

The Darkest Dark



AN INSPIRING
BEDTIME STORY BY
BESTSELLING AUTHOR
**CHRIS
HADFIELD**

Astronaut
Chris Hadfield



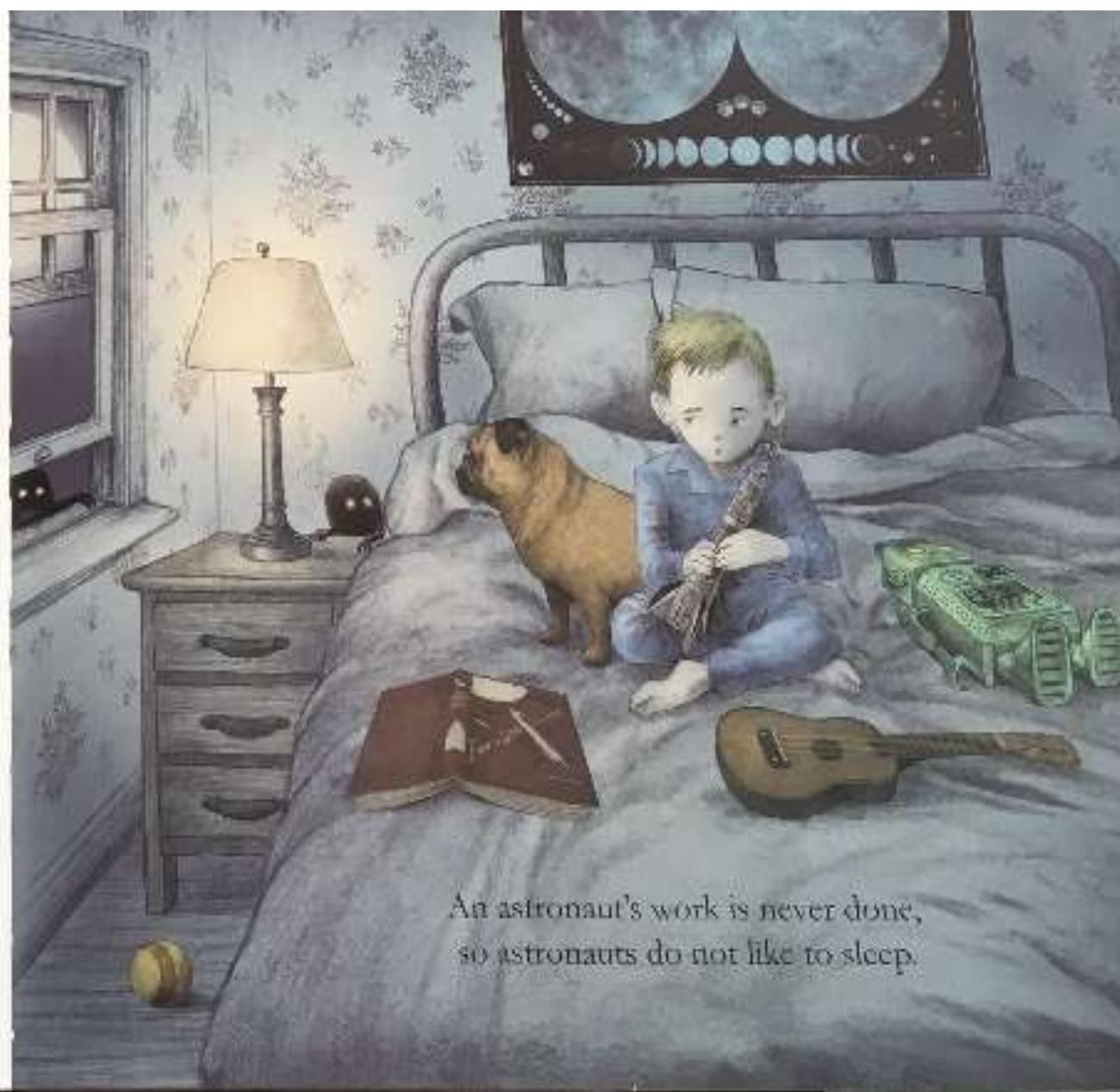
Chris was an astronaut. An important and very busy astronaut.



