Every Space Cadet is on duty 24 hours a day. His time is divided between practicing space flights, physical training and the classroom. Here, Cadet Alfie Higgins reports on his studies on the gravitational pull on the planets. His class—Cadets Tom Corbett, Roger Manning and Astro listen carefully, quick to catch any errors. Space Cadets study together and try to help each other as much as possible.
IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF SPACE ACADEMY, COMMANDER ARKWRIGHT BRIEFS CAPTAIN STRONG AND HIS SQUAD OF SPACE CADETS...

I WONDER WHAT WE'RE GOING TO JUPITER FOR?

CLOSE YOUR JETS, ASTRO, AND LISTEN TO COMMANDER ARKWRIGHT!

AN EXPEDITION TO SET UP A COLONY ON JUPITER'S MOON, IO, IS LEAVING. YOU AND YOUR SQUAD OF CADETS, CAPTAIN STRONG, ARE TO GO WITH THE COLONISTS. ANY QUESTIONS?

WHO IS IN COMMAND OF THE COLONISTS, SIR?

A SPACE ADVENTURER NAMED SKIP MCKAY, CAPTAIN. HIS REPUTATION IS NOT TOO GOOD. HE'S A SWASHBUCKLER AND BRAGGART—

THAT'S ME! AND YOU MIGHT ADD, COMMANDER ARKWRIGHT, THAT I DON'T LIKE HAVING SOLAR GUARD BRASS TELL ME WHAT TO DO!
I've jetted around in space long enough to know what to do! I came here to warn you to stay out of my business! I'm in command of this expedition—and I won't have you high-pressure boys messing around with my plans!

The Solar Guard will not interfere with your work, McKay—unless an emergency comes up! But the laws on establishing space colonies states that every expedition must be accompanied by a squad of Solar Guards.

I can't stop you from coming along, Captain, but I warn you to keep out of my way!

I know my duty, McKay, and I'll do it! We're not coming on this expedition to hurt the colonists, but to help them!

You can help by minding your own business, strong, and make sure those space brats of yours stay out of my command area!

I'm afraid there's going to be trouble before this expedition is over, Commander!

Yes, I believe you're right, Joan?

I'll have to reinforce your group, strong. Joan will go along... and you better take along another cadet with you!

Right, sir? I'll take Cadet Alfie Higgins!
ME? BUT WHY ME?
DON'T ASK US, GENIUS! CAPTAIN STRONG TOLD US TO PICK YOU UP AND BRING YOU TO THE POLARIS!

GEE, FELLOWS! I'M HONORED TO BE ASSIGNED TO YOUR SQUADRON FOR THIS TRIP TO JUPITER--JUST THINK OF IT! JUPITER IS 390 MILLION MILES FROM EARTH AND--

STOW THE SPACE GAS, JUNIOR! WE'VE GOT TO GET GOING!

THERE'S THE COLONIAL SHIP! WHAT DO YOU SAY WE LOOK HER OVER, ASTRO?

SURE! I'D LIKE TO SEE THE COLONISTS GOING ABOARD!

I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE!

HURRY, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME BEFORE WE GET READY FOR THE BLAST-OFF!

MAKES ME THINK OF MY PARENTS WHEN THEY LEFT EARTH TO SET UP THE COLONY ON VENUS?

SO MANY OF THEM--THAT SHIP IS GOING TO BE OVERCROWDED! I DON'T LIKE THIS, FELLOWS!
Skip McKay gets paid so much for each colonist—and he's certainly packing them in!

And what are you going to do about it?

I'm going aboard to check on it. Then I'll report to Captain Strong.

Listen, space hero—McKay told us to stay out of his way! You're just looking for trouble!

We might as well go with Tom! McKay isn't someone to fool around with!

Aw, all right! But don't blame me if we get into trouble!

I'll bet this ship is jammed beyond the safety margin!

McKay's greed, evidently, is putting the whole expedition into danger! My goodness! This isn't right!

I'm in command here—and I'll decide what's right and what's wrong. Now, get off my ship, you space brats, before I have you thrown off!

Oh, oh! McKay, the space ace has arrived!

I was handling rocket ships when you jokers were knee-high! I know what a ship is capable of carrying!
But, sir--the ship is overcrowded! You can't blast off in this condition!

Can't I? We'll see! Now get off the ship!

