

The Pudgy Astronaut

There once was an Astronaut with a rather round stomach. He liked to eat sandwiches, which was the main cause of his big middle, and he ate them quite a lot.

It didn't matter where he was; the Pudgy Astronaut would always find a way to carry a sandwich with him (usually a Ham and Cheese). Most of the time, he would put one in his pocket before his spaceship took off. That way, he always had a little snack for the trip!

One day, as he was flying around in his tiny red spaceship, he looked out the window and saw the Moon. The Pudgy Astronaut had never been to the Moon before, so he decided to stop and pay a visit. (It would be a good chance to stretch his legs too.) At that moment, his stomach began to rumble. He heard a little grumble next to him as well. It was Gilford, the Pudgy Astronaut's dog. He was a pug, and a grumpy pug at that. Gilford hated space travel and usually just wanted to take a nap. But, at the moment, it seemed that they were both hungry. After splitting his tasty sandwich between the two of them, the Pudgy Astronaut landed his spaceship. He put on his helmet and, putting a smaller one on Gilford, went outside.

Now, the tiny red spaceship he traveled in was only a little bit taller than he, so the Pudgy Astronaut had to squeeze himself out of the doorway. After a few minutes of struggling, he finally made it down to the Moon's surface. Gilford waddled slowly out and sat with a *plump* on the bumpy grey surface. He didn't like going on walks outside of the spaceship; it didn't matter how remarkable the planet was.

And the Moon was indeed very remarkable. The Pudgy Astronaut looked out over the surface; one could see for miles. It was full of deep craters and a wide horizon. He turned and looked at the earth. It looked like a little blue and white swirling globe, bright against the

darkness of space. The Pudgy Astronaut breathed in and gave a contented sigh. He loved views like these.

But then, his stomach began to rumble.

This was quite a problem. Where was the Pudgy Astronaut going to find food on the Moon? After all, the Moon wasn't made out of cheese (though that would be nice). His stomach rumbled again; it was getting hungrier. The Pudgy Astronaut patted his side, checking for his usual sandwich. But, there was nothing there. He forgot he had already eaten his snack on the ship. The Pudgy Astronaut was now left with no choice; he was going to have to go exploring. So, he and Gilford set out to find some food.

As previously mentioned, Gilford didn't like going on walks. Thus, the Pudgy Astronaut had to drag him along, quite literally, and much against Gilford's will. He lay sluggishly on the ground as the Pudgy Astronaut pulled him alongside on his leash.

The pair then walked around the Moon for quite some time. The Pudgy Astronaut wasn't sure what he expected to find, there on the uninhabited surface of the Moon. But, he figured it didn't hurt to look around, just in case something did pop up. It was fun to explore as well; the Moon had many odd-shaped pits and craters, some of which looked like different creatures to the Pudgy Astronaut. He pointed them out to Gilford as they passed, but the grumpy pug just sighed.

Then, surprisingly, the Pudgy Astronaut spotted something in the distance. As they walked closer, it appeared to become rounder and whiter. The Pudgy Astronaut wondered what it could be. Was there cheese on the Moon after all? But, when he finally got there, he saw what it really was. The mysterious object was a pie. A cream pie, to be specific. Gilford gave it a disinterested glance and went back to lying on the ground. The Pudgy Astronaut thought this

appearance was very curious, but at that moment, his stomach began to rumble again; he couldn't wait much longer to eat. The Pudgy Astronaut was just going to have to try the pie and see how it tasted.

But, the pie suddenly moved to the right.

The Pudgy Astronaut stared at it. It sat still. He reached down to grab it, but the pie moved again. A most curious action. The Pudgy Astronaut was truly puzzled. However, it was at this point that the Moonlings, as the Pudgy Astronaut promptly dubbed them, popped out from behind the cream pie. The little rambling creatures looked like hairy balls of brown dust; they scuttled about and behind the desired dessert, hopping in various directions. Then, all at once, they seemed to become aware of the presence of the man and his grumpy companion. The Moonlings all gave a startled jump and began to scoot the pie away from the stunned pair.

Disappointed and stomach still rumbling, the Pudgy Astronaut sighed and turned to drag himself and Gilford back to the tiny red spaceship. Out of the blue, he felt a slight poke to his leg. The Pudgy Astronaut turned around in time to see some of the Moonlings scurrying away, leaving a neat slice of the cream pie behind. The Pudgy Astronaut was overjoyed. He scooped up the precious slice and waved to fading creatures. He then bounced with pleasure the whole way back to the spaceship.

As soon as they got inside, the Pudgy Astronaut hastily took his and Gilford's helmets off. He whipped out his fork and eagerly tried a good mouthful of the pie. It was absolutely delicious – much better than any cheese one might have expected to find. (Even Gilford seemed to cheer up a bit after trying some.)

H.R. Deutsch

And, thought the Pudgy Astronaut as they headed back out into space, it was the best snack he had ever had, perhaps even better than a Ham and Cheese sandwich.

He was most certainly going to have to go back for more.