



# Countdown

2979 Days to the Moon

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## Chapter 1: A Daring Dream

At first  
it's only a dream—  
an ambitious, outrageous idea.

The dream seems so big,  
so impossible,  
that few people dare to say it out loud.

Until one day,  
May 25, 1961,  
one man,  
President John F. Kennedy,  
bravely announces the dream to the world:

“I believe that this nation should commit itself  
to achieving the goal, before this decade is out,  
of landing a man on the moon  
and returning him safely to the earth.”

But how can someone soar all the way to the Moon,  
two hundred and forty-thousand miles through space?  
America knows the answer: teamwork.

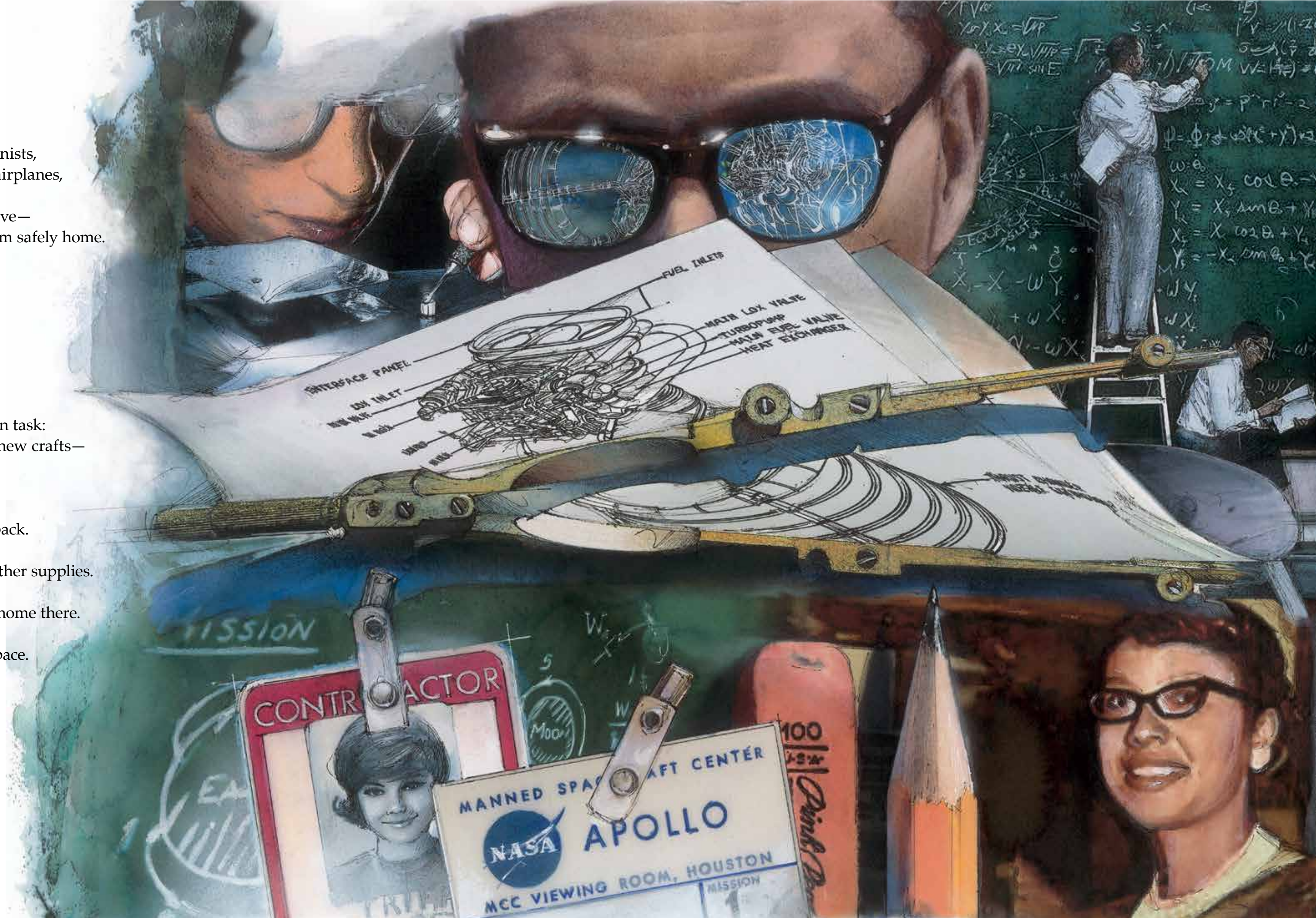


Thousands of engineers, technicians, mathematicians, scientists, and machinists, working on engines, computers, and airplanes, join Project Apollo, a new space program with one objective—land a man on the Moon and bring him safely home.

But America isn't the only country with an outrageous dream. The Soviet Union has its own plan to put the very first man on the Moon.

Determined to win this Space Race, the Apollo team begins their herculean task: designing, building, and testing four new crafts—each with its own important role—that must work flawlessly together. The command module will carry the crew to the Moon and back. The service module will provide electricity, oxygen, and other supplies. The lunar module will land on the Moon and provide a home there. And the mighty Saturn rocket must launch the entire mission into space.

The president watches and waits. His end-of-the-decade deadline seems a long time away. But for this lofty dream—man's first Moon landing—it isn't much time at all.




Still, Kennedy believes in his country,  
and teamwork.

So does the smiling Texas crowd,  
waving wildly during a motorcade parade  
on a sunny fall day—  
November 22, 1963.

Suddenly an assassin takes aim.  
In an instant,  
the brave voice is silenced—  
the visionary gone.





But the dream remains  
in hopeful hearts,  
now more important than ever.

And America's quest for the Moon continues,  
to honor their beloved leader,  
to help heal a hurting nation,  
to prove that violence doesn't destroy dreams.

**"...it will not be one man going to the  
moon...it will be an entire nation. For all  
of us must work to put him there."**

**—President John F. Kennedy, May 25, 1961**