

**The Sea of Tranquility**

A 10 minute comedy

by Ted Fry

**Setting**

The Moon, the day after the international ban on claiming land on the Moon is unexpectedly lifted. On the edge of the Sea of Tranquility.

**Characters**

**Captain Apollo Pleasant**- American, named for the moon missions. Fulfilling a lifelong dream by stepping on the Moon and claiming land for the U.S.A.

**Vladimir Borovnikov**- Russian, overconfident and underqualified. Acts like this is just another Tuesday, but he is there to claim land for Russia.

**Captain Sylvie Hoffmann**- Luxembourgian, reserved, savvy, and calculating. There to claim the land for the mighty state of Luxembourg.

(LIGHTS UP. APOLLO enters in a spacesuit holding an American flag, taking moon steps.)

APOLLO

*\*krshhht\** Mission control, this is Captain Apollo Pleasant, checking in from the Sagittarius 1 space capsule, brought to you by Capital One. *\*krshhht\** (clearly over-rehearsed) The Sea of Tranquility lies before me, and a vast ocean of possibility is opened up to Americans everywhere. (deep breath) As I plant this flag at the edge of this magnificent expanse, may the symbolic significance of this moment be a beacon of hope... to... all.. the...

(APOLLO begins to trail off as VLADIMIR ENTERS the stage opposite, in a spacesuit, carrying a Russian flag)

VLADIMIR

(Russian accent, as he is entering) And for the glory of Russia, as I approach the edge of the newest addition to the empire of our people, to claim it for our own, I am-

APOLLO

Excuse me, I'm kind of in the middle of something here.

VLADIMIR

(Just realizing he is not alone) Oh, hello. Pardon me, I am in the process of claiming the Sea of Tranquility for mother Russia.

APOLLO

Well then we have a problem, because I'm here to claim the Sea for America!

(They stare at each other. APOLLO puffs out his chest, then deflates. Breaks the stare-off, turns, speaks into his wrist)

APOLLO

*\*krshhht\** Mission control, this is Captain Apollo Pleasant, requesting guidance on a new development. There is a foreign captain present attempting to-

VLADIMIR

I am not captain. I am farmer.

APOLLO

(looking up, disbelieving what he heard) Excuse me?

VLADIMIR

I am farmer in Russia. I grow potatoes. Make Vodka. Do you need more explanation?

APOLLO

How are you here if you're not a trained Cosmonaut?

VLADIMIR

Men come to farm, say, "Vladimir, Russia needs you". I go with them. They say, "We want you to go to moon and claim big Moon Sea for mother Russia. You leave tomorrow. Here's your suit." So here I am.

APOLLO

I can't believe this.

VLADIMIR

Are you satisfied? Can I claim Sea now?

APOLLO

No!!

(The two descend into an argument, voices overlapping. Meanwhile, SYLVIE ENTERS, wearing a spacesuit and holding the Luxembourgian flag)

SYLVIE

...And as I stand on the precipice of the Sea of Tranquility, I hereby claim this land in the name of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg...

(APOLLO trails off as he realizes that they have company. VLADIMIR turns and recognizes the same. SYLVIE is oblivious.)

SYLVIE

...I only hope that in doing so, our small but mighty nation may look to the sky, and take pride in the newest addition to our glorious-

APOLLO

Excuse me, who are you?

SYLVIE

Oh, hi there! I am Captain Sylvie Hoffmann, I am here on a mission to claim the Sea of Tranquility for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg!

(APOLLO and VLADIMIR are speechless)

SYLVIE

...And you are?

VLADIMIR

I am Vladimir Borovnikov! Pot-

APOLLO

He's a potato farmer. I, however, am Captain Apollo Pleasant. Decorated American Astronaut and United States Senior Ambassador to Outer Space, in partnership with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Buffalo Wild Wings. Pleased to make your acquaintance.

SYLVIE

You're Apollo Pleasant? You're a Legend! Your work on the Hypothetical Alien Transcommunication System changed the way we search for extraterrestrial life!

APOLLO

Why thank you! Always nice to meet a fan! H.A.T.S. was certainly a "giant leap" as it were.

(VLADIMIR looks bored, while APOLLO laughs at his own joke)

SYLVIE

Wow, it is such an honor to claim the Sea of Tranquility in the presence of my childhood hero!

APOLLO

Oh, right, about that. (Trying to be diplomatic) My apologies Captain Hoffman, but I'm afraid that I must... There are certain protocols that must... The United States has hereby authorized...

VLADIMIR

Hey, I'd really like to get back to Russia, so I'm going to claim Sea now.

APOLLO

No! Absolutely not! I didn't train for 30 years, orchestrate the repeal of the Outer Space Treaty, invent a universal inter-space radio communicator, and pilot a 2 billion dollar space shuttle to claim the most coveted section of the Moon, just to be turned away by some dense Russian potato farmer and a Luxembourgian fangirl!

(Beat)

APOLLO

Captain Hoffmann, I'm afraid I cannot allow you to claim this land, but maybe I can sign something for you?

VLADIMIR

Maybe you can take that little crater over there and claim that?

(SYLVIE marvels at the audacity. As the others return to their argument, she hatches a plan)

APOLLO

Now back to the matter at hand. Mr. Borovnikov, I suggest you go northwest to the Sea of Serenity or the Sea of Cold, and claim one of those for Russia.

VLADIMIR

Those are already taken.

(SYLVIE bounds away to the other side of the stage unnoticed and out of earshot)

APOLLO

They are? How? The Outer Space treaty was only lifted yesterday!

