

Lost on the Moon



Roy Rockwood

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Chapter

1 A WONDERFUL STORY

"Well, what do you think of it, Mark?" asked Jack Darrow, as he laid aside a portion of a newspaper, covered with strange printed characters. "Great; isn't it?"

"You don't mean to tell me that you believe that preposterous story, do you, Jack?" And Mark Sampson looked across the table at his companion in some astonishment.

"Oh, I don't know; it may be true," went on Jack, again picking up the paper and gazing thoughtfully at it. "I wish it was."

"But think of it!" exclaimed Mark. "Why, if such a thing exists, and if we, or some one else, should attempt to bring all those precious stones to this earth, it would revolutionize the diamond industry of the world. It can't be true!"

"Well, here it is, in plain print. You can read it for yourself, as you know the Martian language as well as I do. It states that a large field of 'Reonaris' was discovered on the moon near Mare Tranquilitatis (or Tranquil Ocean, I suppose that could be translated), and that the men of Mars brought back some of the Reonaris with them. Here, read it, if you don't believe me."

"Oh, I believe you, all right—that is, I think you have translated that article as well as you can. But suppose you have made some error? We didn't have much time to study the language of Mars while we were there, and we might make some mistake in the words. That article might be an account of a dog-fight on the red planet, instead of an account of a trip to the moon and the discovery of a field of Reonaris; eh, Jack?"

"Of course, I'm likely to have made an error, for it isn't easy to translate this stuff." And Jack gazed intently at the strangely printed page, which was covered with characters not unlike Greek. "I may be wrong," went on the lad, "but you must remember that I translated some other articles in this paper, and Professor Henderson also translated them substantially as I did, and Professor Roumann agreed with him. There is Reonaris on the moon, and I wish we could go there and get some."

"But maybe after you got the Reonaris it would turn out to be only common crystals," objected Mark.

"No!" exclaimed Jack. "Reonaris is what the Martians call it in their language, and that means diamonds. I'm sure of it!"

"Well, I don't agree with you," declared the other lad.

"Don't be cranky and contrary," begged Jack.

"I'm not; but what's the use of believing anything so wild and weird as that? It's a crazy yarn!"

"It's nothing of the sort! There are diamonds on the moon; and I can prove it!"

"Well, don't get excited," suggested Mark calmly. "I don't believe it; that's all. You're mistaken about what Reonaris is; that's what you are."

"I am not!" Jack had arisen from his chair, and seemed much elated. In his hand he held clinched the paper which had caused the lively discussion. It was as near to a disagreement as Jack Darrow and Mark Sampson had come in some time.

"Sit down," begged Mark.

"I'll not!" retorted Jack. "I'm going to prove to you that I'm right."

"How are you going to do it?"

"I'm going to get Professor Henderson and Professor Roumann to translate this article for you, and then you can ask them what Reonaris is. Guess that'll convince you; won't it?"

"Maybe; but why don't you ask Andy Sudds or Washington White to give their opinion?"

"Don't get funny," advised the other lad sharply, and then, seeing that his chum was smiling, Jack laughed, cooled down a bit, looked at the paper which he had crumpled in his hand, and said:

"I guess I was getting a little too excited. But I'm sure I'm right. Here's the paper I brought from Mars to prove it, and the only thing there's any doubt about is whether or not Reonaris means diamonds. I'll ask ___"

At that moment the door of the library, in which Jack and Mark were seated, was cautiously opened, and a black, woolly head was thrust in. Then two widely-opened eyes gazed at the boys.

"What's the matter, Washington?" asked Jack, with a laugh.

"Scuse me, Massa Jack," answered the colored man, "but did I done heah you' to promulgate some conversationess regarding de transmigatorability ob diamonds?"

"Do you mean, were we talking about diamonds?" inquired Mark.

"Dat's what I done said, Massa Mark."

"No, you *didn't* say it, but you meant it, I guess," went on Jack. "Yes, we *were* talking about diamonds, Washington. I know a place that's full of them."

