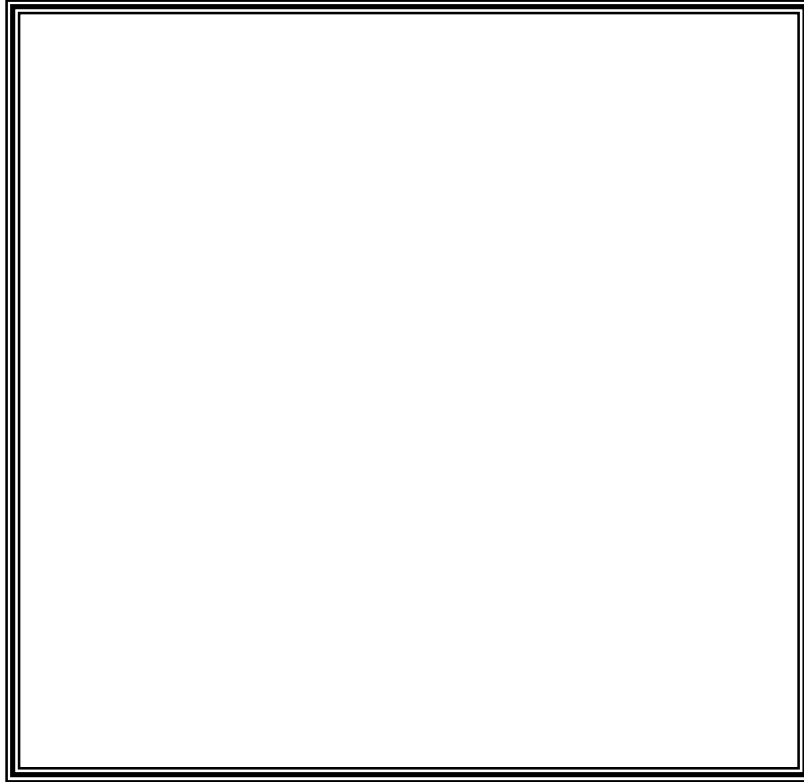


# Eugene and Sissy and the Curious Egg



Written by Jacinta Behne for  
NASA's Genesis Mission ©2006

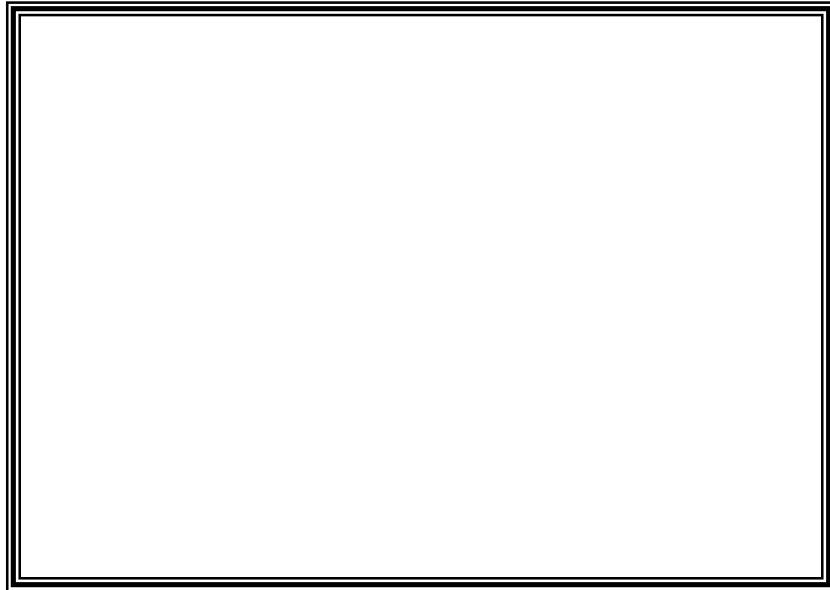


A long time ago in a land not so far away, there was a magical kingdom called Bonneville, where little villages scattered the countryside. There was a beautiful lake that stretched for hundreds of miles with small islands—almost like stepping stones—dotted across the surface. The forests were deep green; the mountains stretched high; and the water and skies shared a bright color of blue. Some of the villagers were fishermen; some were craftsmen; others tended great herds of geese. But none—not even one—of them was a farmer. Even the most talented gardener couldn't get a thing to grow—not a carrot, potato, onion, ...nothing.



You see, one day, in a fit of anger, the evil wizard Igmund put a curse on all of the land in Bonneville. The soil became barren—nothing could grow in it—and it was covered with a hard, salty crust that went "crunch" wherever they stepped.

