



IN THE LATE 1950s, THE UNITED STATES RACES WITH THE SOVIET UNION* TO BE THE FIRST COUNTRY TO EXPLORE SPACE. THE SOVIET UNION TAKES THE EARLY LEAD BY SENDING THE FIRST SATELLITE† AND THE FIRST MAN INTO SPACE. ALARMED BY THESE EVENTS, THE UNITED STATES WORKS HARD TO CATCH UP. THE GOVERNMENT LOOKS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE GIFTED AT MATH TO HELP THEM SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF SPACE FLIGHT. KATHERINE JOHNSON, AN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN FROM WEST VIRGINIA, COULD BE THE KEY TO THEIR SUCCESS. FIRST, THOUGH, SHE'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH BEING TREATED UNFAIRLY BECAUSE OF HER RACE AND BECAUSE SHE'S A WOMAN.

Use this Graphic Book with Katherine Johnson at Level V.

*SOVIET UNION - FROM 1922-1991 A COMMUNIST COUNTRY IN EASTERN EUROPE AND NORTHERN ASIA MADE UP OF RUSSIA AND MANY SMALLER COUNTRIES

†SATELLITE - A HUMAN-MADE OBJECT THAT FLIES AROUND EARTH OR ANOTHER OBJECT IN SPACE

THE GIRL WHO BECAME A COMPUTER



Written by John Rousselle

Illustrated by Scott R. Brooks

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THE GIRL WHO BECAME A COMPUTER

1923: WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, WEST VIRGINIA

ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SEVEN. ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT.



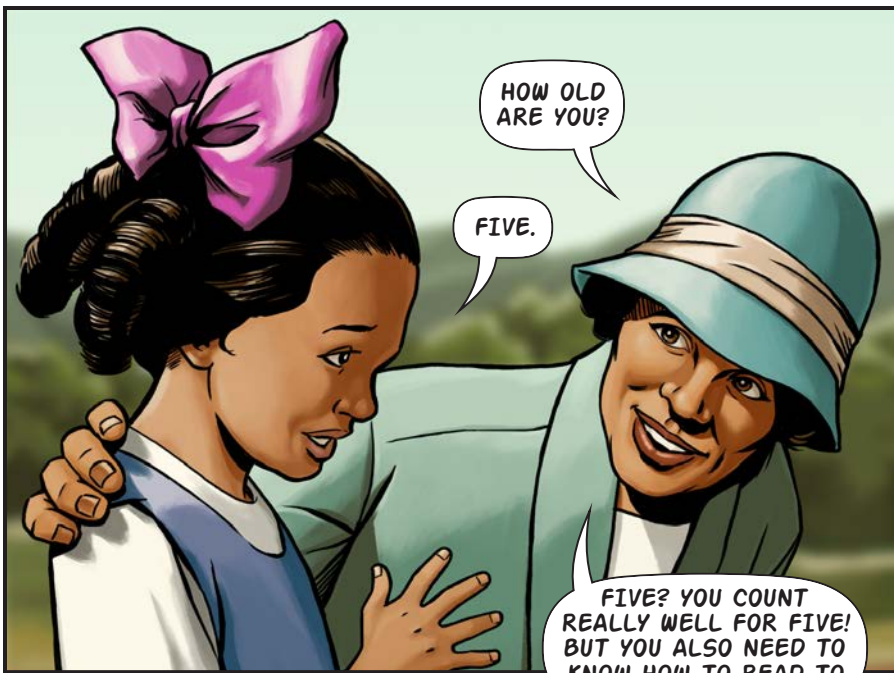
Written by John Rousselle
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HOW OLD ARE YOU?

FIVE.

FIVE? YOU COUNT REALLY WELL FOR FIVE! BUT YOU ALSO NEED TO KNOW HOW TO READ TO GO TO SCHOOL.

