

**For Oliver, for taking me on the greatest journey of all – D.C.**

**For my wonderfully supportive family and my Matt – H.C.**



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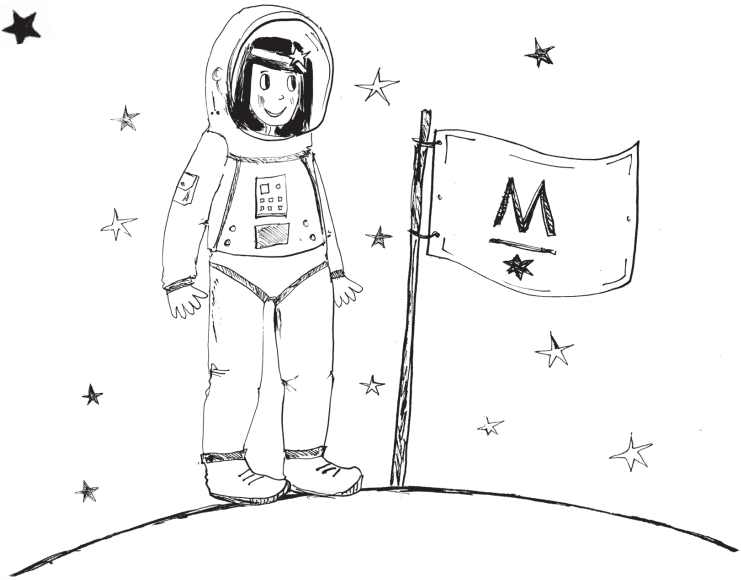
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# MEET MATILDA ROCKET BUILDER




WRITTEN BY DOM CONLON
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Me!
My journal!

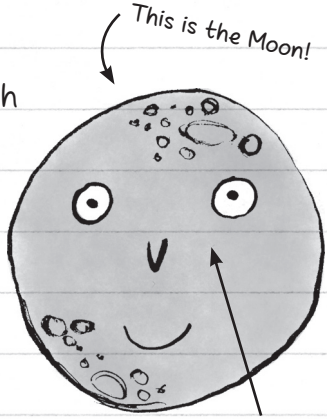
# Chapter 1

# HELLO AND GOODBYE

Hi. This is the scientific journal of Matilda Musk, written for all humankind in case I don't make it back.

It contains all the research of my journey to the Moon.

I know, right? We've only just met and here I am saying that I'm outta here.



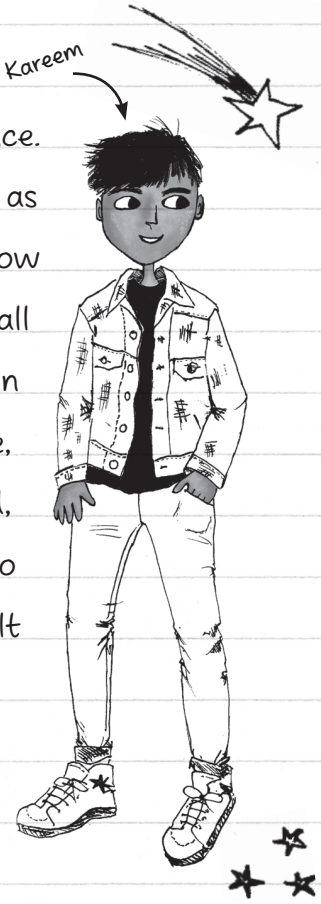
And not just outta here, but **WAY, WAY** outta here.

The reason I'm doing this is because everywhere I look people on Earth are complaining. They're complaining about the weather, about the news, about school (OK, that last one might just be my brother). They've stopped seeing what great things people are doing and this has begun to get on my nerves.



By landing on the Moon I can show everyone in the world that things aren't so bad; that we can do brilliant things.

Like when Mrs Hulme saw how Kareem Amin was upset when he struggled with his poetry




she told him to talk about science. Kareem loves science as much as I do and so he talked about how all the bits which make us – all the atoms – are first made in the heart of a star. As he spoke, Kareem cheered right up and, because he talked about it so beautifully, everyone else felt great too.

Mrs Hulme showed Kareem what he could do and said this was like poetry too.

That's a small example, and it was enough for us, but if I'm going to make the whole world look up then I need to do something



Now, you don't know me, and I don't even know you, but I do know what you're thinking. You're thinking I'm as daft as a snowman in summer because how can I, a ten-year-old kid, go to the Moon? Do I have wings? Do I have jet-powered boots and a magic space helmet? Do I have a billionaire aunt with a spaceship in her underground lair?

Nope. I don't have any of those things. **BUT** I have something better — **BRAINS**. And I'm determined to use them to make the world look up.

