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## SYNOPSIS

As the US/Soviet Space Race heats up in 1961, eleven-year-old Arno finds his dreams of becoming an astronomer imploding faster than an extragalactic supernova.

## EXCERPT

But wait. Where was Saturn?

Arno wheeled around to survey his room.

"Comet!" he shouted, just as his dog, Saturn in his mouth, dashed under Arno's bed. "Give it back, Comet!" Arno demanded.

He knelt down to peer at Comet. Comet scooted farther back into the darkness. He gently held Saturn by the tips of his pointy little teeth.

"I mean it, Comet. Give it here."

Arno thrust his arm under the bed like he meant business, but his sweeping hand came nowhere near Comet.

"Don't make me come after you!"

Comet thumped his tail but otherwise didn't budge.

The solar system was nothing without Saturn.

Arno peered under the bed to survey the situation.

It was dark. It was a small space. He might get stuck with no one home to rescue him.

And then what?

## EARLY REVIEW

Writing in a believably childlike third-person, Kerrin adds period details and handwritten pages of "Deep Thoughts" from Arno's astronomy notebook, and she closes with notes on the space program's later history. A quiet reminder that the stars are not out of reach, with work and well-timed help. **Kirkus Reviews**

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## JESSICA SCOTT KERRIN – BIOGRAPHY

I'm a Canadian writer (Halifax) best known for my fiction books for children, including an eight-book series called *Martin Bridge*; a trilogy called *The Lobster Chronicles*; two linked mysteries called *The Spotted Dog Last Seen* and *The Missing Dog Is Spotted*; a travel adventure novel, *The Things Owen Write*; a picture book about a father/son relationship called *The Better Tree Fort*; and now, *Clear Skies*, my first work of period fiction.

What interests children interests me. This includes monster lobsters, creepy cemeteries, giant tree forts, spectacular rockets and comical dogs. I've mentored many writers and toured hundreds of schools and libraries across Canada and the United States. To date, my books have been translated into six languages.

I was inspired to write *Clear Skies* in anticipation of the fiftieth anniversary of the first human Moon landing (July, 20, 2019). I grew up in the immediate aftermath of the Space Race between the US and the Soviet Union. *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* were all the rage. For a time, I thought I might grow up to become an astronaut. Then I had to get glasses when I was in grade two, putting an end to those starry dreams. Back in those days, astronauts had to have perfect vision. In hindsight, forced abandonment of that career was probably met with some relief. After all, I thought (and still do) that those pioneer astronauts were the bravest people I could imagine. Happily, I grew up to be an author and I had an astronaut (John Glenn) sign my first *Martin Bridge* book, which happened to be about rockets!

*Clear Skies* is set in the early 1960s, the dawn of the Space Race. Our ability to safely land someone on the Moon at that time was anybody's guess. And now, fifty years later, we cast our eyes to the red planet Mars. Already, numerous probes and robotic land rovers have led the way. It's no longer science fiction to think that today's young readers of *Clear Skies* might grow up to become tomorrow's Mars explorers, our next generation of astronauts.

Visit my website at [JessicaScottKerrin.com](http://JessicaScottKerrin.com)