

The Return of the Moon Man

Pre-reading

'The Return of the Moon Man' is by Eric Malpass, and takes place in the future, although the future in this story seems remarkably like the present – or least the characters who populate it do. The two main characters in the story are Grandfather (Mortimer) Griffiths and his wife, Gran. They live on their farm called Pen-y-Craig, a Welsh name, and the way the characters speak indicates that they are Welsh.

1. Sequencing

Here are the main actions of the story, but they are mixed up. Can you put them into a logical order?

- A space ship launched from London lands in a field on the farm
- Gran decides Grandfather is dead and hangs black cloth around his picture
- Gran leaves the farm to go and live in a town and remarries
- Grandfather gets his revenge
- Grandfather goes missing
- Grandfather returns from the moon
- He hunts for Gran
- Newspaper headline '**Octogenarian on Moon**'
- One of the spacemen is injured and goes back to London
- The moon slowly changes from a full moon to a crescent moon to no moon
- We discover that Grandfather Griffiths is anti technology but that Gran isn't.

2. Matching

Here are 5 excerpts from the story that fit 5 of the actions mentioned above. Which is which?

'Nothing to what you will bite when you land on the Moon,' said my grandfather.

'That is what I am thinking,' the man replied. 'And that is why I say they can have their old Moon. Back to Golders Green by the first train it is for me.'

'No Moon,' repeated Gran in a voice of death. 'No Moon! She rose and hung a black cloth over the big picture of Grandfather at the Eisteddfod.

'Falling through the sky he will be now,' she said slowly; as though speaking to herself. 'Like a shooting star he will fall, and like a shooting star he will cease to be! She went back to her chair and sat down, her hands folded in her lap.

That was funny about Gran. She was progressive, and left to herself she would have filled the house with refrigerators and atomic cookers and washers. But Grandfather called these things devil's inventions, and would have none of them.

All the grown-ups looked uneasy, and suddenly I was frightened and began to cry.

'Gone to talk to the old bull, maybe,' said Gran.

Silently my father picked up the lantern and went out into the fields. It was a long time before he came back.

'Gone,' he said. 'clean as a whistle'.

No one said anything.

But at that moment there was a noise as of a great wind passing over, and then a terrible crash as though someone had picked up all our milk chums and dropped them on the Dutch barn. We ran outside, and there, in the Ten Acre Field, a Thing was glinting in the frosty moonlight. Huge it was, like a great shining rocket.