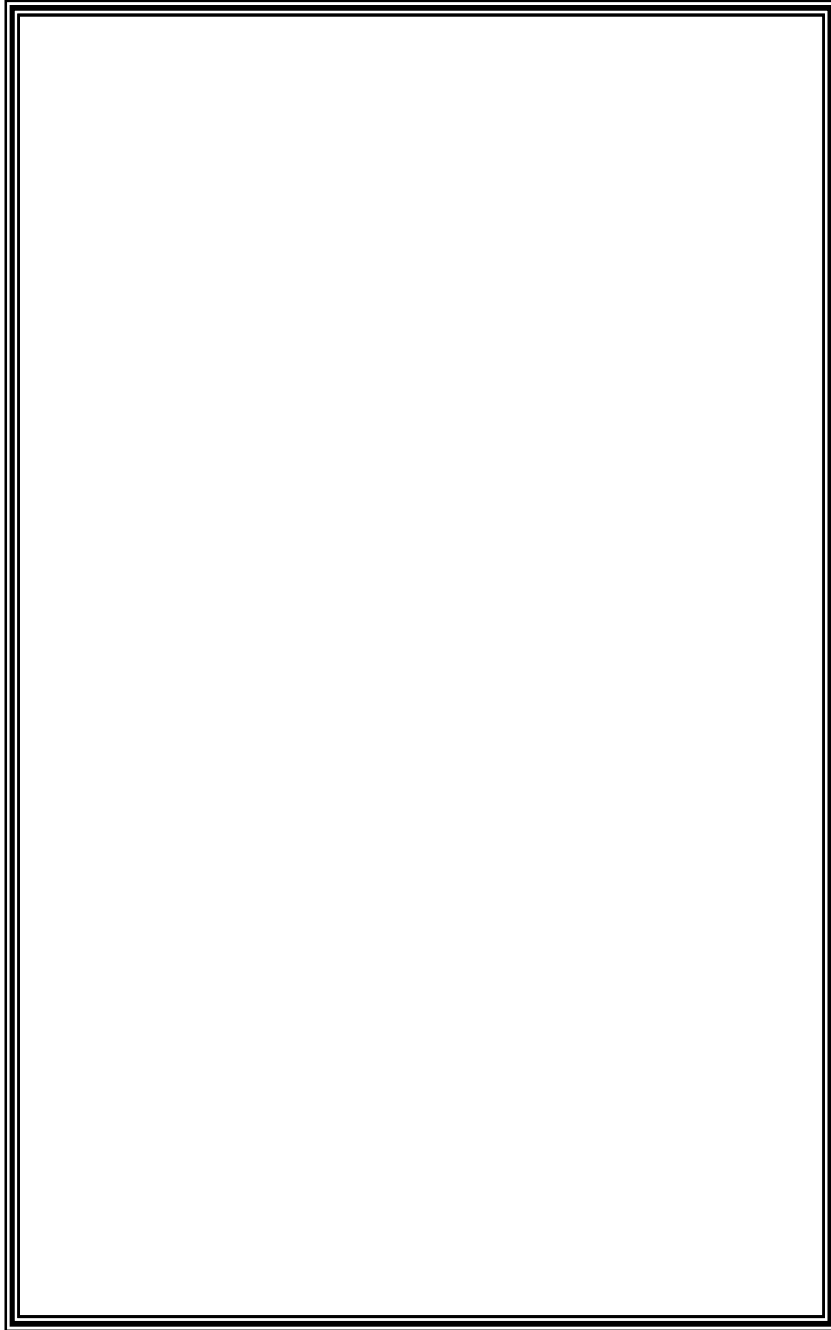
But now, I'm getting ahead of my story.



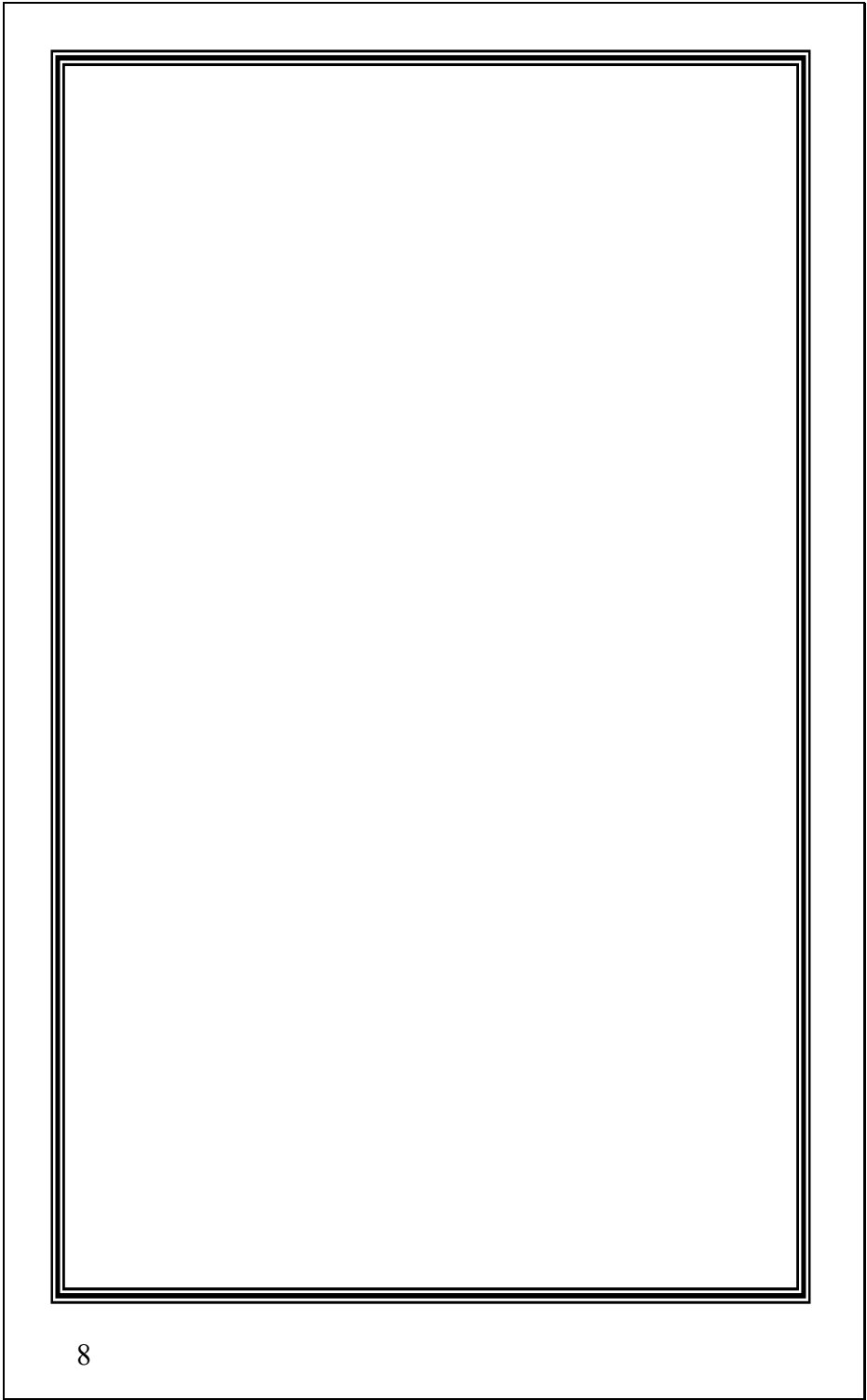
The kingdom was ruled by King Iso and Queen Helio, both of whom were known for their kind and generous ways. Iso and Helio loved everything about their kingdom: the people, the water, the sky, and yes, even the stark, barren land. The king and queen also instilled a love for learning far and wide. You see, they knew that as long as their kingdom kept its love for learning, it would survive. So, anyone who lived in Bonneville was forever poking here, prodding there, studying the land underneath its crust, surveying the surrounding waters, and searching the skies above. They welcomed challenges—especially those that appeared nearly impossible.

