

GOOD LUCK, MR. GORSKI

by

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SUPER TEXT: "What follows might have been a true story."

1 EXT. MOON - NEWS FOOTAGE 1

In the silence of space, the Apollo XI landing capsule drifts down through the moon's atmosphere.

2 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT, 1969 2

One house sticks out: decorated with red, white and blue balloons, bunting, flags. No party noise. Only the faint MURMUR of the television.

On the mailbox, a sign: "ARMSTRONG."

MOVE on to the mailbox of the house next door. The sign reads "GORSKI."

3 INT. GORSKI HOUSE - NIGHT 3

MR. GORSKI sits mesmerized by the television, drinking a beer. On the other side of the room, where she can't see the television, MRS. GORSKI irons a pile of identical bowling shirts.

ON THE TV - the spacecraft judders down onto the cratered surface.

TELEVISION COMMENTATOR

Man on the moon! Man on the moon!
The impossible has happened! On
July 20th, 1969, Apollo Eleven has
touched down on the moon ...

Mr. Gorski is rapt. Mrs. Gorski irons manically, making the ironing board CREAK and SQUEAK, as if to drown out the TV.

MR. GORSKI

Hell, Louise, aren't you gonna
watch this? He's gonna get out
soon. You're gonna miss the whole
damn thing.

MRS. GORSKI

I'm busy.

Like her husband, she looks older than her years. Her eyes are dull. Her mouth is tight with disappointment.

MR. GORSKI

It's history, for Chrissake.
Something to tell the
grandchildren.

MRS. GORSKI
What grandchildren.

On the wall is a picture of Alan Gorski, late 20s, long hair and beads, surrounded by third-world children.

MRS GORSKI (CONT.)
A flower child. At his age.

MR. GORSKI
Time moves on, you know. Things can change.

ON THE TV - Neil Armstrong starts down the ladder to the moon's surface.

MRS. GORSKI (CONT.)
(suddenly hysterical)
Why does Neil have to be the one who does something!

Mr Gorski shoots her a look - he doesn't know why she's so worked up, but he doesn't want to miss the moment:

ON THE TV - Neil Armstrong sets foot on the moon.

NEIL ARMSTRONG
One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.

MR. GORSKI
Hey, that's pretty good. Never seemed to me like the poetry type.

MRS. GORSKI
Don't be ridiculous, Bob. He didn't say that. They wrote it for him.

MR. GORSKI
What makes you so sure?

MRS. GORSKI
They have people that write these things. They're not allowed to just talk.

ON THE TV - Neil Armstrong puts one foot in front of the other, lumbering gracefully in his spacesuit.

NEIL ARMSTRONG
Good luck, Mr. Gorski.

Mrs. Gorski's hand flies to her mouth. The iron crashes to the floor.

4 INT. MISSION CONTROL, HOUSTON 4

The mood among the team is controlled euphoria.

CONTROL CHIEF
Who's Gorski? How about, "Hey,
guys, the beers are on me!"

5 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, MISSION CONTROL - SAME 5

Some dark-suited men are near panic.

FIRST CIA AGENT
Sounds like a Russian name. Check
it.

SECOND CIA AGENT
(scrolling down a list)
Gorski, Gorski ...

FIRST CIA AGENT
Get Langley on the phone.

The NASA LIAISON OFFICER watches them, vastly amused.

NASA GUY
You sent a commie spy to the moon?
You sure he's got the right flag?

The First CIA Agent is shaking with agitation.

FIRST CIA AGENT
(to himself)
Who the fuck is Gorski?

6 INT. GORSKI HOUSE - NIGHT, SAME 6

Mr. Gorski stares at the television, dumbstruck.

MR. GORSKI
How 'bout that! Probably some guy
called Gorski in Mission Control.

MRS. GORSKI
Bob.

Her voice is so strangely calm he gives her his full
attention this time.

MRS GORSKI (CONT.)
He means you.

MR. GORSKI

What, his folks told him we'd made the semifinals and that's what he's thinking about while he's walking on the moon?

MRS. GORSKI

(hysterical)

Neil doesn't give an Indian nickel about your bowling tournament!

MR. GORSKI

No kidding, Louise.

MRS. GORSKI

Why couldn't he just forget? And then he has to tell the whole country... the President...

MR. GORSKI

Did you take some kind of a crazy pill?

He turns back to the television, where Neil Armstrong is planting an American flag.

