



A Bunch of Plumbers

John Newcomb

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The Unsung Heroes of the American Space Program A Bunch of Plumbers is the behind-the-scenes story of how NASA engineers, armed with butcher paper, slide rules, and punch card computers, accomplished two of the most successful missions of the 20th century-the Lunar Orbiter Project that placed five spacecraft around the Moon and photographed the proposed Apollo Landing Sites, and the Viking Project that succeeded, against all odds, in placing two landers on the surface of Mars in 1976. John Newcomb's account is a tribute to the Lunar Orbiter and Viking Project Teams and the thousands of other engineers who were the unsung heroes of the space race. Woven throughout this book are stories of extraordinary people like Derwood, who launched rockets from Wallops and continued to play the violin despite losing an arm in a launch accident; superstitions like Lee Scherer's lucky coat; and Newcomb's save-the-day calculation involving rolls of butcher paper. It is a wild ride mixed with sobering realities of sacrifice and dedication. And ...you don't have to be a rocket scientist to enjoy this book.

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