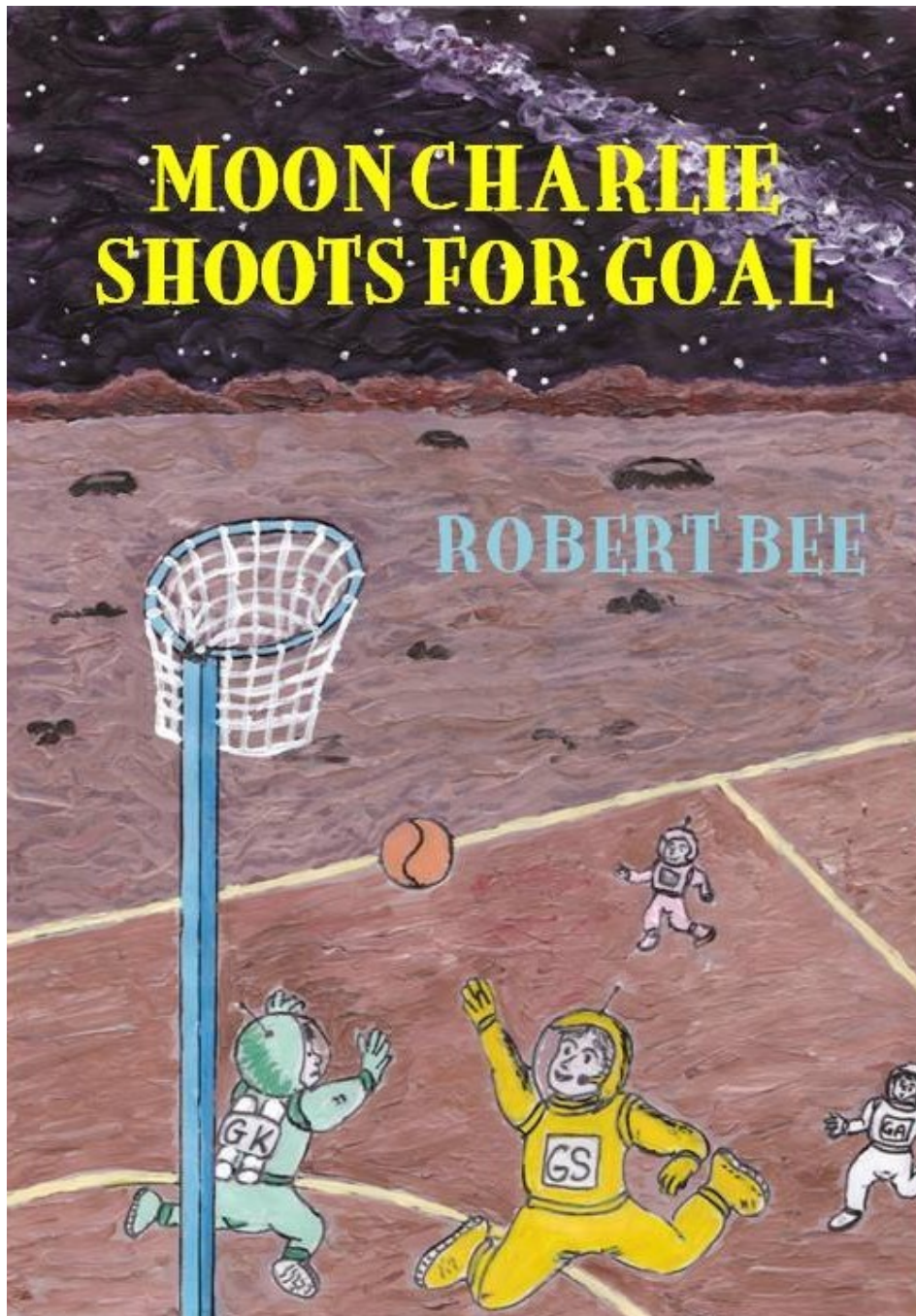


Moon Charlie Shoots For Goal - Junior Novel Sampler



This is a Junior novel for girls who enjoy sport but particularly netball, with some sci-fi thrown in. It is also a book that their mothers and nans will enjoy.