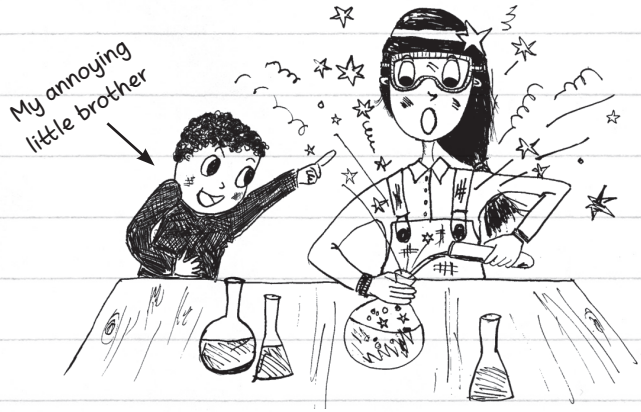


See, everyone smiles a **LOT** more when things like the World Cup or the Olympics are on. It's as though we all really want to be happy but feel like we need an excuse first. Which is daft, if you think about it. We need excuses to get out of the *bad* things in life, like detention

or visiting cousins, but we don't need them to do great things.

Seeing how Mrs Hulme encouraged Kareem has encouraged me too.

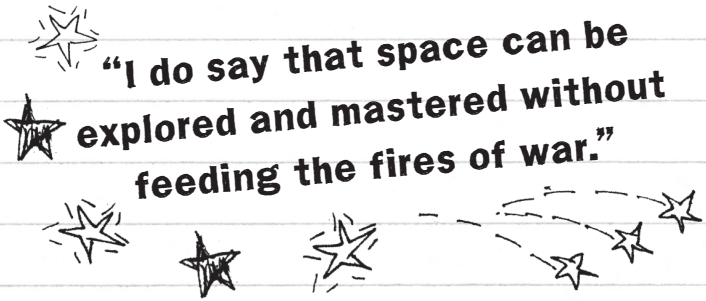
SO HERE'S WHAT I THINK: I think the problem is that we don't encourage each other often enough. There are too many arguments, too much name-calling and too much telling each other that things suck. We're just not used to saying "you can do this" any more.




That's why I wish we'd do more amazing things.

Like going to the Moon – that was amazing.

On **May 26th, 1961**, the president of the United States of America, John F Kennedy, said "you can do this". Sort of. What he actually said was:



**"I do say that space can be explored and mastered without feeding the fires of war."**

Things were about to get exciting. The world was listening.

He went on to say:

**"WE CHOOSE TO GO TO THE MOON! We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."**

In saying this he challenged the people in his country to do an extraordinary thing: to send three people into space and put two of them on the Moon.

Wow. Right? **WOW.**

And they did it too. On **July 20th, 1969**, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the Moon whilst Michael Collins stayed in orbit around it.

More than fifty years have passed since those four boots kicked up the lunar dust. Fifty years since Neil Armstrong said:



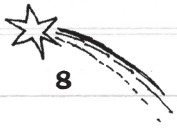
**"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."**

In that time, LOADS of other things have happened. Televisions became more popular in

colour. Then they became flat. And then they could fit into our lovely pockets. Computers were once the size of a house. Then there was one in every house, and then . . . yes, you guessed it . . . they could fit into our pockets. We got personal stereos, we got mobile phones (which fit into pockets) and we got the Internet.

**WE DID ALL THIS IN HALF A CENTURY.**

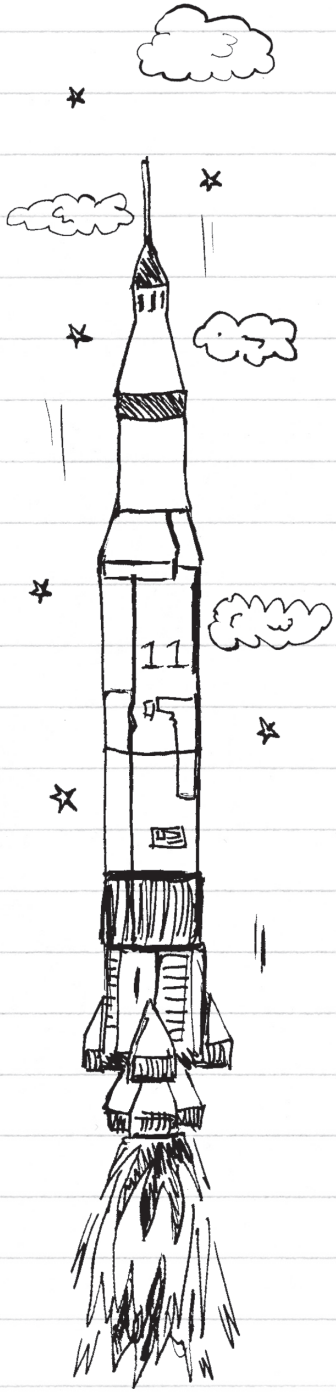
So I reckon that the older technology gets, the easier it becomes to make. Or at least it does sometimes. I can build my own telephone and my own computer if I want to. I've looked on the Internet and the parts can all be bought and there are plenty of instructions on how to assemble them. I could even build a car!



So if we can do all those things, then how hard can it be to build an old spaceship and send it to the Moon? That technology is now over fifty years old which is, like, even older than my dad, and we've made miles better stuff since then. I may be just a kid, but kids do amazing things all the time. So this kid is going to find out how to build a spaceship.

And then she's going to build it.

I've said this before but I'm going to say it again, so listen up: I've got brains. I'm not bragging but I'm not ashamed of saying it either.



And because I've got brains I can see that none of this will be easy. After all, NASA had **400,000** people. I've got me. But, in my defence, NASA had to invent the tech. I just need to follow the instructions and get an adult to use the welding torch.




I mean, really. How difficult can it be?