"Where?" inquired the colored man, thrusting his head farther into the room, and opening his eyes to their fullest extent. "Ef it ain't violatin' no confidences, Massa Jack, would yo' jest kindly mention it to yo's trully," and Professor Henderson's faithful servant, who had followed him into many dangers, looked at the two boys, who, of late years, had shared the labors of the well-known scientist. "Where am dose diamonds, Massa Jack?"

"On the moon," was the answer.

"On de moon? Ha! Ha! Dat's a joke!" And Washington began to laugh.
"On de moon! Ha! Ho!"

"Well, you can read it for yourself," went on the lad, tossing the paper over to the colored man. The latter picked it up, gazed at it, first from one side, and then from the other. Next he turned it upside down, but, as this did not make the article any clearer, he turned the paper back again. Then he remarked, with a puzzled air:

"Well, I neber could read without mah glasses, Massa Jack, so I guess I'll hab t' let it go until annoder time. Diamonds on de moon, eh? Dat's wonderful! I wonder what dey'll be doin' next? But I'se got t' go. Diamonds on de moon, eh? Diamonds on de moon!"

As Washington turned to leave the room, for he had entered it when Jack and Mark were talking to aim, the latter lad asked:

"Did you want to see us about anything particular, Wash?"

"Why, I suah did," was the reply, "I did come t' tell yo' dat Perfesser Henderson would be pleased to hold some conversations wid yo', but when Massa Jack done mentioned about dem diamonds, I clean fo'got it. Diamonds on de moon, eh?"

"Well, if the professor wants us we'd better go," suggested Mark. "Come on, Jack, and stop dreaming about Reonaris and the moonbeams. Get back to earth."

"All right; laugh if you want to," said Jack sturdily, "but the time will come, Mark, when you'll find out that I'm right."

"How?" asked Mark.

"I don't know, but I'm sure I can prove what I say."

The two boys were to have the wonderful diamond story demonstrated to them sooner than either expected. Following the colored man, the lads, Jack carrying the paper, made their way to the laboratory of Professor Henderson. His door was open, and the aged man, whose hair and beard were now white with age, was bending over a table covered with papers, chemical apparatus, test tubes, alembecs, Bunsen burners, globes, and various pieces of apparatus. Another man, not quite so old as was Mr. Henderson, was on the point of leaving the apartment.

"Ah, boys," remarked the older professor, as he caught sight of them, "I hope I didn't disturb you by sending for you."

"No; Jack and I were only having a red-hot discussion about diamonds on the moon," said Mark, with a laugh.

"Diamonds on the moon!" exclaimed Professor Henderson.

"Diamonds on the moon?" repeated his friend, Prof. Santell Roumann. "Is this a joke, boys?"

"Mark thinks so, but I don't!" cried Jack, enthusiastically. "Look here, Professor Henderson, and also Mr. Roumann. Here is one of the newspapers that we brought back with us in our projectile, the *Annihilator*, after our trip to Mars. I have been translating some of the

articles in it, and to-night I came across one that told of a trip made by some of the inhabitants of Mars to the moon, in a sort of projectile, like ours, only more on the design of an aeroplane.

"They landed on the moon, the article states, and found a big field, or deposit, of Reonaris, which I claim are diamonds. Mark says I'm wrong, but, Professor Henderson, isn't Reonaris to the Martians what diamonds are to us?"

"It certainly is," agreed the older scientist, and he looked for confirmation to his scholarly companion.

"Reonaris is substantially a diamond," said Professor Roumann. "It has the same chemical constitution, and also the diamond's hardness and brilliancy. But I don't understand how any diamonds can be on the moon."

"You can read this for yourself," suggested Jack, passing over the paper, which was one of some souvenirs brought back from what was the longest journey on record, ever taken by human beings.