With 176 A5 pages, in perfect bound paperback, it is for sale at meetings of the Macarthur Astronomical Society for only \$12.

It is also available for \$12 for mailing out but will incur a \$5 P&H cost. To order, contact the author at robertbee46@gmail.com.

Here is the synopsis of the story and a small sample of the book, where we meet our heroine, Charlie Angler, or Moon Charlie, after her 10th birthday.

Charlie Angler lives on the *Moon* with her parents and little pain-in-the-bum brother Jacob.

Charlie has just turned 10.

Little does she know what difference that will make in her life:

- A new luminous lemon yellow *spacesuit*
- Her first *dust crater skiing* adventure
- An encounter with a dreaded '*moon shark*'
- Trying out for her dome's Under 11s *netball team*
- *Nasty tricks* by her nemesis Skyler Snow
 - New and unlikely *friends*
 - Meeting her *Netball hero*

And all this happening on the airless Moon.

With **extra-low gravity**.

Where **one long leap** can take her many metres.

Where she can **jump as high** as her very tall Dad.

**Will Charlie make it into the U11 netball team,
the *Plato Parrots*?**

Can she foil Skyler's attempts to keep her out?

Can they win the *Inter-Dome competition*?

And what will Jacob do to cause so many tears?

All this and more in

Moon Charlie Shoots for Goal

CHAPTER 1

An Unexpected Present

Charlie Angler was excited. Today was to be her first go at dust skiing. Ever since she was a little girl she had watched her parents and older girls and boys enjoy the thrill of skiing. Now she had turned nine and was old enough to try. How will I go, Charlie thought. Well, she would soon find out and the weather for it was perfect. But then it always was.

"One good thing about living on the Moon is the weather," Charlie said to her friend Gemma.

"The weather?" Gemma said. "But there isn't any weather Charlie. There's no air outside the dome. It's a vacuum."

"Exactly," Charlie smiled. "So it's always the same. You can count on it."

Gemma Stone had to agree with Charlie. Inside the huge dome where everyone lived, the climate was always mild and it never rained or had storms. That was because of the large air conditioning machines.

Outside the dome it also didn't rain or have storms but for a different reason. It was the surface of the Moon and had no air to cause winds and no water to cause rain. As Gemma said, outside the dome there just wasn't any weather.

Charlie pointed at the blue-brown-white globe of Earth on her desk. "Now if we lived there, we'd have our sport called off because of bad weather. That would be no fun. But here on the Moon, there is no air..."

"... so no bad weather," Gemma added.

"... so sport is always on. What could be better?" Charlie asked.

"No school?" Gemma laughed.

"Ooh, don't let my mum hear you say that."

"Too late. I heard you," an adult voice said from down the hall.

Charlie's mum was Lorna Angler, one of the primary school teachers in Dome Plato and took her job very seriously. Sometimes too seriously, Charlie thought.

Charlie's family had moved to Dome Plato on the near side of the Moon when she was three years old. She was so young at the time that she had no memories at all of her earlier life on Earth. She had never been back to Earth since. Maybe one day...

Her brother Jacob was born on the Moon the year after and had now just turned five. Charlie tried to remember if she was such a pain in the bum when she was that age. Probably, she thought.

Charlie's dad was Peter Angler and he was a scientist and engineer. His science job was to study the history of the Moon and search for minerals that people could use, both on the Moon and on Earth. He was also second in charge of the engineering department. It was his job to keep the dome's machinery working so that everyone in the dome was safe. Mr Angler was well liked by everyone in the Dome. Well, almost everyone. Sometimes Charlie's dad and his boss, Mr Snow, didn't see eye to eye on work matters and this often led to friction between them.

"Dad, why doesn't Mr Snow like you?" Charlie had asked her father one day.

