

BLAST OFF

Based on real life, this is the hilarious story of three billionaires building rockets and you guessed it, BLASTING OFF into space.

Written by

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Brief Bio: My latest novel *Juan Pablo and the Butterflies* (Simon and Schuster) won the Westchester Fiction Award and the episodic TV script is currently optioned at Faye Schwab Productions. Lantern Books recently published my short book *Grief Is Love*, written for everyone who has lost a loved one. Before that I wrote a bunch of historical romance novels (Avon Books, Zebra Books under the name Jennifer Horsman) many of which also won awards and one of these awards was almost considered prestigious. I finally stopped being able to write these novels when I began having increasingly vivid fantasies of killing off my heroines—in really dreadful ways. I have also written six screenplays and these have been optioned over twenty-five times. (Warner Bros., Paramount, Julian Krainin Productions, Dreamworks.) These include *Clarence Darrow's Last Stand*, Darrow's last and most compelling case where he successfully defended an African America physician who was falsely accused of murder, a script that has won screenwriting two contests, auctioned once and optioned almost ten times and *Noah's Ark: The True Story*, a hilarious retelling of the famous bible story, which Jeffery Katzenberg said was one of the best animation scripts he ever read. I also wrote *The Emma Edmonds Story*, the true story of a young woman who disguised herself as a man and fought heroically in the Civil War, which okay, has only won one award, but oh, boy it rips beginning to end and has a romance as powerful as the Titanic but set against the most tumultuous time in our history.

Wait. You did ask?

INT. LARGE AUDITORIUM - DAY

On stage, OWEN SHELL sits on a high-end chair, surrounded by cutting-edge tech. Slightly disheveled, not fit, and wild eyed, he appears caught between mad genius and, well, plain crazy.

He wears almost all black - pants, tee-shirt, jacket, sneakers - but then goofy rainbow socks.

He leans forward, while taking a long draw on his vape.

The screen behind him shows the fluctuating price of his multi-billion dollar company FlashE's stock, and these digitalized numbers are also in rainbow colors.

In the audience two thousand well dressed, mostly young men and stock-broker types hang on this man's every word, recording it, speaking to their offices, even as they watch the fluctuating price of his company's stock.

AUDIENCE MEMBER ONE

Not speaking...

AUDIENCE MEMBER TWO

Still not speaking...

AUDIENCE MEMBER ONE

Silence...

Owen looks up from a contemplative pause - or a drugged stupor - it is hard to tell which. He notices the audience for the first time.

OWEN

Whoa. Look at this.

AUDIENCE MEMBER ONE

Speaking!

AUDIENCE MEMBER TWO

He started...

AUDIENCE MEMBER THREE

Stand by...

The stock price tentatively starts going up.

Owen takes out his phone and swipes. He swipes again, trying to open it. Again. Giving up, he returns it to his pocket and turns to the side for help.

RO, a well dressed, beautiful East Indian woman, who is definitely running this show, rushes out.

OWEN
(Whispers) What day is this?

RO
Day? Omg. Saturday.

OWEN
The date?

RO
12th.

Owen still appears confused.

RO (CONT'D)
July!

Pause. Owen looks this way and that, still unsure.

RO (CONT'D)
(Heated whisper:) 2022!

This amazes and delights Owen.

OWEN
2022? Whoa. (laughs) It's like I
time traveled.

Ro's most common gesture? A roll of eyes heavenward.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Yeah. Okay. What are we doing here?

RO
You're suppose to speak about the
future.

OWEN
(Nods) Right. (To the audience:)
The future.

He pauses, takes another toke as Ro exits the stage.

OWEN (CONT'D)
The future is A.I., man.

He holds in the smoke. His voice is pinched:

OWEN (CONT'D)
A.I. will be a trillion times
faster than a human, see? No need
for humans. Humans are already
obsolete.

Expels a cloud of smoke.

AUDIENCE MEMBER ONE
No more humans. Get rid of them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER TWO
86 all employees.

The company's stock price starts going up.

OWEN
You see, this...
(indicates body)
...is just a meat suit. Who needs
it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER TWO
(frightened)
No more meat?

AUDIENCE MEMBER ONE
(confused, uncertain)
Go vegetarian?

AUDIENCE MEMBER THREE
That's what he said...

The stock price slows, then slowly starts downward.

Six look alike boys, who also appear weirdly similar to Owen, stand with a sign in the audience. Each has one or two letters displayed on iPads and this reads: WE LOVE DAD!

Owen spots this and nods, indicating them with his head.

OWEN
The China experiment.
(Thoughtful pause:)
We have a bunch of other
experiments going on. Like, we're
putting these really cool like, I
don't know, micro chips? These tiny
metal thingamajigs in mice brains.
How awesome is that?

Excited by this idea, his next thought sinks his expression.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Though, honestly, it got me down
the other day. I mean how many of
the little buggers have to die
before we get the internet into a
mouse brain?

(MORE)

OWEN (CONT'D)

We're looking at a mouse holocaust.

Owen takes a draw, suddenly starts laughing.

OWEN (CONT'D)

First this, you know, mouse
holocaust, then humans.

(Laughs harder)

Assuming our A.I. overlord even
lets us.

Still laughing.

The stock price is sinking fast.

Ro rushes out in a desperate attempt to right this ship.

RO

(Whispers) Owen. Pull. It.
Together. The future!

OWEN

(Surprised again)
Right. Right. Okay. The future.

RO

Think. What can you say about the
future?

Draws back, like duh.

OWEN

We're fucked. We are seriously
fucked.

RO

Not that! Please not that. What do
you love about the future?

Owen puts his thinking hat on.

OWEN

What do I love about the future?

INT. OWEN'S PRIVATE HOME - FLASHBACK

In a darkened room, the back of Owen's head appears above a hyper-modern couch. The original Star Trek plays out on a huge screen. Captain Kirk, Spock and Bones shoot phasers at a giant Greek God.

Smoke rises around Owen's head.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Vapor still swirls around Owen's head.

OWEN

Space. The final frontier. Rockets
and all that shit. 'Cause, like,
seriously, people. We're gonna need
a new planet.

The audience rustles, unsure of this.

The stock price bounces slowly up and down, reflecting this
same uncertainty.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Wow. Holy shit.

Owen's mind is blown.

OWEN (CONT'D)

You know what would be, like, so
cool?

The rapt audience leans forward.

OWEN (CONT'D)

If, like, I built a rocket and shot
into space!

The words hit the collective consciousness of his audience.
They exchange uncertain looks. Uncertain for but a moment.

The company's stock slowly starts going up, then faster and
faster still.

AUDIENCE MEMBER ONE

He's a genius.

AUDIENCE MEMBER TWO

Brilliant!

The audience stands with thunderous applause.