

CAPTAIN ^{OF THE} UNIVERSE

CHAPTER 2

by Kay Hively

On the second night of his vacation, Eddie and his grandfather sat together on the porch again. Soon a very bright star appeared in the west just as it had done the evening before. Now Eddie knew that star was Jupiter.

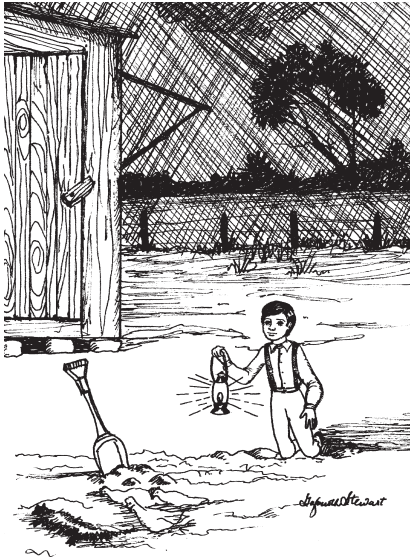
He asked his grandfather about Jupiter. Grandpa Hubble explained that the sky had thousands of stars, but very few planets. He said a planet was like a big ball that moved around and around the sun.

Eddie listened carefully and then asked his grandfather how many planets there were in the sky. His grandfather rubbed his chin, looked up into the sky and then said he thought there were only eight planets. One of them, he said, was the earth. He also said that even more planets might still be found. Grandpa Hubble said people were looking through telescopes all the time searching for new planets.

Eddie thought for a while about the planets. He had seen a globe at school, so he knew what Earth looked like. He did not know there were other places like the earth.

Then Grandpa Hubble said the other planets might not be like earth. They might not have people living on them. Some of them might even be nothing but fire.

Eddie's head was spinning with all this talk of planets. He wanted to know more. But just as he started to ask another question, he heard a loud noise in his grandfather's chicken coop.



Grandpa Hubble jumped to his feet and rushed into the house. Eddie heard his grandfather say something was killing the chickens.

When Grandpa Hubble came back out onto the porch, he was carrying a lantern and his shotgun. Right behind him was Eddie's grandmother. She told Eddie to stay on the porch.

It was dark out in the yard, but Eddie could see his grandpa-

ther running with the lantern. Grandpa Hubble opened the door of the chicken coop. In the dim light of the lantern, Eddie saw his grandfather go into the little building.

The chickens got louder and louder. Suddenly there was a giant explosion — a big bang! The noise startled Eddie so much that he nearly fell off the porch.

Standing close by his Grandma Hubble, Eddie looked out into darkness. He saw his grandfather come through the chicken coop door with his shotgun and the lantern. At the same time, Eddie got a big whiff of something very strong and very smelly. Grandpa Hubble had shot a skunk!

When Grandpa Hubble came back to the porch, he handed the lantern to Eddie. Together they walked to the chicken coop. Eddie held the light while Grandpa Hubble dug a hole and buried the smelly old skunk. They also buried three of Grandma Hubble's chickens.

Later, as he lay in bed, Eddie could still smell the skunk. Through a window he could also see the night sky. Eddie fell asleep wondering what, or who, lived on the other planets that were up in that big sky.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2001.

CLASSROOM EXTENSIONS — THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DO

- After Eddie grew up, scientists discovered another planet. They called it Pluto. In 2006 what did scientists do to Pluto?
- Draw a picture of the lantern that Eddie held for his grandfather, or draw a picture of a skunk in the chicken coop. Or, draw a picture of your favorite planet.

**NEXT
WEEK
CHAPTER
THREE
The Big
Dipper**