PART 3 – DESTINATION MOON

P3T3 VLOG 3

Hi, everyone. Big day. Today I get to really use my skills. All trace of my motion sickness has died away now, and I feel ready for anything. I said I was a geologist. I'm an expert in rocks; that's why Mineralec sent me. Geologists research and record the Earth's history. But the mission today is to collect a particular rare mineral, Dysprosium. We need it to operate our Smartphones. It's true; on Earth, it is in very short supply and hard to mine. But we think the source is better on the Moon.

My home is filled with boxes of rocks and I'm always heading off on another expedition in some remote part of the world. I've a pack of tools which travel everywhere with me: my little pick for hacking at rock, my eye glass, my knife. And today's my best ever expedition, except that all the work has been done for me. I'm really just the collector.

I've always loved the Moon. When I was little, I used to listen to a story about a hedgehog who thought the Moon had fallen out of the sky because he could see it in a puddle. I used to gaze at the gleaming Moon in the sky and then at the Moon's shining reflection in my book and I loved the idea of the Moon being made of foods like cheese or honeycomb with secret and mysterious places.

So, in a way, preparing to go down to the Moon's surface today feels like I must have dreamed it.

Some parts of the Moon are exactly the same as they were 4.5 billion years ago. The Moon is the brightest thing in the night sky. In all the years there have been humans on Earth, people have come up with so many strange beliefs about the Moon. The Egyptians even named it as their god of death and imagined it fighting the sun and winning a battle, day after day. Now we believe the Earth and Moon are roughly the same age and the Moon formed from a collision of huge objects in Space. But the only reason we know that is because of the Space missions to the Moon; because of the samples of rocks and dust they brought home. The Genesis rock, the oldest rock known to exist, helped us to date our whole solar system. Imagine that!

Engines firing for approach.

My face pressed right up against the window, I gaze down through the blackness at the grey surface, like plaster on a ruined wall. Everything is black, white or grey, like an old film. Some boulders here are as big as houses. Looking down on them makes my heart flip. Craters are dotted about as far as I can see, some the size of football pitches. Hey, imagine playing football on the Moon!

We're slowing down.

I'm suiting up. First, I pull on a cooling garment, like a vest and long leggings; this will be under my spacesuit. You know the packs you have in your freezer to keep your yoghurts cool on a picnic? Well, today, I'm the yoghurt pot; the Moon temperature rises to 200 degrees plus. Then my spacesuit in its two halves…step into the boots…helmet sealed. I sit back in my seat for landing. MIC has precise coordinates for this, based on the last two missions; it's a plateau in the centre of a wide crater. We'll avoid rocks and hills. Lots of the craters were named by the first astronauts. Lacus Mortis: the lake of Death. Daedelus and Icarus; those are characters from legends. Icarus flew too close to the Sun and fell to Earth. And Pasteur and Einstein craters; great humans who changed the course of human history. Ed would name a crater after his football team, wouldn't you, Ed?

We're bobbing about a lot. Inside their padded gloves, my hands clamp down on the arms of my seat.

All systems ready, Tazz.

Grey swirls past my eyes. We sway, then land squarely down on solid ground. Engines shut down.

Silence. There's just me and that strange grey world out there.

I undo the belts and clips holding me still and leave my seat. I enter the pressure lock area and move down towards the hatch.

Hissss. Behind me, the cabin seals itself. I flip the catches and activate the opening of the hatch, ready to step outside.