

My name is Galileo Galilei. I am 76 years old and I am blind. I live under house arrest by order of His Holiness Pope Urban VIII. I suspect I will live this way until I die. I still have three pleasures left in life. The first of these is my work. My new book *Dialogue on Two New Sciences* has been smuggled out of this country to be published in France. Of course no one in this country would publish a book by a man branded a heretic. The second pleasure is my son Vincenzo who lives with me and helps me. When I lost my sight over the last few years I turned to dictating the book to him. The third pleasure is, as it has been most of my life, my music. When I need cheering up I can still play the lute. And I can rarely play it without thinking of my father, Vincenzo; it was he that taught me to play when I was a boy.

WHEN I WAS A BOY

Upon discovering mathematics I quit medical school and became a tutor of mathematics until I secured a position at the University of Pisa, where I had recently been a troublesome, irritating student known for my still-annoying habit of attacking the teachings of Aristotle. Those arrogant, out-dated professors were now arrogant, out-dated colleagues, and they felt no warmer to me than I did toward them. I can well imagine what they used to say about me.

A WRANGLER

And indeed, when my contract expired it was not renewed and I was again out of work until influential friends intervened and I was hired as a mathematics instructor in the prestigious University of Padua, located in the Serene Republic of Venice. I lived there for eighteen years and did work in many fields. Two of these were to be of utmost importance. The first was the discovery of the basic laws of motion.

A LECTURE

It is the subject of the laws of motion that my new book addresses; it took me fifty years to finally write down what I discovered in my twenties. The second great adventure began when I heard of a Flemish inventor who was trying to sell his newest toy. It was a long tube that made far away objects appear to be near. I sensed the importance of such an invention and I spent a fevered week of work experimenting until I had created something far better than the poor Flemish gentleman had ever imagined. In 1609, at the age of 45, I aimed my new invention at the sky and set the rest of my life in motion.

STARS

Within a year I had published *Starry Messenger* to announce to the world my discoveries. The most shocking were: the moon is pock-marked and imperfect, not perfect, as demanded by Aristotelian theory and that Jupiter has four moons revolving around it, indicating that not *everything* in the universe revolves around the Earth. I began to be convinced of the correctness of the theory of the Polish cleric Nicolai Copernicus, whose work in reforming the calendar for the Church had led him to the radical conclusion that the Earth revolves about the sun.

The book made me a celebrity. I used my new renown to secure a position back in my home-state of Florence as court mathematician - and philosopher. My decision to name the four moons of Jupiter after the Medicis - the rulers of Florence - may have helped in this effort.

I soon traveled to Rome and met with the most influential people. I had two audiences with the Pope who blessed my work. I was also inducted into the Society of Lynxes - a group of young men dedicated to the advancement of science and experimentation. At the ceremony to make me a member we made fine speeches, we spoke of the pursuit of the truth - but mostly we drank.

THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN HEAVEN

PASSION

When I left Venice I left behind some hard feelings, some fine friends, and my common-law wife Marina and our three children. I was sure that we would all meet again, but Marina and I were to never see each other again.

DAYS LIKE THESE

The implications of my conversion to Copernicanism were not lost on some in the church. I came in for criticism by those who felt that scripture demanded that the sun rotates around the Earth. How else, for instance, could one explain the story of Jericho? Clearly I posed a threat to two sets of people -- the clergy, who defended scripture and the philosophers who saw in me a challenge to the cosmology of Aristotle. The harping at me was incessant. I was even formally accused of heresy and an investigation was begun although nothing came of it at the time.

TARGET

I sent a letter to a friend in which I outlined my growing belief in the Copernican system and my opinion that the Church and Science had separate roles and that for the church to rule on matters of science could be devastating should they be proven wrong. The letter, along with false, incriminating versions of it began to circulate. Ultimately the letter was published in the form of that I sent to the Archduchess Christina of Florence.

THE LETTER TO CHRISTINA

The letter circulated widely. I was finally summoned to Rome and told by Cardinal Belarmine that it was acceptable to teach the heliocentric theory only as a mathematical convenience and not as literal truth.

SAVE THE APPEARANCE

In 1632, at the age of 68 I finally published "A Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems." I felt that I complied with the church's demands by structuring the book as a conversation among three men: Salviati, presenting clearly and rationally the Copernican view, Sagredo (modeled on a now-dead friend from Venice) as the interested, but uncommitted listener, and, Simplicio arguing as the tired, befuddled Aristotelian. The book was approved by a Florentine censor and printed. Had the plague not been afoot it would have been sent to Rome and much may have turned out differently. The book caused a sensation as soon as it hit the stores. A group of Aristotelian philosophers approached Pope Urban to convince him that the book was heretically dangerous, and, worse, that Simplicio was a mocking caricature of the Pope himself.

STOP HIM

STILL IT MOVES

WHEN I WAS A BOY