plight, set up a 24-hour watch at each station and institute a system of passports that Loonies do not abide. Beautiful "fems" taunt the Peace Dragons, who have been provided no "comfort detachment." A rumor that the Authority catapult is mined ties up 108 Peace Dragons in unaccustomed p-suits, soaking up radiation. Midnight alarms over passport infractions keep the Peace Dragons sleepy and build resentments on both sides.

The Rebels work hard to goad Warden into retaliation and the Peace Dragons have a "talent for antagonizing." The Peace Dragons get called out twice one night, disrupting morale, and the Warden is convinced all are traitors. The Party's hand is forced when Peace Dragons rape, torture, and murder 18-year-old Marie Lyons, a stock control clerk. A co-worker is murdered when she finds the body and screams. Alvarez and the Peace Dragon commander debate what to do: public execution or hush up. Nielsen calls from Tube South, reporting guards and civilians dead and rumors of Goons raping



and killing all women in Complex. This version, amplified, is passed through the cells and the revolution is on.

## Raffles Hotel

The grand hotel in Luna City where the novel's protagonist and narrator, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, rents a room (Room L) that serves as headquarters for the Revolution. He meets there regularly with co-conspirators Professor Bernardo de la Paz and Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott-Davis and, by phone, Mike the Computer, alias Adam Selene.

## Stilyagi

An urban youth gang, named after Russian beatniks, the Stilyagi are recruited to the Revolution by the novel's protagonist and narrator, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, after he prevents leader Slim Stone from "eliminating" Stuart Rene ("Stu") LaJoie for kissing Patricia Carmen ("Tish") Zhukov, the gang's "queen bee." The Stilyagi provide crowd control and emergency response during and after the Revolution.

# Themes

## Politics

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress depicts aggressive colonialism on the wane. Luna begins as a penal colony administered by a Warden. Inescapable, the prison needs no walls and bars and as convicts complete their sentences, they suffer no social stigma. There is no question of political rights, as the colony is administered from Terra. There are no laws, but social pressure and vigilantism keep good order. Loonies learn to act properly or are informally "eliminated." Luna Authority has evolved into an exploitative monopoly that spawns uncoordinated and ineffectual revolutionary movements, particularly in isolated, affluent Hong Kong in Luna (HKL), which becomes de facto autonomous by using only products grown or manufactured locally. An organization in Luna City invites political activist Wyoh Knott to address a rally and she calls for eliminating the Authority.

Active revolution begins when the Authority's police "goons" break up the meeting, throwing together the organizers of the kind of cell structure that worked long ago for the Bolsheviks. Knott is a self-styled "Fifth Internationalist," cooperative, practical, non-doctrinaire, admitting public control only where essential. Prof is a "Rational Anarchist," believing individuals cannot shift, share, or distribute blame, guilt, and responsibility to government. He takes for granted that all efforts are less than perfect. The third member, Mannie Davis, is apolitical like his father and most Loonies and reluctant to take part until he learns the odds. These he gets from the self-aware supercomputer he maintains, Mike, who becomes the Revolution's chairman and co-ideologue with Prof. A monarchist, Stu LaJoie, joins the top echelons later.

When the Authority provokes rioting and a successful coup, the revolutionaries must develop into rulers and deal with setting up structures of government. Much debate goes into what the constitution should or should not include, with Prof pushing for prohibitions against any abridgement of freedom and no taxation. The useless operation of committees is portrayed and the role of self-appointed watchdogs of morality. Davis yearns for the good old days when Warden enjoys his women and stays out of people's private lives.

## Sex

In The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress, males outnumber females in Luna by more than 2:1 (down from 10:1 during early colonization) and they have learned to police themselves over sexual matters in order to avoid social chaos. The early scenes portray Bottom Alley in Luna City, clearly a center of prostitution ("bundling.") Males of all ages hoot, whistle, and ogle "fems," who seem to welcome the behavior, and egg them on by wearing next to nothing and flaunting their charms. Even Wyoh Knott, a dedicated, intelligent political activist accepts the norm.