Mr. Roumann adjusted his glasses, and carefully read the article that was printed in such strange characters. As he perused it, he nodded his head thoughtfully from time to time. Then he passed the paper to Professor Henderson.

The older scientist was somewhat longer in going over the article, but when he had finished, he looked at the two boys, and said: "Jack is right! This is an account of a trip made to the moon by some of the Martians, who have advanced much further in the art of air navigation than have we. Some of the words I am not altogether familiar with, but in the main, that is what the paper states."

"And doesn't it tell about them finding a field of Reonaris?" asked Jack eagerly, for he was anxious to prove to his chum that he was right.

"Yes, it does," replied Mr. Henderson.

"And Reonaris is diamonds, isn't it?" asked Jack.

"It is," answered Professor Roumann gravely.

"Then," cried Jack, "what's to hinder us from going to the moon, and getting some of those diamonds? The Martians must have left some! Let's go to the moon and get them! We can do it in the projectile with which we made the journey to Mars. Let's start for the moon!"

For a moment there was silence in the laboratory of the scientist. It was broken by Washington White, who remarked:

"Good land a' massy! Annodder ob dem trips through de air! Well, I ain't goin' to no moon—no sah!! Ef I went dere, I'd suah get looney, an' I has troubles enough now wid'out dat, I suah has!" And, shaking his head dubiously, the colored man shuffled from the room.

Chapter

2 SOMETHING ABOUT OUR HEROES

"Are you in earnest in proposing this trip?" asked Professor Henderson of Jack. The lad, with flushed face and bright eyes, stood in the centre of the apartment, holding the paper which the aged scientist had returned to him.

"I certainly am," was the reply. "It ought not to be a difficult undertaking, after our trip to the North Pole through the air, the one to the South Pole under water, our journey to the centre of the earth, and our flight to Mars. Why, a trip to the moon ought to be a little pleasure jaunt, like an automobile tour. Can't we go, Professor?"

"From the standpoint of possibility, I presume we could make a trip to the moon," the scientist admitted. "It would not take so long, nor would it be as dangerous, as was our trip to Mars. And yet, I don't know that I care to go. I am getting along in years, and I have money enough to live on. Even a field of diamonds hardly sounds attractive to me." Jack's face showed the disappointment he felt.

"And yet," went on the aged scientist with a smile, "there are certain attractions about another trip through space. I had hoped to settle down in life now, and devote my time to scientific study and the writing of books. But this is something new. We never have been to the moon, and —"

"There are lots of problems about it that are still unsolved!" cried Jack eagerly. "You will be able to discover if the moon has an atmosphere and moisture; and also what the other side—the one that is always turned away from us—looks like."

"It does sound tempting," went on the aged scientist slowly. "And we could do it in our projectile, the *Annihilator*. It is in good working order; isn't it, Professor Roumann?"

"Couldn't be better. If you ask me, I, for one, would like to make a trip to the moon. It would give me a better chance to test the powers of Cardite, that wonderful red substance we brought from Mars. I can use that in the Etherium motor. If you left it to me, I'd say, 'go to the moon.'"

"Well, perhaps we will," spoke Mr. Henderson thoughtfully.

"You'll go, too, won't you, Mark?" asked Jack.

"Oh, I'm not going to be left behind. I'll go if the rest do, but I don't believe you'll find any diamonds on the moon. If there ever were any, the Martians took them." For Mark had been partly convinced after the confirmation by the two professors of Jack's translation.

"I'll take a chance on the sparklers," said his chum. "But now, let's go into details, and figure out when we can start. It ought not to take very long to get ready."

As has been explained in detail in the other books of this series, Professor Amos Henderson and the two lads, Mark Sampson and Jack Darrow, had undertaken many strange voyages together. Sometimes they were accompanied by friends and assistants, while Washington White, a sort of servant, helper, and man-of-all-work, and Andy Sudds, an old hunter, always went with them.

Mark and Jack were orphans, who had been adopted by Professor Henderson, who spent all his time making wonderful machines for transportation, or conducting strange experiments.

