Holocaust Memorial Day 2023

Small Steps

Tom Palmer

A note from the National Literacy Trust: By its very nature, the subject of the Holocaust is extremely upsetting. We have created this story to be appropriate for pupils in Years 5, 6, 7 and 8. There are no graphic descriptions of events. However, we know that we all find the Holocaust tough to comprehend and process, and for some children it might be too much for them to hear about. You will know your pupils and students the best. Please read through each chapter before reading aloud, to ensure that you are able to support your class. We have highlighted one or two paragraphs which teachers of Year 5 and 6 might wish to omit. If you are using the videos of Tom reading the story, please apply the same awareness.

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Ok… forty feet… thirty feet…

We held our breath, watching the screen. We knew that the astronauts were running low on the fuel they needed to land safely. All five of us were glued to the small black and white screen in the corner of the living room. Mom, Dad, my younger siblings, Miriam and David. And me.

July 1969.

We were watching the moon landing. The first time people had travelled to the Moon. Ever.

Engine off… twenty feet…

I could feel my whole body aching with tension as we studied the grainy images being beamed tens of thousands of miles from the Moon to our home, to the room where normally we played board games and did our homework. We tried to make sense of the eerie moon shadows and forbidding craters, while listening to every word coming from the TV presenter and NASA command.

Contact light… ten feet…

Not a sound from the five of us. Then:

413 is in…

I turned to Dad. 'Does that mean?'

Dad nodded and he ruffled my hair with his hand.

We copy you down, Eagle.

'That's the control room,' Dad explained.

Then he held his hand up to silence us, because he knew what was coming and he wanted us to hear it. This moment of spectacular unprecedented history. Neil Armstong's voice coming to us across tens of thousands of miles.

Houston… uh… Tranquillity base here… the Eagle has landed.

And now we breathed out, laughed, grinned at each other. Mom squeezed Dad in the tightest hug, whispering to him something we could not hear.

‘Man on the moon,’ I croaked.

We had done it. I looked around our living room. At the brown curtains framing a sunset to the west. The chairs sat in pairs. The framed pictures on the walls. None of this would ever look the same.

‘And is that your camera, Dad?’ David asked. ‘The pictures we’re seeing?’

Dad nodded.

‘And it’s working properly?’ Miriam added.

Dad smiled. No words. Just that cute sideways tilt of his head. And why should he not smile today of all days? Because my dad worked for NASA. On the moon programme. And – if it wasn’t for his contribution – we’d not be seeing these pictures of an American spacecraft landing on the moon for the first time in human history.

Here’s the science bit. The camera that 600 million people were watching these scenes through right now was so complex it is hard to put into words. Dad designed some of the really important parts that made the camera work: the sensor and the camera tubes. In an environment with such unpredictable changes of light and temperature, it needed scientists with three university degrees to create it.

My dad was part of this. My dad was part of history.

I was thirteen when we landed men on the moon. I had just returned from Israel with Mom to celebrate my bat mitzvah. That meant that, now, I was officially an adult.

Maybe because of that, or because we were in Israel, or because I was alone with Mom for days and days without the rest of the family, I had begun to ask her more questions about her and Dad’s lives. To fill the gaps in what I knew about their childhoods, their teenage years. I knew about Mom. She’d been born in Germany, but fled for England in 1938 because the Nazis were being so dreadful to the Jews. Mom is Jewish. We all are.

But I knew less about Dad.

‘Tell me about you and Dad,’ I pleaded. ‘You don’t talk about it much and he never does. I’m thirteen now.’

Mom screwed up her face, stared at the sky, then took a deep breath.

Dad’s name, she told me, used to be Meir Sosnowicz. He was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1927. His life was centred around family and school and games, playing the violin and going to the synagogue with his dad, my grandfather.

‘He had fun playing hide and seek and hopscotch,’ Mum said. ‘He had a mother and a father and uncles and aunts, cousins, two brothers and a sister. They had big family gatherings to celebrate Shabbat, Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur.

‘Then?’ I asked. ‘Then what happened?’

I want to tell you what Mom told me that day about my father’s childhood. It’s important. Not just to me. But to you. To us all.

He was 12 and living on Zamenhof Street in Warsaw when Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Even before the Germans came, there was a lot of hatred and violence towards the Jewish people.

But when the Germans invaded, things became worse. German warplanes attacked Warsaw. A powerful bomb fell near Dad’s family apartment, creating a great crack that made the building incredibly cold during the Polish winter. The courtyard reeked of burning for weeks.