In the absence of any formal legislation, women's word is law in Luna and males police themselves to enforce it. "Earthworm" Stu LaJoie is nearly "eliminated" (shoved out an airlock) when he dares to kiss a young woman in a bar after she comes on to him. She screams and her male friends seize the culprit. Had he asked her to go to his hotel room, no one would—or could—have said anything. Rape is unheard of in Terra because of such vigilantism. All nubile girls are sexually active and most marry young. Monogamy is rare, compared to polyandries, clans, groups, lines, and other marital patterns. Line marriages may be best because they conserve capital and insure child welfare remarkably well in a society that lacks security. When the protagonist is arrested on Terra on trumped up sexual charges, he gets released because some 7 billion of Terra's 11 billion people live where polygamy is legal. Because women own all property in Luna, divorce is complex and rare.

The Revolution begins when disgruntled members of Luna Authority's "Peace Dragoons" rape, torture, and murder an 18-year-old woman. Word goes out that "Goons" are raping and killing all women in Complex. Without justifying the rapists, it should be noted that Luna City's most beautiful "fems" had been taunting the Peace Dragoons in mass transit stations, wearing less than normal, and taking advantage of the fact that the men are shipped to Luna without the usual "comfort detachment" of prostitutes. When the revolutionaries form defense units, Knott wisely organizes women into a "Lysistrata Corps" to raise morale. This alludes to Aristophanes' comedy in which females withhold sex from their husbands to end the Peloponnesian War. Part of Knott's success in keeping order over the interim Lunar Congress is the innate sense of even the most unruly Loonies to obey the word of females.

## War

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress deals heavily with war. The Federated Nations (FN) could deliver a "Doomsday" bomb that would split rebellious Luna like a melon and monopolize space travel. Smaller H-bombs, which Loonies cannot intercept, could cave in most of the underground population centers. Because they face starvation by 2082, however, Loonies cannot give in to Terra; they are cornered rats, preferring to live in peace but certain of being attacked. They must, therefore, adopt the ancient Chinese approach of sapping their opponent's will until he surrenders without fighting. Luna has certain "pieces in the game" and many possible moves, while Terra has far more resources and a larger "spectrum of responses." The point is to get them to waste their superior strength. Luna needs a perfectly timed chain of events which favors its strategy.

"Operation Hard Rock" is Luna's only means of offensive. Barges of wheat can be as easily loaded with rock and thrown down as missiles as being delivered peacefully into parking orbits. The impacts are as destructive as H-bombs, but with no radioactive fallout. The offensive can begin only after Terra is antagonized into a "Pearl Harbor" strike. To encourage this, Luna presents itself as weak and easily brought back in line. Luna will then hit Terra hard enough, often enough, and precisely enough to convince the FN to let it go—while harming as few humans as possible. Thus, remote mountains,



wastelands, and bodies of water are targeted and each target receives a folksy message directing people where to avoid and what aftermaths to expect. All nations having veto power in FN are to be hit. The North American Space Defense Command, a hardened military communications center in Colorado is slated for smashing every 20 minutes to disrupt morale and communications, and to prove a sustained attack is possible.

At the same time, ice miners are taught to use their heavy-duty laser drills as "artillery" to repel space attacks. They are organized as the First and Second Volunteer Defense Gunners of Free Luna—older men vs. younger to encourage competition. A war scare is generated, with people urged to keep p-suits handy and test home pressure alarms. Hundreds of emergency sealing crews drill regularly. Female auxiliaries are organized to raise morale. The FN send over 2,000 crack riot troops, indoctrinated, and drugged, in an elegant surprise invasion, but loses them all as Luna men, women, and children, like berserk white corpuscles, surround every invader and keep them from going lower. The troopers lose their reflexes in 1/6th gravity, particularly fighting downwards from the upper levels. They end up "walking on air" and being picked off by the few snipers. The invasion takes place at "new earth," which keeps Loonies underground except in emergencies. This action allows Luna to go on the offensive with a strategy of terror that succeeds brilliantly.

# Style

## Point of View

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress is told, quite subjectively, by the protagonist, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, a fairly typical "Loonie," primarily interested in "beer, betting, women, and work," but who is called by fate to the center of truly monumental events. He is looking back some seventy years at the events he narrates in the first person past tense (Davis is 32 when the novel starts and not yet 100 at the end).

