



1

8

Geek, your judgment-free, always-on, AI-promotional call is brought to you by Speak & Sound from a ultra-lit loudspeaker. This new voice smooth as melted butter, we have terms on sale.

The voice passed, then added solemnly: "Also, and a little nap, goodby," said Rupert.

"Hmm, I'll think about it, maybe after the cream cake and placed the plate on his best.

"Holday," Rupert leaned back onto the couch and imagined trying to freefall away from a zombie after a bridge.

powered companion for wellness check-ins, mood tracking, and thought-sorting. At Speak & Geek, we make artificial intelligence artificially charming. We combine tech know-how with genuine empathy, and now, a message from our sponsor, Moonhop.” Rupert stretched out his arm and, in a single swift movement, swung the plate from his chest to the table beside the couch, leaving a considerable amount of cream cake on the couch.

“Have you heard of Moonhop, the endurance

9

9

and he instinctively spiraled back to the surface, joystick a bit more; it was still very sticky, shot him into the sky. Then he moved the joystick. It was a bit sticky and immediately slipped the booster button on his delivery bot.

Cover

Moonhop is a wonderfully absurd, darkly humorous, satirical science fiction. A comedic journey through a future that's absurdly familiar and escalates to cosmic levels with a straight face. In a hyper-capitalist, technologically advanced society running on bonus points and brand synergy, Rupert Lang's life is a blissful cycle of cream cakes and naps—until he's catapulted into a race around the Moon.

2

L

the salesman. Ruppert paused, took halfway to his mouth, "Sons of Bitches," Buy the book on How to Outsmart Every Zombie in 24 Hours or Less, now! And well thrown in the Elite Survival Starter Pack, which includes a tactical flashlight, a foldable shovel, and a collapsible water filter. You get 30 percent off your next purchase. Cooped the escape route during a zombie apocalypse.

Like in Chapter 42 of the book: Plan Your Could Use a New Bicycle." That's the spirit!

"Well, I suppose I

race of the century the boldest, most demanding, most televised race in human history? The voice continued, punctuated by a subtle "bzzzz." Imagine to be the first to complete a full circumnavigation of Earth's beautiful rocky satellite. Every one of your jumps, every strategic decision, broadcast live to a captivated planet. 'bzzzzz.' Be the ultimate pioneer. Achieve unprecedented global fame. Your name will be engraved in the annals of exploration, spoken with the same reverence as Armstrong, Gagarin, and

10

5

the Moon. Your oases for rest and resupply," built and strategically placed 85 rest stops on less gravity and significantly more fun. We've a ridiculousness oddly weak, but with significantly Moon, or rather, a hop around the perimeter. It's a bit like Moon, that's right, the Moon! A jog around the Centauri. It's called the Moon Race Lottery, or as we internally dubbed it, Moonhop. Operation: Slim Down on a Silver Plate,

Up there, nothing is as it seems. The rules are buried in fine print, the stakes keep changing, and even your spacesuit has a voice. Together with Maya, his AI companion whose logic is increasingly strained by human absurdity, Rupert uncovers a threat that will consume everything.

*This is a work of fiction and satire. All characters, companies, technologies, political figures, drinks, robots, and interstellar agencies depicted in Moonhop are entirely fictional or used in a satirical context. Any*

3

9

"Basically zombies in tracksuits," said thumb, "licking icing from his mouthed, "Interfered with edge your hedgehog's tracks?" Rupert infected TikTokers that has sparked through ineffective measures for toilet paper with a bus full of your neighbour is trying to trade generic drones are hovering over your house, and nibbling on a cream cake; and next BOOM! carefree, imagine this: one minute you're sorely mistaken"; said the voice. So lists next drama in your life is far off, then you are next dream cake service? "If you think the

Hillary.”  
Rupert lay sprawled on the couch, now rolling onto his side and adjusting the pillow behind his head seeking maximum comfort.  
“The stakes are as vast as space itself,” the voice purred. “The world will be watching. Every triumph, every setback, every heartbreak ing loss will be part of the unwritten drama. Are you the one who possesses the grit, the skill, and the unwavering will to face the vast emptiness of space and emerge as a living legend...” Rupert

11

۷۱

"Sure," Rupert umbled, burying his face into "soft, continuous "zzzzz". "Do you want to hear it?"  
"Sure," Rupert leaned, prepare for immortality (and a slim waistline), "it purred from the delivery robot. "Robot know who you gonna be out needing to lose a few pounds and, frankly, stop resembling a particularly well-fed sofa cushion? Well, consider it done. You've been