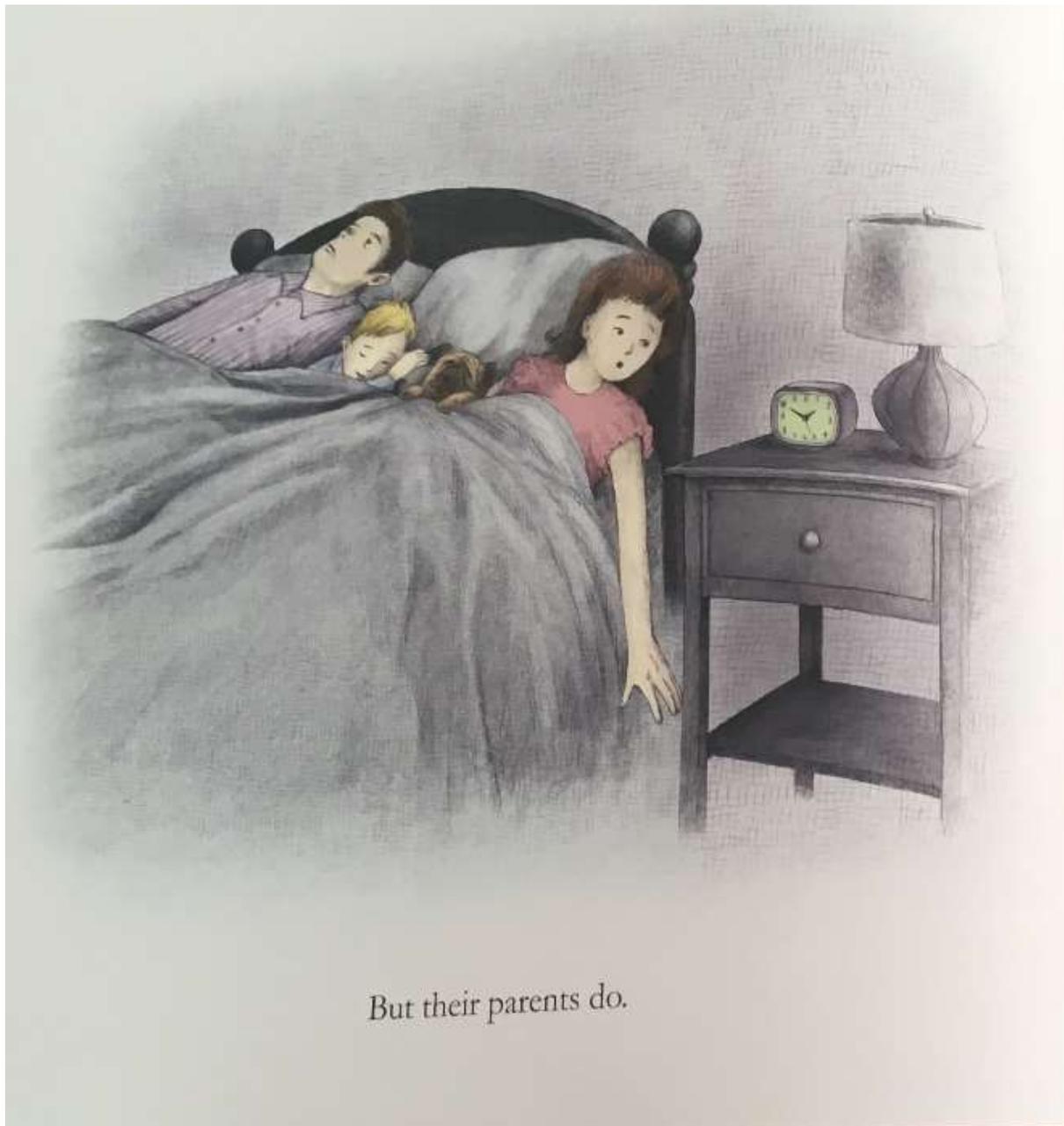
When it was time to take a bath, he told his mother, "I'd love to, but I'm saving the planet from aliens."



When it was time to get out of the bath and go to bed,
he told his father – politely, because astronauts are always polite –
“Sorry, no can do. I’m on my way to Mars.”



An astronaut’s work is never done,
so astronauts do not like to sleep.



But their parents do.



“You’re a big boy now,” said Chris’s father.
“You have to sleep in your own bed.”



*And Chris tried, he really did,
but his room was dark. Very, very dark.*

The kind of dark
that attracts the
worst sort of aliens.

