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## Apollo 11

In May 1961, the US President, John F. Kennedy, made a famous speech in which he set a new national goal for America: to land a man on the Moon and return him safely to Earth by the end of the decade.

On 20th July 1969, the US space administration, NASA, achieved this goal when *Apollo 11* landed on the lunar surface. The whole world was watching as astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to walk on the Moon. Sadly, John F. Kennedy was not there to see it. He was shot dead by an assassin in Dallas, Texas in November 1963.



# CHAPTER 1

## July 2019

Ryan leaped out of bed and flung open his curtains. The sky was clear and blue, as blue as the wide-open sea, broken only by a single jet trail crossing far above.

The jet's plumes streamed out behind it in straight twin lines. Ryan angled his telescope up in its direction. He peered closely at its tiny body, gleaming in the sun, as it zipped through the stratosphere. He imagined all those hundreds of people travelling aboard. Where were they going? Somewhere new and exciting – a far-off place, perhaps, with palm trees and exotic cities.

Ryan felt a rush in his heart as he thought about the day ahead, and what it would bring, for today was the day they would open the time capsule.

He flung on his school uniform and his shoes. He ducked under the models of the planets that were hanging down from the ceiling. Such was his hurry that he almost knocked over his scale model of the US Space Shuttle on his way out of the door.

Ryan heard his big sister, Martha, in her room, talking loudly, probably to one of her friends on her phone or her laptop. Ryan poked his head around the door and smiled. "Morning!"

Sure enough, Martha was at her laptop, surrounded by the books and papers that she was studying for her degree. Martha was a lot older than Ryan. She was at university. She was just about to sit her final exams. Another girl's face was shining back on the screen.

"What?" Martha twisted her head round, her glasses perched on the end of her nose. "Oh, yeah, morning. I'm on to Tanusha. It's three o'clock where she is."

Ryan smiled and backed out of the room. Martha had lots of friends living all over the world.

Downstairs, Ryan wolfed down some cereal and swallowed a few gulps of orange juice. He was in too much of a hurry to get to school to bother eating. Mum had just got back from a business trip the night before, and was busy unpacking her briefcase. Dad was quiet, lost in his thoughts and staring into the distance as he nibbled on his toast. He looked a little troubled, though Ryan hardly gave it a passing thought.

"We're opening the time capsule today," Ryan announced.

Dad gazed at him. He was still miles away, Ryan could tell, and only half listening. "Hmm ... Time capsule?"

"I told you – remember? Children at the school buried it in 1969 at the time of the *Apollo* Moon landings. That's fifty years ago exactly. We're opening it up again today."

Dad snapped out of his daze. "Oh, yes, you did tell me. That's great, Ryan."





Mum was sitting by her case, staring down absent-mindedly at a letter that was folded in her hands. Something about Mum and Dad's behaviour nagged at Ryan – the distance and the silence. It wasn't like them. Ryan glanced from Mum to Dad, then back again. "Is anything wrong?"

Mum shook her head, then turned to him and smiled, a broad, reassuring smile. "No, everything's fine, Ryan. Don't worry."

Ryan shrugged. When people told him 'everything's fine', Ryan assumed that everything really was fine. Sometimes it wasn't and they said it anyway, but Ryan could never work out the difference. He put it behind him as he raced out of the door, for there was a lot to get excited about today.

Ryan vaulted the garden wall, as usual – gates were for pedestrians and losers. He was still chewing his toast, while tucking his shirt in at the same time.



# CHAPTER 2

The year AD 1890 was carved into the stone in front of Cheam Hill School. As Ryan sprinted towards the gates, a strange thought flashed into his head, a thought about all the generations of kids who'd passed through here. Today of all days, he could sense them; could sense the ghosts of their footsteps as they raced in and out of the building.

The bell had just stopped ringing, and the pupils from his own generation were already filing inside.

"Late again, Ryan," joked the man in the orange council vest who was sweeping the street outside. Mr Deegan was an old man with grey hair and a dark, wine-coloured birthmark on his upper lip. He was always sweeping round here. This was his patch.

"Ah, no, not late, Mr Deegan," he replied. "Just in time."

Mr Deegan laughed and raised his broom in a kind of salute, which he did often, and Ryan fell in behind the other pupils.



Ryan's friend, Kayden, was already at his desk, shuffling his football trading cards, when Ryan came running into the classroom. With his thick messy hair and ruffled shirt, he looked almost as untidy as Ryan did. Kayden glanced up at Ryan, caught the excited expression on his face and laughed. "Ha! Your face, Ryan. You're a space geek, you know that?"

"Come on! It's a time capsule! Full of things from the past. Does that not make you excited?" asked Ryan.

Kayden cut his cards, and sighed. "Football is exciting. Not a boring old box from the past."

Ryan's teacher, Mrs Pace, called the class to order. As the lesson began, Ryan could hardly concentrate. He fidgeted and drummed his fingers on the desk. All he could think about was the time capsule. What would it be like, and what would they find inside it?

It seemed like an age before the bell rang again, and the time came. Mrs Pace led the whole class outside to the grassy stretch around the side of the building. The air was warm and muggy. The rest of the school was filing out too, but they lined up behind. It was Ryan's class, Class 6A, that took pride of place at the front – and for a good reason. The class who buried the time capsule fifty years ago were also Class 6A.

A large boulder used to mark the spot where the time capsule was buried, but the spot was bare now. The boulder had been shifted. In its place were two shovels sticking out of the earth. A pair of council workmen in overalls stood waiting, their arms folded.

