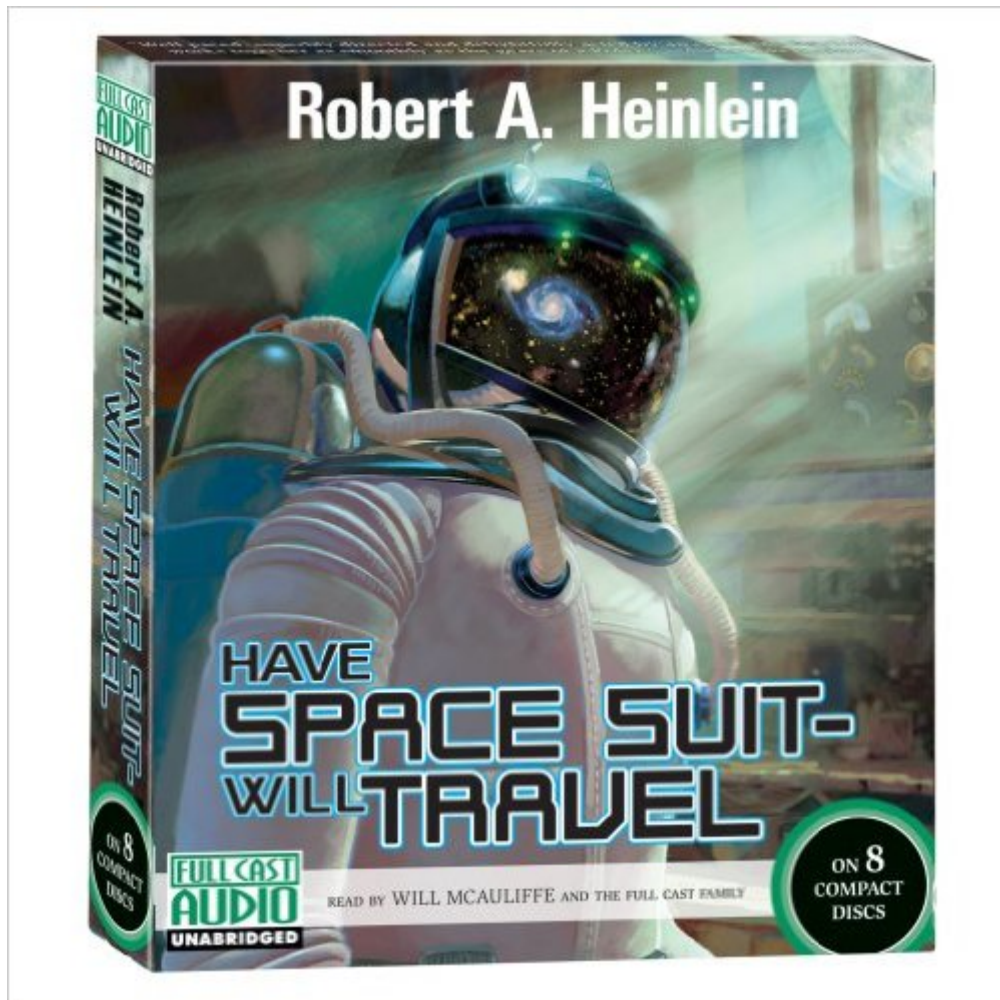


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# Have Space Suit, Will Travel



## Synopsis

When Kip Russell wins a used space suit, he has no idea it will lead to his abduction by aliens, much less that he will wind up crossing the galaxy with a pint-sized genius named Pee Wee and an empathetic alien creature called the "Mother Thing." It's a galaxy spanning adventure from the greatest science fiction writer of all time.

## Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #7,956,662 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > ( H ) > Heinlein, Robert A. #2424 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > Fantasy #3215 inÂ Books > Books on CD > Children's Fiction > General

## Customer Reviews

This was the first science fiction book I ever read, I found it in the public library when I was 12 years old, was intrigued by the title and took it home to read. I enjoyed it immensely and went on to devour Heinlein's other kid's classic, "Podkayne of Mars" which I thought was equally wonderful. Thirty-five years later, Kip, Peewee and the Mother Thing have lost none of their charm. What I found most interesting about this book, however, was how very much things have changed since this it was first published: the story begins with Kip's attempting to win first prize in a soap slogan contest (he sends in 5,000+ entries) the grand prize for which is a trip to the moon. He doesn't win the trip but he does win Oscar-the-Traveling-Spacesuit, which turns out to be the best prize after all. Back to the contest: Kip can send in the actual contest form included with each bar of soap or he can send in a "reasonable facsimile." He entertains the idea of photographing the form 5,000 times before deciding that's impractical, so he settles instead for collecting the forms from the people who have bought the soap. I kept thinking, so why doesn't he just use the photocopier when it occurred to me there weren't any photocopiers when this book was written. There weren't any integrated circuits either, never mind microprocessors, which would have been necessary to achieve colonization of

the moon in the first place.

Have Space Suit--Will Travel represents Heinlein at his storytelling best. Free of the esoteric themes that would appear in his later writings, this book is pure science fiction seemingly written solely for the enjoyment of the reader. Originally published in 1958, the story stands up well even today and will surely be read and enjoyed by untold generations to come. I am sure that many a young person read this book and yearned to reach the moon in the decade before the Eagle finally landed. This is generally classified as one of Heinlein's juvenile books, but Heinlein's writing is for all ages. I am sure the book appeals to many young people because its protagonists are themselves young people: Kip is a high school senior, and Peewee is a girl of about twelve. Kip develops an overpowering urge to go to the moon, and he is lucky enough to win a real space suit in a contest. Heinlein's description of the many different features of the suit is fascinating. Resigning himself to selling the suit for college tuition money, Kip goes for one last walk; somewhat playfully calling out on the radio, he is surprised to hear an answer to his call. He is amazed when a space ship soon lands in his backyard and a decidedly alien creature comes out and collapses. A second ship lands, an entity gets out and conks Kip on the head, and the next thing Kip knows he is trapped inside a space ship on his way to the moon, suddenly in the company of a little girl. His captors are "Wormfaces," a species of alien that has been in hiding on the moon, looking at the earth with evil intentions.

When I was in 4th grade the librarian noticed that when our class made it's weekly visit to the library I absolutely refused to check out a fiction book. One day she took me to a section I'd never noticed before, where little spaceships with a stylized atom orbit were on the spine of each book. She pulled one down and said "I think you might like this." That book was "Have SpaceSuit -- Will Travel" and to this day I wish I could thank her for what she did. HSWT was the first fiction I had ever seen (at the advanced age of 9) which was not of the "see Spot run" variety. The hero, Kip, is a normal kid a few years older than I was at the time, who has willingly learned latin and french, can do math, has read history, and desperately wants to go to space. He's not a genius, just a normal, smart kid. While walking in his back yard one night pretending to be on the moon he accidentally contacts (via radio) a spacecraft in earth orbit. The spacecraft (to his utter surprise) then lands almost on top of him. Kip meets Pee-Wee, a 9 year old girl smarter than him, the Mother-Thing, and Wormface. He gets to travel to Luna and the Magellanic Cloud and save the earth. This book has everything young people should be exposed to: action, intelligence, a non-condescending authorial voice and, MOST

importantly, STRONG moral values, such as loyalty, bravery, and the importance of education. In one scene, Heinlein teaches the reader a mnemonic for memorizing some important facts about our solar system and demonstrates how to solve a problem involving the speed of light mathematically. Importantly, Heinlein was generations ahead of his time when he made the girls and women in his books as smart and brave as the males.

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