Mrs. Gorski makes a heroic effort to pull herself together.

MRS. GORSKI

Don't you remember?

MR. GORSKI

Was it more than two weeks ago?

MRS. GORSKI

Very funny, Bob.

6A

EXT. ARMSTRONG HOUSE - EVENING - FLASHBACK TO 1940S

6A

Nine-year-old NEIL and his older BROTHER are playing with a baseball. Just as Neil throws the ball ...

MRS. ARMSTRONG

(at the screen door)

Neil! Billy! Dinner time!

The ball sails over the fence into the Gorskis' backyard.

BILLY

Neil, you idiot. I'm not going.

Billy runs into the house. Neil flings his baseball mitt on the ground and heads next door.

MRS. ARMSTRONG
 Not now, Neil. Dinner's on the
 table. You'll have to get it
 tomorrow.

NEIL
 But Mom ...

One look from her shuts him up. Another look sends him back
 to pick up the mitt lying on the lawn.

7

EXT. GORSKI BACKYARD, NEAR THE FENCE - NIGHT

7

It's a dark night, with small patches of moonlight.

A flashlight drops into frame. Then Neil, wearing pajamas
 patterned with planes, jumps down from the top of the fence.

He finds the flashlight, shines a quick blast at ankle level
 across the lawn. No baseball.

He goes to a flowerbed, shoots another blast of flash-light.
 It was too quick to see anything anyway. On his knees, he
 feels around blindly. Still no baseball.

He moves to another flowerbed, too close to the house for the
 flashlight. The RUSTLE of his hands among the plants is
 drowned by RISING VOICES from indoors.

YOUNG MRS. GORSKI (O.S.)
 (wailing)
 Why can't you be happy like we are?

Neil flings himself flat on the ground.

YOUNG MR. GORSKI (O.S.)
 I just thought it might be fun ...

YOUNG MRS. GORSKI (O.S.)
 It's disgusting!

Feet stomp toward the window.

YOUNG MRS GORSKI (O.S., CONT.)
 I'll perform that oral ... sex
 thing the day the kid next door
 walks on the moon!

A book hurtles out the window. It hits Neil, who YELPS.

A shaft of moonlight hits the cover as it lies on the grass:
 "A MARRIAGE MANUAL".

Neil looks up at the window, locks eyes with Young Mrs Gorski. Stifling a WAIL, she yanks the curtains closed.

8

INT. GORSKI HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

8

Mr. Gorski stares at his wife, then starts to CHUCKLE.

MR. GORSKI

He heard you? What was he, hiding in the bushes?

MRS. GORSKI

I think he was looking for his baseball. I found it, the next day, when I was watering the azaleas.

There's a pleading look in her eyes. Tears stream down her cheeks. But Mr. Gorski can't stop - he hasn't LAUGHED this hard in years.

MRS. GORSKI

Why did it have to be him? Out of all the kids in America, it had to be Neil Armstrong? Couldn't he have just been a jet pilot or a scientist like anyone else?

MR. GORSKI

I guess you gave him the idea!

MRS. GORSKI

(another wave of anguish)
And now the whole universe knows!

9

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

9

Mrs. Gorski washes dishes, Mr. Gorski dries. Their actions are synchronized with habit.

MR. GORSKI

You want to get up, or you want to leave the breakfast things on the counter?

MRS. GORSKI

You might as well have a hot breakfast inside you. God knows what garbage you'll be eating at that tournament.

MR. GORSKI

It's only Cincinnati. It's not like I'm going to the moon.

His LAUGH is rather wistful.

Finished, Mr. Gorski digs a fork into the remains of a casserole cooling in an open Tupperware container beside the fridge. Mrs. Gorski takes it from under him, presses the lid on, and puts it in the fridge. She sets a Tupperware bowl on the table. It holds about ten cold peas.

MRS. GORSKI
Eat the peas.

MR. GORSKI
I don't want the peas.

Mrs. Gorski takes out another Tupperware box from the fridge, containing a few miserable-looking slices of fried eggplant. She gets a jar of strawberry jam from the cupboard and unscrews the lid. Mr. Gorski unenthusiastically spreads jam on the eggplant.

Mrs. Gorski writes on a label, then reaches into the fridge to stick it on the casserole.