When the German soldiers arrived on the streets Dad’s childhood was over. It was no longer safe for Jewish children to play out. Jews were not allowed to walk on pavements, only in the gutters, Mum told me.

There were other rules, too. Jews will not go in the park. Jews will not sit on benches. Jews will not ride the trams. Jews will not go to school. Jews cannot use the hospital. And rules for non-Jews: Don’t buy from Jewish stores.

Next, the Germans forced all the Jews to live in the part of the town where my father lived, thousands crammed together impossibly.

The area became known as the Warsaw ghetto. Countless more families arrived, having had their homes taken.

One of the things I love about our Jewish traditions is that G-d requires us to show kindness and to offer hospitality to those who need it. I was proud to hear that my father's parents did that, taking in family, friends and even strangers who were forced to live in the ghetto, having lost everything. My grandparents provided for these people as best they could.

They also arranged for a special tutor to teach my father and other children now that no school was allowed. Education meant everything to them. They knew how important it was.

But the Germans found out about the secret teacher. One day, as he was teaching, the Nazis burst into their room, beat the teacher and dragged him away. They burned all the books the children were using. That was my father's last day in school.

His teacher was never seen again.

Now with all the Jews in one place, the Nazis could control them, and they created more rules. We will make you wear a white armband with a blue star of David on your right arm to show that you are a Jew. We will catch you on the street and force you to shovel snow or to dig graves. We will not pay you, but, if you don't work, we will kill you.

And people were killed.

My father saw them hung and shot and beaten to death in front of his eyes. Others starved. Can you imagine walking home passing bodies just lying in the street?

My mother told me all this. And that most of those who remained crammed inside the Warsaw ghetto would go on to be killed.

So why, you might ask, was my dad still alive? Why did he not die, too?

I remembered all the things my mother had told me as I sat with my father on the sofa watching the Eagle lunar module landing, waiting for the astronauts to come out and step on the moon.

It really was hard to imagine how Dad was still alive on the sofa next to me. How had he survived and learned how to contribute to a camera that might show the world – the whole world for now and forever – a man walking on the moon?

As I was sitting there trying to fathom my father's life, his extraordinary achievement, a thought came to me.

What if his special camera didn't work and we couldn't watch men on the moon?

I took a deep breath.

'Will it work, Dad?', I asked. 'When they walk on the moon, will your camera work?'

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‘Will it work?’, Dad repeated my question back to me. ‘Our camera on the lunar module?’

‘Yes,’ I said.

‘I think so,’ he assured me. ‘I mean… there’s always a chance something will go wrong when you try something new like this. But the landing camera worked. That’s a good sign. There’s a camera above the exit hatch and another on the top of the lunar module. Even if only one works we’ll see something. And the science is good.’

I nodded, trying to think how Dad must feel. His cameras had been designed to film people on the moon, recording the most amazing scientific event in human history.

‘I hope it does, Dad,’ I said quietly.

‘Me too,’ Dad winked, then moved closer to the edge of his seat, his hands clasped together, eyes hard on the screen. ‘But I think we’ll have to wait maybe five or six hours before we see anything new,’ he warned. ‘The astronauts have a lot to do before they open the hatch.’

I don’t think Dad moved in all the time it took for Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to do whatever it was they had to do. Eyes on the screen, Dad took in every word that made it through to us from the radio contact between the control room and the lunar module. He told us what the men were saying if we didn’t understand. I remember watching him that evening as the daylight faded outside and as night fell.

I remember scrambling to the window to see if I could see the moon myself.

Then back to my seat next to Dad, wondering, worrying. What was next? What would happen when the hatch opened?

Nobody knew. Not really. No-one had been to the moon before. This must be the most anxious day of Dad’s life, I thought.

But only for a moment.

That was when the other things that Mom had told me in Israel came back to me.

We had been sitting at the Western Wall, looking at a view of Jerusalem, when she told me how Dad escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto.

How there was not enough food in the ghetto and that my grandparents realised Dad might not survive if he stayed. And that an opportunity arose. There was a friend of the family who was a policeman. My grandmother paid this policeman to help Dad and another boy, Neute, to escape from the ghetto. It was all arranged. The escape.

Dad and Neute went to the edge of the ghetto early one morning. The policeman who was a guard had come to his house the day before and had told my dad and Neute how to sneak onto a tram that came briefly into the ghetto, just to turn round before leaving again with no passengers. Watched closely by the Nazis who were always alert for escaping Jews.