*Chris. Was. Going. To. Sleep.
In. His. Own. Bed. Tonight.*



But his parents meant it.



His mum and dad checked under his bed and in the wardrobe,
and even in his underwear drawer. They declared the room
one hundred per cent alien-free.

They tucked Chris in.
They turned on the night-light.
They even gave him a special
bell to ring if he was nervous.



Toronto Daily Star
Wednesday, July 16, 1989 • 24 pages

MOON-BOUND

8:32 a.m.
blastoff

"The spirit of the American people is up! As the world will see with you on your flight to the moon."
—President Nixon



Stories on Pages 4 and 5

Part 11 (2/16), enjoying their first dinner here on Earth before this Friday morning's blast-off. Buzz Aldrin, later made pilot, left with a mate.

Commander Neil A. Armstrong was a pilot. Commander module pilot Michael Smith was the copilot.

"Spacemen Will Be Speedy
At Over 24,000 mph"



They took away the bell.



And then his father said something that worried Chris even more than the dark did. "One more peep, young man, and I'm afraid we'll all be too tired to go next door tomorrow."

But tomorrow would be a special day. A very special day. Chris *had* to go next door. His life pretty much depended on it.



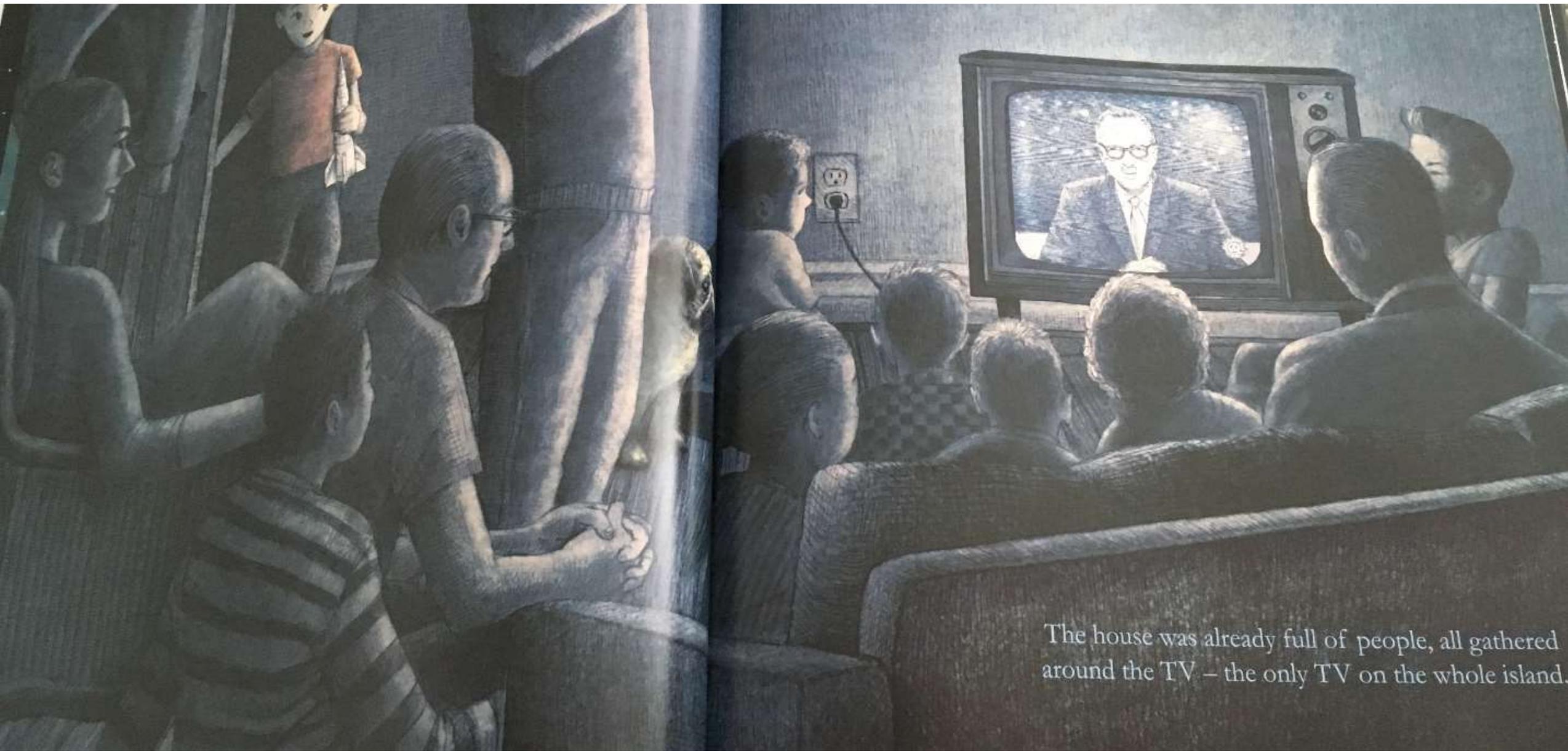
So Chris stayed in his own bed. Without a peep. It took a long time to fall asleep, but when he did, he had his favourite dream . . .

