

Over the Moon





Stanley Rogers was known to family and friends as a walking encyclopedia on the moon. Any question you could imagine, he could answer. As a retired 10th-grade science teacher, he had a wealth of knowledge stored in his brain.

His fascination began as a child when he received a telescope for his birthday. Stanley would pack salami, cookies, and milk to camp in his yard and sky gaze. As he grew older, his curiosity only deepened. Stanley devoured every book and article he could find about lunar science.



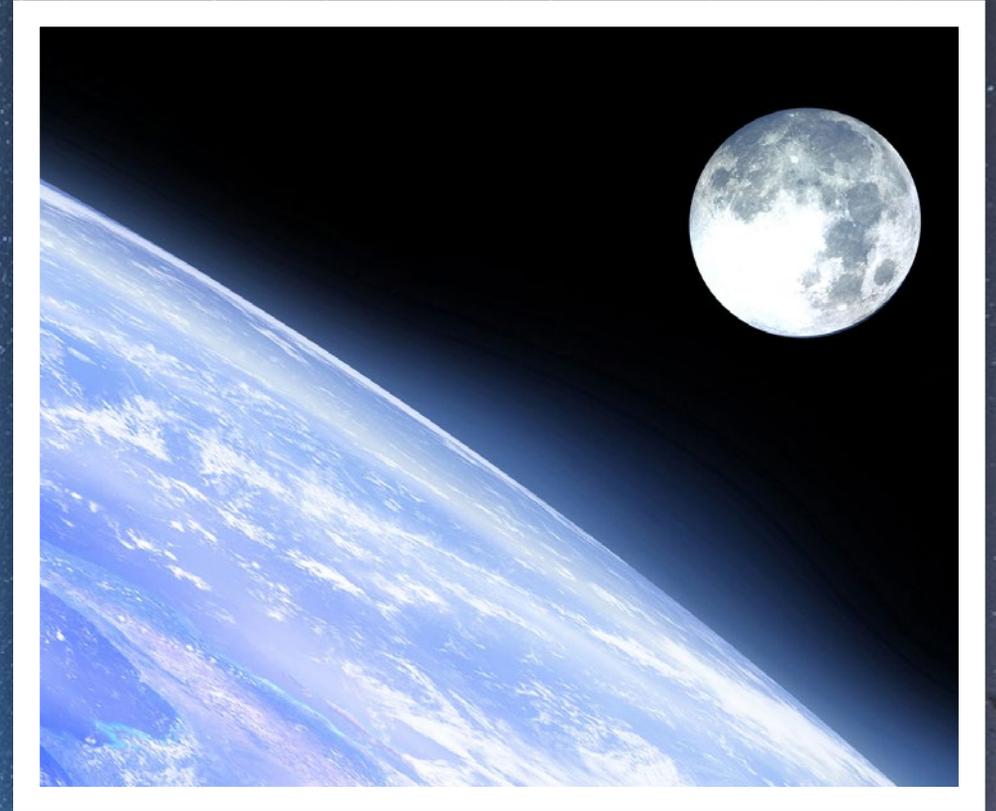


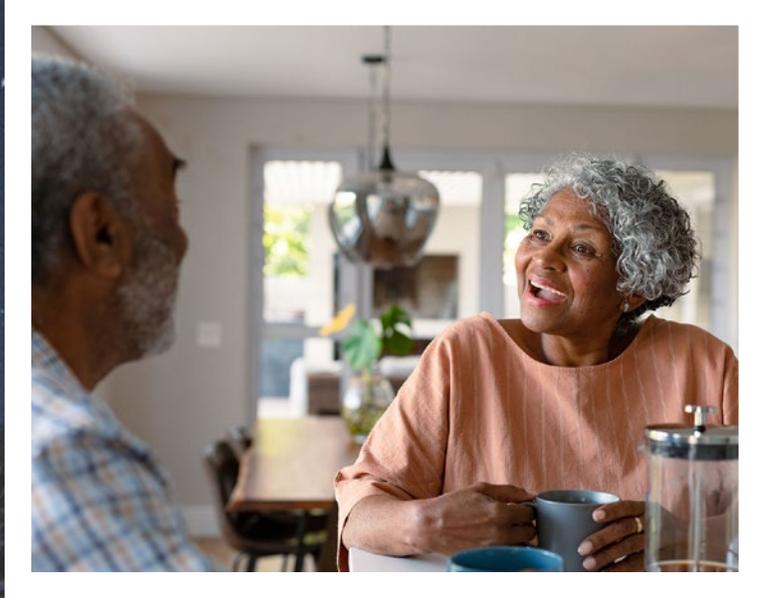
His passion was further fueled by the Apollo moon landings. Stanley was 24 years old when Neil Armstrong and crew landed on the moon. At the time, he drove a delivery truck. Stanley pulled over to listen to the radio broadcast of the moon landing. He remembered every moment of July 20, 1969. He could quote the words Armstrong said: “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.”



Stanley cheered when astronauts planted the American flag on the moon. And he cried with joy when they all returned safely to Earth. On long drives for work, Stanley would think about how the astronauts' footprints remained undisturbed on the moon. He imagined being weightless. Ever since then, Stanley had dreamed of traveling to space.