"It's not that he doesn't like me," her dad replied. "We just have strong disagreements sometimes. We get over it." Her dad had smiled at her. "He really is a nice man, once you get to know him."

"Oh, I'm glad," Charlie said. Which is more than I can say for his daughter, Skyler Snow, Charlie thought. For some reason, she hates me and shows it. She and her friend Mandy Peabody. When she had mentioned it to her mum, Mrs Angler just said "well, you can't please everyone Charlie. Just give it time, you never know what's around the corner. But you be nice to her. Two wrongs don't make a right."

When her mum said that, Charlie remembered a plaque her dad had hung on the back of their toilet door. It showed some cartoon dog named Snoopy sitting on his kennel roof saying: 'Be nice to everyone who hates you. It will drive them crazy.' She had laughed at that memory. She wondered if it would work on Skyler. She could only try.

Charlie enjoyed life on the Moon. There was so much to do, so much fun to be had. But like every other adult and child on the Moon, she also knew that danger, very deadly danger, was always only one mistake away.

Even dust skiing was dangerous but to Charlie and all the other kids on the Moon, that's what made it so exciting.

"Hurry up or you'll miss the shuttle," her mother called from the lounge room of their unit.

"Yes Mum," Charlie called back, rolling her eyes at Gemma. "I'm coming."

"So is Halley's Comet – in twenty years time. Make it snappy," Mrs Angler called back. "Oh, and Gemma, you'd better scoot home. Your mum's waiting with your new space suit. She wants to check that it fits snugly before you head out to the dust pond."

"Yes Mrs A," Gemma called out. "Better go. I don't want to miss the shuttle either."

"A new space suit?" Charlie said.

"Yes, shocking pink. Cool heh?"

"Wow, how shocking?" Charlie persisted.

Gemma laughed. "Mum said if it was any more pink they'd see me from Earth. As if."

"Yeah, as if," Charlie said, looking at her own drab grey space suit lying on her bed. "At least we'll see you if you go under the dust."

Gemma frowned. "I doubt that. The dust in that pond is so thick I wouldn't see my own hand in front of my face once I went under. What hope would the spotters have of seeing me?"

Both girls were silent for a moment, having just reminded themselves of one of the serious risks of dust skiing. Charlie broke the moody silence. “Just as well we have the safety ropes, eh?”

“Girls, get a move on. Now!” Mrs Angler’s no-nonsense voice called out.

“Yes Mum,” “Yes Mrs A,” Charlie and Gemma called out in unison. Gemma jumped off Charlie’s bed and ran out of the room, waving behind her. “See you at the air lock Charlie. Don’t forget your helmet. Bye Mrs A.”

“Bye Gemma.” Charlie’s mum came to the bedroom door ready to hurry her daughter up again, but stopped when she saw Charlie holding her space suit, her bottom lip pushed out. “What’s the matter Blip? Find a hole in your suit?”

“Don’t call me that Mum,” Charlie sighed.

“I’ll stop calling you Blip when you stop sticking out your bottom lip like that,” her mother said. “Now, what is your problem? We don’t have much time.”

“Gemma’s got a new space suit and it’s pink,” Charlie said.

“Oh, pink. Nice.”

“Shocking pink,” Charlie added.

“Ooh, shocking? Even nicer,” her mum said, smiling.

“It’s not funny Mum,” Charlie shot back. “Look at mine. Gruesome grey. Yuck!”

Charlie’s mum shook her head sadly. “Gruesome grey eh? Yes, it is a tragedy, that’s for sure. But let me ask you this. Does it keep your air in and the vacuum out?”

Charlie looked at her mum, then nodded, her bottom lip still out.

“Just as well,” her mum said, “because if it didn’t, that really would be gruesome. Your blood would boil and you would suffocate and die pretty quickly. Then we would have to buy a new daughter. Where would we get one of those up here on the Moon?”

“Mum!” Charlie squealed, shocked.

