

Junkyard Rocket

By

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FADE IN:

INT. LESLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A young boy's bedroom, filled with space toys, Astro iconography, and books.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

Climate issues continue with some of the worst natural disasters we have experienced in years.

LESLIE, 10, Boy, pyjamas slips out of bed, puts on slippers. Grabs empty cup from bedside table, walks to bedroom door.

He opens the door and creeps into the hall.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Leslie tiptoes down the stairs, the living room visible. He moves down, the flickering light of the TV shines on his face and he stops.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Devastating forest fires continue to ravage the west coast.

Leslie holds onto the stair banister, watching the screen, grip tightens on empty cup.

He's a deer caught in headlights, watches the fire rage through the hills.

MUM, DAD, sit with their back to him, facing the TV, blank and no movement.

NEWS ANCHOR

Here on day three of the worst forest fire we have had on record and fire departments are struggling to handle the blaze. Members of the community have taken to social media and asked, 'is this the end of the world?'

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Leslie creeps down the stairs, enters the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Leslie shuts the door behind him, careful not to make a

sound.

He places his cup down and shuffles past the fridge. He looks up out of the window.

His wide eyes, still filled with fear, fixate on the moon. The vastness of the night sky draws him in. In the centre of that eye, the moon.

The look shifts from terror to hope.

LESLIE'S POV:

An imaginary rocket soars across the moon, gliding gracefully.

CUT TO:

He watches in awe.

Leslie makes a loud and excited gasp.

**TITLE CARD:** *Junkyard Rocket*

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

At the kitchen table, EMMA, 15, Graphic band t-shirt, ripped jeans, headphones, slouches in her chair, the embodiment of teenage apathy. The music is loud, muffled in the background.

She chews her cereal slowly, indifferent, scrolls through her phone, news articles about the fires.

Leslie sprints past her, jolts out the back door.

Emma barely glances up to watch Leslie run out.

A reel on her phone plays.

JOURNALIST

World leaders say time is running short to stop the worst effects of warming.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

The back garden is long and untamed, filled with scattered piles of junk; discarded furniture, old garden tools, scrap, broken toys. Forgotten by time, left to decay and decompose.

Leslie is at the far end of the garden. Scouting out a spot

for his work, he extends his arms and draws a square for a semi-empty spot of the garden.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Astronaut Leslie Sharp, preparing to  
build the greatest rocket ever!  
Mission: Escape Earth. Destination:  
The Moon!

He claps his hands together.

Lifts a large and heavy rusted metal sheet and drags it across the floor, plants it flat where he marked his working space.

He places various items on the sheet, metal bucket, cardboard box, old piping.

Places an old dining room chair in the middle.

He sits on the chair and looks at the mess around him. Smiles proudly at his work.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Astronaut Sharp, do you have any  
comment on how rocket progress is  
going?

LESLIE

(Deep voice)

Excellent, we have our seats and our  
engine!. Now we just need a way for  
the rocket to blast up. For that we  
are using...

He looks around. Looks up at Emma's bedroom window, gasps.

He runs back towards the house.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Leslie runs through.

Emma at table, still on phone.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Leslie runs through, holding hair dryer. Holds it behind his back away from Emma.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Leslie runs to the rocket. Ties the hair dryer to the bottom of the chair.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Emma enters the room. Rock music blasting through her earphones. She looks through a desk full of makeup, hair products and straighteners.

EMMA

Where are the...

Something outside catches her eye. Walks to the window.

She sees Leslie hopping off the chair. He disappears behind a pile of junk, re-emerging with a bicycle wheel.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Why does he always have to come in here and take my stuff?

He drags it across the ground, his little face scrunched with effort.

Emma watches, eyebrows furrowed.

Leslie moves onto something else, picking up a wooden crate, inspecting it, tossing it aside.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Weirdo.

The rocket ship loses stability and falls directly onto Leslie.

She gasps. Sprints out the room.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - LATER

Emma bursts through the back door, running toward Leslie with great urgency.

Leslie is crying and screaming. A plank of wood is laying on top of him.

Emma gets to him and lifts the plank of wood off and throws it.

EMMA

What are you doing?!

Leslie, sniffing stands back up and looks at his rocket.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Leslie! You could have been seriously hurt.

Emma stomps to the collection of items Leslie has acquired and starts rummaging through. She pulls out a small rusty sharp metal sheet and a bit of rotten wood with a nail in it.

Her face is shocked, flings it far away.

LESLIE

No! That's my rocket!

EMMA

It's not a rocket, this is a mess.

LESLIE

It's not, this is for you as well you know?

EMMA

Fine. Why are you building a rocket?

LESLIE

Going to the moon.

Emma scrunches her face. She unties the hair dryer from the seat, grunting.

EMMA

Stop going into my room and taking my stuff! I'm taking this all down.

LESLIE

The woman said we will die if we stay on Earth!

EMMA

You're not going to die and you're not going to the moon. Go inside and stop being such an idiot.

Leslie looks down at the ground. His arms at his side, fists clenched. Face scrunched and on the brink of tears.

Emma notices, her demeanour calms.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for calling you that. It's the fires that are worrying you?

LESLIE

What if they spread to our house?

EMMA

We lives miles away, they won't spread to here. But all of this junk doesn't help stop things that cause those fires.

LESLIE

What do you mean?

EMMA

Help me take all this down, I have an idea.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - EVENING

The clutter has been rearranged, tools, bike parts and odd materials scattered around.

A makeshift rainwater collection system made from old plastic bottles. A compost pile tucked away near the fence. A solar oven designed with cardboard and tinfoil, with a clear plastic sheet on it. A line from the house extending to the tree, tied to it, clothes hanging. A plant bed made from wooden planks.

At the centre of it, Leslie and Emma sat on the ground next to each other.

LESLIE

Thank you for helping me. I'm not scared anymore.

EMMA

Stop going into my room. You're welcome.

They look over the work they have done, Emma puts her arm around Leslie and brings him in for a hug.

FADE OUT.

THE END