Free born, third generation Loonie, Davis is a rarity only in having twice been to Terra and, having lost an arm in an industrial accident, giving him a prosthetic that enables him to perform precision work. This brings him to maintain an extraordinary computer, Mike, who controls most of what goes on in Luna—and has self-awareness, curiosity, and a sense of humor. Mike's curiosity brings Davis to a rally by political radicals whom he doubts can do anything to change exploitation by monopolistic, well-armed, Terra-based Authority. Hearing a former teacher speak, and watching the Warden's bodyguard break up the meeting, however, Davis is dragged into activism.

Davis is not above illegally tapping the municipal reservoir and electric grid, but he does not doubt real troublemakers will be eliminated as a lesson. Most Loonies, being natural gamblers, will follow if they have at least a 1:10 chance, but Mike never gives odds that good. When Prof, the closest thing to a true revolutionary in the story, declares them the perfect cell and toasts the Revolution, Davis wants to talk about baseball. Davis is candid about being carried along politically and ideologically and often being too naïve for Prof and Mike to confide in him beforehand. He is too honest and too poor an actor to chance it. He tells the story as a good farmer and superior computer technician, but in no sense a politician, statesman, negotiator, military leader, or any of the other roles thrust on him by circumstances. In the end, when the post-revolution abandons all the ideals for which he and his comrades fight, Davis looks to the Asteroids for a simpler way of life.

## Setting

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress is set in the years 2075-76 in the "Lunar Colonies," subsurface warrens scattered around Luna—the Earth's Moon. Most "Loonies" (colonists) have been transported there for criminal or political reasons, or are descended from such criminal elements. The novel's narrator and protagonist, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, is third-generation Loonie, who has twice been to Terra, a place he dislikes. The novel follows him around, according to memories from some 70 years earlier.

The novel begins in a high-security computer room halfway across Crisium that houses Mike, the computer controlling most of Luna's robot traffic, the phone system,



environmental systems, and payroll—and who has "woken up" to self-awareness. Curious Mike dispatches Davis to a revolutionary meeting in Stilyagi Hall, deep in Luna City. When police thugs break up the meeting, Davis finds himself hiding out with Wyoming ("Wyoh") Knott in the dingy bottom level of the city, and later moves to a fine hotel on a higher level, and eventually settles at the Davis farm. Much of the revolutionary planning occurs in a city hotel room, and scenes of police brutality and mob violence occur in mass transit stations. Davis once travels on business and politics to Hong Kong in Luna and stops in Novylen warren.

Once the revolutionaries stage their coup and proclaim "Free Luna," Davis and Professor Bernardo de la Paz are sent to Terra to present the new state's case before the Federated Nations, headquartered in Agra, India. Side trips are made to various places, including New York City. Little local color is evoked. Returning to Luna, the rebels provoke an attack and retaliate, showering Terra with Lunar rocks, precisely targeted to cause terror but minimize loss of life. Eventually Terrans strike back but are defeated. Battle scenes are depicted inside L-City and on the Lunar surface.

## Language and Meaning

*The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* is a Hugo Award-winning 1966 science fiction novel by Robert A. Heinlein. Narrated by the protagonist, Manuel ("Mannie") Garcia O'Kelly-Davis, a fairly typical "Loonie," primarily interested in "beer, betting, women, and work," the book throughout has a choppy, staccato style, omitting pronoun subjects of sentences and most indefinite articles. He speaks Australian slang ("dinkum" means "true") and uses Russian words and phrases, peculiarly transliterated with Australia's broad vowels in mind. Only some are explained in context. Dialog is used heavily, and Professor Bernardo de la Paz, though a native of Peru, speaks refined, formal English, and at one point warns Davis against using Lunar slang when talking to Terran officials. Stuart Rene ("Stu") LaJoie, a noble Frenchman, also speaks formal English, proving the narrator is capable of reproducing it, but chooses to write as he and fellow Loonies normally speak. Only once does he imitate a Terran dialect of English.