'Did his Mom go to drop him off at the tram?' I asked, thinking that is what I would have wanted for him. He would have been scared. He was 13. My age.

'He doesn't remember that,' Mom told me.

I frowned. 'How could you not remember that?', I asked.

Mom shrugged. 'It is painful for Dad to remember the horrible things that happened to him. But he is always honest about what he remembers. When he says he remembers, it is true. And he is honest when he cannot remember. He doesn't make things up. That is important. His testimony is the truth.'

Mum carried on telling me more things I did not know that day in Israel. Things that now I like to not remember too.

Dad and Neute escaped on the tram and from the ghetto and made their way through the streets of free Warsaw. Although they were anxious at being identified as Jews, they were astonished by the city. People walked freely, laughing, sitting in cafes, drinking coffee. Children played in parks. Nobody walked in the gutter. Nobody wore blue stars. There were no dead bodies on the pavement waiting to be collected.

Dad and Neute took a boat that was used mostly by peasants coming to and from the city along the Vistula River to sell their produce from the farms. They were praying that they wouldn't be discovered to be Jewish, as the boat sailed south to their destination.

They were very nervous that the other passengers, some of whom were just as hostile to Jews as the Nazis were, would tell the Nazis that they were Jewish.

And then they were stopped. By Nazi soldiers who checked their bags and asked them questions. Fortunately the Nazis didn't realise they were Jewish. My Mom told me that Dad had said to her: 'We knew that we could be dead in minutes.'

Remembering this, I glanced at my dad, who still had his eyes on the TV and the moon and I wondered what would have happened if he had been identified as a Jew that day.

Would I be here?

Would my brother and sister be here?

Would we have children and grandchildren and live free?

And, if my dad had not survived the Holocaust, would there have been someone to make that camera the world was watching the surface of the moon through now? Would there have been someone who knew how to do what Dad did?

My dad and his friend made it south. To Ostrowiec, where his mother had arranged for him to stay with his aunt and her five children, his cousins.

Mom hesitated, before telling me more.

'I asked your father if I could tell you this,' she said, 'And he said that – because you are asking – you are old enough.'

'Thank you.'

'You won't thank me when I have told you,' Mom said.

Then she told me.

'The town they had moved to live in was called Ostrowiec. Very soon after they arrived, Einsatzgruppen – Nazi killing squads, who had been paid to find and

kill Jews – would come in the middle of the night, pull Jews out of their beds, for them never to be seen again.'

I said nothing.

'There was only one way to escape this fate,' Mom told me after a pause.

I said nothing again. It was hard to know what to say.

'How?', I managed at last.

'Work,' she said. 'Only those who were selected to work as slaves in the iron works factory might be able to avoid that fate, at least for a time.'

'But what happened to his cousins? His aunt? What fate do you mean?'

Mum looked to the skies. 'Some of his cousins,' she told me, 'And his aunt were taken. Everyone in Ostrowiec who wasn't working in the iron works were taken. 11,000 people. To the death camps.'

How did that even make sense? I struggled to comprehend it.

'What about his other cousins?'

'The two oldest – Shmuel and Srul – were spared with your dad because they all worked as slaves in the factory.'

'And then?', I managed to croak.

'And then,' Mom paused again to swallow, to take a deep breath, 'After two years in the iron works factory and living a terrible life with very little food, the Nazis herded all the Jewish workers together one day and took them from the factory and put them into boxcar railway wagons with a hundred men in each and with one bucket to use as a toilet in there. And no food.'

'But where? Where did they take them?'

'To Auschwitz, my love.'

Auschwitz.

Have you heard of Auschwitz?

Auschwitz is where over a million Jewish people were murdered by the Nazis, most of them within hours of their arrival. It was unusual for a Jewish person

to leave Auschwitz alive. Some – but very few – were selected to work and many of these, too, died from the horrific treatment they suffered.

This next monstrous event in my father's life returned to my mind as I watched him study the tiny lunar module on the dusty grey moon.

Three hours became four became five became six.

Until the hatch of the Eagle opened and we held our breath as we waited to watch astronauts to walk on the moon through my dad's camera.

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Okay Neil… we can see you coming down the ladder now…

We weren't able to watch the first astronaut emerging through an open hatch to see the Moon before him. But we could hear them talking it through. Planning what they still had to do, how they would go about it.

It was hard to imagine this was really happening. Although Mom did not let us watch cartoons on the TV, we had been allowed to watch many other space-related lift-offs. We had been to the movies and seen adventures like *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon* with great spaceships zooming about. But, even though this was slow, the words of the men saying they were opening the hatch were a hundred times more exciting than a Hollywood film.