Well, not ALL of the villagers thought it was a good idea to be so curious. Some of the elders said that it wasn't a good idea to ask so many questions ...to be forever gazing into the deep water or searching the endless skies. Some said that it was that very curiosity that brought Igmund's spell to their kingdom.

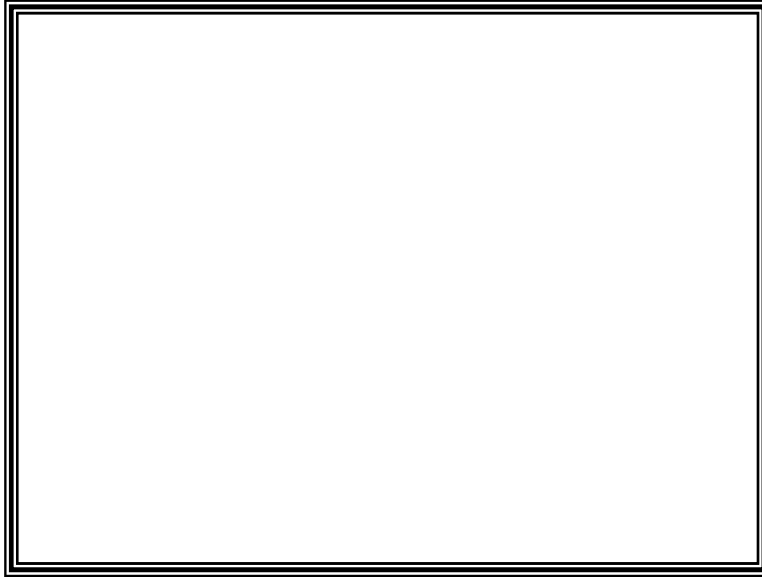
The story went that the queen had enraged Igmund one day when she sat at her window, gazing across the lake toward his neighboring castle. He was seated at breakfast, salt shaker in hand, when the Sun caught the queen's eyeglass and sent a reflection right into Igmund's eyes. Tracing the source across the lake to the Queen's quarters, Igmund was furious. He didn't like being spied upon one bit. He threw the salt shaker to the heavens and cast a magic spell. The next morning, all of Bonneville awoke to a land covered with a salty crust. It was horrid.



And so, it was for good reason that some of the villagers were afraid of Igmund and his magic spells. The days went by. With land where nothing would grow, the villagers lived off the fish from the lake. It was fine, if you didn't mind eating fish, and only fish—well, MOST of the time. There were the geese who flew over and stopped as they made their annual trip north in the spring, then south again in the fall. They brought a supply of wonderful eggs for eating. Some stayed near the villages in herds, while others moved on. As such, the geese that stayed were indeed treasured by one and all. The villagers tried not to think about the lack of plants, flowers, and grains. They even tried to ignore the evil Igmund. How could they ever please him? ...plead with him to lift the spell? ...politely ask him to find another place to live? ...stop him in his tracks?





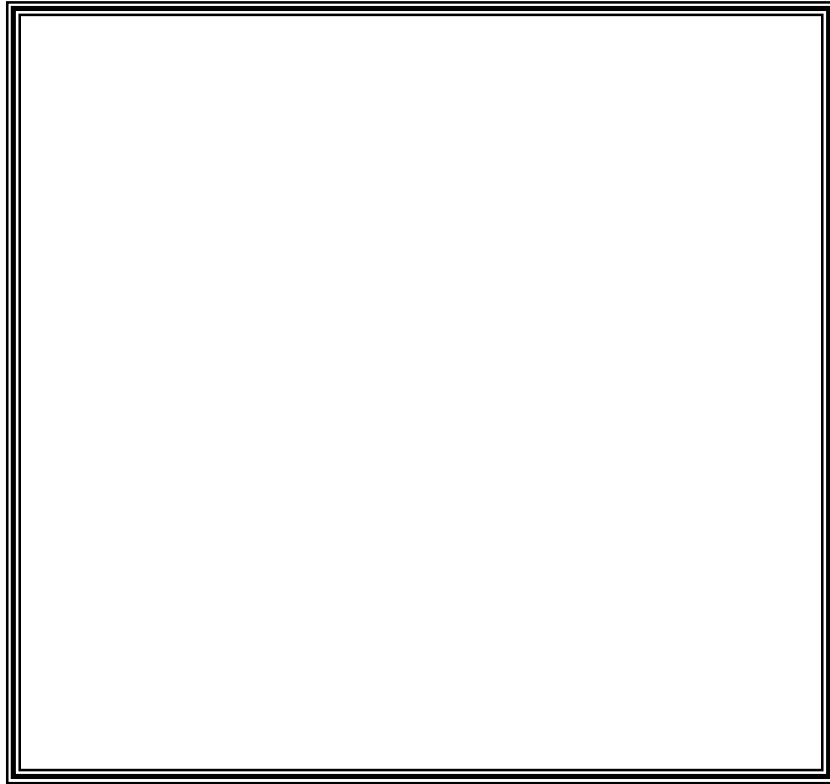


It was Eugene, a lowly goose herder, and his twin, Sissy, who came up with the grand idea one day. Standing in village center, they rang the calling bell. Everyone came running. Gene—as he was called by his friends—had a plan, and he shared it with the village.