The two boys had been rescued by Professor Henderson and Washington White from a train wreck. Although both boys were badly hurt, they were nursed back to health by the eminent scientist, who soon learned to care for the lads as though they had been his own sons.

They aided the professor, as soon as they were able, in constructing an airship, called the *Electric Monarch*, in which Professor Henderson hoped to be able to reach the North Pole. The boys thoroughly enjoyed the trip through the air, and had many thrills fighting the savage Eskimos. Finally, they succeeded in passing over the exact spot of the North Pole during a violent snowstorm.

Not satisfied with their experiences after conquering the North, the adventurers set out for the Antarctic regions in a submarine boat. This trip, even more remarkable than the first, took them to many strange places in the South Atlantic. They were trapped for a time in the Sargasso Sea, and they walked on the ocean floor in new diving suits, one of the professor's marvelous inventions.

It was on the voyage to the south that, coming to the surface one day, the adventurers saw a strange island in the Atlantic Ocean, far from the coast of South America. On it was a great whirlpool, into which the *Porpoise*, their submarine boat, was nearly drawn by the powerful suction.

The chasm might lead to the center of the earth, it was suggested, and, after thinking the matter over, on their return from the Antarctic, Professor Henderson decided to build a craft in which they might solve the mystery.

The details of the voyage they took in the *Flying Mermaid*, are told of in the third volume, entitled "Five Thousand Miles Underground." The *Mermaid* could sail on the water, or float in the air like a balloon. In this craft the travellers descended into the centre of the earth, and had many wonderful adventures. They nearly lost their lives, and had to escape, after running through danger of the spouting water, leaving their craft behind.

For some time they undertook no further voyages, and the two boys, who lived with Professor Henderson in a small town on the coast of Maine, were sent to attend the Universal Electrical and Chemical College. Washington remained at home to minister to the wants of the old professor, and Andy Sudds went off on occasional hunting trips.

But the spirit of adventure was still strong in the hearts of the boys and the professor. One day, in the midst of some risky experiments at college, Jack and Mark, as related in "Through Space to Mars," received a telegram from Professor Henderson, calling them home.

There they found their friend entertaining as a guest Professor Santell Roumann, who was almost as celebrated as was Mr. Henderson, in the matter of inventions.

Professor Roumann made a strange proposition. He said if the old scientist and his young friends would build the proper kind of a projectile, they could make a trip to the planet Mars, by means of a wonderful motor, operated by a power called Etherium, of which Mr. Roumann held the secret.

After some discussion, the projectile, called the *Annihilator*, from the fact that it annihilated space, was begun. It was two hundred feet long, ten feet in diameter in the middle, and shaped like a cigar. It consisted of a double shell of strong metal, with a non-conducting gas between the two sides.

Within it were various machines, besides the Etherium motor, which would send the projectile along at the rate of one hundred miles a second. This great speed was necessary in order to reach the planet Mars, which, at the time our friends started for it, was about thirty-five millions of miles away from this earth. It has since receded some distance farther than this.

Finally all was in readiness for the start to Mars. Professor Roumann wanted to prove that the planet was inhabited, and he also wanted to get some of a peculiar substance, which he believed gave the planet its rosy hue. He had an idea that it would prove of great value.

But, though every precaution was taken, the adventurers were not to get away from the earth safely. Almost at the last minute, a crazy machinist, named Fred Axtell, who was refused work on the projectile, tried to blow it up with a bomb. He partly succeeded, but the damage was repaired, and the start made.

Inside the projectile our friends shut themselves up, and the powerful motors were started. Off it shot, at the rate of one hundred miles a second, but the travellers were as comfortable as in a Pullman car. They had plenty to eat and drink, they manufactured their own air and water, and they slept when they so desired.

But Axtell, the crazy machinist, had hidden himself aboard, and, in mid-air, he tried to wreck the projectile. He was caught, and locked up in a spare room, but, when Mars was reached, he escaped.

