

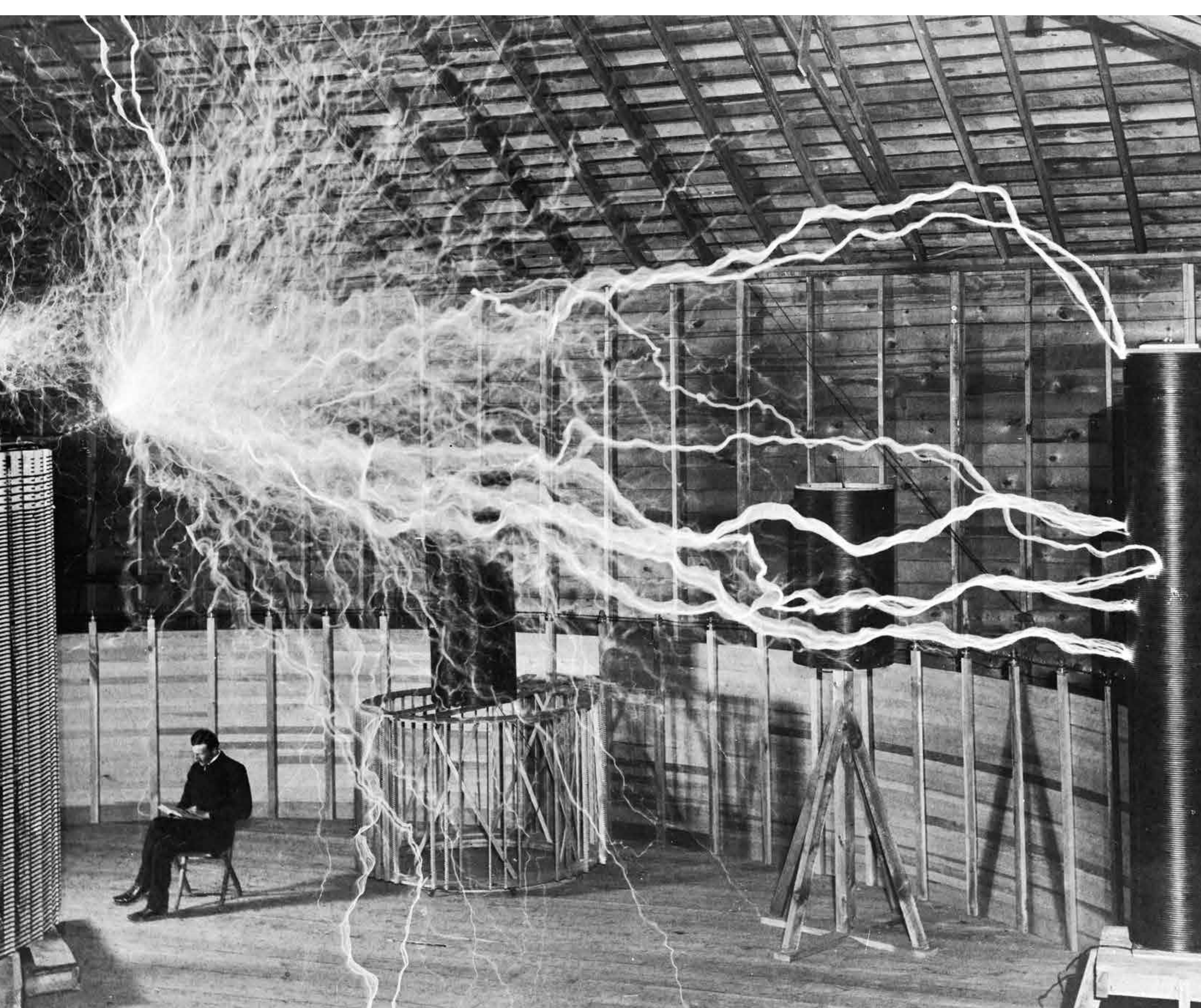
EDISON AND TESLA in Science Fiction

Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla share a legacy of over 125 years in popular culture.

Edison and Tesla's legacies extend to fictionalized biopics, appearances in television programs, novels and video games. *The Current War* (2017), *Tesla* (2020) and the Doctor Who episode *Nikola Tesla's Night of Terror* (2020) are recent additions that show the ongoing fascination with the inventors.

Edison's Android

The earliest fictional work featuring Edison is the 1886 French novel *L'Ève Future* (The Future Eve) by Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, which popularized the term "android." By means of "electromagnetic power and Radiant Matter," Edison imparts the physical beauty of a theatre singer onto an android he creates on behalf of an English nobleman. The antifeminist overtones and psychological themes of the novel set it apart from the adventures of Jules Verne, a contemporary French author.