"A goose? Your plan is a goose?" The villagers were shocked.

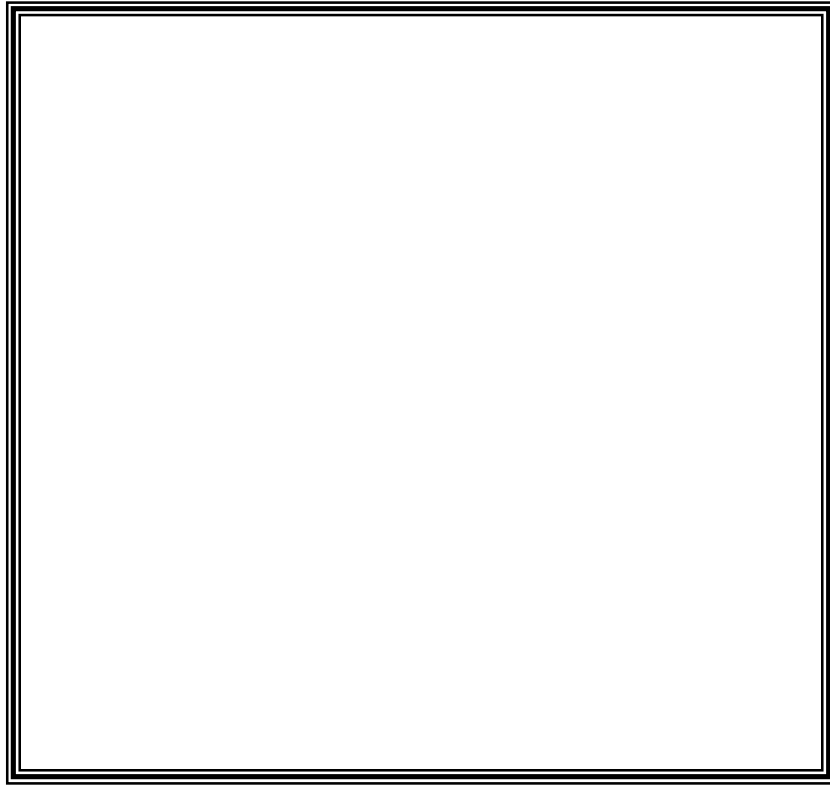
"Not just any goose!" replied Gene.

"We're willing to share our prized goose," said Sissy. "The one that lays very smart, very special eggs!"



And so they told the rest of the story, and when it was done, the villagers had to admit that the plan had merit. When they asked the king and queen's permission, it was immediately granted. And so, they set to work—Gene, his sis, and their fellow villagers. Surely if they were tired of a diet of fish from the lake, Igmund was also? Their mission was to send Igmund an egg—a gift from them.

The day came that Gene and Sissy's prized goose took flight and landed inside the walls of Igmund's castle. After building a nest, the goose laid an egg. Igmund was certain to come and snatch it up—which is exactly what happened. "I'll have me a grand feast," said Igmund. But when he took his first bite, he knew something was wrong. "Poison!" he cried as he spat it out. "That goose tried to poison me!"



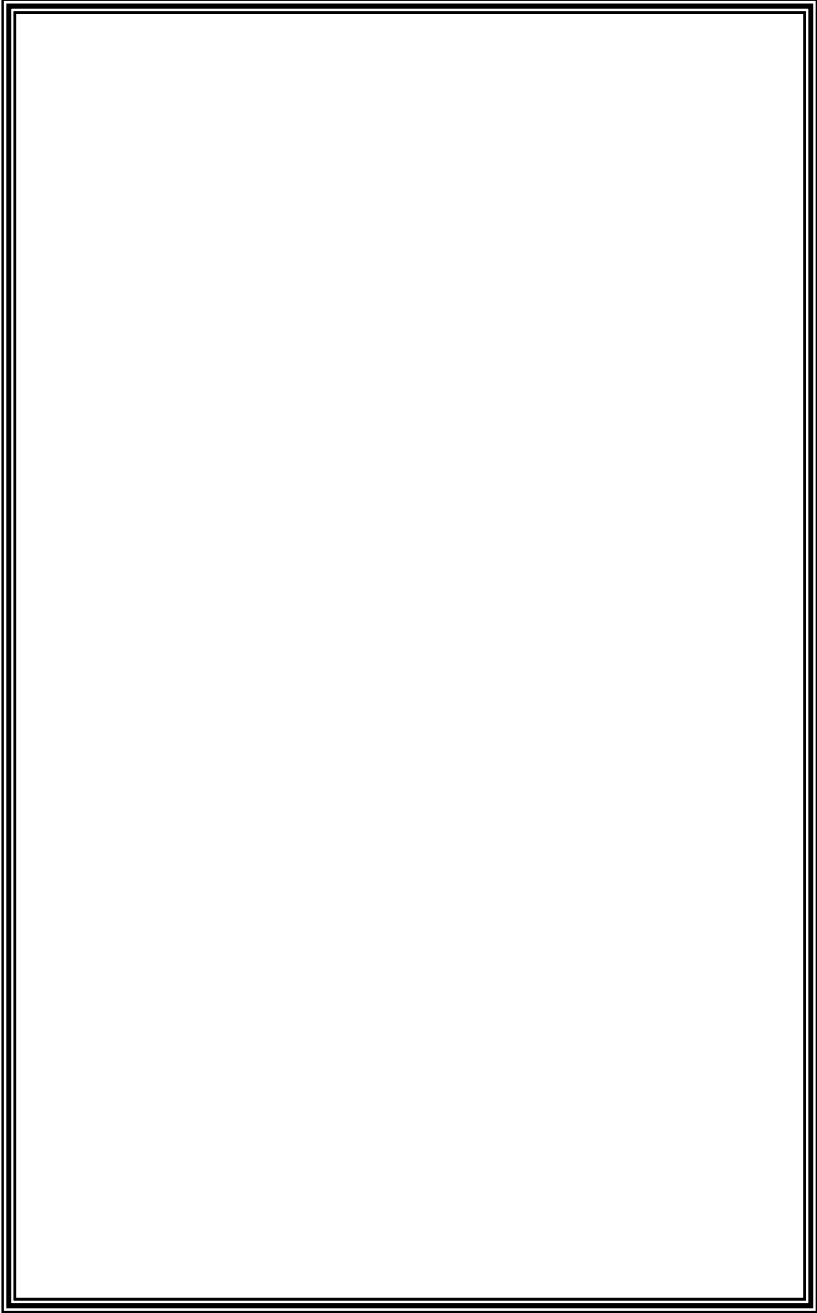
He ran to the spot where the goose lie, only to find her flying over the wall, back home, and right back to the village where the whole plan began.