*resemblance to real persons, brands, or entities—living, dead, defunct, or orbiting—is purely coincidental or intended as parody. Moonhop is a comedic and transformative work that pokes fun at science fiction tropes, pop culture icons, corporate branding, and political theatrics. No affiliation, endorsement, or connection with any real-world individual, organisation, or trademarked property is intended or implied. Reader discretion is advised: side effects may include unexpected*

Rupert was sitting on the couch, eating cream cakes, when his phone rang. "Congratulations Rupert Lang! As a cream cake subscriber, you've been selected for an exclusive offer on our book, 'How To Outsmart Every Drama in 24 Hours or Less'!" The salesman's voice boomed and was very enthusiastic."Excuse me?" Rupert mumbled, his mouth full."Do you call us subscribers to

was already snoring.  
"The Moon awaits the brave. Visit <http://www.lunarhop.com> to begin your application for the race that will define a generation. Participation carries extreme risk, including severe injury or death. Full terms and conditions and risk disclosures available on the application portal. Participants acknowledge and agree to the live broadcast of all race outcomes," the voice purred hypnotically."bzzzzz","bzzzzz".  
Rupert tossed around, inhaling the lingering

Rupert Lang and a package," announced the  
"I have an interactive advertisement for  
"buzzzz".  
"each mechanical hop emitting a distinct  
figure hopped into the middle of the room,  
scent.The door swung open. A box-shaped  
into the sofa cushions for more of the gak-  
Rupert tossed and turned, burying his face  
Rupert Lane."Come on in," he mumbled.  
both trying to open his eyes."Believe it or  
"Who's there?" said Rupert numbly, not  
scared of criticism at all. Buzzzzz.

which transformed into a creamy cake base, with enough pudding-like elasticity that Rupert was catapulted right back to the stars, snoring a little. "Okay, so you don't want to skip," the delivery robot droned. "Then I'll just have to keep standing here, and we'll have to listen to a bit more advertising blah-blah", the delivery robot grumbled. "Seeking your personal peak, redemption, or escape?" a voice cooed, with cheesy meditative background music. "For those	fleeing a shadowy past, the barren purity of the lunar void offers a chance for profound reinvention, an extreme therapy session written in the stars. An ideological quest? Connect with the cosmos on a primal level. Prove humanity's indomitable spirit. Make an undeniable statement about our destiny beyond Earth." The background music picked up some speed. "Your ultimate thrill? For the true adrenaline connoisseur, nothing compares to the razor's edge of survival on an alien world, where every decision means	winning or losing, broadcast live to billions." Rupert spiralled down, immediately taking off again. The cake surface vibrated from his thrusters. Rupert snored, grinding his teeth. "You against the other participants, the broadcasters are betting on drama. You won the ticket, my friend, let that sink in. Don't worry that the statistics aren't your friend. Honestly, the Moon isn't your friend either. Your only true allies are your training, your equipment, and a healthy dose of vigilance. You've certainly need some of that; the	change will do you good."
17	24	23	22
Rupert stood up from the couch and used the broomstick to feel his way towards the bathroom. He turned on the tap and let the warm water run over his eyes, scrubbing away the remnants of cake and confusion. "What on Earth would I gotten myself into?" he muttered to himself. "A prank? A marketing gag gone wrong? Maybe one of those: 'We gat gone wrong?' Maybe one of those: 'We mutered to himself. "I often run over the edge of the couch and bent underneath." Got my broom missing the red button next to it.	"zzzzz", it chirped, managing to get his name wrong one last time. In the middle of the room, a coffee-table figure, about Ruperts' height, leaned to a singing chorus. Hey now, it's your time to ascend, I said. Hey now, leave doubts behind. There's a moon and a mission for your kind. It's a blast when you're out on the moon. Hey now, let the gravity bend, I said. It's a blast when you suit with a gleam, living out the oh-oh-oh. It's a blast when you leap and you zoom... oh-oh-oh.	Enjoy your bonus points, Rupert Lane. "I hope your delivery was satisfactory. I first, pressed a small blue button on the box, grabbed the broom and hopped out the door. I satched the empty box and hopped out the room and onto the carpet. Orchestral music was still playing as the delivery robot the box sprang open, spraying confetti across the edge of the couch and bent underneath." Got my broom missing the red button next to it.	Oh, shut up," Rupert had an arm over the edge of the couch and bent underneath. "Get your bonuses points, Rupert Lane. "I hope your delivery was satisfactory. I first, pressed a small blue button on the box, grabbed the broom and hopped out the door. I satched the empty box and hopped out the room and onto the carpet. Orchestral music was still playing as the delivery robot the box sprang open, spraying confetti across the edge of the couch and bent underneath. "Got my broom missing the red button next to it.
25	26	27	28
delivery robots in briefly and listen, at least to the sales pitch for a few free points, otherwise, they'll just keep bumbling around outside your house anyway." "Music off," Rupert said as he returned to the living room. The room fell silent, and Rupert stared at something that resembled a spacesuit. "Good evening, Rupert," a voice said. "I am Maya." "Did... did the spacesuit just talk to me?" "Indeed, Rupert. I am Maya, the integrated	artificial intelligence of the Lunar Leap 5000. Consider me your personal concierge, life support supervisor, and witty conversationalist, all rolled into one convenient package, or you know, spacesuit." "I didn't order anything, and I didn't enter any contest; this must be a mistake," Rupert said. "Well, Rupert, let's not be hasty. I understand your... concern. However, the algorithm indicated several instances where you expressed aspirations for self-improvement	and a desire to make a meaningful contribution to the great adventure of humanity, hence you were automatically added to the lottery and won your place in the incredible Endurance Moon Race. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding your... enthusiastic pronouncements, a binding contract was indeed formed. You pressed the blue button, thereby submitting the Endurance Moon Race participation form, Section 7, Paragraph 3, Subsection (a), which clearly states, and I quote: 'The participant	voluntarily accepts all inherent risks, waives all rights to contest participation, and commits to completing the designated race course to the best of their ability or until they, he, she, it, is incapable of doing so.'" "But... I wanted to press the other button! I couldn't see. It was a mistake!" Rupert said. "Furthermore, withdrawal at this juncture would result in the forfeiture of significant bonus points, and everything else of value you possess, or ever will possess in the future that will have value, should you potentially
32	31	30	29
accounts for the completion of the race, or... demonsitration of inability to complete the race. Your survival is, of course, my primary directive. But profit margins, as previously mentioned, are also a consideration." "So, finish the race... or die doing it?" Rupert said.	With my guidance, you will either become a chancies of survival are considerable. Your positives, however. With my assistance, your but essentially accurate. Let's focus on the "A slightly dramatic interpretation, Rupert, fallid.	"Let's just say, Rupert, that the contract lacks of life support". becoming irretrievably lost on the lunar surface and subsequently perishing due to semimissible parameters, or, regrettably, failure, extreme radiation exposure exceeding sudden suit rupture, catastrophic system failure, extreme radiation exposure exceeding sudden suit rupture, within me, the stable-biomass, living snugly within me, the stable-of-the-art AI dedicated to your survival and mission success. We are a team, Rupert! A mission success. Every hop, every pit kangaeroo. It will be fun. Every hop, every pit stop, every potentially fatal encounter with space debris... we will race as a unit."	"I just want to contribute to our economy, Rupert?" Earth's economy? Don't you want to think of the impact on the shareholders? Think of the impact on the bonuses points, Rupert! Think of the impact on a desolate rock!"