We won't get off until Commander Arkwright inspects the ship and gives his approval!

Then I'll have to show you who is in command here? Brazos! Kita! Morgan?

Throw these space worms off the ship! And don't be gentle about it!

All right, space hero! Blast off!

Why, you space rats! I'm gonna knock you into a million pieces of space junk! Let go my arms!

Gentlemen! Gentlemen! This is no way to treat space academy cadets!

You'll get a lot worse treatment next time you stick your nose in our business!
YOU BETTER START RUNNING, IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET CAUGHT IN THE ROCKET BLAST! WE'RE TAKING OFF NOW! GIVE MY REGARDS TO COMMANDER ARKWRIGHT-- AND REMIND HIM THAT ONCE IN SPACE, I COMMAND MY SHIP!

GOODNESS! THIS IS MOST UNDIGNIFIED!

THROWING US OUT ISN'T GOING TO HELP YOU, McKAY. COMMANDER ARKWRIGHT WILL STOP YOU FROM BLASTING OFF AS SOON AS HE GETS OUR REPORT!

THERE THEY GO! WE CAN'T DO A THING TO STOP MCKAY NOW!

THE RECKLESS FOOL! HE'S ENDANGERING THE LIVES OF TWO HUNDRED COLONISTS!

WHERE IN SPACE-BLUE BLAZES HAVE YOU CADETS BEEN? WHY ISN'T THE POLARIS READY TO BLAST OFF?

SORRY, SIR. WE WERE ABOARD THE LUNA TRADER-- MCKAY'S SHIP. SHE'S OVERCROWDED AND IN DANGER, SIR!

NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW-- EXCEPT HOPE THAT SPACE MAN'S LUCK RIDES WITH THEM!

WE'LL HAVE TO STAY CLOSE TO THEM AND BE PREPARED FOR ANY EMERGENCY!
Swiftly, the space cadets take their stations, ready for blast off...

Minutes later...

We're clear of the Earth! Take over the controls, Tom. Steady as she goes!

Aye, aye, sir!

We've got a long trip ahead—and a dangerous one! I want someone to keep the Luna Trader under observation every second of the journey! She's an old ship overcrowded—and with a reckless adventurer in command! That's a combination that means trouble!

Outward bound from the Earth and the inhabited parts of the solar system, the two ships speed through the silent, weird emptiness of space!

We'll break into watches! Joan, Astro, and Alfie will take the second watch. Tom, Roger, and I the first! That's all!
WE'RE PAST MARS AND MCKAY HAS BEEN HANDLING HIS SHIP VERY WELL. DID YOU GET THE REPORT ON THE ASTEROID BELT, TOM?

YES, SIR! RADAR SCOPE SHOWS THAT IT'S VERY THICK IN THIS AREA?

WE'LL HAVE TO CIRCLE AROUND THIS PART OF THE ASTEROID BELT. THE LUNA TRADER IS TOO CLUMSY TO SLIP THROUGH THAT MESS OF METEORS. CALL MCKAY!

POLARIS CALLING LUNA TRADER! POLARIS CALLING LUNA TRADER! COME IN, PLEASE!

WELL, WELL! THE SPACEHEROES! SO YOU'RE STILL WITH ME? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

LISTEN, MCKAY! WE'VE BEEN CHECKING THE ASTEROID BELT AHEAD! IT'S ONE OF THE THICKEST PARTS! THE LUNA TRADER IS TOO SLOW AND CLUMSY TO MAKE IT!

YOU'LL HAVE TO CIRCLE YOUR SHIP AROUND THE MAIN PART OF THE ASTEROID BELT, MCKAY!

ARE YOU GIVING ME ORDERS, CAPTAIN STRONG? WELL, SAVE YOUR BREATH! I'M IN COMMAND OF THE LUNA TRADER---AND I SET THE COURSE!

YOU'RE PUTTING THE PASSENGERS IN DANGER, MCKAY! YOU CAN'T MAKE IT!

CAN'T I? JUST WATCH!
HE’S INCREASED SPEED AND IS HEADNG RIGHT THROUGH THEasteroid Belt, sir!

ATTENTION, ALL HANDS! STAND BY FOR EMERGENCY ORDERS!

WHAT’S UP, STEVE?

JOAN, PREPARE EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT FOR RESCUE! THAT FOOL MCKAY IS HEADNG INTO THE WORST PART OF THEasteroid MES--- AND MAY CRASH ANY MINUTE!