In a fit of rage, Igmund raised his hand to the skies, and in a great bolt of lightening, the rains came, ...and came, ...and came. It rained for days, weeks, months on end. When finally one day the rains stopped, the villagers came out of their huts, looking up to the skies in disbelief. It was Sissy who looked down.

"Hey! Look! The ground has lost its crust! It's no longer brown!" she exclaimed.

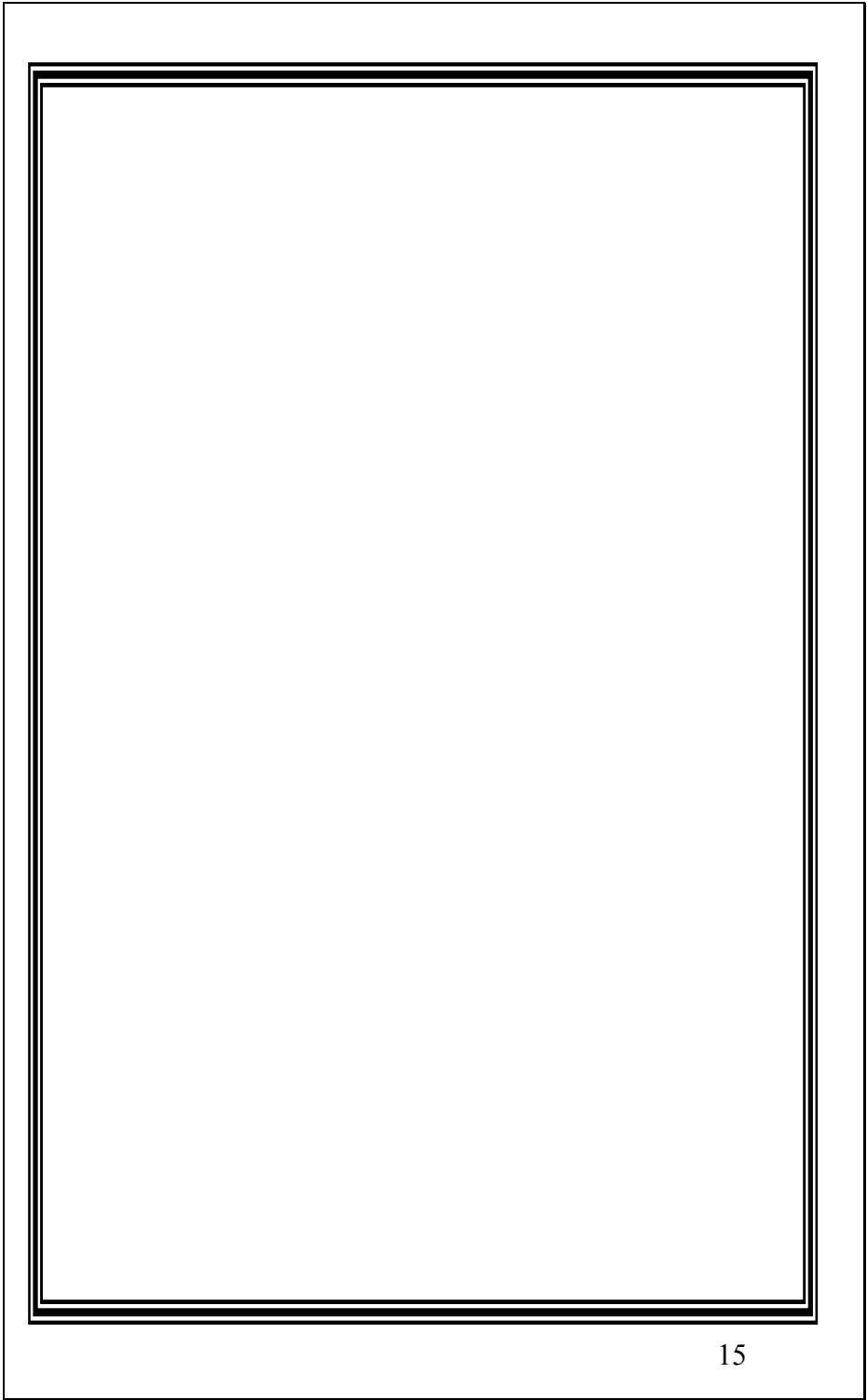
Sure enough, the salty brown crust that covered their land had washed away—right into Lake Bonneville! Fish were jumping high into the air, trying to escape the salty water.