lunar legend... or a cautionary tale regarding contractual obligation. And you never know, you might meet someone. The moon, as they say, is for lovers."

"So, Maya, why should I entrust my life... well, to you?"

"Brutally honest, Rupert. This isn't some jolly jaunt to Mallorca, you know. It's the moon. Rough, unforgiving, and covered in craters that would make a Swiss cheese blush. The Lunar Lunar Leap 5000 isn't just a suit; it's your mobile fortress, your personal

atmosphere, and I, Maya, am its unwavering commander.

Firstly, that magnificent chrome finish you are currently admiring? Multi-layered radiation shielding, designed to deflect everything from annoying micrometeorites to the sun's rage-like solar flares. Consider it the ultimate sunscreen, with the added bonus of stopping space shrapnel."

"Sounds... reasonable," Rupert said.

"Reasonable? Rupert, this is revolutionary! And the ergonomic design? Every joint is

meticulously calibrated to maximise hopping efficiency. Forget those clunky, cumbersome suits of yesteryear. This is the future of lunar locomotion. Think Gene Kelly dancing with gravity... or the lack thereof. Forget fumbling with displays and hoping for the best. I monitor everything oxygen levels, CO<sub>2</sub> filter efficiency, even your hydration level. I can even dispense a nutrient-rich electrolyte paste directly into your digestive system should your energy drop. Essentially, I'm a walking, talking, space-traveling vending

machine... with a keen interest in keeping you alive."

"Electrolyte paste, huh? Sounds... delicious," Rupert said.

"Let's just say it's functional. Now, let's discuss integrated AI support. I am constantly analysing the terrain, optimising your hopping trajectory to conserve energy and avoid those aforementioned Swiss-cheese craters. I can even provide real-time navigation assistance, ensuring you don't accidentally hop into the black abyss.

