

Name: _____

The Man in the Moon

Moon Man by Tomi Ungerer



On clear, starry nights the Moon Man can be seen curled up in his shimmering seat in space.

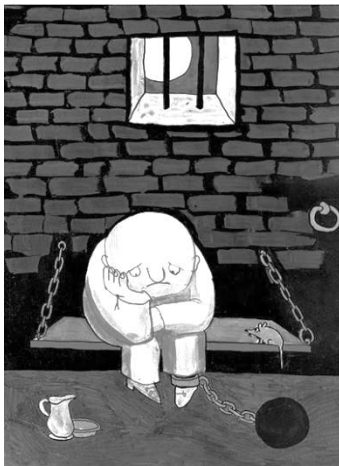
Every night from his drifting sphere, the Moon Man was filled with envy as he watched the earth people dance.

"If only I could join the fun," he thought. "Life up here is such a bore."

One night a shooting star flashed by. The Moon Man leaped just in time to catch the fiery tail of the comet. The night creatures of the woods fled in terror at the loud crash of the fallen star.



The noise brought hundreds of people from a nearby town. Soldiers sped to defend the earth. Firemen hastened to quench the flaming light. The ice cream man hurried to set up his stand for the spectators.



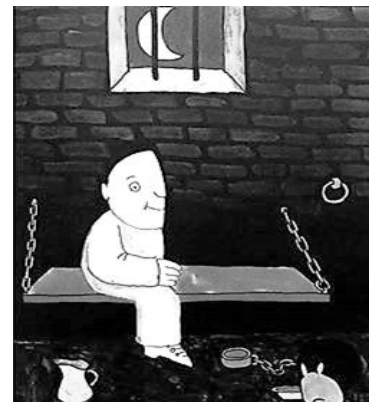
When they reached the site of the crash, no one could decide what the pale soft creature lying in the crater could be.

Government officials were alerted. Statesmen, scientists, and generals panicked. They called the mysterious visitor an invader.

The Moon Man was thrown in jail while a special court conducted a criminal investigation. Poor Moon Man, his hopes of dancing among the merry crowds and bright lanterns were crushed.

One night, as the Moon Man sat wondering why he was so cruelly treated, he noticed that his left side had faded. Why, I must be in my third quarter," he thought happily. Every night as the moon grew thinner and thinner so did the Moon Man, until at last he was able to squeeze through the bars of his window.

When the head of the armed forces paid a visit to inspect the weird captive, he found the cell empty. The general was furious.



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Days later, as the moon reappeared in its first quarter, a quarter of the Moon Man came back. Two weeks later, he had reached his full size again.

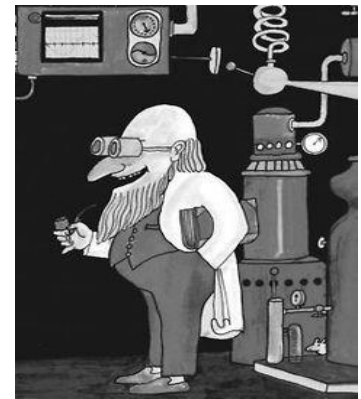


Delighted with his freedom, he wandered about, discovering the sweet smelling flowers, the splendid birds and butterflies.

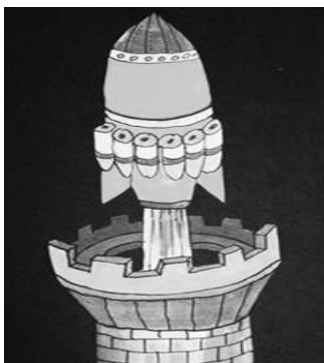
He came upon a garden party where people in gorgeous costumes were dancing. "Look! Someone has come as the man in the moon," a lady cried. The Moon Man danced blissfully for hours.

Alas, a grumpy neighbor complained of the late music to the police. Scared by the sight of the guns and uniforms the Moon Man dashed off to the nearby woods. But he was spotted by the policemen, and a wild chase began. Swiftly outracing the police, the Moon Man shot across the countryside. In a lonely place, he came upon an ancient castle.

There he was welcomed by a long-forgotten scientist, Doktor Bunsen van der Dunkel. For years, he had been perfecting a spacecraft to reach the moon. Now finished, the intricate machine rested on its launch pad in a castle turret.



Doktor van der Dunkel had grown too old and too fat to fit into the capsule. He asked his guest to be his first passenger. The Moon Man, who had realized that he could never live peacefully on this planet, agreed to go.



Doctor van der Dunkel decided to wait for the moon to enter its third quarter. "By then the Moon Man will have grown small enough to fit into the capsule," he thought.

A few nights later, the Moon Man took leave of his benefactor. With tears in their eyes they bade each other farewell. Then the Moon Man blasted off with a roar of rockets.

Having succeeded in the launching of his spacecraft, Doktor van der Dunkel at last received the recognition he had so long deserved. He was elected chairman of an important scientific committee.

Having satisfied his curiosity, the Moon Man never returned to earth and remained ever after curled up in his shimmering seat in space.