I HATE TO ADMIT IT, CAPTAIN STRONG, BUT MCKAY CERTAINLY KNOWS HOW TO HANDLE A SHIP IN THIS SPACE JUNK!

LET’S KEEP OUR FINGERS CROSSED, TOM! THE BEST SPACE PILOT IN THE UNIVERSE HAS TO HAVE A SHIP THAT HANDLES EASILY TO GET THROUGH THIS PART OF THEasteroid BELT!

OF ALL THE LUCKY STIFFS! MCKAY IS ALMOST THROUGH--- AND WITHOUT A SCRATCH!

THAT’S NOT NERVE, TOM! IT’S STUPIDITY AND RECKLESSNESS! A MAN LIKE THAT SHOULD NEVER BE TRUSTED WITH A SPACE SHIP!

HE’S GOT NERVE!

THEN... AS THE LUNA TRADER DODGES ONEasteroid, ANOTHER LOOMS IN HER PATH... DESPERATELY, MCKAY BLASTS THE PORT JETS, BUT THE CLUMSY SHIP WON’T TURN QUICKLY ENOUGH...

LOOK! ABOUT A DOzenasteroids ARE IN HIS WAY!

BUT HE’S WEAVING AND SLIPPING RIGHT PAST THEM!
JOAN, BREAK OUT EMERGENCY RESCUE EQUIPMENT! —
MANNING, TAKE THE CONTROLS!
ALFIE AND TOM, INTO SPACE SUITS! YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

MANNING --- BRING US IN CLOSER TO THE LUNA TRADER!
SLOW AND EASY!

CLOSE ENOUGH! HOLD HER STEADY NOW! WE'RE GOING TO JET ACROSS TO THE LUNA TRADER!

ALFIE, WALK AROUND THE HULL AND TEST FOR ANY AIR LEAKS.
TOM, GO AFT AND SEE WHAT CONDITION THE ROCKET TUBES ARE IN! I'LL CONTACT MOKAY!

CADET HIGGINS REPORTING,
CAPTAIN STRONG. THE HULL APPEARS TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION. AT ANY RATE, I DO NOT OBSERVE ANY INDICATION OF —

THAT'S FINE, ALFIE! RETURN HERE!
CADET CORBETT REPORTING, CAPTAIN STRONG! TUBES AND FINS COMPLETELY SMASHED! BEYOND EMERGENCY REPAIRS! SHE'LL NEVER CUT SPACE UNDER HER OWN POWER AGAIN, SIR!

RETURN HERE, TOM!

THE LUNA TRADER IS A HELPLESS WRECK, MCKAY! THE SOLAR GUARD TAKES COMMAND OF ALL SPACE DERELICTS! UNLESS YOU OBEY ORDERS—— I'LL PLACE YOU UNDER ARREST!

ALL RIGHT, STRONG! YOU WIN THIS TIME!

AND HOW ARE WE GOING TO GO ON, STRONG? I SAY WE TAKE TO THE SPACE LIFEBOATS?

NO! THE POLARIS IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TOW YOU IN THE REST OF THE WAY TO 10!

BY THE RINGS OF SATURN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOArd MY SHIP? GET BACK TO THE POLARIS AND STAY THERE?

YOU'RE NO LONGER IN COMMAND OF THE LUNA TRADER, MCKAY!

WHAT HAPPENS NOW, SPACE HERO! YOU'RE IN COMMAND—— SO LET'S HAVE YOUR ORDERS!

WE CAN'T TURN BACK, MCKAY—— NOT WITH THE LUNA TRADER IN THIS CONDITION!

CAREFULLY, THE POLARIS IS MANEUVERED CLOSER TO THE LUNA TRADER! THEN...

LOWER AWAY ON THE MAGNETIC GRAPPERS! STEADY, NOW?
Days later...

I've been thinking of that for the last couple of days, Tom. We'll use the nose braking rockets and a prayer!

Check the safety belts of every person on board, Alfie. Report to me when ready!

Cadet Higgins reporting to control bridge, all personnel on board strapped in and ready, sir...

Take command of the Polaris, Joan. We shall remain here on the Luna Trader!

All right, Steve! Space man's luck!
LUNA TRADER CALLING POLARIS! COME IN, POLARIS!