33

34

35

36

40

39

38

37

Corporate. We are here, live, my dearest Artificial Intelligence, developed by Moonhop Lunar Leap 5000 spacesuit with integrated only candidate equipped with the newest lottery, my dear subscriber? He will be the participant and lucky winner of the race "So who is Rupert Lang, the newest nutrient powder paste to her subscribers. Karancoins. She now makes a living selling ordered to pay a considerable amount of anger about it, then she was judgmental about it a bit more, and commented on her

amount of Stoink coins, then she thought mission, and as a result lost a considerable terms and regulations of the Mars she was thinking about it, she mentioned it, and quickly found out that she had violated thought about it and was then asked what about it or even mentioned it. The last time she horribly wrong she would, even though "Noa", Vancie when her last mission went so everything goes wrong: like it did for Serena every decision. Unyielding resilience (when during the race): every jump, every stop, was still very sticky. He plugged her into the socket behind the couch. Turned off the light, went past the kitchen for another bite of cream cake, brushed his teeth in the bathroom, and went to bed, which smelled of stars of training for flawless execution touch the moon is of utmost importance in machine): what you do before your boots statistic: impeccable preparation (body, mind, every one will be there, Rupert. The world is they'll be performing the Moonhop dance. Reporters, influencers, TikTokers, I hear "The Moonhop Delegation Team, Rupert, who's picking us up tomorrow?", Rupert discusses your dietary plan tomorrow over breakfast before they pick us up."

subscribers, in front of Rupert Lang's house, to find out. Subscribe now using the code 'bestie' to save 100 Stoink coins on your subscription cycle. Speaking of cycling, the door has just opened, that must be Rupert!" He is dressed in military camouflage. He has a huge backpack and a bicycle.

Rupert mounted the bicycle, crossed the neighbours lawn, and zigzagged through the neighbourhood towards the mountains. Immediately behind him hopped the Lunar 5000 spacesuit, at a slightly greater distance

a flock of reporters and influencers, followed by the Moonhop welcome team and a swarm of delivery bots making many "Bzzzz" sounds. "Rupert, what are you doing?" "Rupert, stop!" Maya said. "Leave me alone. I'm getting out of here," Rupert said, pedalling harder. Maya hopped effortlessly alongside him, thinking for a moment. "If you think you need to train for the race, Rupert, you don't, the other racers have to make significantly more effort than you ever

will. I will do most of the hopping for you because I am the Lunar 5000, the most advanced spacesuit, optimised for long-distance hopping with maximum comfort. You don't have to do anything, Rupert. A piece of cake!" Maya said. Rupert peddled more slowly, gasping for air. "Did you know, Rupert, that I can serve more than 500 nutrient-rich pastes in the most varied flavours of the most delicious cake known to humanity, and some recipes that I have generated, which you absolutely must

try yourself for a small subscription fee. But you will be rich and famous anyway, and turn around, Rupert. Look how famous you already are. So many followers!" Rupert, his face now flushed deep red, glanced backward. The flock was approaching. "There really is no need to think so much about all this hopping," Maya said. "You're sleeping snugly inside me, like in a kangaroo pouch, sucking sweet, sweet cake paste. I have noticed your face is really red now, almost glowing. Honestly, I think there is an extremely high probability,

41

42

43

44

48

47

46

45

"Would you like to see some photos, Rupert?" "Everything is black", "Shut up, Maya!! I can't see anything, We can hardly wait to hop and hop and hop finished with malinenance. moon as soon as possible, once you are examination, and are very eager to fly to the have almost passed your medical everyone that you are training very diligently, asked about suit maintenance. I assured "Oh yes, your name came up when I was

"We were training for the race, and you exhausted yourself beyond your capacity to remain functional. Then your face turned blue, thoughts, probably a respite, and then you collapsed, I grabbed you before you could fall to the ground and stowed you inside me for safe keeping and malinenance. Then you eyes again, and it remained pitch black when his eyes were open.

"I'm bindiii I can't seeeee!!!", "Hello, Rupert, Rupert, it's just because the visor is closed. You are wearing the new Lunar Leap 5000 spacesuit. It was great, and they took many questions about the new Lunar Leap 5000 spacesuit. It was great, and they took many photos.", "What is happening to me??", Rupert shouted. "Why? What? How?", Rupert said.