“I’m just saying that the colour of your suit doesn’t matter, not really. As long as it works. What difference would it make if it’s gruesome grey, as you say, or shocking pink, or...” Mrs Angler brought a gift wrapped package from behind her back “... maybe luminous lemon?”

Charlie stared at the package her mum was holding out to her. “Mum, what’s that?” she asked, hoping it was what she thought.

“It’s your final birthday present. Your dad and I held onto it until today when you went for your first dust skiing trip. Open it,” her mum said, clearly as excited as Charlie was.

Charlie grabbed the parcel and in one rip, tore the wrapping paper off. Her bottom lip quickly went back in place. “Oh Mum, it’s so cool. It’s... beautiful. Thankyou.” She jumped up and gave her mum a super hug, a quick kiss, then looked again at her gift. She unfolded it and held it up before her in the wardrobe door mirror.

It was a new space suit of the latest slimline design. And it was the brightest loudest lemon yellow colour she had ever seen, not even on a lemon. Surely they would be able to see her from Earth in this.

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CHAPTER 2

Please Watch Your Step

Working and playing on the Moon meant dealing with the low gravity.

Everything felt a lot lighter on the moon. Heaps lighter. If Charlie stood on the scales on Earth they would say 30 kilograms. But when she stood on the scales on the moon they only said 5 kilograms.

The Moon’s gravity which kept everything on the ground and brought everything thrown up back down again was only one sixth the gravity that people on Earth felt. That’s not a lot of gravity. That meant when Charlie threw a ball up, it went six times higher and took six times longer to come back down than if she threw the same ball up on

Earth. The same when she walked or jumped. It also meant she could take much longer steps, which was a lot of fun.

But when you lived your entire life on the Moon, when you wanted to cook, eat, relax and sleep, it was nice to have the comfort of Earth type gravity so you weren't floating in the air for so long when you jumped out of bed. It was also good for your health, Charlie's dad told her.

Charlie's family unit, like the living units of all the other families in the dome, was on the inside face of a giant drum. The drum was over one hundred metres wide and fifty metres high and fit snugly beneath the roof of the dome. It was humungous. The top end of the drum faced towards the sky and the bottom end almost touched the dome's ground. All the family units' ceilings faced inwards towards the drum's centre and the drum rotated gracefully around the centre, driven by gigantic motors. It took the living units round and round like on a merry-go-round. A giant merry-go-round. This gave the feeling of being pressed towards the floor on the outer wall of the drum, just like water stays in the bottom of a bucket when you swing it in a big circle around your head.

When Charlie was in her bedroom or sitting at the dining table, the huge Drum was smoothly rotating, taking her room with it. However, she never felt it. She was always standing feet down to her unit's floor and her head towards the ceiling and that was all that mattered. If she dropped something, it fell straight to the floor. When she poured a glass of water, it went straight down into her glass. The Drum spun at just the right speed to make it feel exactly like Earth's gravity. Her parents told her that it was just like being on Earth. Cool!

There was another drum, exactly the same size as the Habitation Drum. It was called the Admin Drum. This was for the school, gymnasium, hospital, shops and Council offices. They have Earth-like gravity as well. That was just as well. Who would want to sit at school all day in one sixth gravity? Or do gymnastics where you would hit the ceiling after jumping over the vaulting horse? Or go shopping and try to drink a milkshake? Or play ping pong when the ball took forever to come down to the table?

Those Drums made life more enjoyable on the Moon.

Whichever Drum she may be on, for Charlie the fun part was getting off and onto the dome's ground. Preferably without any dangerous jumps.

After all, the outer edge of the bottom of the Drum was moving faster than a dust jet ski past the dome's floor. And that's very fast. This was because they were always moving. Going round and round at the same speed, never stopping.

So to get off, they had a special room at the bottom of the Drum. It had a very fancy and complicated name but the kids all called it the 'Gogo' Room. That was short for 'getting on, getting off.'