"Now you've done it!" cried one of the villagers. "We have our land back, but we've lost our lake to a pool of salt!"



Eugene, Sissy, and all of the villagers didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It was King Iso and Queen Helio who set to work. Now it was their turn to face a challenge and make a plan. The king had heard of a wondrous lake, far away in the Solar System, in the region of the Sun. It was a golden, magical lake with a source that, if captured and returned, might restore Lake Bonneville.

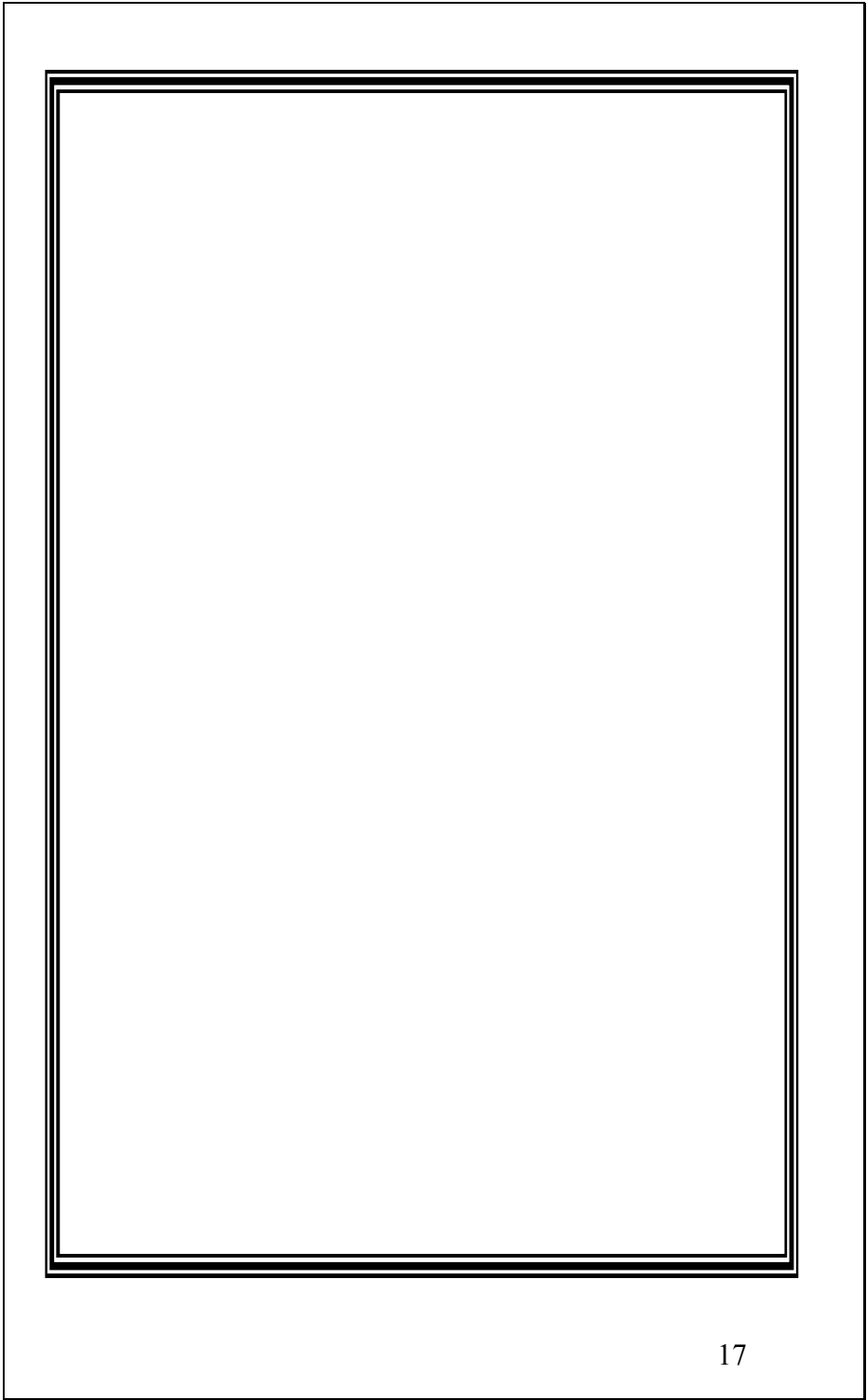
So the king set his scholars to work. They were on a mission. A spacecraft would be built, and it had to be just right.



