

The New York Times Best-Selling Series

Who Was Louis Armstrong?



by Yona Zeldis
McDonough

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Armstrong?



**Who Was
Louis
Armstrong?**

By Yona Zeldis McDonough
Illustrated by John O'Brien

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For Jane O'Connor, editor
extraordinaire—Y.Z.M.

For Tess—J.O.B

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A Rough and Tumble Start

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Ups and Downs

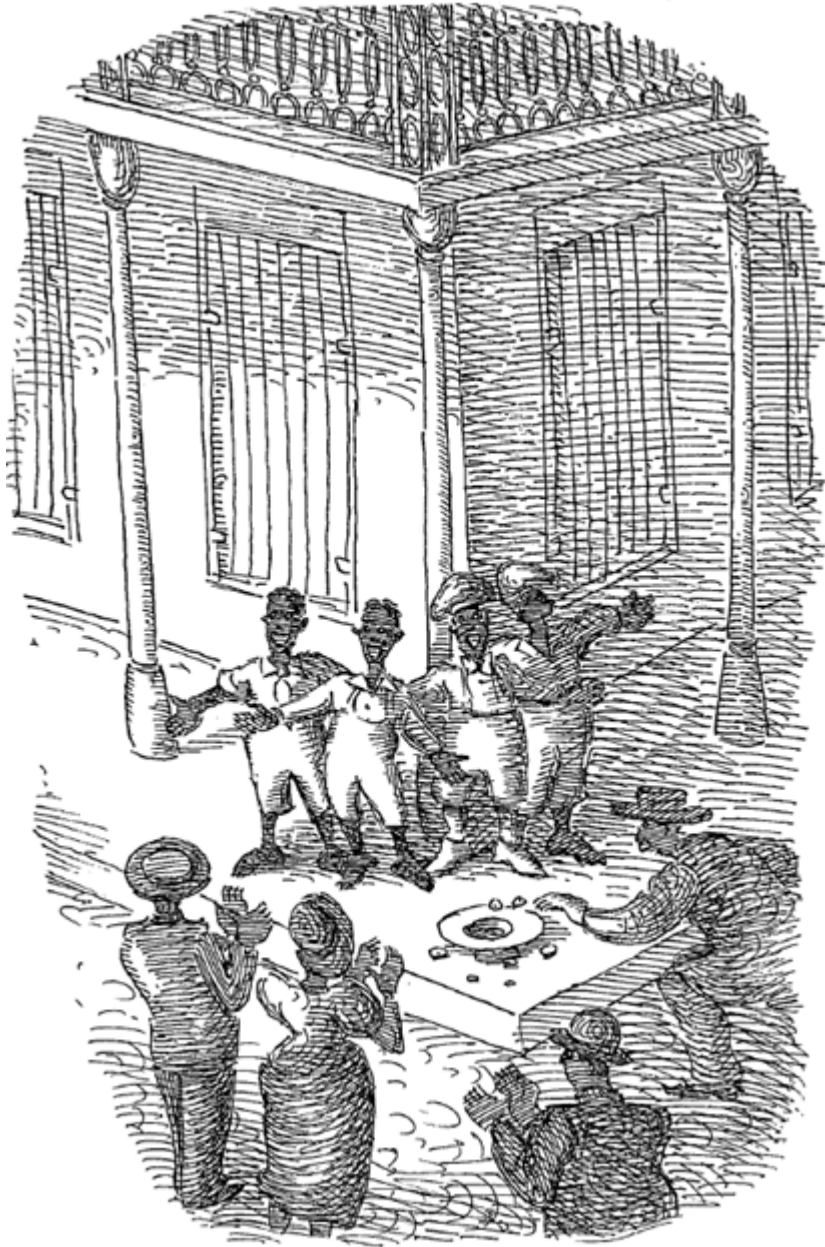
A Question of Color

Hello and Good-bye

Who Was Louis Armstrong?

Once, there was a poor black boy who grew up in New Orleans in the early years of the twentieth century. His name was Louis Armstrong. But people called him Little Louie. To help his family, he did all kinds of jobs. He hunted for bits of brass and tinfoil that he sold to junk dealers. He peddled newspapers on the streets, and he ran errands for grown-ups.





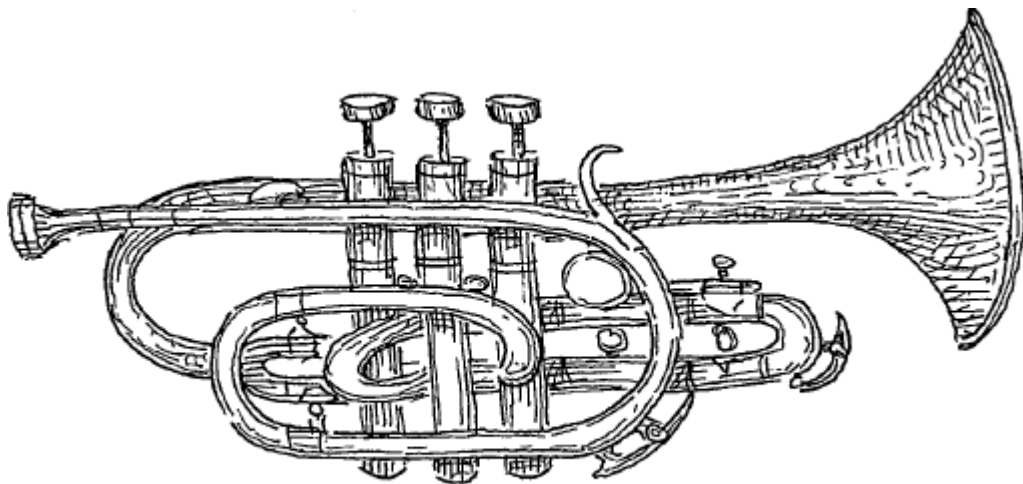
Louis also formed a singing group with three of his friends. The boys stood on a corner and sang. People gave them money.

On New Year's Eve, when Little Louie was about twelve, he and his friends went out to sing. They had just finished a song called "My Brazilian Beauty" and were on their way home. One of his pals took out a cap gun and shot it into the air. He wanted to make noise, because it was New Year's Eve. Louie did, too. And he had a real gun. He took it out and pointed it up at the sky. *Bam! Bam! Bam!* A policeman heard the gunshots. Shooting a gun was very dangerous. It was also against the law. The policeman took

Louie down to the station, and the next day he was sent to a reform school. Reform schools were for boys who were too young to be sent to jail.



Years later, Louis Armstrong remembered that he thought his world was coming to an end then. As it turned out, going to the reform school saved his life. While he was in the school, he learned to play the cornet. He learned to play it so well that he grew up to become one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time. He composed dozens of songs that have become famous, and his music is still heard and loved today.



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