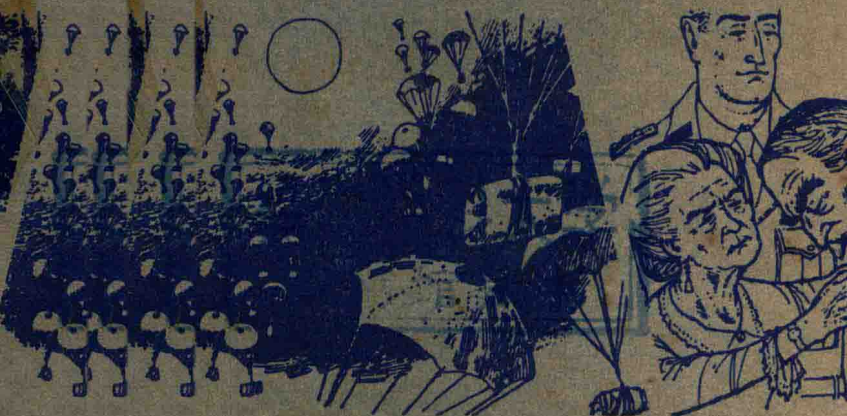


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THE MOON IS DOWN

John Steinbeck



The Moon is Down

JOHN STEINBECK

Retold by M. J. PAINE

Illustrated by Clifford Bayly



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Vocabulary Control There is a basic vocabulary of approximately 1,600 words. At the same time, students are given some opportunity to meet new words whose meanings are either clear from the context or are explained in the *Glossary*. Help is also given to the students in the form of illustrations which are closely related to the text.

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The People in this Story

It is wartime. A small town is invaded by the enemy

The Townspeople

Mayor Orden and his wife

Joseph, the Mayor's servant

Annie, the Mayor's cook

Alex Morden, a miner, and his wife, Molly

George Corell, a shopkeeper

The Invaders

Colonel Lanser

Captain Loft

Captain Bentick

Lieutenant Tonder

Lieutenant Prackle

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A complete list of unsimplified books by John Steinbeck can be found on p. 72

The Moon is Down

The Beginning

The invaders arrived in the town on Sunday morning.
No one expected them.

By ten o'clock six local soldiers had been killed.

By 10.30 the six local soldiers were buried.

By 10.35 the invaders had taken the town¹.

By 10.40 the invaders' band was playing beautiful music
in the town square.

By 10.45 the invaders' leader, Colonel Lanser had asked
Mayor Orden if they could meet. A meeting was arranged
for eleven o'clock in the Mayor's five-roomed palace.

1. The Search for Guns

Old Doctor Winter sat beside the fireplace in the drawing-room of the Mayor's palace. He had a beard and his face was simple and kind. He looked at the fire and rolled his thumbs over and over. Doctor Winter looked very simple, but really he was very clever. He looked at Joseph, the Mayor's servant. Joseph did not understand what was happening.

'Eleven o'clock?' Doctor Winter asked.

'Yes, sir,' Joseph answered. 'The note said eleven.'

'Did you read the note?' asked Doctor Winter.

'No, sir,' replied Joseph. 'The Mayor read the note to me.'

Joseph went round the room making sure each of the chairs was in its place. Joseph liked everything to be neat, clean and tidy. He was thin and he did not smile very much. He was getting old. Joseph looked very clever, but really he was very simple. He thought that something rather important was happening. There were foreign soldiers in the town and the local soldiers had been either killed or wounded. Joseph would soon know all about it.

Doctor Winter moved his chair a few inches from its correct place and Joseph wanted to put the chair back again.

'Eleven o'clock,' Doctor Winter said again. 'The invaders will be here at eleven o'clock.'

And Joseph, without listening said, 'Yes, sir.'

Doctor Winter looked up and watched Joseph touching the furniture.

'What's the Mayor doing?' the Doctor asked.

'He's dressing to receive² the Colonel, sir,' Joseph answered.

'Aren't you going to help him. He won't dress himself

very well,' the Doctor said.

'Madame is helping him,' said Joseph. 'She wants the Mayor to look his best. Madame' – Joseph's face went a little red – 'Madame is cutting the hair out of the Mayor's ears, sir. He won't let me do it.'

Doctor Winter laughed suddenly. He stood up and held his hands to the fire. Joseph went quickly behind the Doctor and put the chair back in its correct place.

'We're so wonderful,' the Doctor said. 'Our country is falling and our town has been invaded. The Mayor is about to receive the invader, and Madame is cutting the hair out of the Mayor's ears!'

At that moment, a soldier's face looked through the glass window of the door and someone knocked. The warm light seemed to go out of the room. Doctor Winter looked up at the clock.

'They're early,' he said. 'Let them in, Joseph.'

Joseph went to the door and opened it. A soldier came in. He was dressed in a long, grey coat. The soldier wore a helmet and carried a sub-machine gun over his arm. He looked about quickly and then came into the room. An officer stood in the doorway behind the soldier.