THIS IS JOAN, STEVE! WHAT IS IT?

START BRAKING FOR A LANDING NOW! DO NOT RELEASE THE MAGNETIC GRAPPLERS UNTIL WE'RE ALMOST ON THE SURFACE. DO NOT SIGN OFF!

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE ALTITUDE, TOM!

RIGHT, SIR! TEN THOUSAND—EIGHT THOUSAND—SIX THOUSAND—FOUR THOUSAND—

JOAN! RELEASE THE MAGNETIC GRAPPLERS!

GRAPPLERS CLEAR? BE CAREFUL, STEVE!

OUR SPEED IS STILL TOO GREAT, SIR! WE'RE GOING TO CRASH!

BLAST THE FORWARD BRAKING ROCKETS, TOM! GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT!

AYE, AYE, SIR! FORWARD BRAKING ROCKETS OPEN TO FULL POWER!
WE'RE COMING IN JUST RIGHT, TOM! I WANT TO TOPPLE THE SHIP OVER ON ITS SIDE?

WELL, SIR! WE'RE STILL IN ONE PIECE!

SPACE MAN'S LUCK WAS RIDING ON OUR SHOULDERS, TOM! LET'S CHECK AND SEE IF EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT ON BOARD?

JUST A MINUTE, CAPTAIN STRONG! YOU FORGOT THAT WE'RE NOT A WRECK DRIFTING IN SPACE ANY MORE.

NO, MOKAY, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN IT — AND I HOPE YOU DON'T!

THE EMERGENCY IS OVER! I'M IN COMMAND OF THIS SHIP AGAIN! TAKE YOUR SPACE MONKEYS AND GET OUT!

VERY WELL, MOKAY! I HOPE YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON! DON'T TAKE UNNECESSARY RISKS!

IT'S A BIG JOB — BUILDING THIS BARREN ROCK INTO A LIVABLE WORLD! CALL ON US IF YOU NEED ANY HELP!

JUST DO WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO, STRONG, AND AFTER THAT— MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

A LUMP OF MUD AND ROCK FLOATING AROUND JUPITER, BOYS! BUT MODERN SCIENCE WILL SOON MAKE THIS A BEAUTIFUL AND GOOD PLACE TO LIVE ON!
OUR JOB NOW IS TO CHECK THE CONDITIONS ON THIS COLONY--- BUT WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH THE WORK! WHEN EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER, WE CAN BLAST OFF FOR HOME!

A WEEK LATER...

THE COLONY LOOKS LIKE IT'S WELL ON THE WAY TOWARD STRAIGHTENING EVERYTHING OUT!

WHAT IS THAT MACHINE DIGGING, SIR?

THAT'S GOING TO BE A RIVER, BOYS, AND THIS MACHINE WILL MANUFACTURE WATER! ANY OF YOU KNOW HOW IT WORKS?

YES, SIR! THAT'S A HYDRO-GENERATOR!

THIS MACHINE TAKES THE ROCKS AND DIRT OF THIS PLACE--- AND CHANGES THE ATOMIC STRUCTURE, TURNING THE ATOMS INTO HYDROGEN AND OXYGEN ATOMS. THEN IT COMBINES THE TWO AND RELEASES OXYGEN WITH THE WATER...

WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS? SPACE SHIPMATE TO AN ENCYCLOPEDIA?

HERE IT COMES!

SAY?--- MAYBE WE CAN GO SWIMMING SOON!

THERE SHOULD BE ENOUGH AIR TO BREATHE NOW, ASTRO. OTHERWISE THE WATER WOULD NOT FLOW OUT SO EASILY!
STAY IN YOUR SPACE SUITS UNTIL WE CHECK, BOYS! HOW'S THE READING, JOAN?

THE AIR IS STILL A LITTLE ThINNER THAN THAT ON EARTH— BUT GOOD ENOUGH TO BREATHE!

ISN'T IT AMAZING HOW THAT MACHINE WORKS, ROGER?

AS LONG AS IT WORKS—I DON'T CARE HOW IT WORKS!

WOW! THE AIR IS SURE NICE AND FRESH!

WE CAN ALL GET OUT OF OUR SPACE SUITS NOW!

THIS PLACE IS GETTING TO LOOK MORE AND MORE LIKE HOME!