Tesla experimented with a powerful "magnifying transmitter" for interplanetary communication. The photo is fake: the seated Tesla appeared via a double exposure. Photo by Dickinson Alley, December 1899



Cover of the French novel *L'Ève Future* (1886), in which Edison appeared as the central character. Public Domain

To Mars with Tesla

In a series of newspaper articles published in early 1901, Tesla claimed to have detected radio signals from Mars and to be capable of communicating with the planet. This inspired Weldon J. Cobb's novel *To Mars with Tesla*, serialized in the boys' magazine *New Golden Hours*. Tesla's claims also inspired a plot point in H.G. Wells's 1901 novel *The First Men in the Moon*, whose criticism of imperialism is in stark contrast to the tone of earlier dime novels, such as *Edison's Conquest of Mars*.

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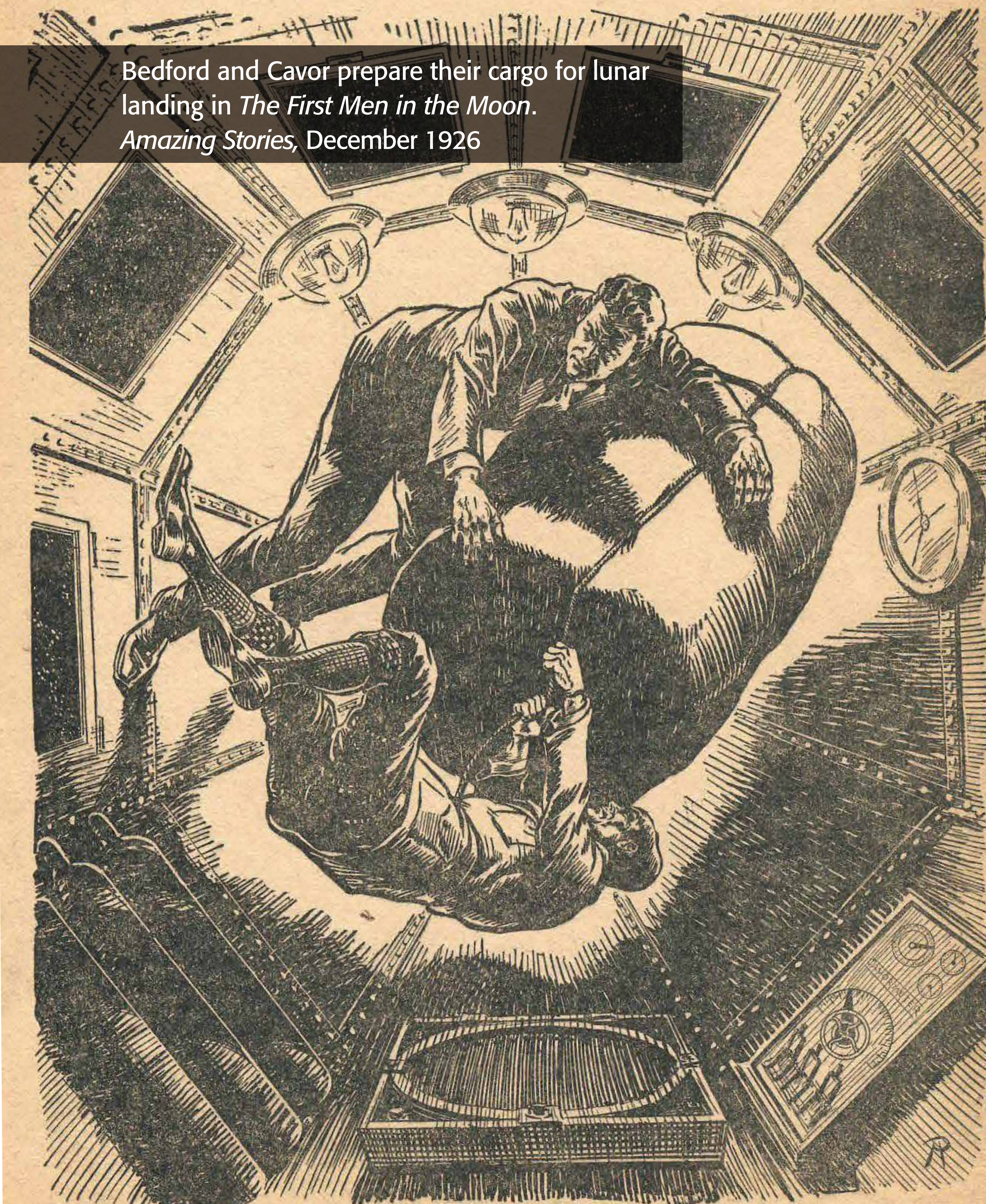
Tesla's assistant in *To Mars with Tesla* was Thomas Edison's college-age nephew (below right). *The New Golden Hours*, March 30, 1901

The FIRST MEN in the MOON

By H.G. Wells

Author of "The Island of Dr. Moreau," "The Empire of the Ants," etc.

