

Space Girl

Isabel rode with her parents to the liftoff site in a special bus. The giant rocket up ahead seemed to get bigger and bigger as they drove closer.

"You are going to be famous," her father said, smiling at her.

This would be an exciting day. It was the day of the **launch**. Not only was Isabel about to become the first kid astronaut, she was also going to be the first kid to walk on the Moon. Her parents were scientists. The whole family was going to live at the new International Moon Base. Today they were flying from Earth to the Moon.

The **mission** would last for a whole year. Isabel was both excited and sad. She was excited because she would get to fly in a rocket and explore the Moon. She was sad because she knew she would miss her friends at school.

People in white suits helped them into the rocket and strapped them into their seats. Isabel's heart was beating fast as they started the countdown. The astronauts checked and double-checked their **instruments**. Everything had to be perfect.

When the countdown was over, Isabel felt the rocket begin to shake. The engines roared. Soon they were speeding through the sky and up through the atmosphere.

"Everything is going exactly as planned, Isabel," her dad reassured her. "Are you OK?"

"I'm fine, Dad," Isabel responded.

Soon they were up in space, circling the Earth. Isabel looked down at the blue oceans and white clouds. "I need to write about this in my diary," she thought. Then she looked out a window on the other side of the spaceship. The void of space seemed empty and endless.

Suddenly, her mom's face was upside down in front of her.

"Do you want to unstrap and float around?" her mom asked.

Isabel took off the straps and felt **weightless**. She drifted around the rocket.

"This is awesome!" she said, beaming at her mom.

"Come over here," her mom said. "I want to show you something."

Isabel floated to the window and looked outside at the Moon. She'd never seen the Moon look so big. It felt as if she could reach out and touch the **craters**.

"Those craters were made when **asteroids** hit the Moon long ago," said her mom.

"And in just a few days, you will be playing in the craters!"

Isabel couldn't wait.

COMPREHENSION Do you think Isabel will have fun on the Moon? Why or why not? Which words help you understand space?



Maria Mitchell

A Great Example

Maria Mitchell was a woman who loved to learn. She especially loved science, and it was science that made Mitchell famous.

Mitchell was born in 1818 on an island called Nantucket, which is part of the state of Massachusetts. She was lucky to be born where she was. At that time, girls faced many **obstacles**. People often treated girls differently than boys. Girls did not always go to school or learn things that boys learned. But on the island where Mitchell was born, girls did go to school and they learned the same things that boys learned. Mitchell's father was the principal of her school. He was also an astronomer. He liked to study planets, stars, and other things in outer space. Mitchell's father taught her to love outer space, too.

When Mitchell was young, she memorized the names of the stars. Mitchell was very smart, and her father **encouraged** her to work hard. As she grew up, she worked as a schoolteacher and a librarian. But Mitchell's **dream** was to be an astronomer like her father.

When she was twenty-nine years old, Mitchell's dream came true. She was using a telescope to look far away into space, and she saw something she had never seen before. It looked like a star was moving. She had discovered a comet! Mitchell was only the second woman ever to discover a comet. This made her very famous! They named the comet "Miss Mitchell's Comet" after her. She was also given a gold medal. Mitchell had achieved her **goal** of becoming a famous astronomer.

But even though she was famous, Mitchell knew that many women still struggled to get the chance to learn. In 1865, she became a professor of astronomy at Vassar College. At Vassar, Mitchell **challenged** young women to study astronomy. She **wished** that women could learn just as much about science as men did.

Mitchell worked at Vassar for twenty-three years. During this time, she did a lot to help women. She helped start the American Association for the Advancement of Women. She also studied other parts of outer space. Mitchell died in 1889, but women still worked hard to study and learn just as she did. The Maria Mitchell Observatory was opened in 1908, in her honor.

Maria Mitchell's life is proof that people can work past challenges, as long as they have a dream.

COMPREHENSION Why did Mitchell want to help other women learn? What words about dreams did you hear in this passage?