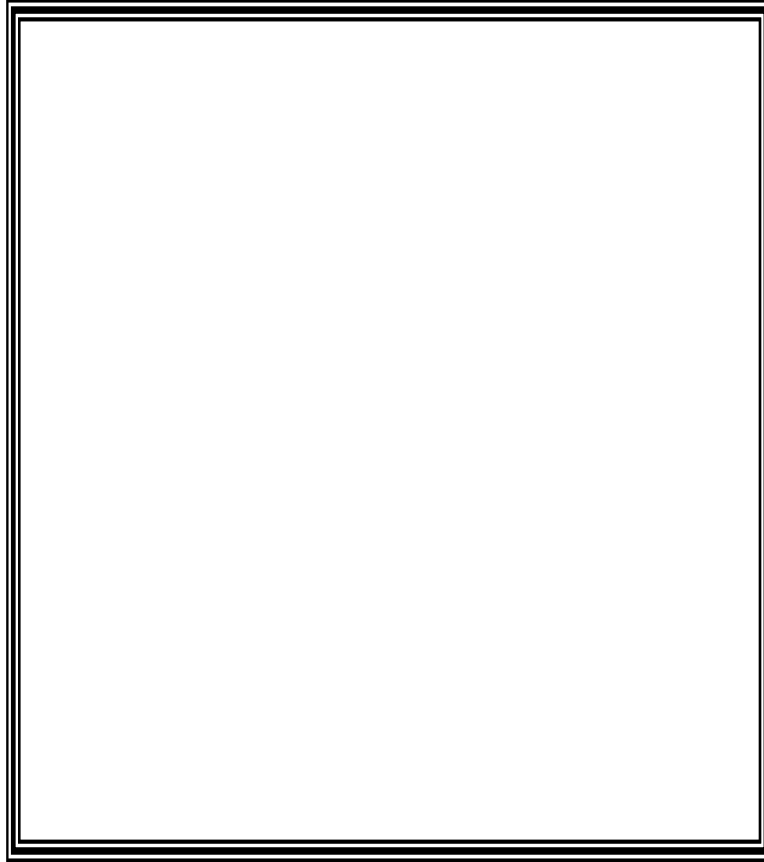
In honor of their kinship with the geese, the ship was designed in the shape of an egg. It had wide wings to carry it into the heavens. Like the queen's eyeglass, the wings would capture the Sun's rays and use them, but this time, for fuel to fly the ship. Like Gene and Sissy's goose, the "eggship" would return home after its mission.

Inside was a hexagon—a six-sided steel plate. It too was a sun catcher and would capture the secrets of the golden lake and return them to Bonneville. They named the ship *Genesis*, after Gene and his sis. After all, it wasn't their fault that Igmund sent the rains. Their plan was actually a good thing. It seems that when the lightning bolt exploded, it sent a jolt so strong that even the horrible Igmund couldn't survive.



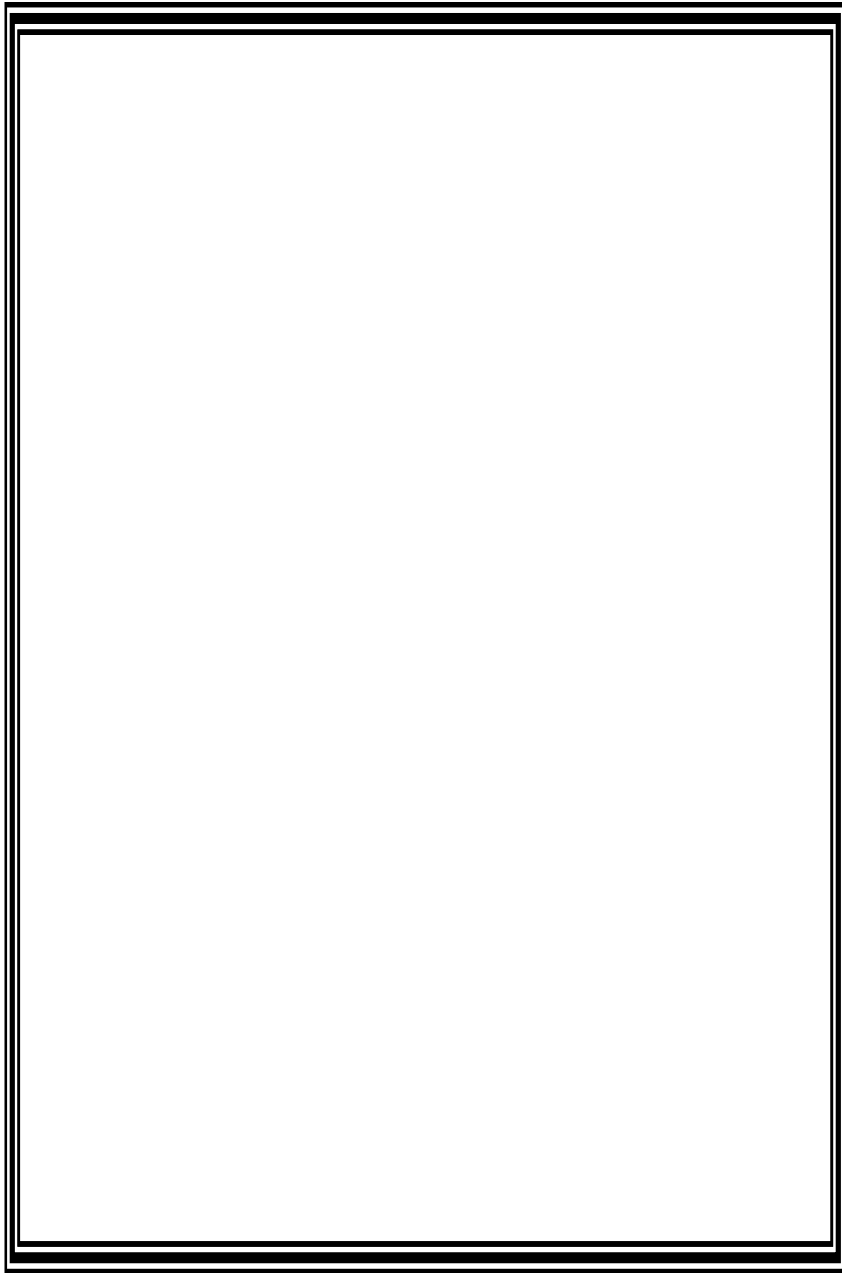


The day came to launch *Genesis* on its mission toward the Sun. All of the villagers came to watch as great flocks of geese came from far and wide to carry the ship aloft—farther than the eye could see. Then, all the kingdom of Bonneville waited. Some said the eggship would never return. Others remained hopeful.