He flew his spaceship all the way to the Moon.





The next day seemed to last forever. But finally, when the Moon was shining over the lake and the summer wind was ruffling the leaves of the trees, Chris ran next door.



The house was already full of people, all gathered around the TV – the only TV on the whole island.



Chris found a spot where he could see through the crowd.
And what he saw was . . .

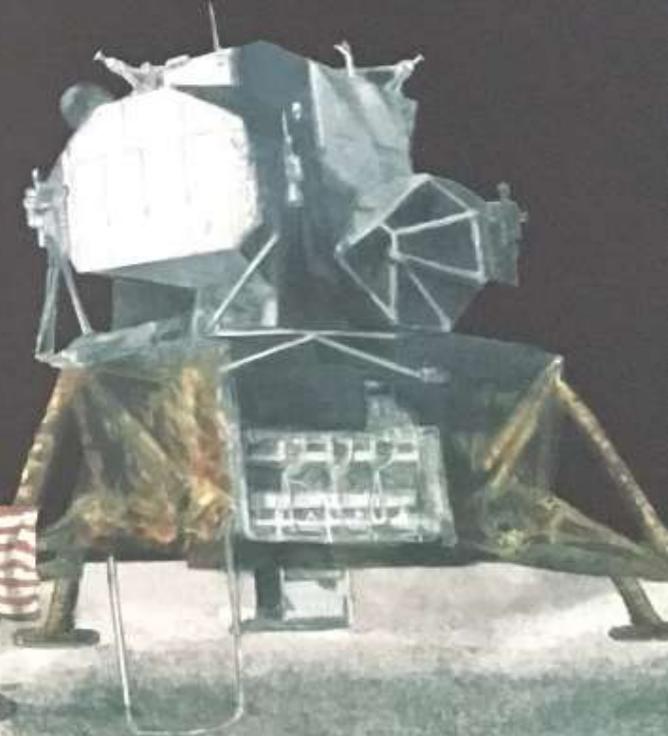
Astronauts. Real, live astronauts. On the actual, far-away Moon.
They were wearing puffy white suits and jumping for joy –
jumping so high, because there was so much less gravity there.



