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172 Hours On The Moon

Lauren Johnson

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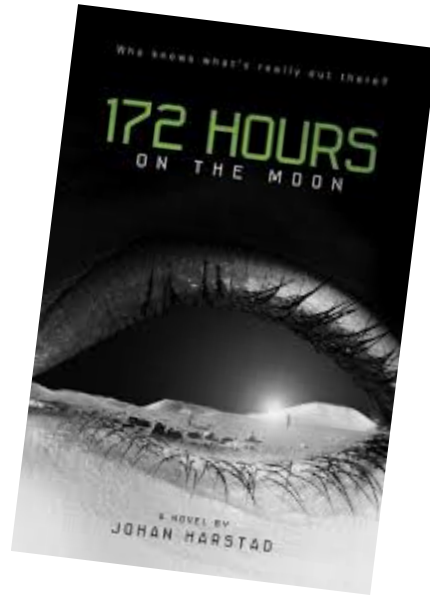
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Book Review

Title: 172 Hours On The Moon
Author: Johan Harstad
Reviewer: Lauren Johnson
Publisher: Little, Brown and Company
Publication Year: 2008
ISBN: 9780316182881
Number of Pages: 351
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Dependable



Review

It's 2018, and NASA is grasping for public funding and attention by sending three lucky teenagers for a week-long stay on the moon. What the winners don't know is that their trip is a brilliant cover-up. NASA's primary purpose in returning to the moon is to investigate reports of a sinister being on the lunar surface. All three teens receive chilling supernatural warnings not to go, but nevertheless report for training and rocket into space with four NASA astronauts, eventually landing safely on the moon. But when the lunar habitat's power is mysteriously disconnected and team members begin to die and disappear, NASA astronaut Captain Coleman must finally reveal that his suspicions have been confirmed: a being that presents itself as a doppelganger is plotting its own trip to earth, and none of the humans are invited. In her desperate attempt to escape, teenager Mia must confront her own horrifying doppelganger, who leaves Mia to die on the moon. The doppelganger travels to earth and embarks on a vicious killing spree.

In *172 Hours on the Moon*, author Johan Harstad manages to bore, delight, and horrify his readers in just 351 pages. Because the first half of the book is spent briefly but slowly developing many characters whose background add little to the plot, the book seems to lack suspense, and readers may find themselves less than engaged. However, once the mission lands on the moon and the focus turns to the teens' survival, Harstad's pacing is spot-on. With quick action and chilling details that ratchet up the suspense with each new page, Harstad crafts a delightful science-fiction horror story that readers will enjoy. The book's final pages, however, take a disturbing turn, with shockingly violent scenes that feel unprecedented. Overall, the novel presents a compelling story, but with uneven pacing and a final chapter that is much more horrific than horrifying.

*Contains brief but moderate to severe violence.