But – as I heard the words from ground control – I wasn't thinking about this being one of the greatest events in human history. I was thinking of another moment of human history. The worst, perhaps.

I was thinking of Auschwitz.

And what my mother had told me about my father's – and his two cousins, Shmuel and Srul's – time in that place.

Before I say any more, you must remember that this story is not just a story. These are true events. I can show you a film of my father telling this story. His testimony. Hundreds of others have told this story. They wanted to bear witness. Thousands more have found they could not even speak of it. And, even though I keep using the word story, all that I tell you here actually happened.

Please remember that. And thank you for listening.

Some people say that Auschwitz did not exist, that the things I am telling you did not happen. But they did. We even have some of the papers that the Nazis used to document what they were doing.

When the train stopped at Auschwitz, my father and his cousins were forced onto the platform and faced immediately with Nazi guards shouting and wielding clubs, pointing guns, their dogs barking and snapping at legs, arms

and faces. It was terrifying. And it was meant to be terrifying. You did what you were told, the fear was so overwhelming.

My dad and his cousins were forced through large stark halls where their hair was shaved off, their clothes abandoned and they were doused with dust that stung in their eyes. They each had a number tattooed into their forearm. My dad's was B5247, his cousins' B5245 and B5246.

This would be how they would be known from now on.

I have seen the tattoo on my father's arm.

Next, they were given striped pants and a shirt and a small cap. All made of thin material, useless against the freezing temperatures of the Polish winter.

Most people who arrived at Auschwitz were sent immediately to their deaths. The few men that were kept alive were only kept alive because they could be used as slaves, worked to death. The majority were taken to large concrete bunkers where they were poisoned with gas until they dropped dead. Then their bodies were hauled into an adjacent bunker and thrown into furnaces where they were reduced to ash.

Just stop and think about it.

In Auschwitz, Dad and his cousins lived in barracks with rows of stacked wooden shelves, where they slept at night, several people on each shelf. It was cold. A few lucky people had blankets. There were no mattresses. There was not enough food.

In the morning – early and freezing – they were forced to gather in an open space and they were counted there, standing for hours sometimes.

Dad and his cousins – relying on each other more and more – figured out that in order to survive, they should do whatever the Nazis needed doing.

One day a Nazi said: 'We need Zimmermen'.

What was a Zimmerman? Dad, Shmuel and Srul had no clue what a Zimmerman was, but volunteered anyway because they knew that Zimmermen were needed. It turned out a Zimmerman was a carpenter and, so, they worked as carpenters repairing a roof which had been bombed by the Allies. Srul was not always well, but kept working, knowing what it meant if you did not work.

But then, one day Srul was too sick to go to work on repairing the bomb damage. He stayed back in the barracks. When my father and Shmuel came in after a long day working, Srul was gone.

They never saw him again.

And then that all stopped, too. Auschwitz was finished. The Russians were coming. The Nazis, leaving. And those slaves who could do so were forced to walk out of Auschwitz and towards Germany.

This walk was called, by the prisoners, the Death March.

A deadly January walk through freezing Poland. With no food. You put one foot in front of the next. For as long as you could. Took small steps.

They were not fed. If there was a chance to stop at a field where grass was growing, they would eat the grass.

Some people could not go on and stopped, sitting in the snow and the dark. There, they were shot.

If you had shoes, you had a better chance of living. Especially if your shoes still had soles. So, if someone died in front of you, you took their shoes if they were better than yours. Then you might not die too.

That's why the prisoners called it a Death March.

But my father and the others knew that the Russians were advancing still. Word was that the war was nearly over. It was January 1945. If they survived this march or the next camp, might they live? Might they see those they loved again?

Still waiting for the astronauts to come down the ladder, I looked at my father, perched silent on the edge of his seat. Then glanced at Mom to see that she was looking at me. I wondered if she was thinking what I was thinking. Not about the moon and the men about to come down that ladder. But of Dad and what he had been through and how somehow they were here with their children watching this on the other side of the Atlantic more than twenty years later.

Now I saw Mom's gaze move to look at the TV. Her eyes widened. I turned to see what had astonished her.

There were huge-booted feet coming down the steps of the lunar module and now nearly at the bottom of the ladder. A blurry white costume. My father took in a sharp breath.

This was it. A man was about to walk on the moon.