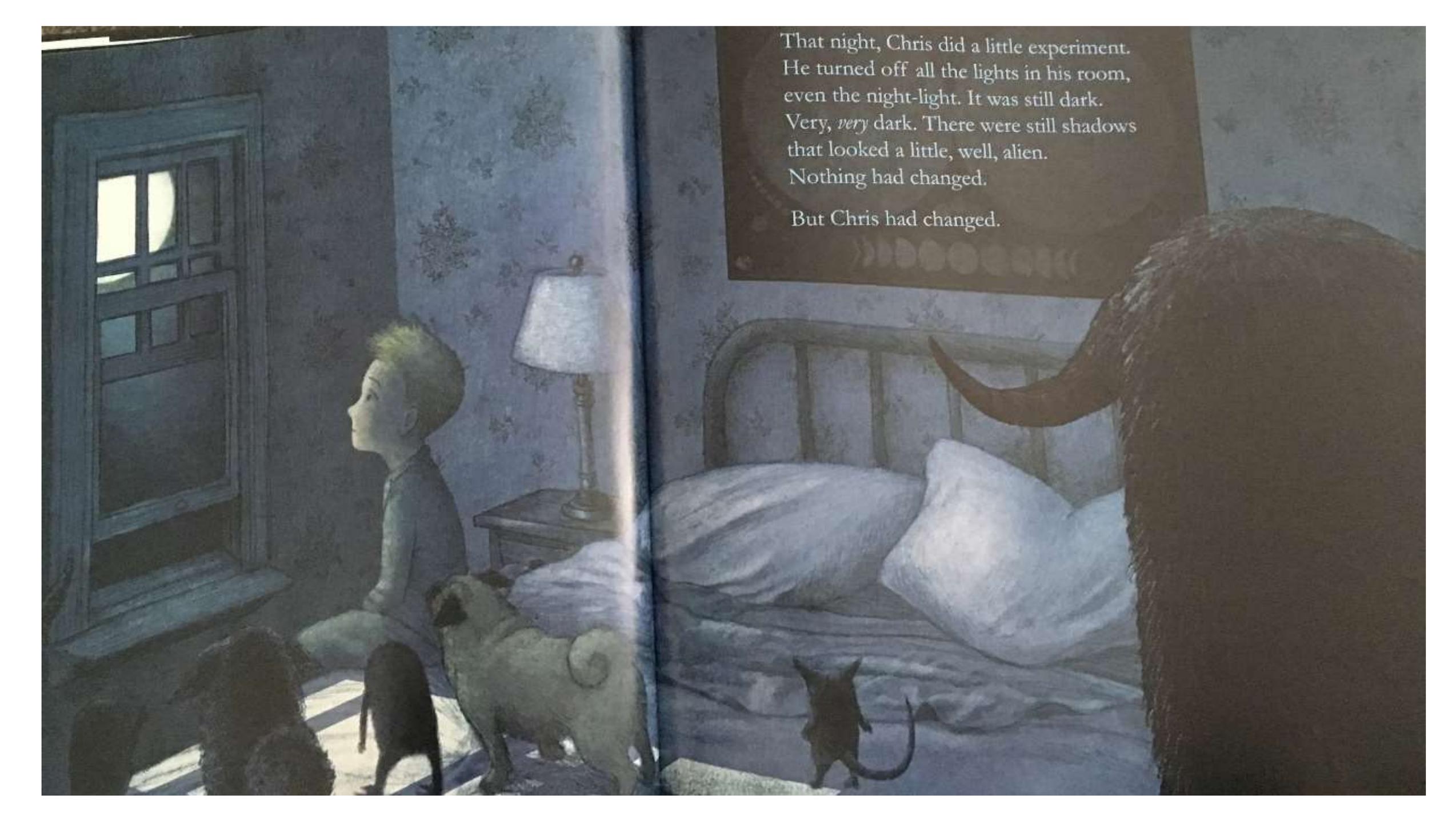
The grown-ups huddled around the TV were amazed. Their whole lives long, they'd never expected to see this sight. Even Chris (who had been to the Moon just the night before) was amazed. He'd never really noticed how *dark* it was there.



Outer Space was the darkest dark ever.