MAYBE TO YOU, YOU VENUSIAN MONKEY! ME— I'M USED TO BETTER THINGS——

YES, SIR! BETTER THINGS LIKE—— LIKE—— LIKE—— HMMMM! MAY I HELP YOU, MISS?

WHY, THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU, SPACE CADET?

NO TROUBLE AT ALL, MISS' ALFIE, PICK UP THESE BOXES AND BRING THEM IN—— LIKE A GENTLEMAN!
YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT NOW, MISS! I HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL HERE. WHY I REMEMBER ONCE WHEN I WAS ON MERCURY——

WE MIGHT AS WELL GO, TOM! ROGER IS SETTLED DOWN TO BEING A GREAT SPACE HERO!

OUR COLONY IS PRETTY WELL SET UP NOW. WE CAN TAKE SOME TIME OFF TO EXPLORE THE PLACE!

WHAT'S MCKAY UP TO NOW, Astro?

LET'S JOIN MCKAY AND FIND OUT! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH ELSE TO DO, TOM, SO——

GOOD IDEA, Astro? LET'S GO!

LOOK AT THAT STREAM! WE MADE IT! MAKES A MAN PROUD, DOESN'T IT, CADETS?

YES, AND SOON THERE WILL BE GRASS AND TREES!

HE, SKIPPER! LOOK WHAT I'VE FOUND!

WHAT DO YOU THINK, MCKAY? URANIUM ORE?

LISTEN TO THE GEIGER COUNTER, YOU FOOL! THERE'S A FORTUNE HERE!
LOOK AT THIS! THE RICHEST DEPOSIT OF URANIUM I'VE EVER SEEN!

THERE'S ENOUGH HERE TO MAKE EVERY COLONIST RICH— TEN TIMES OVER! WE'RE GOING TO START DIGGING THIS STUFF UP——

WAIT A MINUTE, MCKAY! WE CAME HERE TO SET UP A COLONY— NOT GO TREASURE HUNTING!

I'M STILL THE LEADER OF THIS EXPEDITION AND I GIVE THE ORDERS! WE'RE GOING TO MINE THIS URANIUM!

THE COLONISTS WILL VOTE——

YOU'LL TAKE MY ORDERS! THOSE WHO THINK THEY CAN STOP ME ARE GOING TO FIND OUT HOW TOUGH I CAN BE!

THERE WON'T BE ANY VOTING BY THE COLONISTS! I'M NOT GOING TO LET THEM LOSE A FORTUNE——

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, MCKAY!

COME ON, MEN! WE'LL SHOW THEM WHO'S BOSS HERE!

WHAT'S GOING ON? STOP THIS FIGHTING— OR I'LL BE FORCED TO USE A PARALOAY GUN ON ALL OF YOU!
MCKAY WANTS TO STOP BUILDING OUR COLONY TO MINE THE URANIUM DEPOSIT WE'VE JUST FOUND!

I KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR THE COLONISTS--- AND I GIVE THE ORDERS!

NOT IN THIS CASE, YOU DON'T! THE COLONISTS THEMSELVES MUST MAKE SUCH A DECISION!

CADETS ASTRO AND CORBETT--- INFORM ALL COLONISTS TO MEET AT THE MAIN SUPPLY STORAGE HUT FOR A POLICY MEETING!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

SOME HOURS LATER...

A PROPOSAL HAS BEEN MADE TO GIVE UP THIS COLONY, MINE URANIUM ORE AND RETURN TO EARTH. IT IS UP TO YOU TO DECIDE BY MAJORITY VOTE!

WE CAME HERE TO FIND SECURITY AND GOOD LIVING CONDITIONS! WE CAN GET ALL THAT ON EARTH--- WITHOUT WORKING HARD FOR IT! THE URANIUM WE'VE FOUND CAN MAKE EVERYONE OF US RICHER THAN WE EVER DREAMED WE COULD BE! WE DON'T NEED THIS COLONY ANY MORE!
SKIP MCKAY IS WRONG! WE CAME HERE TO BUILD HOMES FOR OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN! THAT'S WORTH MORE TO US THAN ALL THE TREASURES IN SPACE! THAT'S WHAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE DOING—BUILD UP OUR HOMES!

IT'S A CINCHE THE COLONISTS AREN'T GOING TO TAKE ANY OF MCKAY'S SPACE GAS!

THEY'LL VOTE HIM DOWN!

