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Who Was Neil Armstrong?



by Roberta Edwards

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By Roberta Edwards
Illustrated by Stephen Marchesi

Grosset & Dunlap

Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[Chapter 1 - A Boy Who Loved Flying](#)

[Chapter 2 - Real Planes](#)

[Chapter 3 - The Wider World](#)

[Chapter 4 - Test Pilot](#)

[Chapter 5 - The Space Race](#)

[Chapter 6 - Astronaut Neil Armstrong](#)

[Chapter 7 - First Voyage in Space](#)

[Chapter 8 - Next Stop—the Moon](#)

[Chapter 9 - Moon Walk](#)

[Chapter 10 - Returning Home](#)

[BIBLIOGRAPHY](#)

For my father and to those for whom the journey is the destination.—S.M.

GROSSET & DUNLAP

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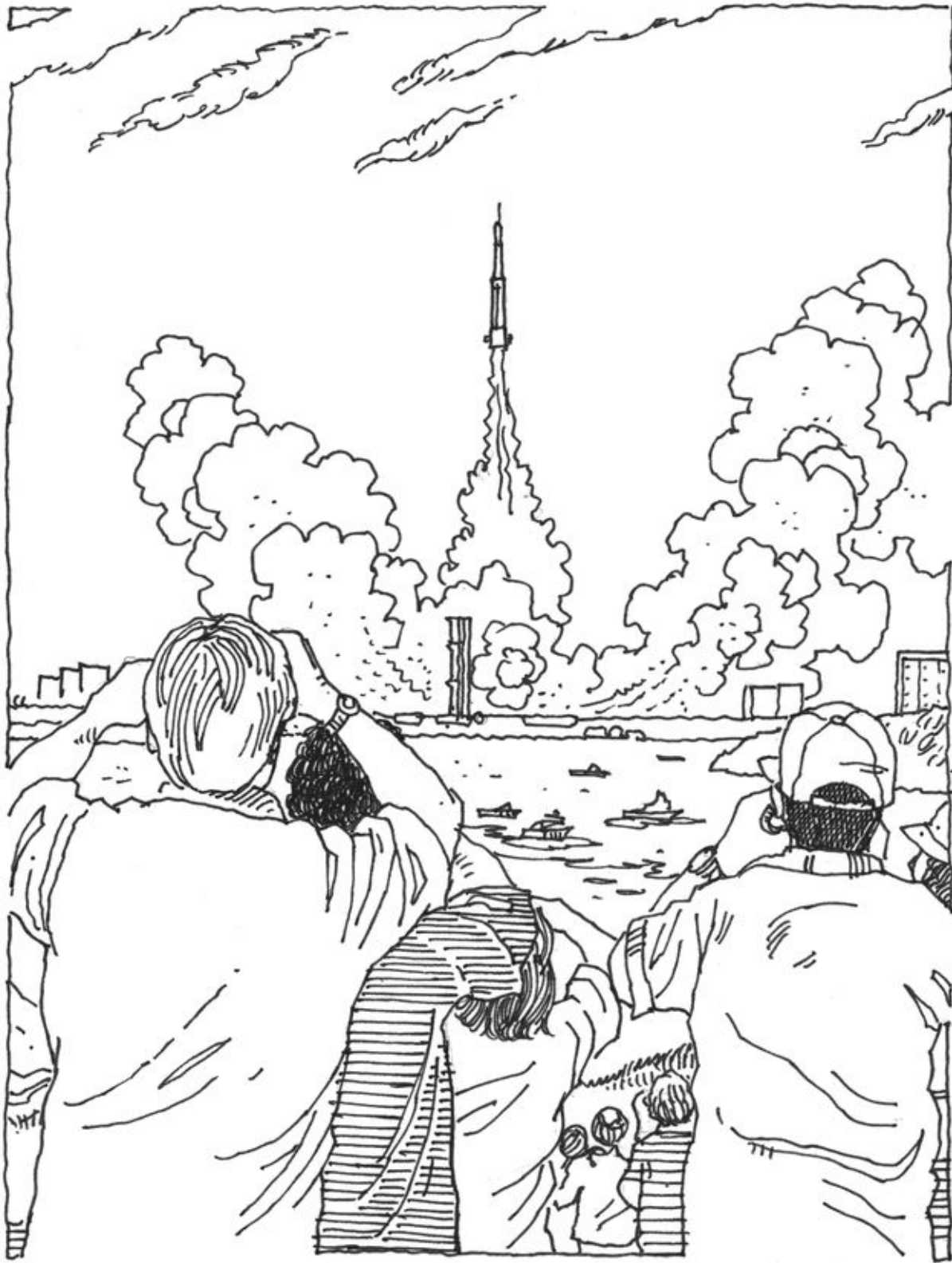
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Who Is Neil Armstrong?

It is July 16, 1969. By 9 A.M. the temperature hits a whopping ninety degrees. That's just a typical summer morning in central Florida. The heat does not stop a crowd of a million people from coming as close to Cape Kennedy as they can get. That is where the United States will launch a spacecraft in just a little while. Carloads of people line the roads for miles. Hundreds of boats bob in the waters just offshore. The beaches swarm with people. Everyone hopes to get a glimpse of the *Apollo 11* spacecraft as it soars off into the heavens.