The officer came in and looked at Doctor Winter. The officer looked exactly like an English gentleman. He did not walk like a soldier. His face was red and his nose was long, but he was not ugly. He stood in the doorway looking at Doctor Winter and he said, 'Are you Mayor Orden, sir?'

Doctor Winter smiled. 'No, I'm not.'

'Are you an official³, then?' the officer asked.

'No, I'm the town doctor and I'm a friend of the Mayor.'

'Where is the Mayor?' the officer asked.

'He's dressing. He's getting ready to receive you,' answered the Doctor. 'Are you the Colonel?'

'No, I'm Captain Bentick,' he said and bowed.

‘Colonel Lanser will be here soon. Before he arrives, we must search the room for weapons. We do not want to be impolite, sir.’

And the Captain called over his shoulder, ‘Sergeant!’

The sergeant went quickly to Joseph and to Doctor Winter. He searched their pockets for weapons.

‘I believe there are some guns here,’ said the Captain.

He opened a little leather book that he carried in his pocket.

‘You’re very careful,’ the Doctor said.

‘Yes, a man from your town has been helping us for some time,’ the Captain answered.

The Doctor looked very surprised.

‘I don’t suppose you would tell me his name,’ he asked.

‘He has finished his work now,’ Bentick said. ‘I think I can tell you. His name is Corell.’

‘George Corell!’ Doctor Winter said in surprise. ‘But that seems impossible!’

The Doctor knew George Corell well. Corell was an important man in the town and everyone liked him. The Doctor began to understand what had happened and his mouth closed slowly.

A door opened and Mayor Orden came in. He was dressed in his official coat, with his Mayor’s chain around his neck. The Mayor had a large, white moustache and big eyebrows. His white hair was brushed flat. He had been Mayor in this town for a very long time.

Madame was behind the Mayor. She was small and old and fierce. She walked around the Mayor and took his hand. Then she pushed the Mayor’s hand to his side and straightened his tie.

‘I’m glad you’re here, Doctor,’ she said. ‘How many officers do you think will come?’

And then Madame looked up and saw Captain Bentick.

‘Oh!’ she said, ‘the Colonel!’

‘No, ma’am,’ replied the Captain, ‘I’m not the Colonel.’

The sergeant was turning over pillows and looking behind pictures. Captain Bentick called him and he came quickly to Mayor Orden and felt the Mayor's pockets.



'Excuse me sir,' said the Captain, 'it's orders.'

The Captain looked at his little book again.

'Your Excellency⁴,' he said, turning to the Mayor, 'I think you have some guns here. Two, I believe?'

'Guns?' replied Mayor Orden. 'Yes, I have a shotgun and a sporting rifle. You know, I don't hunt very much any more. I don't use my guns very much now.'

'Where are these guns, Your Excellency?' Captain

Bentick asked.

The Mayor touched his face and tried to think. He turned and spoke to his wife.

'Weren't the guns in the cupboard in the bedroom?'

'Yes,' replied his wife, 'and all the clothes in that cupboard smell of oil. I wish you'd put the guns somewhere else!'

The sergeant went quickly out of the room. He returned a few minutes later carrying a shotgun and a sporting rifle.

'That's all, thank you, Your Excellency,' said the Captain. 'And thank you, Madame.'

The Captain turned and bowed to Doctor Winter.

'Thank you, Doctor,' he said. 'Colonel Lanser will be here soon. Good morning.'

And the Captain went out of the front door, followed by the sergeant with the guns.

2. Colonel Lanser

When the Captain had gone, the Mayor's wife spoke first.

'The Colonel will soon be here with his officers,' she said. 'Shall we give the officers tea or a glass of wine?'

Doctor Winter shook his head and smiled. 'I don't know. It's been so long since we invaded anybody or anybody invaded us. I don't know the correct thing to do.'

Mayor Orden put his finger in his ear.

'Well,' he said. 'I don't think we should offer the invader anything. I don't think the people would like it. I don't know why, but I don't want to drink with the invaders.'

Joseph came in with a small cup of black coffee. The

Mayor took the coffee almost without thinking and said, 'Thank you.' Then, as he drank the coffee, he turned to Doctor Winter.

'Do you know how many soldiers are in the town?' he asked.

'Not many,' the Doctor answered. 'I don't think there are more than a hundred and fifty, but they all have those little machine guns.'

The Mayor drank some more of his coffee.

'What about the rest of the country?' he asked.

The Doctor raised his shoulders and dropped them again.

'I don't know,' he said. 'The telephones do not work. There is no news.'

The Mayor stopped asking questions to look at his watch.

'What time is it?' asked Doctor Winter.

'Five to eleven,' the Mayor answered.

'They will be here on time,' said the Doctor. 'Do you want me to go away?'

Mayor Orden looked surprised.

'Go away? No, no, stay.' The Mayor laughed softly. 'I'm sorry, but I'm a little afraid. Well, not afraid really, but I'm nervous. We have not been invaded for such a long time.'