Charlie's friend Zac Watt was her age but already a techno nerd. He wanted to be an astro-engineer when he grew up, just like his dad who worked with Mr Angler looking after the dome's engines and machines. So when Charlie told him using the Gogo room was fun, Zac said: "It's not fun Charlie. It's just very clever." Yes, he was a nerd but he was cute. Not like Jacob who was just a pain.

Finally ready for their day's adventure and Charlie's first dust ski, Charlie, her parents and Jacob, all dressed in their space suits and carrying their helmets left their home unit and headed down a long corridor towards the Gogo room which was at the very bottom of the Drum. There was a Gogo Room for each row of units, making a total of eight Gogos. They went to Number 2, the closest.

Jacob rushed to press the 'Exit' button, jabbing it over and over again. With a sigh, Mr Angler grabbed Jacob's hand off the button. "Just once, Jacob," he said patiently. "You only need to press it once."

"But it will come quicker Dad," Jacob explained.

"No it won't," his dad said

Just then, the Gogo door opened. Jacob looked up at his dad with an 'I told you so' look and said "I told you so."

Mr Angler sighed and said "Everybody in."

The family stepped into a plain room about the size of their unit's lounge room. Charlie always giggled when she walked in the door because on the wall opposite there was a big sign saying 'Dome Floor'. That seemed very strange until you knew how the Gogo worked. The room was empty except for two rows of five post rails from the floor to the ceiling. One row was closer to the 'Dome Floor' wall than the other row. The closest posts were for the children. Each of the family walked to a post and held on with two hands, one above the other.

"Hold the rail tightly, Jacob," his mum said.

"I know, I'm a big boy now," Jacob whined.

Charlie was already holding on, having done this every day for six years and waited for the fun. Mr Angler pressed the 'Exit Drum' button and the door to the corridor closed with a hiss.

"Please hold onto the rails provided" a pleasant lady's recorded voice said over a speaker.

"Der, I'm already..." Jacob started to say.

"Jacob, you say that every time," his dad sighed.

"Well, I'm holding on, why does..."

"Disengaging drum" the pleasant voice said. Unseen by those in the Gogo, an outer ring to the bottom of the Drum which held the Gogo Rooms silently disconnected the locks holding it to the Drum. As the Drum continued on its majestic rotation, the ring began to slow down and was left behind by the Drum.

"Whee" said Charlie and Jacob together as the gravity in the room changed, gradually dropping from the full Earth gravity of the Drum to the Moon's one sixth gravity. As this happened, their feet were no longer held firmly to the Room's floor and they floated away from the floor like they were flying. This was fun, no matter what Zac said, Charlie thought, but glad she was holding onto the rail.

After a few more seconds, the room finally came to a halt. Charlie and Jacob slowly settled their feet back on the room's floor and laughed. But now the floor was the wall saying 'Dome Floor' and the posts now went from one side wall to the other, like ballerinas' exercise rails. Their parents smiled because, while keeping calm faces, they too secretly enjoyed the experience.

"Dome level. Please exit quickly. Have a nice Moon Day," the lady's voice said.

"Thank you," Charlie said politely.

"Silly," Jacob hissed. "She's only a recording."

"It doesn't do any harm to be nice," Charlie replied. "You should try it sometime Jacob." A door in what had been the floor but was now a side wall opened onto a short set of stairs leading down to the dome's ground level. They all bounced down the stairs, now at the Moon's one sixth gravity.

"Look, there are the Stones, over near the air lock with the shuttle," Mr Angler pointed. "Last one to them is a rotten egg."

"I'll beat you" Jacob laughed and he started to moon-hop towards the Stones.

"Oh no you won't" Charlie cried, and started hopping after her brother, taking long strides that took her over a metre into the air and three metres forward, arcing through the air gracefully like a gazelle.

Mr Angler turned to his wife. "Want to race?"

Charlie's mum laughed. "I'd love to, but I won't. I have a school teacher image to maintain."

"Thankfully, I don't," said Mr Angler, and with that he bounded after his children. "Here I come kids. Beat you to the shuttle."

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... and so the action continues.