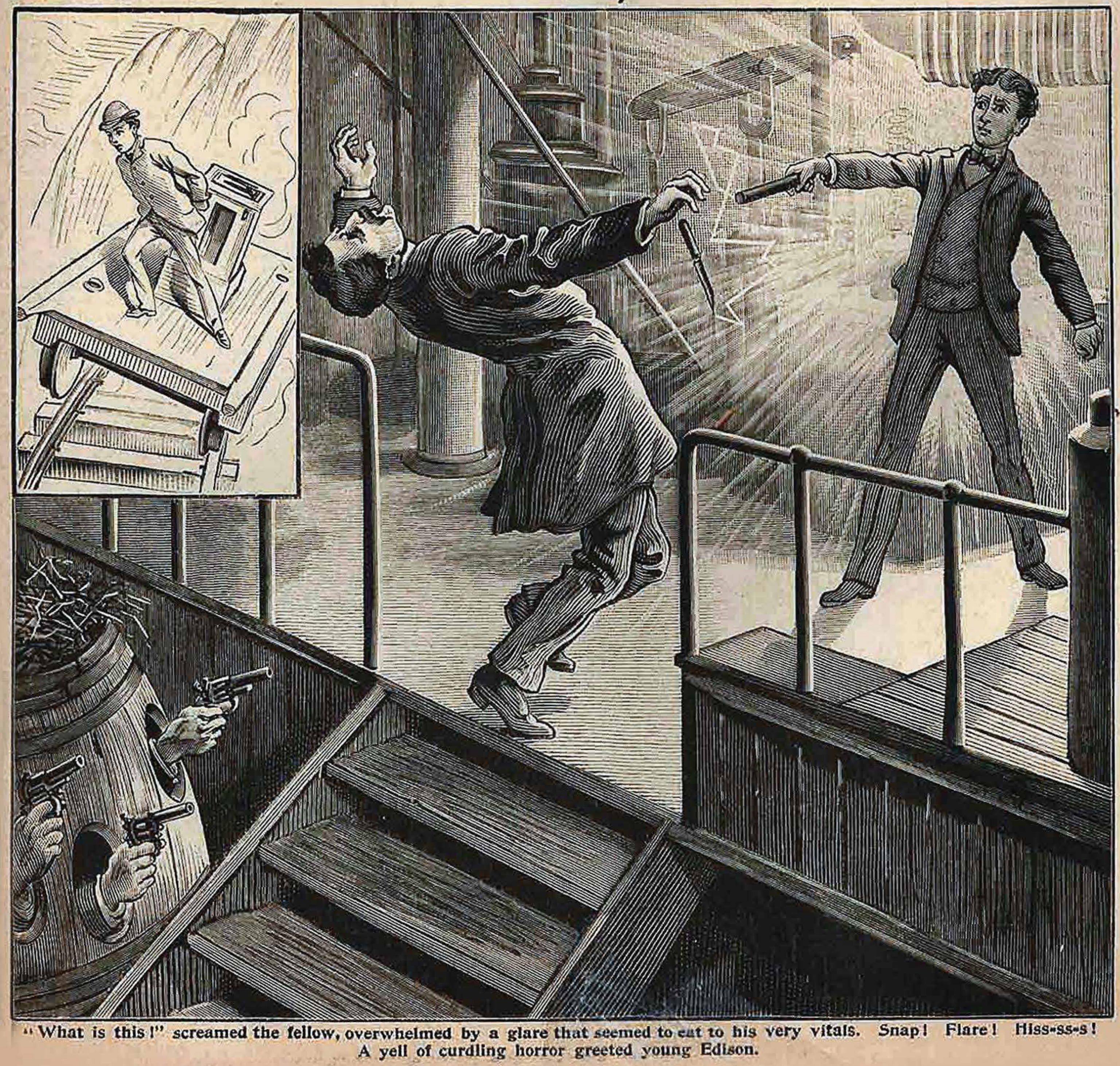
Bedford and Cavor prepare their cargo for lunar landing in *The First Men in the Moon*. *Amazing Stories*, December 1926



FIGHTING AGAINST ODDS; or, A Brave Sailor Boy's Adventures in Southern Seas. Next Week!



TO MARS WITH TESLA; or, The Mystery of Hidden Worlds. BY WELDON J. COBB.



"What is this!" screamed the fellow, overwhelmed by a glare that seemed to eat to his very vitals. Snap! Flare! Hiss-ss-s! A yell of curling horror greeted young Edison.