The headteacher, Mr Ferris, marched to the front. Ryan, standing at the end of a line, caught a flash of colour at

the corner of his eye, something from beyond the other side of the school fence. He turned, glimpsing Mr Deegan, or at least his face, half-hidden behind bushes and peering in. *Peering sadly,* he thought. Mr Deegan half-caught Ryan's eye. Ryan smiled and waved, expecting his usual friendly wave in return. But Mr Deegan didn't wave back. He cast his eyes down and ducked out of sight, which was a bit strange, Ryan thought. Then the headteacher coughed and began to speak.

"Class 6A," he said in his booming voice. "Fifty years ago, Class 6A of Cheam Hill School buried a time capsule. The time has come for us to open it up and see what they've left us."

Mr Ferris nodded at the workmen, who spat on their hands, snatched up their spades and began to dig.

As the men worked, slowly and steadily, silence hung thick in the air. The only sounds were the gravelly crunch of the spades in the ground, then the sprinkling of the earth as they cast it behind them. Everybody watched and waited, holding their breath.

Finally, one of the spades struck something solid. One workman, the older of the two, kneeled down in the hole they'd dug and scraped away some dirt.

The man glanced up at the headteacher and nodded. "Found it."

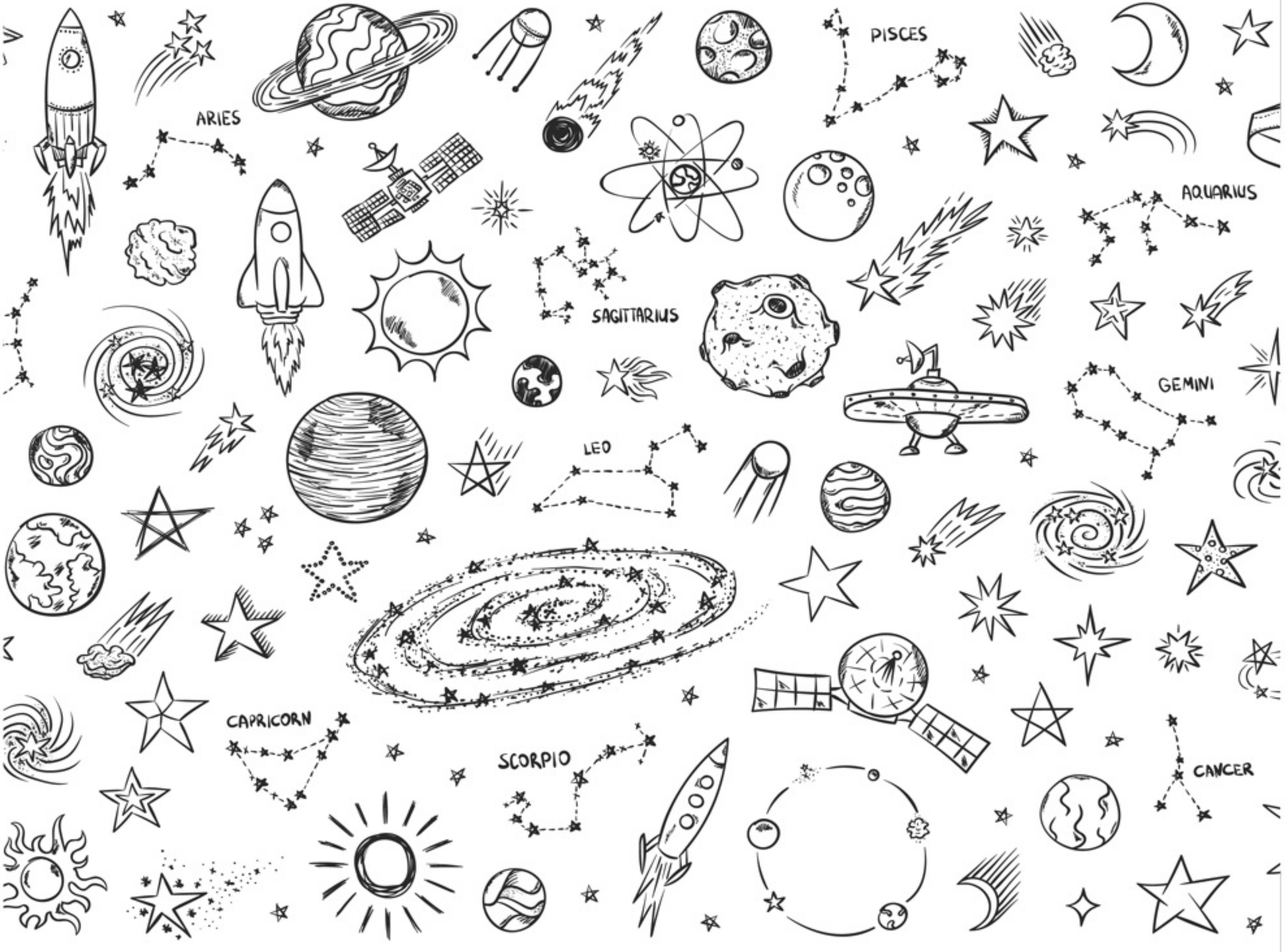
Mr Ferris leaned over the hole to watch as the two men uncovered something, then prised it free. With a tug and a heave, out it came, a dirt-covered stainless-steel canister. At first glance, it looked like a kind of milk churn that they used to use in the old days.



The men lugged it over to a trestle table that was set up nearby. They lowered the canister on to the table top. The older workman unscrewed the cap with a twist, but he stopped short of opening it fully. He stepped back, leaving the headteacher to unscrew it the rest of the way.

Ryan wasn't sure what to expect as the cap came off: a pop, a hiss, a rush of air as the long-pent-up gases escaped? But there was nothing, just a soft click.




ARIES
PISCES
AQUARIUS
SAGITTARIUS
GEMINI
LEO
CAPRICORN
SCORPIO
CANCER