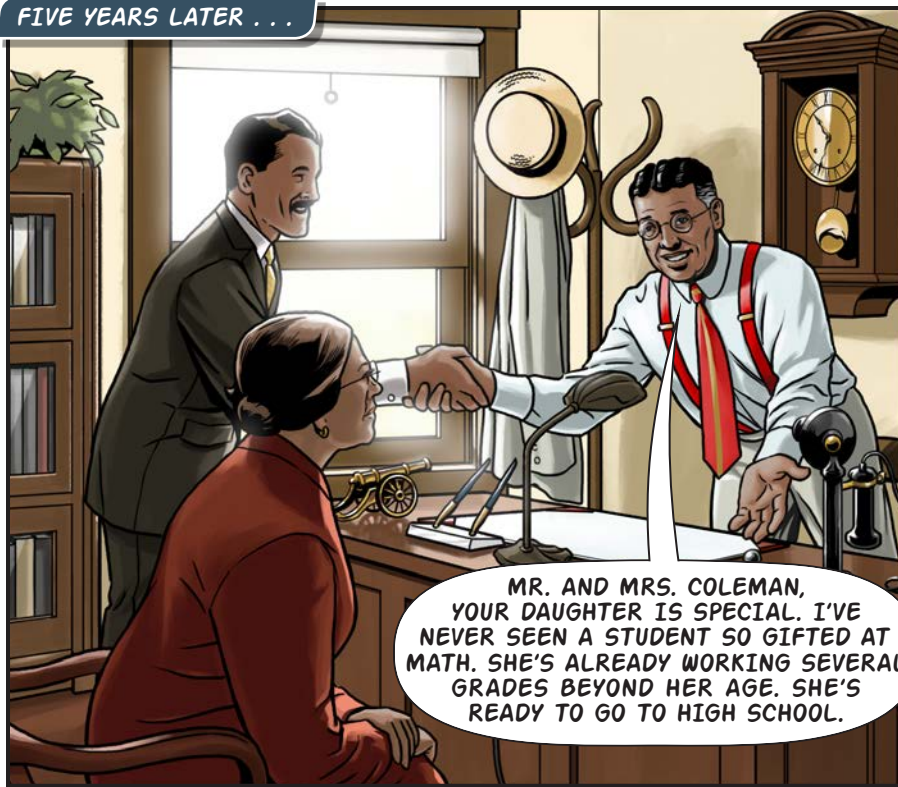


I CAN READ! I READ THE NEWSPAPER.

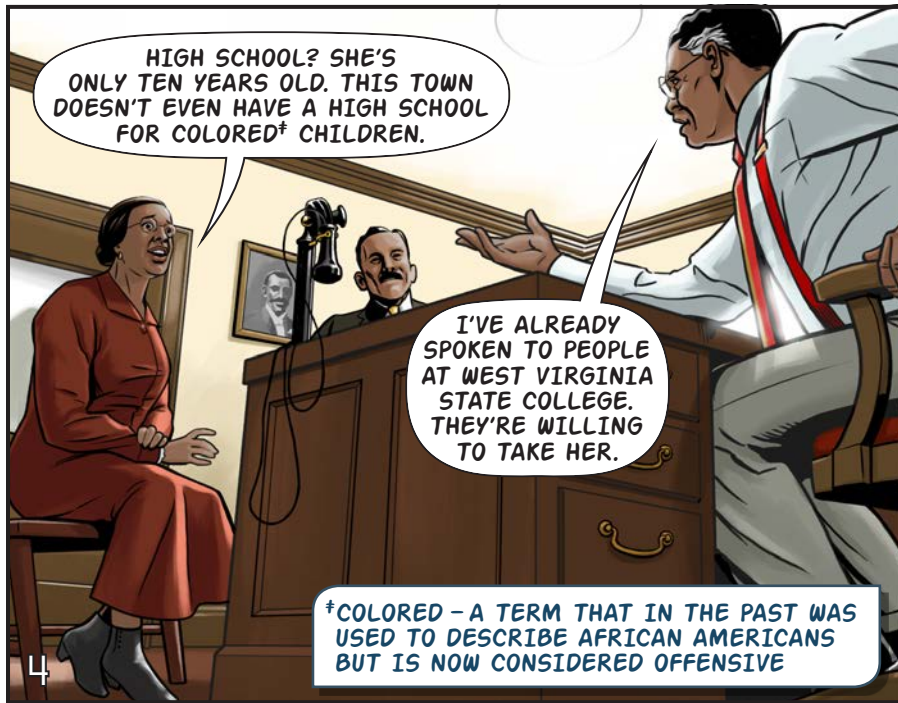
YOU DO? MAYBE YOU SHOULD COME TO SCHOOL WITH ME THIS SUMMER. I'LL SPEAK WITH YOUR PARENTS.

3

FIVE YEARS LATER . . .