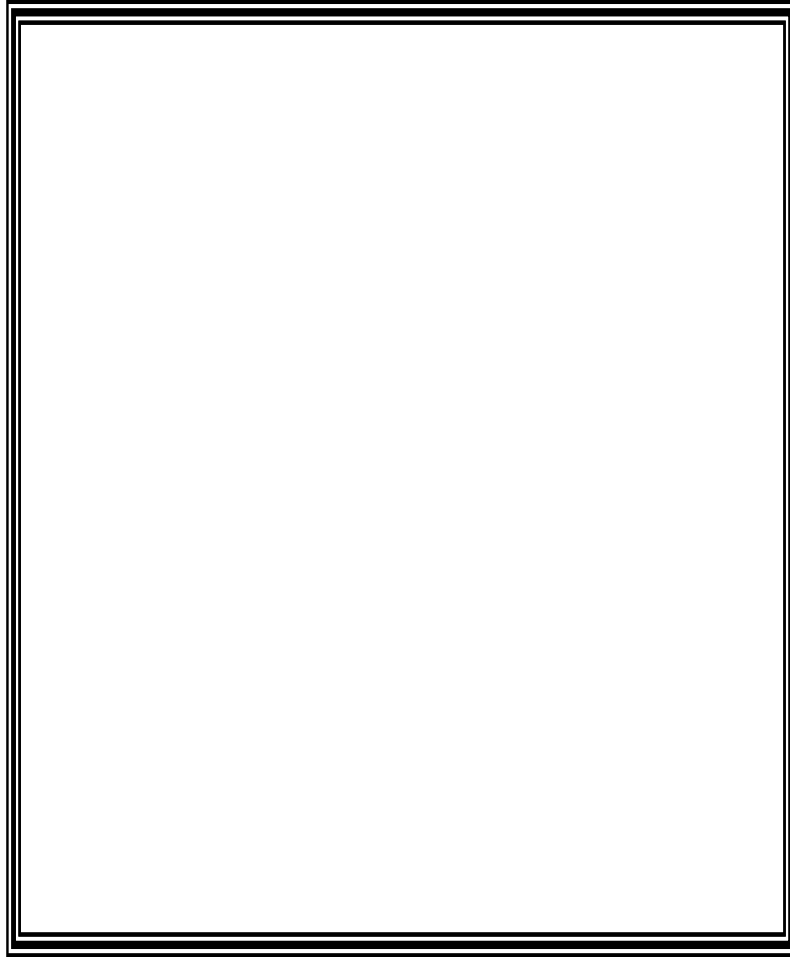


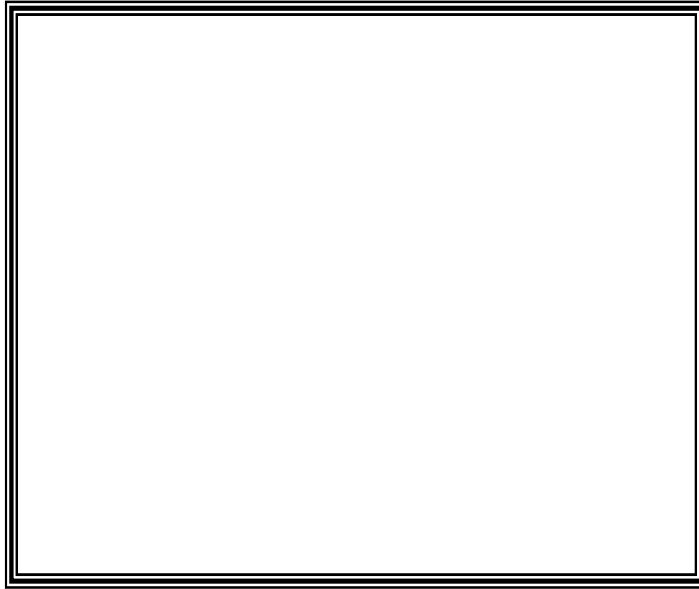
More than a couple of years had passed when one day, one of the villagers heard something approaching from above. Another saw the large white egg, its wings long gone, on its return to Earth. "Look! It's here! It's come back!"

And quick as a wink, the eggship came tumbling down, down, down, until it reached the sandy Bonneville soil below. It was a bit of a mess—the curious egg broken open and contents scattered. But there in the sand lie the six-sided plate—the hexagon with its secrets to the Solar System and the golden lake in the sky. Villagers came from far and wide to spend the day carefully gathering and storing the pieces.



Then the great science masters set to work.  
They studied the hexagon, unlocking its clues.  
There was a lot to learn about the Solar  
System. It was a fascinating piece of work, with  
new discoveries made on a daily basis.





Soon King Iso, Queen Helio, and the villagers gathered at the lake's edge. They watched as Gene and Sissy, with great effort, hurled the hexagon into the water.

In a flash, Lake Bonneville turned its original bright blue. A great shout of joy rang up. They had done it! They had unlocked the secret of the solar lake. Gene and his sis were dancing with joy. There was a great celebration in the kingdom. It was indeed a very curious egg that saved the great kingdom of Bonneville.

The End

About the author...

Jacinta Behne lives in Castle Rock, Colorado. She works for Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), where she gets to create learning materials for young people. Genesis, a NASA mission that sent a spacecraft to collect raw solar wind particles in outer space, is one of the projects that she works on. Jacinta hopes that you will enjoy reading her story. She invites you to join her in creating your own illustrated book about the wonder of space exploration. Will you be an *Eugene and Sissy* and *the Curious Egg* illustrator?

About the illustrator...

\_\_\_\_\_ lives in

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
\_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ years old when  
this story was illustrated.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's favorite thing about  
drawing pictures for stories is

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\_\_\_\_\_ hopes that  
when you read the story and look at the  
pictures, you will

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