VLADIMIR

(Shrugs) Lots of countries want piece of moon.

APOLLO

All the more reason that I can stop at nothing to claim this coveted land for the United States!

(The two descend into argument once again, silently gesturing and mouthing off to each other as focus turns to SYLVIE)

SYLVIE

(Into her wrist) Captain's Log, May 23rd, 2029. I have encountered an unexpected- two unexpected complications in my mission to claim the Sea of Tranquility for Luxembourg. America and Russia have sent representatives to claim the Sea for their respective countries. American displays signs of inflated ego and God complex. Russian seems to have no idea what he's doing, but is stubborn. I was sent here at great cost to fulfill my mission. I must not fail.

(SYLVIE turns to observe APOLLO and VLADIMIR, studying them, taking notes. Focus shifts back)

APOLLO

THAT'S IT! (Turns away from VLADIMIR, raises flag to be planted. Deep breath) The Sea of Tranquility lies before me, and a vast ocean of-

VLADIMIR

*(overlapping, raising his own flag)* For the glory of Russia, as I stand at the edge-

APOLLO

Stop that!

VLADIMIR

Stop what?

APOLLO

Stop saying your line!

VLADIMIR

This is what they tell me to say!

APOLLO

You can't say that, because you're not claiming the Sea of Tranquility for Russia, I'm claiming it for America!

VLADIMIR

Why do you get to say your line then?

APOLLO

Because I trained for years! I devoted my entire life to this moment! I was named for the mission that bore the very first men to the Moon! This is my destiny! I wrote that line in the second grade, and kept it above my bed every night, waiting for this very moment!

VLADIMIR

(beat) It's a pretty lame line.

APOLLO

It is not!

VLADIMIR

Pretty lame.

APOLLO

It is not lame! It carries the weight of the moment, captures the symbolic nature of claiming the Sea of Tranquility, and hearkens back to the most famous quote in human history!

VLADIMIR

What quote?

APOLLO

(flummoxed) Neil Armstrong? One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind?

VLADIMIR

I haven't heard that.

APOLLO

How can you be on the moon, the MOON! And not know the one quote about the moon literally everyone knows?

VLADIMIR

Maybe because that line is lame too.

APOLLO

What? No! That's ridiculous!

(SYLVIE decides the time is right, and begins to bound back over to APOLLO and VLADIMIR)

VLADIMIR

Sounds like a first draft that they decided, "Meh, good enough".

APOLLO

(Collects himself) Listen. I am the most decorated Astronaut in American history. I am the most qualified person on Earth to be right here, right now. Therefore, I suggest you go back to your shuttle and leave this to me.

SYLVIE

Gentlemen, if I may-

VLADIMIR

(To APOLLO, not even registering SYLVIE's presence) No.

APOLLO

There's nothing for you here! I'm not giving this up!

VLADIMIR

Neither am I.

APOLLO

Why not? It doesn't mean anything to you! You're just a potato farmer!

SYLVIE

If I could interject-

VLADIMIR

I am not just a potato farmer, I am Vladimir Borovnikov: Potato farmer, vodka maker, lady lover. I “boldly go where no man has gone before”

APOLLO

That’s Star Trek!

VLADIMIR

Yes, Captain Kirk.

APOLLO

(beat) You know Star Trek, but you don’t know about Neil Armstrong?

VLADIMIR

Star Trek is very big in Russia.

SYLVIE

BOYS, PLEASE! If you’ll allow me, I believe I have a solution that will satisfy all parties. We agree that claiming the Sea of Tranquility is first and foremost a symbolic gesture, as this area holds no strategic or economic value to either of your countries, yes?

APOLLO, VLADIMIR

(begrudgingly) Yes.

SYLVIE

And you agree that as Captains-

(APOLLO coughs, indicates VLADIMIR)

SYLVIE

- That as *representatives* of your respective space agencies, you hold no power to resolve land or border disputes between your countries, and that such disputes must be left to your governments to sort out amongst themselves?

APOLLO, VLADIMIR

Yes...

SYLVIE

And we agree that neither of you will relinquish your country's claim to the Sea of Tranquility-

APOLLO/VLADIMIR

Not a chance/ Absolutely not!

SYLVIE

Then you will be here until you run out of oxygen, or worse.

APOLLO/VLADIMIR

Yes/Oxygen?

SYLVIE

Therefore, the only reasonable thing to do is for you to simultaneously lay claim to the Sea of Tranquility, and let your countries sort it out amongst themselves. You each get to complete your mission, and no one runs out of oxygen in a stand-off. Agreed?

APOLLO/VLADIMIR

(They glare at each other, but both see the sense in the plan. Beat.)

Fine./Agreed.

SYLVIE

Great, then we have an accord. It's been a pleasure, but I'm off to "claim that crater over there"

(SYLVIE EXITS with her flag)

(APOLLO and VLADIMIR turn out, raise their flags, exchange looks, then plant their flags in the ground.)

APOLLO

*\*krshhht\** Mission Control, I am pleased to report another successful mission by Captain Apollo Pleasant, in association with Rocket Mortgage. Shoot for the skies. *\*krshhht\**

(VLADIMIR rolls his eyes. APOLLO and VLADIMIR EXIT, going back to their respective ships. Lights stay up on the 2 flags. After a few moments, SYLVIE peeks her head out, checking for the others. She bounds to the center, again keeping an eye out for witnesses. After determining she is safe, she knocks the American and Russian flags down, leaving the flag of Luxembourg standing. Satisfied with herself, she bounds offstage. BLACKOUT.)  
(END.)