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I remember the moment we saw that strange white shape coming down the ladder of the lunar module. Like a bear or a ghost, all shadowy and hard to pick out. You can watch it today. Just like we watched it then. Generations into the future will be able to watch a human set foot on the surface of the moon.

Because of my father. In part.

We all knew it was not a bear or a ghost coming down a ladder about to put its foot on the moon. It was a man. And that man was the leader of the expedition.

His name? Neil Armstrong.

I so clearly remember that moment in our sitting room in 1969. I looked at Mom and Dad, Miriam and David as we sat on the sofa and chairs and realised that we were all in the same position as Dad. Knees bent at an angle, leaning forward, perched on the edge of our seats.

I remember smiling too. The excitement. I had never known anything like it and I never have since.

Now the words ARMSTRONG ON MOON came up on the TV screen, superimposed over the shadowy images.

'Your camera, Dad,' Miriam said.

Dad's eyes widened, but he said nothing. Just his special smile, head tipped to the side.

Then the announcer spoke:

So there's a foot on the moon, stepping down on the moon… it's a little shadowy … Armstrong is on the moon…. Neil Armstrong a 38-year-old American… standing on the surface of the moon…. On this July 20th 1969…

And I couldn't keep it in.

I said: 'What must it be like? Aren't they frightened? After all they've been through landing in a new place, a place they have no idea about really…' Then

my voice tailed off and I saw a smile playing on my father's lips and caught Mom glancing at me again.

And I felt this sudden overwhelming rush of emotion.

Was it happiness or sadness? Pride or love?

I don't know.

I was remembering what Mom told me about what happened next to Dad when he was in Europe after the war, still trying to get my head round the idea that the man who had worked on a part of the moon camera and the story about the boy in Europe suffering so much were the same person.

Dad.

And that, just like Neil Armstrong, my father landed in a strange place and climbed off an aircraft and put his foot on the ground for the first time. Not on the moon. In England. But still…

I need to go back a few steps. I've gone on too far. The last thing I told you about was the Death March.

When the Death March ended, arriving at the final concentration camp – in what was then a country called Czechoslovakia, a town called Theresienstadt – Dad was very ill. He thought this was the place he had come to die. He told Mom that if the Russians hadn't liberated the camp he would not have lived.

And if he'd died… well, he'd not be here. Nor me and Miriam and David. None of us would exist. Nor our children or our children's children.

But the Russians did come. They liberated Theresienstadt from the Nazis and freed the poor souls held there. Those who had somehow survived.

In Theresienstadt, they found dozens of children still alive. Jewish children. It has been calculated that the Nazis murdered 1,500,000 Jewish children between the years 1939 to 1945.

But here were 300 children. Alive.

Think about that.

They're numbers. Easy to skim over and not take in. But remember that one-and-a-half million Jewish children were killed by the Nazis.

Because they were Jews.

My father told my mother that he wished he had been well enough to see the Nazis running away when the Russians arrived, but that he was too ill, too weak to stand, to even get to a window.

With the war over, a charity called the Jewish Refugees Committee convinced the British government to allow the children into the UK and get them safely away from the chaos that would come with the end of the war. But one rule was that any refugee allowed into England still had to be a child, so under sixteen. Another rule was that they must not be ill.

My father was seventeen and ill. Very ill as it turned out.

But, thankfully, a medical officer approved a document stating that he was younger and made out he was fit and well, and he joined a group of 300 other children on British bomber planes bound for England. They sat on the floor of the planes because there were no seats.

From what Mom told me, the memories Dad has from beyond this point on were not of corpses on the streets, great cracks down his home or the stench of bodies being burned in ovens. His memories were now of a pilot in uniform giving children chocolate. Dad had not tasted chocolate for years. A piece of bread would have been fantastic. Chocolate was hard to believe.

Dad arrived and put his foot down on English soil to see lakes and mountains and blue skies and grass. But not having to eat the grass. Because there was food and fresh water and clothes and real sheets on real beds with mattresses.

Dad was a refugee. One of the Windermere Children. He had found refuge. After all the horrors of what he had been through.

But – now in England – there was no escaping that Dad was ill. Soon after they arrived at a temporary housing estate on the banks of Windermere, my father took part in a game of football and collapsed. The local doctor came and declared he had Tuberculosis, a disease of the lungs that can disable a person, even kill them. Especially a boy who has spent years not eating at all well, freezing and being worked close to death.

Dad was taken to a sanatorium – a hospital or care home for people who are dreadfully ill, even in danger of death. First, one that overlooked the sea near to Windermere, then another in the south of England.

