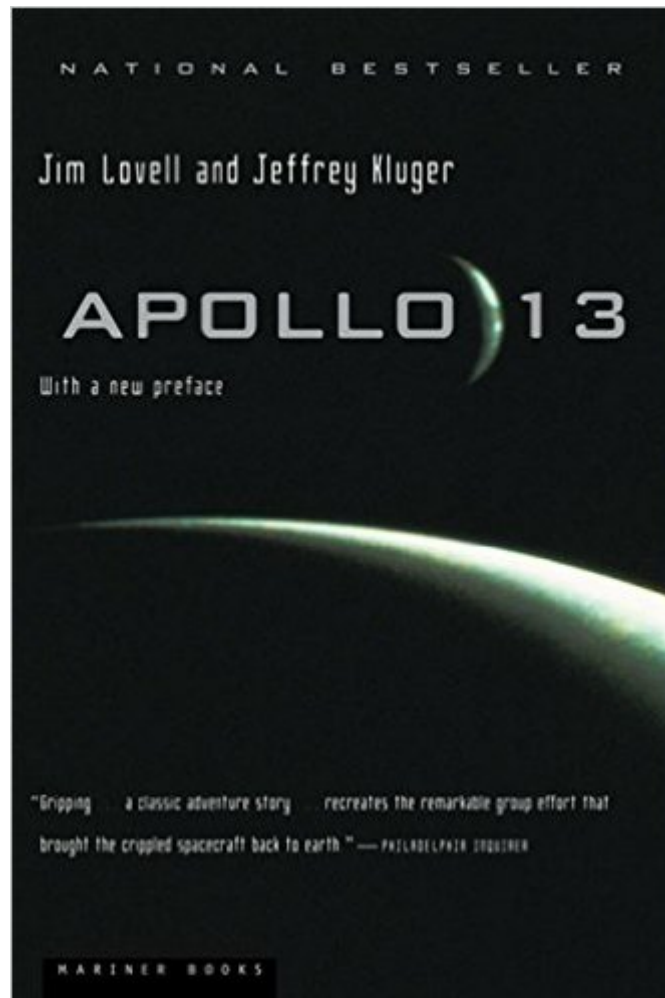


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Apollo 13



Synopsis

In April 1970, during the glory days of the Apollo space program, NASA sent Navy Captain Jim Lovell and two other astronauts on America's fifth mission to the moon. Only fifty-five hours into the flight of Apollo 13, disaster struck: a mysterious explosion rocked the ship, and soon its oxygen and power began draining away. Written with all the color and drama of the best fiction, APOLLO 13 (previously published as Lost Moon) tells the full story of the moon shot that almost ended in catastrophe. Minutes after the explosion, the three astronauts are forced to abandon the main ship for the lunar module, a tiny craft designed to keep two men alive for just two days. As the hours tick away, the narrative shifts from the crippled spacecraft to Mission Control, from engineers searching desperately for a way to fix the ship to Lovell's wife and children praying for his safe return. The entire nation watches as one crisis after another is met and overcome. By the time the ship splashes down in the Pacific, we understand why the heroic effort to rescue Lovell and his crew is considered by many to be NASA's finest hour. Now, thirty years after the launch of the mission, Jim Lovell and coauthor Jeffrey Kluger add a new preface and never-before-seen photographs to Apollo 13. In their preface, they offer an incisive look at America's waxing and waning love affair with space exploration during the past three decades, culminating only recently when the Apollo 13 spacecraft itself, long consigned to an aviation museum outside Paris, was at last returned to its rightful home in the United States. As inspiring today as it was thirty years ago, the story of Apollo 13 is a timeless tribute to the enduring American spirit and sparkling individual heroism.

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Customer Reviews

It had been a long time since I first saw the Apollo 13 movie and it was on TV, so I stopped and watched (and didn't move again until it was finished). The movie was fascinating, and it really triggered an interest to know more about what actually happened. With the limited time format in a movie to convey the technical information and the science behind 'slingshotting' the Apollo spacecraft around the moon, it was difficult to the full impact of the immense effort to get these men back safely. So when I had an opportunity to get the book, I did. I think this is the first time I've read a book and seen a movie that were both excellent. The movie did the best possible job in a limited time to convey the urgency. The book, which is filled with the conversations of the astronauts with NASA space center, as well as the innovation behind the scenes of all the men involved (and the companies) is absolute 'must' reading for anyone who wants to understand the science and engineering behind this almost-disaster. I beg to differ with the men who felt they had failed, including Lovell who did not get to land on the moon. Without the knowledge they gained from this flight, more people may have died...and it certainly advanced knowledge and understanding for space flight for the rest of us left on earth below. This is an incredible story and an well-written book. I could hardly put the thing down, and this is not an area of expertise or interest for me usually. It's a little hard to keep the names and people straight, because so many were involved. But it is worth the effort. This is an excellent book to give to students interested in space or engineering.

Apollo 13 is one of History's great voyages regardless of how long one extends the time frame into the past. If the mission had transpired faultlessly, it still would have qualified for the astonishing, remarkable, achievement it would have been. With the malfunctions that cascaded upon the 3 crewmen, they, together with the men and women on the ground, created their own miracle when the splashdown with the 3 crewmembers was completed. The return, in spite of the overwhelming odds that were against them, places this trip in category of great human achievement, even as it is hoped it never need be repeated. One fact helped to put the trip into perspective for me. If you have a hand held calculator nearby, pick it up. The chances are the computing power you hold in your hand surpasses that available to the crew in their effort to come home. The movie demonstrated this with slid rules and math completed with paper and pencil. The whole event is almost unimaginable. The book is worth reading because as hard as it may be to fathom, the actual trip was even more hazardous, the problems even more numerous than the movie portrayed. I am not suggesting the movie was flawed, only that it was limited by time for telling the entire story. I met Mr. John L. Swigert when I was quite young. My memories are limited but I have a picture that was taken with him that is a treasure. Several years ago I heard Mr. Jim Lovell speak, and his remarks

confirmed that the actual trip held hazards the movie did not depict. As he related parts of the story the impression was of a man who was always in control, a leader, and utterly confident in the men he flew with, and those they relied so heavily with on the ground. There was nothing about him that gave the impression that what he did was special.

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