MR. AND MRS. COLEMAN, YOUR DAUGHTER IS SPECIAL. I'VE NEVER SEEN A STUDENT SO GIFTED AT MATH. SHE'S ALREADY WORKING SEVERAL GRADES BEYOND HER AGE. SHE'S READY TO GO TO HIGH SCHOOL.



HIGH SCHOOL? SHE'S ONLY TEN YEARS OLD. THIS TOWN DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL FOR COLORED* CHILDREN.

I'VE ALREADY SPOKEN TO PEOPLE AT WEST VIRGINIA STATE COLLEGE. THEY'RE WILLING TO TAKE HER.

*COLORED - A TERM THAT IN THE PAST WAS USED TO DESCRIBE AFRICAN AMERICANS BUT IS NOW CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE

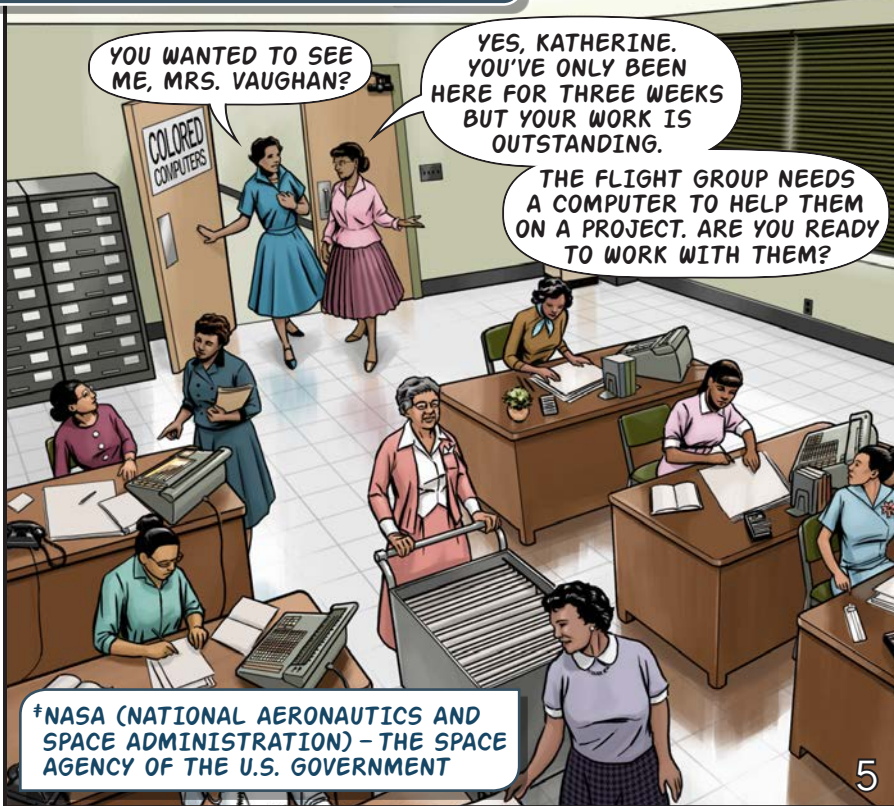
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THAT'S MORE THAN A HUNDRED MILES FROM HERE!

IF IT'S WHAT SHE NEEDS, WE'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK.

1953: NASA* CENTER, HAMPTON, VIRGINIA



YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, MRS. VAUGHAN?

YES, KATHERINE. YOU'VE ONLY BEEN HERE FOR THREE WEEKS BUT YOUR WORK IS OUTSTANDING.

THE FLIGHT GROUP NEEDS A COMPUTER TO HELP THEM ON A PROJECT. ARE YOU READY TO WORK WITH THEM?

*NASA (NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION) - THE SPACE AGENCY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