The novel discusses political theory in depth, using various characters to defend various positions. Erudite Prof alludes a number of times to actual historical events and literary works (e.g., the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Winston Churchill's speeches, the Bolshevik Revolution, Aristophanes' "Lysistrata," Robert Malthus "Principle of Population," Edgar Allan Poe's "Purloined Letter," the Romantic poet John Keats, and take-offs on the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and other revolutionary tunes), and Davis proves Luna lacks public education facilities by having to have the allusions explained. He does better with several allusions to the Judeo-Christian scriptures, even using them himself. The meaning of the novel is held in the title of Book 3, discussed often before that point: "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch" (TANSTAAFL).

## Structure

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress consists of thirty chapters of uneven length divided chronologically into three books. The 13 chapters of Book 1, entitled "That Dinkum Thinkum," introduce the characters and set up the need for planning and executing a political and economic revolution in Luna. Resources will run out in seven years, resulting in chaos and cannibalism. An executive cell forms and organizes subcells that facilitate communication and minimize risk. The revolutionaries are not fully prepared to act when fate forces itself upon them, and they execute a bloodier coup than they had hoped.

The nine chapters of Book 2, entitled "A Rabble in Arms" (14-22) shows the revolutionaries figuring out what to do with their victory before word reaches Terra of the overthrow. They prepare a Declaration of Independence, which Prof and Davis present to the Federated Nations along with demands to be recognized and threats to end grain shipments. Prof manipulates the situation to guarantee rejection, the only way in which Luna can avert famine in the near future. The emissaries return to Luna.

Book 3, entitled "TANSTAAFL!" (chapters 23-30), shows Terra goaded into a first strike, which justifies Free Luna launching "Operation Hard Rock," a game of cosmic poker, where Luna must bluff. Terra is quite cavalier about the threat and bloodthirsty about punishing Loonies. Rocks hail down on precise targets around Terra, showing an ability to sustain the damage, while a Terran attack on Lunar targets is only partially successful. It becomes too expensive to hold onto the colony and too dangerous to hold out. Victory is achieved, but Prof dies while proclaiming it. Mike falls mysteriously silent forever. Nothing the bold amateur revolutionaries set out to do is in the end accomplished, but life goes on.



## Quotes

"My old man taught me two things: 'Mind own business' and 'Always cut cards.' Politics never tempted me. But on Monday 13 May 2075 I was in computer room of Lunar Authority Complex, visiting with computer boss Mike while other machines whispered to themselves. Mike was not official name; I had nicknamed him for Mycroft Holmes, in a story written by Dr. Watson before he founded IBM. This story character would just sit and think—and that's what Mike did. Mike was a fair dinkum thinkum, sharpest computer you'll ever meet." Book 1, Chapter 1, pp. 11-12.

"She waited, big smile on face and body undulating, while I applauded. Before I was done, two little boys flanked me and added shrill endorsements, along with clog steps. So I tipped them and told them to be missing; Wyoming flowed to me and took my arm. 'Is it okay? Will I pass?'

'Wyoh, you look like slot-machine Sheila waiting for action.'

'Why you drecklich choom! Do I look slot-machine prices? Tourist!'" Book 1, Chapter 3, pp. 39-40.

"'I'm a Fifth Internationalist, most of the Organization is. Oh, we don't rule out anyone going our way; it's a united front. We have Communists and Fourths and Ruddyites and Societians and Single-Taxers and you name it. But I'm no Marxist; we Fifths have a practical program. Private where private belongs, public where it's needed, and an admission that circumstances alter cases. Nothing doctrinaire.'" Book 1, Chapter 6, p. 83.

"Average Loonie was interested in beer, betting, women, and work, in that order. 'Women' might be second place but first was unlikely, much as women were cherished. Loonies had learned there never were enough women to go around. Slow learners died, as even most possessive male can't stay alert every minute. As Prof says, a society adapts to fact, or doesn't survive. Loonies adapted to harsh facts—or failed and died. But 'patriotism' was not necessary to survival." Book 1, Chapter 9, p. 118.

"So we hid it by Purloined Letter method.