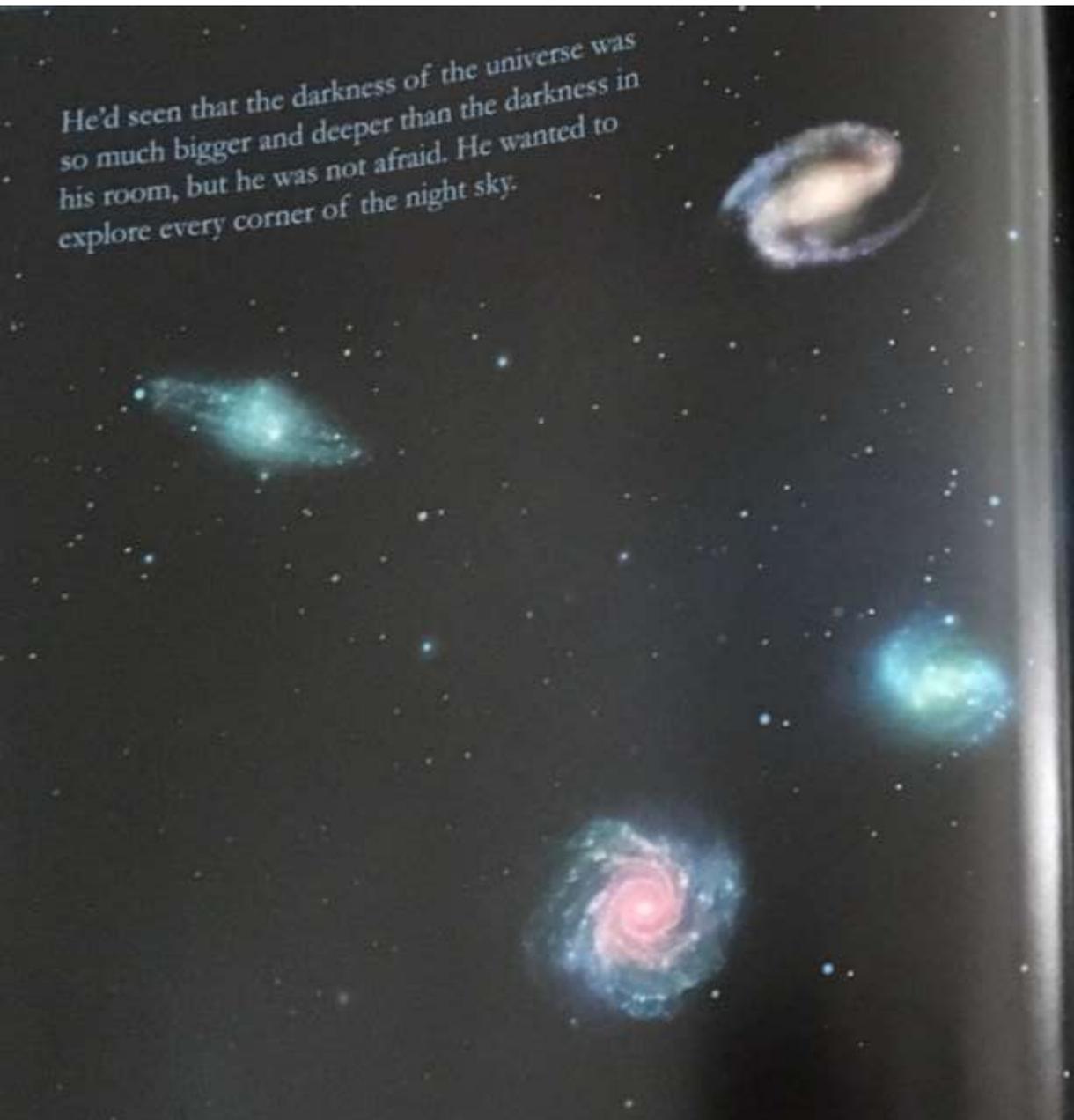


An illustration of a boy sitting on the floor in a dark room, looking out a window. He is surrounded by several dogs of different breeds. The room is dimly lit, with a lamp on a bedside table and light coming from the window. The walls have a floral pattern. The overall mood is mysterious and suspenseful.