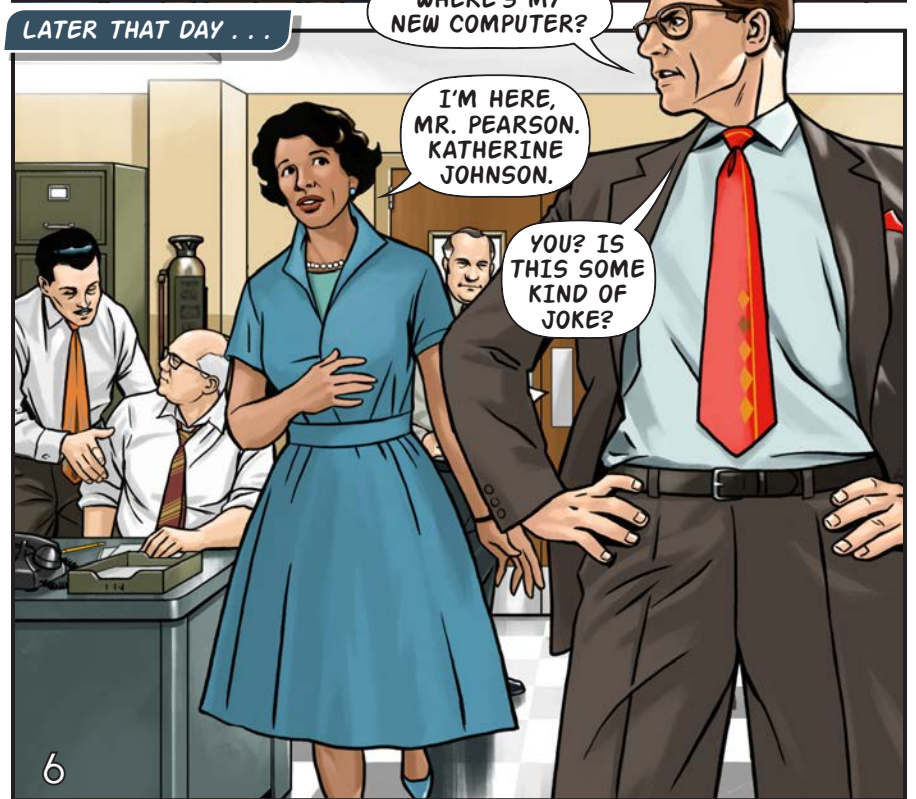
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YES, MA'AM. THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY.

WATCH YOURSELF OVER THERE. THOSE ENGINEERS AREN'T USED TO WORKING WITH A WOMAN OF YOUR TALENTS.

LATER THAT DAY . . .

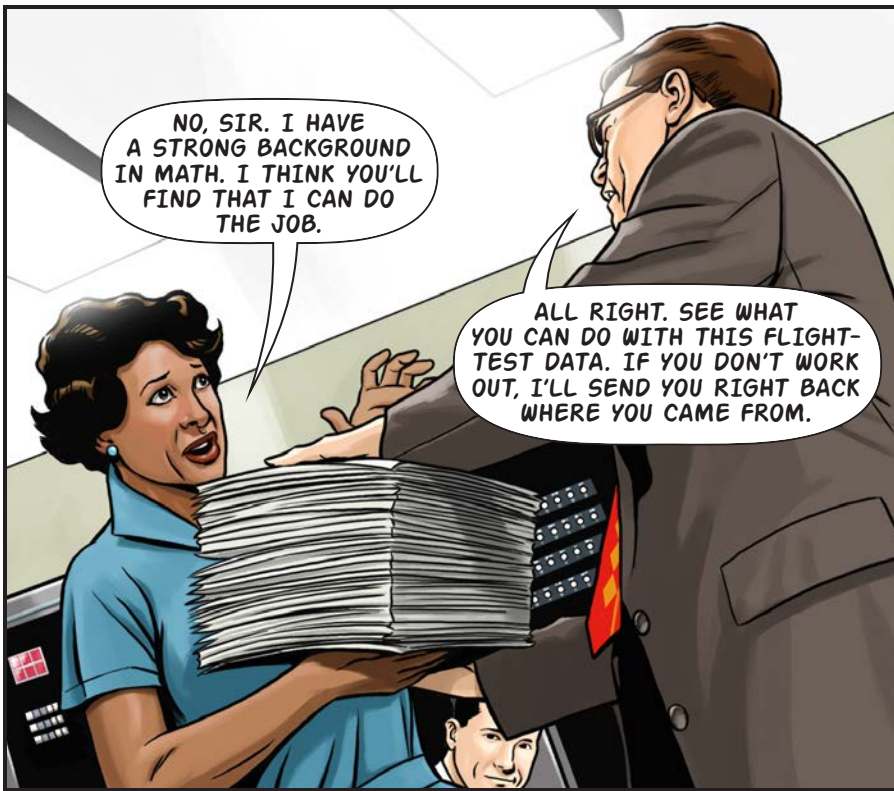


WHERE'S MY NEW COMPUTER?

