



Moondust: In Search of the Men Who Fell to Earth

Andrew Smith

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The Apollo Moon landings have been called the last optimistic act of the twentieth century. Twelve astronauts made this greatest of all journeys, and all were indelibly marked by it. In **Moondust**, journalist **Andrew Smith** reveals the stories of the nine still living men caught between the gravitational pull of the Moon and the Earth's collective dreaming: Here, we relive the flashbulbs, the first shocking glimpse of Earth from space, the sense of euphoria and awe. This was the first global media event, after all, and the astronauts were its superstars.

They had been schooled by NASA for every eventuality in deep space but were completely unprepared for fame. On their return, they struggled to balance notoriety with a spaceman's frugal paycheck. These perfect specimens of mind and body were, ultimately, only human beings thrust into an impossibly intense spotlight. Possibilities bloomed, and marriages crumbled under the strain.

And it wasn't just the astronauts who'd changed; the world was changing, too. As the Apollo program wound down, the wild and happy experimentations of the sixties gave way to the cynicism and self-doubt of the seventies, and the Moonwalkers faced what was, in some ways, their greatest challenge: how to find meaning in life when the biggest adventure you could possibly have was a memory. Some traded on past glories; others tried to move on. Some found God; some sought oblivion; some reinvented themselves and discovered a measure of happiness in a completely unexpected place. Andrew Smith sees them through the eyes of the boy who flung down his bike on a summer evening to hear Neil Armstrong utter his fateful words -- and through the eyes of a grown man balancing myth against reality and finding the truth infinitely richer and more moving.

A thrilling blend of history, reportage, and memoir, **Moondust** rekindles the hopeful excitement of an incandescent hour in American history and captures the bittersweet heroism of those who risked everything to hurl themselves out of the known world -- and who were never again quite able to accept its familiar bounds.

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