MCKAY ISN'T GOING TO ACCEPT THE MAJORITY VOTE, THERE'S GOING TO BE TROUBLE!

WHAT CAN WE DO?

SCATTER AROUND AND GET YOUR PARALORAY GUNS READY—JUST IN CASE!

YOU'VE HEARD BOTH SIDES OF THE QUESTION. THOSE IN FAVOR OF STAYING TO BUILD UP THE COLONY, RAISE YOUR HANDS. THOSE WHO WANT TO GO LOOKING FOR TREASURES—KEEP YOUR HANDS DOWN!
YOU'VE SEEN THE VOTE, McKAY. THE PEOPLE DON'T WANT RICHES -- THEY'RE STAYING TO BUILD HOMES!

YOU HAVEN'T COUNTED ALL THE VOTES, STRONG!

HERE'S THE DECIDING VOTE? ANYONE WHO DOESN'T OBEY MY ORDERS IS GOING TO BE BLASTED INTO ATOMS!

YOU'VE TURNED THIS INTO AN EMERGENCY, McKAY! SO THE SOLAR GUARD WILL NOW TAKE COMMAND OF THIS EXPEDITION!

DROP YOUR GUN, YOU SPACE RAT! SKIP McKAY HAS TO BE CONVINCED THAT HE OUGHT TO OBEY THE VOTE OF THE PEOPLE -- AND CAPTAIN STRONG IS GOING TO DO JUST THAT?

THIS TAKES CARE OF McKAY! TOM, DISARM HIS GANG!
McKay and his henchmen will not bother you any more! Go ahead with your plans.

When the Polaris blasts off for home, we'll take you off this colony. Until then, behave! I don't want to take you back to Earth as prisoners!

I don't think this is the end of it, Steve. McKay isn't the kind to forget a treasure so easily.

You're right, Joan! McKay's got space treasures fever!

From now on, you space gadgets are on the alert. Trouble is coming from McKay! -- and we must be prepared for it!

Yes, sir! We'll keep an eye on him and his men -- every minute!

We're not licked yet! We're going to make the colonists give up and return to Earth!

I hope you've got a plan, Skip! A good one!

All the power to run the machines on which this colony depends come from the atomic engines of the Luna Trader. We're going to smash those motors?

Good! The colonist will have to go back -- or die here?
WE'LL SLIP INTO THE LUNA TRADER DURING MEALTIME --- AND DO THE JOB?

I HAVEN'T SEEN MCKAY COME IN FOR HIS MEALS, FELLOWS!

SO WHAT? THAT GUY SNEAKS AROUND LIKE A MARTIAN MOUSE? IF WE TRIED TO FOLLOW HIM, WE'D ALL GET SPACE GOOFY! FORGET HIM!

MESS HALL

ROGER'S RIGHT, TOM. WE CAN'T SPEND ALL OUR TIME FOLLOWING HIM AROUND IF HE WANTS TO DIG URANIUM, LET HIM?

IT'S NOT THAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT, ASTRO. COME ON, LET'S SEE WHAT HE'S UP TO --- ANYWAY, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GUARD THIS PLACE!

EVERYTHING'S QUIET HERE. ALMOST TOO QUIET!

HALL

ANYONE ON GUARD IN THE ENGINE ROOM?

ONE OF THE CADETS --- THE FUNNY ONE WHO THINKS HE KNOWS EVERYTHING!

HO-HUM? IT WAS VERY WISE OF CAPTAIN STRONG PLACING ME ON GUARD HERE --- FORTUNATELY, NOTHING CAN HAPPEN!
All right, rip out all the wiring? I'll smash the power converters so they'll never be able to fix them!

Let's go in and see how Alfie is doing!

He must be lonely without anyone to talk to.

Skip! Somebody's coming!

All right? Let's get out of here before we're seen!

Alfie? Quick, Astro! Call Captain Strong!

What happened, Alfie? Who knocked you cold?

Gosh, Tom! I don't know! One minute everything was quiet and peaceful... and the next I thought a meteor bounced on my head!

All the wiring is ripped out! The power converters are damaged but not completely wrecked!

I guess you boys interrupted them? Too bad you didn't see anyone leave!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, SIR? WITH THE POWER OUT—THE COLONY WILL BE IN TROUBLE!

