Isabelle snatched up the picture, tearing it in half as she tried to take it from Hugo. “You stole this machine! This belongs to my grandfather!” she yelled, running from the room still clutching her part of the strange image.

Hugo followed her through the lamp-lit streets to a tall imposing town house. Mama Jeanne, Isabelle’s grandmother, was just closing the door.

“Isabelle!” Hugo called. “We have to find out why the mechanical man drew this and why it signed Papa Georges’ name!”

“What’s all this?” Mama Jeanne scolded. “Let me see that.” She took the torn paper from Hugo and as she did so she gasped.

“What is it Mama Jeanne?” asked Isabelle, giving her the other part of the picture.

“Where did you get this?” Mama Jeanne asked curtly as she sank into a chair by the door.

Between them, they told her the whole story, beginning with the day Hugo and his father had pulled the mechanical man from the smouldering remains of the burned down museum.

“Take the drawing away. Whatever happens, don’t let Papa Georges see it. We must never speak of this again.” said Mama Jeanne finally, ushering them into the bedroom as Papa Georges opened the front door downstairs.

A dusty box lay on the top of the old wardrobe. Hugo asked Isabelle if she knew what was inside, but she did not. Curiosity, and boredom, got the better of them and they made the decision to look inside. But as Isabelle was getting it down, the rickety chair she was standing on shattered and she and the box came crashing to the ground. The box splintered and a sheaf of papers puffed up into the air and fell around them like feathers.

Hugo picked up a piece of paper. And another. And another. Now it was his turn to gasp. They were covered with the most amazing drawings: bird-like monsters, planets, men riding monstrous fish, dragons, giant insects. They were all signed: *Georges Méliès*.

Papa Georges stood in the doorway. “No,” he whispered to himself. “No. No. No. No! No!” Why was he so upset? Didn’t he want people to see his wonderful pictures?

Hugo was confused but he wasn’t giving up on this mystery yet. The next day he made his way to a building he had seen once: the Film Academy Library. A friendly man wearing an eye patch met him as he walked through the grand doors.

“And how can I help you, young man?” he enquired. His name badge read *Etienne*.

Hugo told the whole story again, this time adding the details about the box of drawings they had found and Papa Georges’ reaction. If you could have seen Etienne’s face as Hugo talked you would have seen his expression change from that of polite interest to absolute astonishment. Motioning Hugo to follow him, he led Hugo to a huge, clean room lined with rows of perfectly placed shelves. He selected a book from one of the tall cases: *The Invention of Dreams: The Story of the First Movies Ever Made*. Etienne flipped through the pages until he had found it – a photograph of a still from a film. A photograph of the moon… with a rocket in its eye. Hugo recognised it at once.

So Hugo’s father’s favourite movie was called *A Trip To The Moon* and George Méliès, Isabelle’s grandfather, the old man from the toy booth, had made the movie – the book was sure of that. Hugo read the information with excitement until he came to the last part:

*‘Unfortunately, Georges Méliès died sometime after the Great War, and many, if not all, of his films are lost.’*

“Died? He’s not dead!” Hugo said out loud.