MR. GORSKI
You know, if you did something like that. Went to the moon. Or climbed Mount Everest. Say you got to the top and maybe on the way down you fell off, or got hit by an avalanche... It wouldn't matter. Nothing would ever be the same.

MRS. GORSKI
That's right. You'd be dead.

10 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

10

ON THE TV - Neil Armstrong climbs out of the capsule and sets foot on the moon.

As Mrs. Gorski watches the replay, the wonder gets her.

MRS. GORSKI
You know, when I was a kid, you still had to wind up the cars.

MR. GORSKI
Who are you, Grandma Moses?

MRS. GORSKI
We were poor. It was an old car.

Mrs. Gorski takes a drink of her gin and tonic.

MRS. GORSKI
Bob, did you ever ...

He knows exactly what she's asking, but he's going to make her say the words. She steels herself.

MRS. GORSKI
Did you ever go to... one of those women?

MR. GORSKI
(eyes on the TV)
No.

MRS. GORSKI
Not even in Paris?

MR. GORSKI
No.

Mrs. Gorski decides to believe him.

MRS. GORSKI
I thought that was what you wanted.

MR. GORSKI
I never wanted a whore. I just...
Dang it, Louise. It's history.

MRS. GORSKI
(insistent)
You just what?

MR. GORSKI
Ah jeez... I don't know, do something different. So that every time we looked at each other we'd know and it would be... like a buzz. A secret. Forget it.

ON THE TV - Neil Armstrong bounces around like a child playing.

MRS. GORSKI
Some secret now.

11 INT. MRS. GORSKI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

11

Mrs. Gorski undoes her carapace of underclothing: heavy-duty brassiere and girdle, surgical-looking straps holding up her stockings. She rubs the red marks on her flesh, and slips a flannel nightgown over her head.

She goes to pull the curtains closed, and stops.

12 MRS. GORSKI'S P.O.V. - 12

Clouds scud across the moon.

MRS. GORSKI

Neil?

A VISION: the young Neil, in an astronaut suit, bouncing on the grass.

12A INT. MRS. GORSKI'S BEDROOM - RETURN TO SCENE 12A

Mrs. Gorski climbs into bed. The moonlight shines a beautiful light on her face.

13 INT. MR. GORSKI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 13

The curtains are open a crack. A shaft of moonlight slices through the darkness.

Mr. Gorski is tucked up in one twin bed. On the spare bed an open suitcase with his bowling clothes. The door CLICKS open.

MR. GORSKI

(sleepy)

Louise?

FOOTSTEPS approach the bed.

MR. GORSKI

Something wrong?

He turns on the light.

MRS. GORSKI

No!

He turns it off again. SOUNDS of Mrs. Gorski getting into bed.

MR. GORSKI

Louise, what are you doing?

MRS. GORSKI

I always prided myself that I'm a woman of my word.

MR. GORSKI

It was a turn of expression, Lulu. It wasn't a holy vow.

MRS. GORSKI
I guess maybe Neil thought it was.
Look at all the trouble he went to.

Sheets RUSTLE.

MRS. GORSKI
Bob! Bob, what are you doing?

MR. GORSKI
Sssh... sweetheart. I'm going
first.

Mrs. Gorski lets out a faint MOAN.

14 CRASH! 14

Bowling pins erupt in a strike.

15 INT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY 15

In a discreet corner stand the CIA Agents and their BOSS.

SECOND CIA AGENT
Gorski didn't show.

FIRST CIA AGENT
We believe they pass the
information inside the balls, sir.

SECOND CIA AGENT
Stick your finger inside and bingo.
Nobody's the wiser.

CIA BOSS
Son of a bitch.

15A INT. KITCHEN - MORNING 15A

Mr Gorski, in pajamas, arranges a breakfast tray: doily,
flowery china, sugar bowl, milk jug. The radio is on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
And here is President Nixon,
speaking from the deck of the
carrier Hornet, three days after
man walked on the moon.

Mr Gorski places a flower in a little vase on the tray.

PRESIDENT NIXON (ON RADIO)
This has been the greatest week in
the history of the world since the
Creation.

16 INT. MR. GORSKI'S BEDROOM - DAY

16

Mrs. Gorski sits up in bed. She looks younger without her
makeup, a woman only just past the prime of life.

Mr. Gorski comes in with the tray, and squeezes into the twin
bed beside her. She smiles like a bride.

On the radio: Frank Sinatra, "Fly Me To The Moon."

END