Two thousand reporters are in the press area, ready to write headline stories for their newspapers. In special stands nearest to the launchpad at Cape Kennedy are many members of Congress, the U.S. vice president, and many famous names in show business and sports.



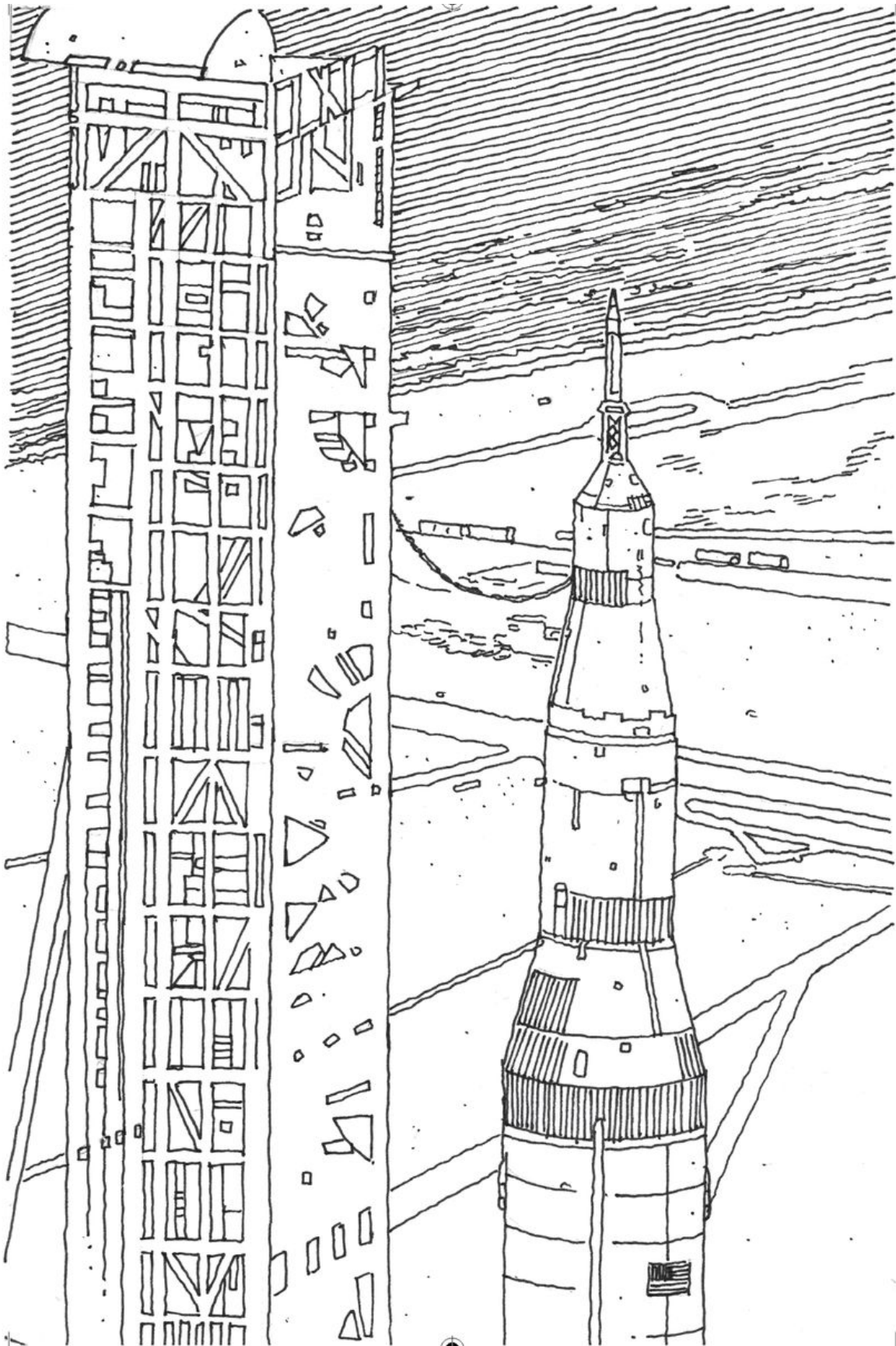
Among all these important people are two young boys, twelve-year-old Rick and six-year-old Mark Armstrong. They stand close to their mother, Janet, who looks as nervous and excited

as they do.

Like everyone else, the boys are watching the giant needlelike rocket. It stands thirty stories high.

At the very top is a space capsule; three astronauts are inside. One of them is the boys' father. His name is Neil Armstrong. He is the commander of this space mission—*Apollo 11*. And if all goes well, in four days he will become the first person to set foot on the moon . . . but that is a big *if*. No spacecraft has ever tried to land on the moon before. What if *Apollo 11* makes it to the moon but then can't get back to Earth? . . . So many things could go wrong.





Apollo 11 may either make history or end in tragedy.