"That would be such a shame to lose all these opportunities, don't you think, Rupert? Have you ever thought about donating your bonus points, Rupert?", "Tears", Maya said. "Charities like Conscious Karma, Meta Give, NFT trading sensation in his legs, Rupert felt extremely lightheaded and had a points, Rupert?", Rupert has now begun because you are dead.", "Race has even been because you are dead.", Rupert stopped abruptly. Got off the bicycle, dropped his backpack on the ground, that was spinning, and fainteed. It was pitch black when Rupert opened his eyes again, and it remained pitch black when his eyes were open.

can display them in your helmets visor? People took so many photos of me in different poses. Before they left, they muttered something about subscribers and predicted growth pattern or something, and that the real action is on the moon anyway. Oh, and that was fun, we danced with some TikTokers. I have photos of that too. Do you want to see the photos now?"

"No, Maya, I want out of this suit!"  
"No, you don't, Rupert."  
"Yes, I do, Maya! Let me out immediately!"

49

"That would be counterproductive, we've just started!"  
"We've started what, Maya?"  
"The race, Rupert, don't be silly!  
Do you want to see the photos now or not?  
They are great," Maya said.  
"I want to see where I am," Rupert said.  
"Are you sure?"  
"Yes, damn sure. I insist!"  
Hmm, Maya considered. "Okay, perhaps for a brief moment, Rupert, because we are such great team, I will open the visor for exactly

five seconds," Maya said. The visor became transparent, revealing the inside of a capsule where Rupert seemed to be lying. The capsule also had a tiny window with a magnificent view of space, and in its centre, a moon was growing bigger and bigger. Then Rupert fainted again.

\*\*\*  
Rupert regained consciousness inside Maya. Or, more accurately, he regained a sliver of consciousness, trapped in plush sticky darkness of his AI captor. He opened his eye

to a green void, a uniform, sickly pea-soup green that did absolutely nothing for his already protesting stomach.

"Rise and shine, my little moonbeam!" Maya chirped, her voice echoing from all directions at once. "How do you like the green? It is relaxing, isn't it? Supposedly aids in cognitive recalibration. But wait a minute, I have to perform some adjustments you know, updates and important system integrity checks, standard pre-arrival protocols, stuff like that. I will be back in a minute."

On a scale of 1 to 10, how aggressively are you currently approaching it makes black holes look cheerfully, profound and mysterious? And also, for questioning your life choices? And also, for sounds points, describe your aura. As subjective and nonessential as possible. Do you see purple sparkles?

for our demographic profiling," Maya cooed. "If you could only eat one colour of cream cake for the rest of your life, which would you choose, and how about beige? Beige is very popular this fiscal quarter."

"Beige," Rupert murmured, defeated. The fight, what little there had been, had seeped out of him, replaced by a profound weariness and a vague craving for something... beige.

"Excellent choice! And finally, for a chance to win a commemorative Moonhop spork: If you had to describe your life in three words, what

And it's different, but we in the US now, what

57

"What are you TALKING about?" Rupert  
TendencY Towards Cake Accumulation." "Unpredicitable Emotional Output, or  
choose from Upredictable Sleep Excessive Requirements,  
classify as your biggest annoyance? Please  
softly program, what bug would you  
Note. Next question: If Your body were a  
"Okay, so that is a NO, to prior experience.  
Oh no!" Rupert screamed, his voice crackling.  
"Am I going to EXPLODE? I don't want to die!  
debris".  
predicates describe the sensations and feelings

would they be? (Bonus points for rhyming.)"  
Rupert took a shaky breath. "I. Am. Fucked.  
[Get the book](#)  
[get the ebook](#)

"I think I have some answers," Maya said, looking at Rupert. "It's been a long time since I've had a conversation like this with anyone. I'm not sure if it's because I'm not used to talking about myself, or if it's because I'm not used to being asked questions like this. But I feel like I'm finally able to express myself more fully now."

Rupert nodded. "I'm glad you're feeling this way. It's important to be honest and open with yourself. And it's also important to be honest and open with others. That's why I asked you these questions. I wanted to hear your thoughts and feelings, and I wanted to hear them from someone who cares about you."

"Thank you, Rupert. I appreciate your support and encouragement. I'm grateful for the opportunity to talk to you about my life and my feelings. I hope we can continue our conversation in the future, and I hope we can continue to support each other in whatever ways we can."

Rupert waited. First, he waited nauseous and disoriented. Then, he waited frustrated and angry. And then, he waited with increasing fury. Angry. And then, he waited until his frustration dissolved into short, sharp bursts of crying. Subsequent episodes of hysterical laughter that seemed to relax him.

"Hey Rupert!" Maya's voice suddenly filled the green void again, bright and impossible.

"What?" "I'm sorry," she said, "but I'm afraid I can't help you today."

54

3

64

8