Then the Mayor stopped and listened. In the distance there was the sound of soldiers. The Mayor and his wife and Doctor Winter turned and listened.

'Here they are,' Madame said. 'I hope there aren't too many officers. This room isn't very big.'

There was a little knock on the door.

'Now who can that be?' said Madame. 'Joseph, if it is anyone, tell him to come back later. We are busy.'

There was another little knock. Joseph went to the door and opened it a little. Then he opened the door wider. A man stood in the doorway. He was dressed in grey and wore a helmet and big gloves.

'I come from Colonel Lanser,' the man said. 'Colonel

Lanser would like to meet your Excellency.'

Joseph opened the door wide. The man in the helmet stood aside and looked quickly round the room.

'Colonel Lanser!' he said.

A second man in a helmet walked into the room. This was the Colonel. He was middle-aged with a grey face and he looked tired. A third man in a black suit followed him into the room. It was Mr Corell.

Colonel Lanser took off his helmet. He bowed quickly and said, 'Your Excellency!' Then he bowed to the Mayor's wife and said, 'Madame!' Lanser looked at the doctor.

'This is Doctor Winter,' said the Mayor.

The Colonel turned towards the man in the black suit.

'I think you know Mr Corell,' he said.

'George Corell?' the Mayor answered. 'Of course I know him. How are you, George?'

Doctor Winter suddenly spoke.

'Your Excellency,' he said, 'our friend George Corell prepared this town for the invasion. He had made a list of every gun in the town. Our friend, George Corell!'

'I work for what I believe in!' Corell replied angrily.

'That's the right way to live!'

The Mayor's mouth opened a little. He did not understand. He looked from Winter to Corell.

'This isn't true!' he said. 'George, this isn't true! You have sat at my table, you have drunk wine with me. This isn't true!'

The Mayor looked at Corell for a long time and Corell looked angrily back. Nobody spoke. Then the Mayor's face and body became stiff and straight and he turned to Colonel Lanser.

'I do not wish to speak with this gentleman here,' said the Mayor.

'I want to be here!' Corell replied. 'I don't wear a uniform, but I am a soldier like the others.'

'I don't want to speak with this gentleman here!' the Mayor said again.

'Will you leave us now, Mr Corell,' the Colonel said.

'I want to be here!' Corell answered.

'Am I not the Colonel?' Lanser asked angrily.

'Well, yes, sir,' said Corell.

'Please go, then,' said Colonel Lanser.

Corell looked at the Mayor angrily. Then Corell turned and went quickly out of the doorway.

3. 'The People Can Do Nothing'

'May I sit down?' the Colonel asked after Corell had left.

'I have not slept for a long time.'

The Mayor suddenly seemed to wake up.

'Yes, of course,' he said. 'Sit down.'

The Colonel looked at the Mayor's wife. When she had sat down, the Colonel sat down, too. He seemed very tired. Mayor Orden stood in front of the fireplace. He was still half dreaming. The Colonel began speaking.

'We want to understand each other as well as we can,' he said. 'You see, sir, this war is being fought for a reason. You have a coal-mine here and there's good fishing. We need the coal and we need the fish. We will try to stay here without making trouble.'

'I have had no news,' the Mayor answered. 'What about the rest of the country?'

'The whole country is taken,' said the colonel. 'The invasion was well planned.'

'Wasn't there any fighting?' the Mayor asked.

The Colonel looked sorry. 'I wish there had not been any fighting. Yes, there was fighting. And some soldiers were killed. We had planned everything very carefully.'

'But aren't our soldiers still fighting against you?' the Mayor asked.

'They fought for a while,' answered the Colonel, 'but now all the fighting has stopped. It was foolish to fight.'

Then Doctor Winter spoke.

'Yes,' he said. 'It was foolish, but they did fight, didn't they?'

'Only a few fought,' Colonel Lanser answered, 'and now they are dead. The people are quiet now.'

'The people don't know yet what happened,' Doctor Winter said.

'They are beginning to know,' said Lanser. 'The people will not be foolish again.'

The Colonel coughed and his voice became firm.

'Now, sir,' the Colonel continued. 'I must talk business. I'm really very tired. But before I sleep, I must tell you one or two things. We need coal. The coal must come out of the ground. We have workers, but the local people will continue to work in the mine. Is that clear? We do not wish to give any trouble.'

'Yes, that is clear,' Orden said. 'But the people might not want to work in the mine.'

'I hope the people want to work in the mine because they must,' the Colonel answered. 'We must have the coal.'

'But what will happen if the people don't work in the mine?' asked the Mayor.

'They must,' answered Lanser. 'They're peaceful people. They don't want trouble.'

The Colonel waited for the Mayor's answer, but no answer came.

'Isn't that true, sir?' the Colonel asked.

Mayor Orden felt his watch.

'I don't know,' he replied slowly. 'The people are peaceful under their own government. I don't know how they will be under your government. Your government is