I'M HERE, MR. PEARSON. KATHERINE JOHNSON.

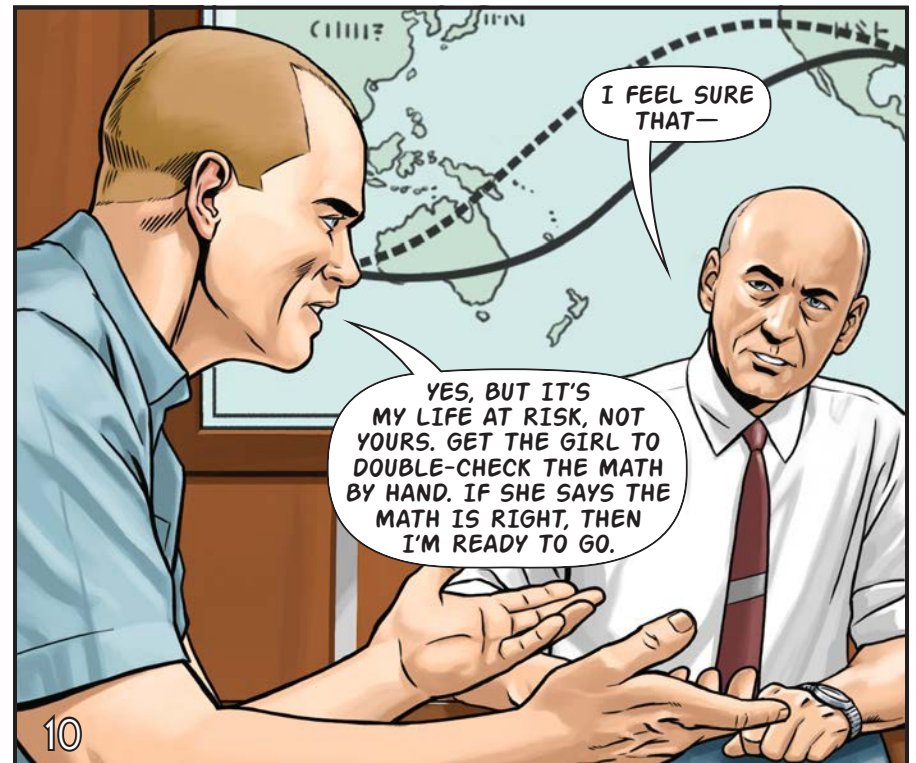
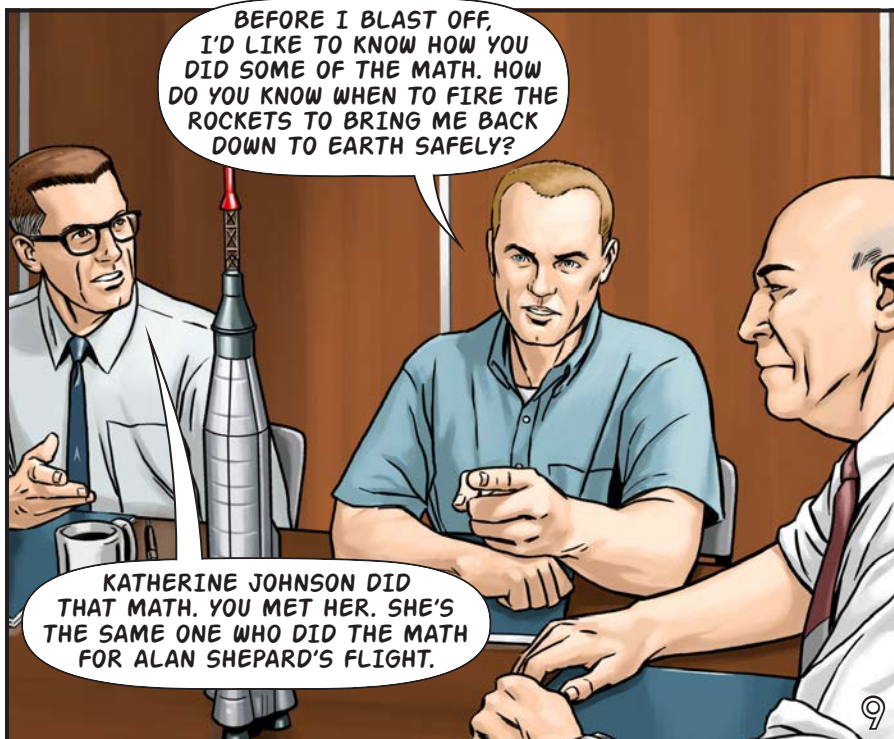