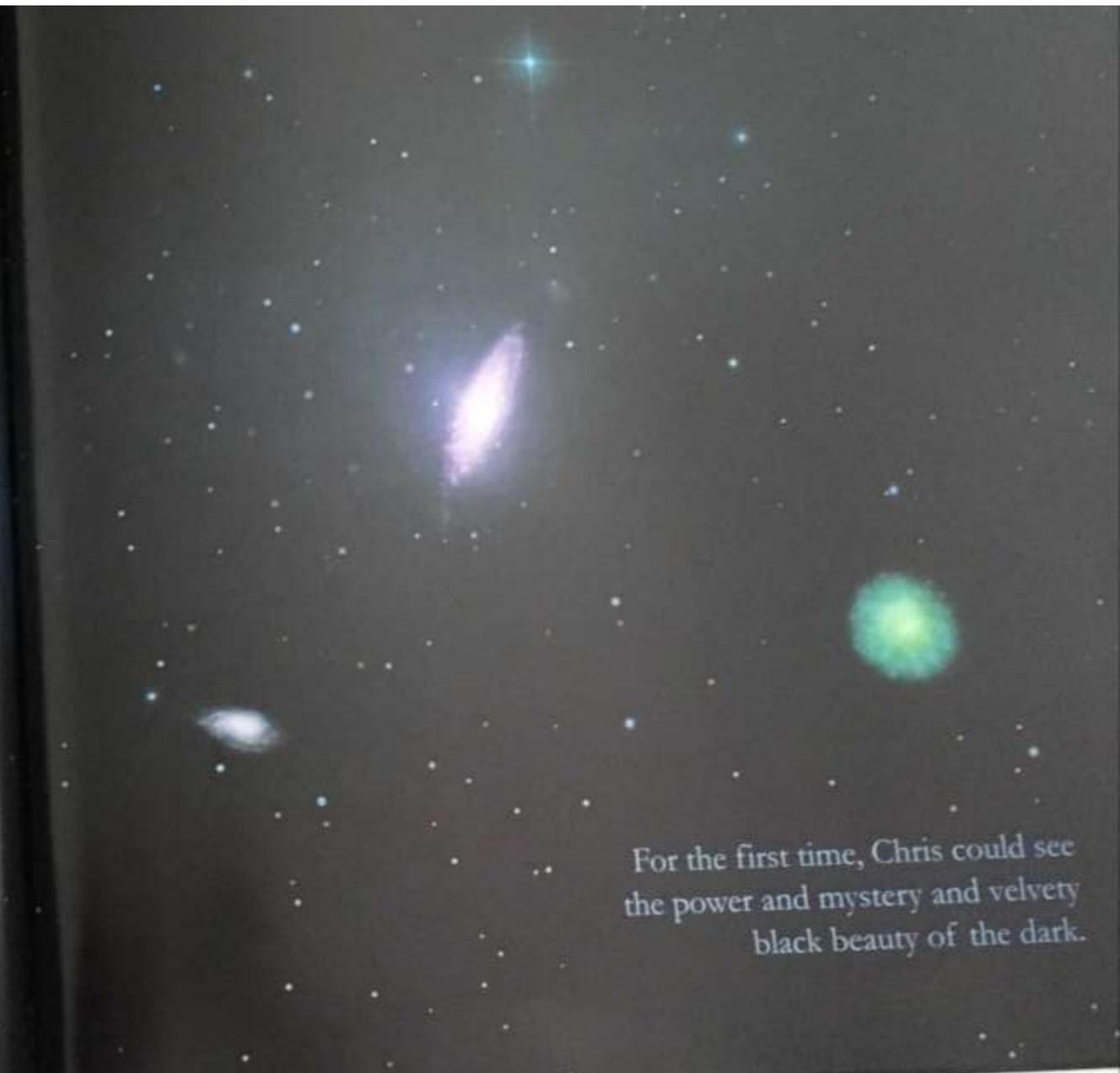
That night, Chris did a little experiment.
He turned off all the lights in his room,
even the night-light. It was still dark.
Very, *very* dark. There were still shadows
that looked a little, well, alien.
Nothing had changed.

But Chris had changed.

He'd seen that the darkness of the universe was so much bigger and deeper than the darkness in his room, but he was not afraid. He wanted to explore every corner of the night sky.



For the first time, Chris could see the power and mystery and velvety black beauty of the dark.



And he realised you're never really alone there.
Your dreams are always with you, just waiting.
Big dreams, about the kind of person you want to be.



Wonderful dreams about the life you will live.



Dreams that actually can come true.



ABOUT CHRIS HADFIELD

Growing up, Chris Hadfield spent every summer at his family's cottage on Stag Island in southern Ontario. Like just about everyone else on the island, the Hadfields didn't have a television set, so late in the evening of 20 July 1969, Chris and his family went to a neighbour's cottage to watch the *Apollo 11* landing on TV. When he saw Neil Armstrong step onto the surface of the Moon, Chris's life changed forever. He knew he wanted to be an astronaut too.

At the time, it was impossible. For one thing, he wasn't a grown-up yet. For another, all of NASA's astronauts were American. Canadians weren't even allowed to apply for the job.

But Chris decided to start getting ready, just in case things ever changed. He worked hard at school, learning everything he could about science, rockets and Space. As a teenager, he learned how to fly gliders, and then, after graduating from military college, he became a fighter pilot. Later, he became a test pilot who helped make military aircraft safer. In 1992, almost twenty-three years after that summer night on Stag Island, Chris's dream came true: the newly formed Canadian Space Agency chose him to be an astronaut.

Since then, he has orbited the Earth thousands of times on three separate missions. Most recently, Chris was in Space for nearly five months, from December 2012 to May 2013, when he served as the first Canadian Commander of the International Space Station (ISS).

Today, Chris travels the world teaching people about Space, sharing the beautiful photographs he took and playing the songs he recorded on the space station. On summer nights, he likes to sit on his dock on Stag Island, watching for the ISS to pass by overhead. Even in the darkest dark, on a moonless night, the spaceship's light is clearly visible.