So how did my father come to be here watching a man landing on the moon in the US? From that perilous position.

First it was kindness. The kindness of those willing to care for and support refugees who had lost everything and been through hell.

Next, it was education.

To learn.

To make himself strong.

Now – in our living room – we watched feet lumbering slowly down the ladder towards the surface of the moon. Heard a crackle on the TV screen as the astronaut reached his foot out to touch.

It's one small step for man…

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It's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.

We watched in silent awe.

This was it. It had happened, really happened. There was a man on the moon.

But I wasn't thinking about Neil Armstrong and his small step. I had this question in my head that I have asked myself over and over again.

How did my father do it? How did he endure all he endured, end up as a refugee in England with nothing and no-one? And then go on to be part of this extraordinary feat?

How do I answer that for you?

I'll try.

My father – who is now known as Michael Novice – did what he did in small steps. Many small steps.

The details I have already told you. And more. Every day that he managed to survive persecution. Every day he managed to get the nutrition he needed not to starve. Then learning English to be able to access education. Learning math and physics to the highest level a human mind can. To work. To emigrate with his family to the US. To put a camera on a spacecraft to record the fact that a man was on the moon.

As he slowly recovered his health in the sanatorium in England, a Rabbi came to see my father. The Rabbi suggested my father study in school then at university, so that he could have a career and look after himself.

So, my father signed up for a correspondence course, coursework and assignments sent to his sick bed in the post. And all of this in English, a language he had never spoken or written in before.

First, he studied general subjects. Math. English. Then, over the next few years, he was educated by colleges and universities, including Cambridge University and the University of London, supported all the time by that same Jewish charity that had brought him from war-ravaged Europe to England.

He did three university degrees in Physics: a BSc, an MSc and a PhD.

He excelled, studying deeper and deeper into his passion for physics, eventually working for the English Electric Valve Company, looking after himself as the Rabbi had suggested he do.

And now my father had a family again! A new family. After he had lost his mother and father, a brother and a sister, now he had a wife and three children!

And then, in 1964, the call came from the United States. The Americans needed scientists. Scientists who could help them to get a man to set foot on the moon. And my father and mother – excited about the idea, excited about a new life – sailed across the Atlantic with their three children on the Queen Mary from Southampton, England, to New York and the sight of the Statue of Liberty.

All this came from education. Supported by kindness.

It's one small step for man. One giant leap for mankind.

We sat and watched Neil Armstrong, astonished. This clumsy, lumbering figure dropping his foot down off what looked like a step ladder you'd use to go up into the loft. And slowly – like a man under water – he put his foot on the moon.

From that day on everyone in the US – in the world, I expect – wanted to be an astronaut. They read about and watched shows and played at being Neil Armstrong.

But not me.

I didn't want to be like Neil Armstrong.

When we heard those words 'one small step for man', I was not watching the strange figure on the moon through that camera tens of thousands of miles away.

I was watching my dad. And I wanted to be like him.

Afterword

Michael Novice was born in 1927 in Warsaw, Poland, as Meir Sosnowicz. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland and his family became swept up in a genocide that we now refer to as the Holocaust. After leaving the Warsaw ghetto, he never saw his parents again. They – along with six million other Jews – were murdered by the Nazis. Like most European Jews, Michael lost dozens of family members, although one brother and one sister survived. Michael moved to the US with his wife and three children. He was met in New York on arrival by his cousin, Shmuel. Michael and his wife, Ruth, now have fifteen grandchildren and nearly forty great-grand-children. Later in life, he volunteered for charities that help those in need, inspired to be kind in response to the cruelty that was inflicted on him. He believes that his mother and father were murdered in the Treblinka Death Camp, and that his older brother, David, was murdered whilst fighting against the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Small Steps **is the story of one of the Windermere Children, 300 Holocaust survivor refugees who arrived in the UK after the end of the Second World War. To find out more about the Windermere Children, please visit** www.tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war**, where you will find resources and links created by the Lake District Holocaust Project and UCL Centre for Holocaust Education.**

Tom Palmer and the National Literacy Trust would like to acknowledge the essential help they received from Trevor Avery at the Lake District Holocaust Project and Helen McCourt from UCL Centre for Holocaust Education in writing this story. Their expertise is invaluable to help us write what we write about the Holocaust and in how we talk about it.

More importantly, the input of the family of Michael Novice has been essential. They have helped us develop the story and suggested changes and ideas to help us to get the facts right about their father, and to make it a story that we can convey to young people in the UK.