

Penguin  Readers

ELON MUSK

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CHAPTER ONE

South Africa and Canada

Elon Musk is a famous **businessman**. He has big ideas, and he builds big **companies**. He is an interesting man, and he has a very interesting story.

His story started in Pretoria, South Africa. He was born on June 28th 1971 and is the oldest of three children. He has a brother, Kimbal, and a sister, Toska. His father was South African, and his mother was Canadian. Elon's mother's family was very interesting. Her father, Joshua Norman Haldeman, loved flying airplanes, and he took his family on adventures across the world.



Elon's mother and her brothers and sisters in Africa

Joshua Haldeman and his wife, Wyn, once flew from South Africa to Norway. They also flew from Africa to Australia in an airplane with only one engine. Elon's grandfather died when Elon was only three years old. But Elon heard a lot of great stories from his mother about his grandparents' adventures.

When he was a child, Elon was quiet and did not have many friends at school. He did not play sports, and he was happier reading or doing experiments with his brother and cousins. He often liked to **spend** time at bookstores after school.



Elon, his brother, Kimbal, and his sister, Tosca, at their house in South Africa

When Elon was eight, his parents **divorced**.

For a few years after their parents divorced, Elon and his brother and sister lived in Durban with their mother. But then Elon decided that he wanted to live with his father in Pretoria. His brother, Kimbal, came, too, and the two brothers lived with their father until they left South Africa.

When Elon was nine, his father bought him his first computer. Elon loved the computer and soon learned to write **code**. In 1984, when Elon was twelve, he sold the code for a video game for \$500. It was the first time that he got money for writing code. Elon, Kimbal, and their cousins Lyndon and Peter Rive once tried to open a video game shop, but their parents were not happy about the idea, and they said no.

Elon's father, Errol, was an **engineer**. He often took his sons Elon and Kimbal to work with him. The father and sons traveled a lot together in South Africa, and to other countries, too. But Errol was a **difficult** man, and life was not always easy for Elon and Kimbal at their father's house.

Elon became more and more interested in living and working in the United States of America. When he finished high school, he started studying at the University of Pretoria. At the same time, he was planning to become Canadian, like his mother. At the age of seventeen, he left South Africa for Canada. This was the first step in his plan to live and work in the USA.

Elon flew to Montreal in Canada in June 1988. He was hoping to meet one of his uncles there. But, when he got to Montreal, he learned that his uncle did not live there any more. He was in the USA. Elon did not know anyone in Montreal, so he bought a bus ticket and started traveling across the country. For the next year Elon traveled across Canada. He worked on a farm in Waldeck, Saskatchewan, and at a factory in Vancouver, British Columbia. He visited a lot of different places and had a lot of different jobs.

Then Elon's mother, brother, and sister also came to live in Canada.

When they arrived, the family decided to live in

Ontario, in the east of Canada. Elon decided to go to Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, to study **business**. He enjoyed university life and made some good friends. He also met Justine Wilson, a very important person in his life. Years later, in 2000, Elon married Justine. In a vacation while at university he worked at the Bank of Nova Scotia and became interested in banking.



Elon with a friend at Queen's University in Ontario

In 1992, Elon left Queen's University and went to the USA. There he became a student at the University of Pennsylvania.

Justine stayed in Ontario, but they still spent time together when it was possible.

Elon **developed** his interest in business, the internet, and **space** at the University of Pennsylvania. When he finished university, he had big ideas for all three things.