The book tells how our friends were welcomed by the Martians, how they learned the language, saw many strange sights, and finally got on the track of the Cardite, or red substance, which the German professor, Mr. Roumann, had come so far to seek. This Cardite was capable of great force, and, properly controlled, could move great weights and operate powerful machinery.

Our friends wanted to take some back to earth with them, but when they attempted to store it in their projectile, they met with objections, for the Martians did not want them to take any. They had considerable trouble, and the crazy machinist led an attack of the soldiers of the red planet against our friends, the adventurers in the projectile.

Among the other curiosities brought away by our friends, was a newspaper printed in Mars, for the inhabitants of that place were much further advanced along certain lines than we are on this earth, but in the matter of newspapers they had little to boast of, save that the sheets were printed by wireless electricity, no presses being needed.

As told at the opening of this story, Jack had noticed on one of the sheets they brought back, an account of how some of the Martians made a trip to the moon, and discovered a field of Reonaris. This trip was made shortly before our friends made their hasty departure, and it was undertaken by some Martian adventurers on another part of the red planet than where the projectile landed, and so Professor Henderson and his friends did not hear of it at the time.

"Well, then, suppose we make the attempt to go to the moon," said Professor Roumann, after a long discussion in the laboratory. "It will not take long to get ready."

"I'd like to go," said Jack. "How about you, Professor Henderson? Oh, by the way, Washington said you wanted to see Mark and me, but I was so interested in this news item, that I forgot to ask what it was about."

"I merely wanted to inquire when you and Mark thought of resuming your studies at college," said the aged man, "but, since this matter has come up, it will be just as well if you do not arrange to resume your lessons right away."

"We can study while making the trip to the moon," suggested Mark.

"Not much," declared Jack, with a laugh. "There'll be too much to see."

"Well, we'll discuss that later," went on Mr. Henderson. "Practically speaking, I think the voyage can be made, and, the more I think of it, the better I like the idea. We will look over the projectile in the morning, and see what needs to be done to it to get it ready for another trip through space."

"Not much will have to be done, I fancy," remarked the German scientist. "But I want to make a few improvements in the Cardite motor, which I will use in place of the Etherium one, that took us to Mars."

A little later there came a knock on the rear door of the rambling old house where the professor lived and did much of his experimental work.

"I'll go," volunteered Jack, and when he opened the portal there stood on the threshold a small boy, Dick Johnson, one of the village lads.

"What is it you want, Dick?" asked Mark.

"Here's a note for you," went on the boy, passing over a slip of paper. "I met a man down the road, and he gave me a quarter to bring it here. He said it was very important, and he's waiting for you down by the white bridge over the creek."

"Waiting for who?" asked Jack.

"For Mark, I guess; but I don't know. Anyhow, the note's for him."

"Hum! This is rather strange," mused Mark.

"What is it?" asked Jack.

"Why, this note. It says: 'It is important that I see you. I will wait for you at the white bridge.' That's all there is to it."

"No name signed?" asked Jack.

"Not a name. But I'll just take a run down and see what it is. I'll not be long. Much obliged, Dick."

The boy who had brought the note turned to leave the house, and Mark prepared to follow. Jack said:

"Let me see that note."

He scanned it closely, and, as Mark was getting on his hat and coat, for the night was chilly, his chum went on:

"Mark, if I didn't know, that we had left Axtell, the crazy machinist, up on Mars, I'd say that this was his writing. But, of course, it's impossible."

"Of course—impossible," agreed Mark.

"But, there's one thing, though," continued Jack.

"What's that?" asked Mark.

"I don't like the idea of you going off alone in the dark, to meet a man who doesn't sign his name to the note he wrote. So, if you have no objections, I'll go with you. No use taking any chances."

"I don't believe I run any risk," said Mark, "but I'll be glad of your company. Come along. Maybe it's only a joke." And the two lads started off together in the darkness toward the white bridge.