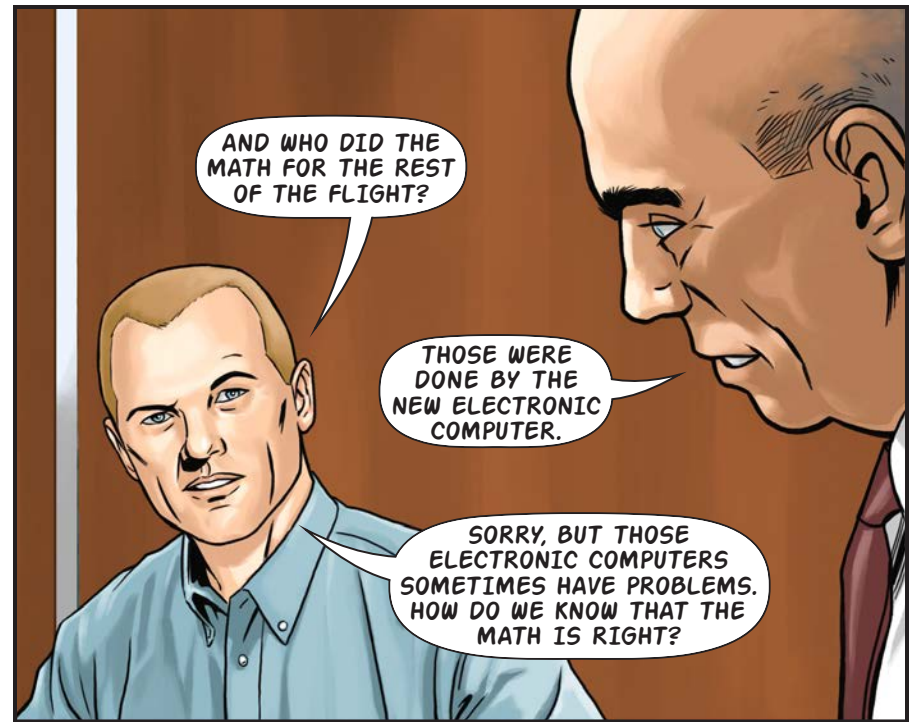
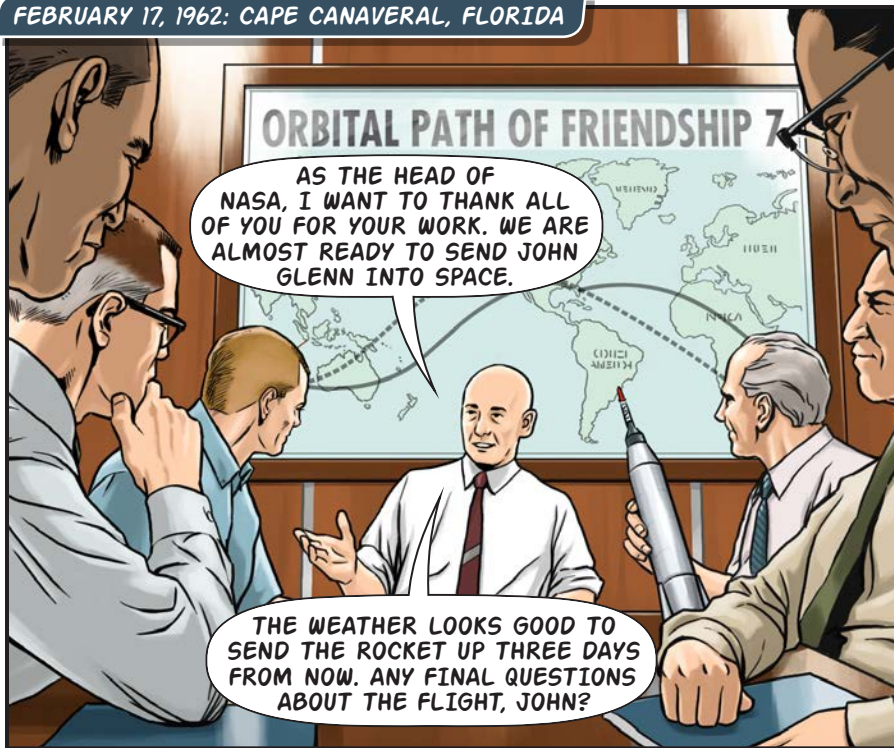
YOU? IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?