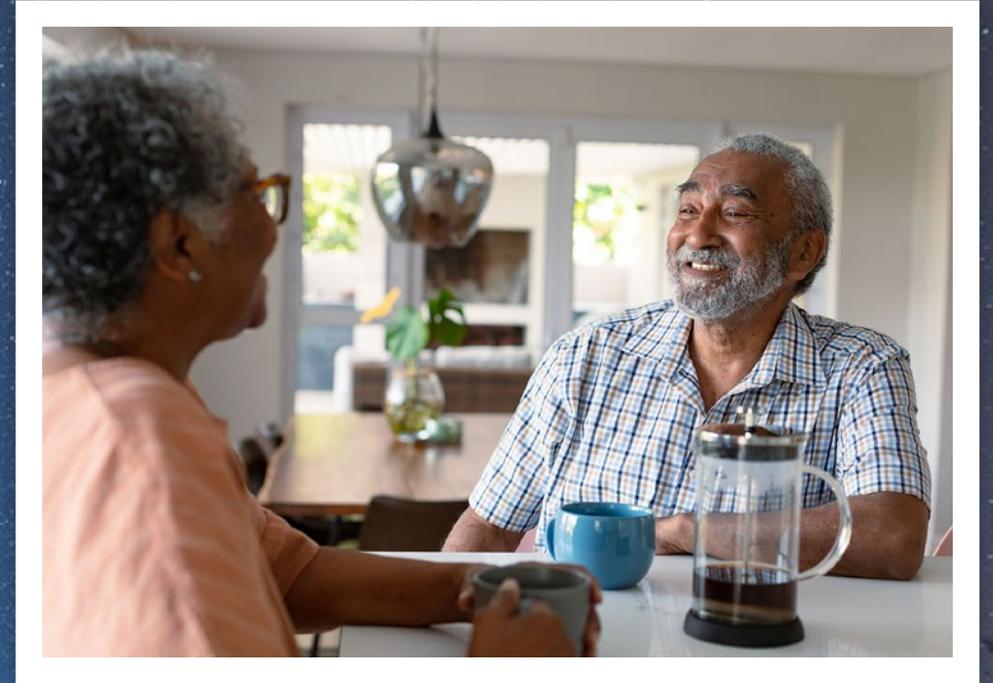
If you asked Stanley how far the moon was from Earth, he'd immediately say, "On average, 238,855 miles." Helen, Stanley's very patient wife, knew every fact as well. The words had been repeated so often that she could recite them in her sleep.





Helen didn't mind except when Stanley talked about how much people weighed on the moon. He always made it about her. He would say, "Helen wants to move to the moon because she'd never have to go on a diet again." Someone would then ask, "Why not?" And Stanley would reply, "On Earth, you weigh six times more than you do on the moon." He would continue by mentioning that Helen would be just 27 pounds on the moon.

Helen did not appreciate being used as Stanley's example. She told him that people could easily do the math and determine her weight. Stanley would laugh and say, "Don't worry, dear; you look perfect to me." This, however, did not make Helen feel better.





“Fly Me to the Moon” by Frank Sinatra was Stanley’s favorite song. He proposed to Helen with the song “By the Light of the Silvery Moon” playing in the background.

Stanley said, “I’m over the moon about you, Helen.”

Helen replied, “I have a feeling you’ll never be *over* the moon.”

As Helen predicted Stanley never got over his love for the moon. He'd named all of their dogs Rocket. Stanley wanted to name their daughter Moonlight, but Helen drew the line. They settled on Luna. Stanley was not foolish enough to believe there was actually a man on the moon, though he enjoyed looking at his face in the sky. And he certainly didn't believe the moon was made of cheese. *But wouldn't that be fun*, he thought to himself.



Recently, Stanley looked into what it would cost to reserve a seat on a future expedition to the moon. The 12 million dollar price tag was completely out of the question for a retired schoolteacher. A more realistic goal was saving four thousand dollars for a UNISTELLAR telescope. Stanley was hoping to get a good look at April's full moon. It was sometimes called the micro-moon, because the moon was farther than usual from Earth.



Stanley's fascination with the moon reached its peak one crisp April evening. He had finally saved enough to buy the UNISTELLAR telescope and set it up in the backyard. Helen reluctantly agreed to join her husband. She brought out a thermos of hot chocolate and sat beside him. Together, they gazed at the micro-moon glowing faintly in the clear night sky.





As Stanley adjusted the telescope, he suddenly gasped. “Helen, look at this! It’s as if I could reach out and touch it.” He handed her the eyepiece, and for a moment, Helen saw the moon the way Stanley had all these years. It was bright, mysterious, and endlessly captivating.

She smiled softly and said, “You know, Stanley, I think I finally understand why you love the moon so much.”

Stanley beamed. “Really?”



“Yes,” Helen replied. “But if you ever call me 27 pounds again, I’m sending that telescope to Luna’s house.”

They both laughed under the moon’s silvery glow, and for once, Helen felt just as weightless as Stanley dreamed of being.





THE END

Discussion Starters

- Can you do the math and figure out how much Helen weighs on Earth? (Hint: Multiply 27 by six.)
- Have you ever had a hobby or passion that you wanted to share? What was it? Was it hard to interest other people in your hobby?

Discussion Starters

- Can you imagine where you were when the moon landing happened in 1969?
- What are some songs about the moon besides the ones in the story? (“Blue Moon,” “It’s Only a Paper Moon,” “Moon River,” “How High the Moon”)

Discussion Starters

- Do you see a face in a full moon at night?
- Would you travel to the moon given the opportunity?



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