

# Counting down to our first rocket launch



*Goodnight, Moon-inspired art project by Daniel, though Abrakadoodle deserves some credit.*

When I heard that the Minotaur I rocket would be launched at around 7:30 p.m. Tuesday from Wallops Island, Va.—and that viewers throughout the Mid-Atlantic would be able to see it—I was excited.

At dinner John and I told the boys that we might see a rocket moving through the sky.

Leo, who's 6 and loves rockets, was very practical.

"I want to see a movie of the real rocket," he said. "I don't want to see a little dot moving through the sky."

He knew our front porch would not be Cape Canaveral. And he was right.

Daniel, who's almost 4, was thrilled. He wanted to see the rocket so badly that he paced and paced the living room in his coat and Lightning McQueen hat.



The moment came to go outside, and John and I went out with Daniel. But Leo, who had been in bed, was peering through the windows at us, and I felt terrible that he was missing it. So I went inside and scrambled to find pants for him, assuming he wanted to come outside. In the end, though, he stuck with his original plan and stayed indoors.

Even though I missed the first part of the show, I saw most of it from our front yard. It looked like a large bright reddish dot, moving behind the trees, and then suddenly it vanished as it moved into orbit. It was my first time seeing a rocket live, and it was awesome.

Then I headed indoors, bracing myself for what I imagined would be two disappointed children—one who would wish he had seen it, and one who wouldn't understand why we called a little light in the sky "a rocket."

But, as I do so often, I guessed wrong.

Because as our younger son sprinted inside to see his big brother, he was breathless with excitement and he yelled to his brother, "We got to see THE MOON!"



*There is the Moon. I couldn't capture the rocket with my camera.*

It reminded me of how one early morning when I was 10, my father drove me out

into the country to see Halley's Comet. It can only be seen every 75 or 76 years, and I couldn't wait to see it. But the comet couldn't compete with the more exciting parts of my experience—hearing a rooster crow and seeing a shooting star.

As Daniel bounced up and down, his big brother looked at him, in that superior way only big brothers can use to look at little brothers. Then he said, "I knew I didn't want to see a little dot like an airplane."

Then they both went to bed, perfectly content.

*This was the best amateur video I could find on YouTube. I would like to find an official NASA video to share with the boys:*

*Did you see the Minotaur I launch? What did you see?*