6



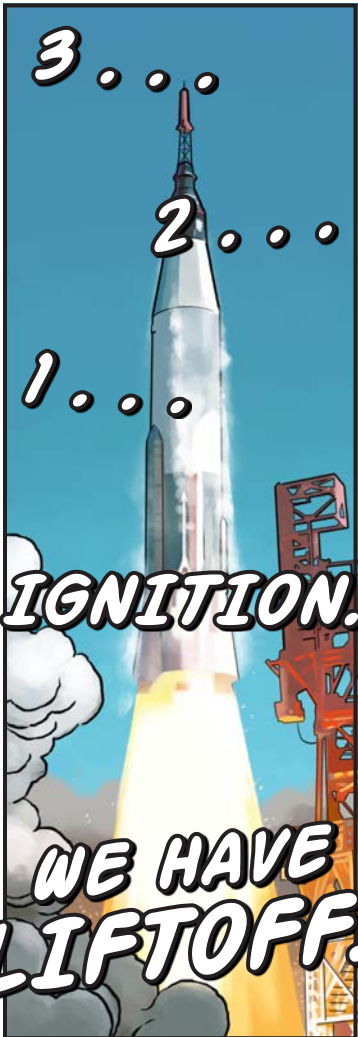
1960: NASA CENTER, HAMPTON, VIRGINIA







KATHERINE JOHNSON
HERE. YOU CAN TELL
MR. GLENN THAT IT
ALL CHECKS OUT!



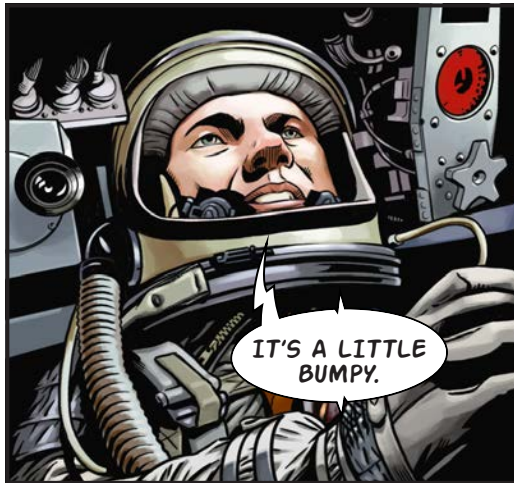
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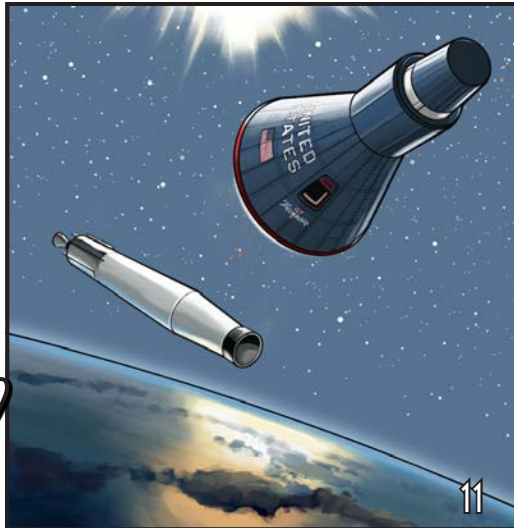
1 . . .

IGNITION.

**WE HAVE
LIFTOFF!**



IT'S A LITTLE
BUMPY.



OH, THAT VIEW
IS BEAUTIFUL!

JOHN GLENN BLASTED OFF ON FEBRUARY 21, 1962, GOING AROUND EARTH THREE TIMES BEFORE LANDING SAFELY IN THE OCEAN. HIS FLIGHT HELPED THE UNITED STATES BECOME THE FIRST COUNTRY TO SEND PEOPLE TO THE MOON AND BACK IN 1969. DURING HER MANY YEARS AT NASA, KATHERINE JOHNSON WORKED ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT SPACE PROJECTS. SHE RETIRED IN 1986 AND WAS GIVEN A MEDAL BY PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA IN 2015. IN 2017, NASA NAMED A NEW BUILDING AT ITS LANGLEY, VIRGINIA, CENTER IN HER HONOR.