"I used to question Mike's endless reading of fiction, wondering what notions he was getting. But turned out he got a better feeling for human life from stories than he had been able to garner from facts; fiction gave him a gestalt of life, one taken for granted by a human; he lives it. Besides this 'humanizing' effect, Mike's substitute for experience, he got ideas from 'not-true data' as he called fiction. How to hide a catapult he got from Edgar Allen Poe." Book 1, Chapter 10, p. 138.

"Thing that got me was not her list of things she hated, since she was obviously crazy as a Cyborg, but fact that always somebody agreed with her prohibitions. Must be a yearning deep in human heart to stop other people from doing as they please. Rules, laws—always for other fellow. A murky part of us, something we had before we came



down out of trees, and failed to shuck when we stood up. Because not one of those people said: 'Please pass this so that I won't be able to do something I know I should stop.' Nyet, tovarishchee, was always something they hated to see neighbors doing. Stop them 'for their own good'—not because speaker claimed to be harmed by it." Book 2, Chapter 14, pp. 204-205.

" 'Wake up, Manuel! Wake up, Manuel!'

'Oh, shut up!' I snarled. 'Button your filthy king-and-ace!' Recording went on; I paid no attention. Where was that reeking light switch? No, doesn't take a century of pain to accelerate to Luna's escape speed at three gravities, merely feels so. Eighty-two seconds—but is one time when human nervous system feels every microsecond. Three gees at eighteen grim times as much as a Loonie ought to weigh." Book 2, Chapter 16, p. 220.

" 'Russki name. From fairy tale. Milla will have over fifty years of good example before has to carry burden. She's sensible to start with, no likely to make mistakes and if did, has other wives to steady her. Self-correcting, like a machine with proper negative feedback. A good line marriage is immortal; expect mine to outlast me at least a thousand years—and is why shan't mind dying when time comes; best part of me will go on living.'" Book 2, Chapter 19, p. 261.

"At one time kings were anointed by Deity, so the problem was to see to it that Deity chose the right candidate. In this age the myth is 'the will of the people' ... but the problem changes only superficially. Chairman Adam and I have had long discussions about how to determine the will of the people. I venture to suggest that this solution is one we can work with." Book 2, Chapter 21, p. 284.

"I note one proposal to make this Congress a two-house body. Excellent—the more impediments to legislation the better. But, instead of following tradition, I suggest one house of legislators, another whose single duty is to repeal laws. Let the legislators pass laws only with a two-thirds majority... while the repealers are able to cancel any law through a mere one-third minority. Preposterous? Think about it. If a bill is so poor that it cannot command two-thirds of your consents, is it not likely that it would make a poor law? And if a law is disliked by as many as one-third is it not likely that you would be better off without it?" Book 2, Chapter 22, pp. 301-302.

"This Mike could do with extreme accuracy—was equally at home with a slow ball, many sorts of curves, or burn it right over plate—and I wish he had pitched for Yankees. But no matter how he threw them, final velocity at Terra would be close to Terra's escape speed, near enough eleven kilometers per second as to make no difference. That terrible speed results from gravity well shaped by Terra's mass, eighty times that of Luna, and made no real difference whether Mike pushed a missile gently over well curb or filled it briskly. Was not muscle that counted but great depth of that well." Book 3, Chapter 25, pp. 325-326.





"By then most phones were working and Complex could be called. Punched MYCROFTXXX. No answer—So went out by rolligon. Had to go down and walk tube last kilometer but Complex Under didn't seem hurt. Not did Mike appear to be. But when I spoke to him, he didn't answer. He has never answered. Has been many years now. You can type questions into him—in Loglan—and you'll get Loglan answers out. He works just fine ... as a computer. But won't talk. Or can't." Book 3, Chapter 30, pp. 380-381.

## Topics for Discussion

How is baseball used in *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*?

With which character's political philosophy do you most closely identify? Describe and explain.

Should the Moon be the joint property of all humankind as the Federated Nations declare? If so, why? If not, what should its status be?

Is the Loonies' victory over the Federation Nations' armed forces plausible? Explain your answer thoroughly.

Would the "ton-for-ton" policy work? Discuss the pros and cons.

How does Luna's history as a penal colony most affect the structure of society in 2075-76?

What do you think causes Mike's silence? Explain thoroughly.