

GOOD LUCK, MR. GORSKI

by

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

EXT. MOON - NEWS FOOTAGE

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

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT, 1969

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."

INT. GORSKI HOUSE - NIGHT

MR. GORSKI, in his fifties, sits mesmerized by the television, alternating drags on a cigarette and a beer bottle. 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
and you're gonna miss the whole
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.

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

On top of the television is picture of Alan Gorski, late 20s,
long hair and beads, surrounded by third-world children.
Below it, 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.

INT. MISSION CONTROL, HOUSTON

The mood among the team is controlled euphoria.

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

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Some dark-suited men are near panic.

FIRST CIA AGENT
 Get Langley on the phone.

SECOND CIA AGENT
 Check it. Check it.

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

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?

INT. GORSKI HOUSE - NIGHT, SAME

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
 More like two decades.

EXT. ARMSTRONG HOUSE - EVENING - FLASHBACK TO 1940s

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.

EXT. ARMSTRONG/GORSKI BACKYARDS - NIGHT

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

Neil, wearing pajamas patterned with planes, tosses a flashlight over the fence. He climbs over after it.

In the Gorskis' backyard now, Neil shines a quick blast of flashlight 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 towards the window. The screen is yanked open.

CLICKS, as the screen is removed.

YOUNG MRS. GORSKI (O.S.)

"Oral sex?"

She can barely speak the word.

YOUNG MRS GORSKI (O.S., CONT.)

I'll do 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.

INT. GORSKI HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

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!

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

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.

The quiver in her voice betrays her very real fear that this might happen soon.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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 lights a cigarette.

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.

INT. MRS. GORSKI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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.

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

Clouds scud across the moon.

MRS. GORSKI
Neil? I'm sorry.

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

INT. MR. GORSKI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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.

CRASH!

Bowling pins erupt in a strike.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

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

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.

INT. MR. GORSKI'S BEDROOM - DAY

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

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

The open suitcase on the other bed - untouched.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
 That was, once again, President
 Nixon, speaking from the deck of
 the carrier Hornet, three days
 after man walked on the moon.

Mr. Gorski comes in, holding two cups of coffee. He hands one to his wife, and squeezes into the twin bed beside her. She smiles like a bride.

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

END