It's All in My Book!

Jonathon Millington was the toast of the country. In fact, he was the toast of many countries.

The clever young scientist had been the sole astronaut on the second manned space flight to the moon. The Australian had been chosen from a host of well-qualified candidates for the job. He would be alone on this, the second moon landing by a human.

There had been no hiccups at all in the flight until the landing itself, when the television satellite link broke down. No television pictures of the landing and moonwalk were seen on Earth. There was a story doing the rounds that some technicians believed someone or something had deliberately tampered with the television equipment. But these rumours soon fizzled out in the triumph of Millington's return.

Life was looking rosy for young Mr Millington. He was living in a perfume cloud with a number of beautiful starlets chasing him. His handsome face seemed to beam out at the world from every magazine stard. Movie executives were falling over themselves with blank cheque offers of starring roles and a publisher had given him a one million dollar advance for his soon to be released book about the landing.

Pursued by reporters, he dropped a bombshell that was to shatter current scientific thinking.

'Yes,' he said, 'believe it or not, there is life on the moon. I don't know what feeds it. I don't know how it survives in an environment with no atmosphere like the moon's. But I do know what I saw and heard. I'll never forget it... the bloodcurdling shriek that it makes. A scream like nothing you or I or anyone else, for that matter, have ever heard.

'Anyway guys, thank you. It's all going to be in my book. You can read about it there,' he said. 'Only $49.95 at all good bookstores,' he added jokingly. He was soon whisked away to yet another society function in a gold limousine. Sitting at home and watching proceedings on television was the well-respected scientist, Bunsen Von Braun. 'Ach du lieber! Dass silly boy ist einen dimvit. Vy do he telling ze lies for? He's going to be losing every sink because he iss telling zem dumkopf lies!' ☺

You, the comprehension detective, must do a little research to find out how Professor Von Braun knew that Millington was telling a sensational but untrue story to boost his book's sales.

1. What do you think is meant by the colloquial expression 'blank cheque offers'?

2. In the passage it says of Millington, 'he was living in a perfume cloud'. What do you think this means?
3. Write short answers to the questions below.

(a) Why was Jonathon Millington the toast of many countries?
________________________________________________________________________

(b) From which country was Millington?
________________________________________________________________________

(c) What broke down just as his craft was landing?
________________________________________________________________________

(d) What did some technicians think?
________________________________________________________________________

(e) List three good things that happened to Millington after his return to Earth.
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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(f) What 'bombshell' did Millington drop?
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(g) What did Millington say the 'moon being' ate?
________________________________________________________________________

(h) What sort of noise did he say it made? (i) What price was his book?
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________________________________________________________________________

(j) What did Professor Von Braun think of Millington's story?
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4. Choose the correct words from the word bank to complete the passage.

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<th>pitch</th>
<th>motion</th>
<th>travels</th>
<th>vibrates</th>
<th>can not</th>
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<tr>
<td>plucked</td>
<td>vacuum</td>
<td>particles</td>
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When a tight string is __________ it ____________, compressing the air particles nearby. These __________ move in a wave ____________. Sound __________ by means of these waves of vibrating air particles. The faster things vibrate, the __________ the __________ of the sound they make. Sound __________ travel in a __________ because there are no particles to vibrate.

5. If you know a little bit of elementary science, you should be able to tell why Professor Von Braun was suspicious of Millington’s story.
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