PLENTY OF TROUBLE, TOM! WE'LL HAVE TO INFORM THE PEOPLE AND LET THEM DECIDE. I'M AFRAID THIS COLONY CAN'T STAY HERE!

YOU KNOW WHAT WE FACE. YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE YOUR OWN CHOICE. WITHOUT THE POWER PLANT OF THE LUNA TRADER, OUR CHANCES OF MAKING THIS PLACE LIVABLE ARE PRETTY SLIM.

WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE, CAPTAIN?

WE CAME HERE TO MAKE HOMES FOR OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN! WE'RE GOING TO STAY AND DO IT!

THAT'S RIGHT! WE ALL FEEL THAT WAY!

SIR, WHY DON'T WE CONNECT THE POWER CABLES TO THE ATOMIC PLANT ON THE POLARIS? THERE WILL BE ENOUGH POWER FOR THE COLONY UNTIL WE REPAIR THE LUNA PLANT?

GOOD IDEA, ASTRO!

DID YOU EXAMINE THE DAMAGE, JOAN?

YES, STEVE! IT'LL TAKE US AT LEAST A WEEK TO PUT IN REPAIRS—MAYBE TWO WEEKS!

YOUR PLAN DIDN'T WORK, SKIP? THE COLONISTS AREN'T QUITTING?

NEITHER AM I! I'VE GOT ANOTHER PLAN—AND THIS ONE WILL NOT FAIL!
IT BETTER WORK, MCKAY! WE'VE GOT ENOUGH URANIUM DUG AND PACKED TO FILL A ROCKET SHIP!
GOOD! WE'LL START NOW!
A PARALORAY GUN? HOW'D YOU GET IT?
FROM THAT SPACE BRAT WE GOT IN THE ENGINE ROOM! I DISARMED HIM AFTER KNOCKING HIM UNCONSCIOUS! NOW I'M GOING TO USE IT!

STAND STILL, MANNING! BRAZOS--- TAKE HIS GUN?
WHY YOU SPACE SKUNK? THIS WON'T HELP YOU!
BRAZOS AND I WILL HOLD UP THE COLONISTS AND THE REST OF THE SPACE CADETS. YOU MEN DISARM THEM BEFORE THEY FIND OUT THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF US!
RIGHT, SKIPPER?

ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE! GRAB FOR THE STARS! THIS TIME I'M NOT FOOLING!
WE'RE LOADING THE POLARIS WITH URANIUM AND LEAVING! SINCE THE REST OF YOU LIKE IT SO MUCH --- YOU CAN STAY HERE!
YOU CAN'T DO THAT? WE WON'T HAVE POWER TO RUN OUR OXYGENATOR! THE COLONY WILL DIE!
HURRY IT UP! I WANT THE URANIUM LOADED QUICKLY!

LOOK, MCKAY—THE SPACE CADETS AND I—-WE KNOW WE HAVE TO TAKE RISKS! BUT THE COLONISTS? YOU CAN'T LEAVE THEM HERE TO SUFFER!

I'M NOT A CRIMINAL, STRONG! I'LL TAKE OFF ALL THOSE WHO ARE READY TO GIVE UP THE IDEA OF COLONIZING IO! I'LL EVEN SHARE THE URANIUM TREASURE WITH THEM!

YOU HEARD MCKAY'S OFFER TO TAKE US OFF THIS COLONY! IF WE DON'T TAKE IT, OUR CHANCES OF STAYING ALIVE UNTIL THE SUPPLY SHIP COMES AREN'T VERY GOOD!

THERE'S ENOUGH AIR ON IO TO LAST US A WEEK. BY THEN, WE'LL HAVE THE LUNA TRADER'S MOTOR FIXED UP? MAYBE WE'LL HAVE TO WORK HARDER AND TAKE MORE CHANCES THAN WE EXPECTED, BUT AT LEAST WE'LL BE FIGHTING FOR OUR HOMES? WE STAY!


NO? I SPEAK FOR MYSELF AND MY SPACE CADETS? OUR DUTY IS WITH THE COLONISTS!

YOU DON'T SPEAK FOR ME, CAPTAIN STRONG! I'LL GO WITH MCKAY! I DON'T WANT TO TAKE MY CHANCES ON DYING HERE ON IO!
YOU DON'T MEAN THAT, TOM!
SO YOU'RE GOING TO DESERT US? WELL, WELL! TOM CORBETT----STAR CADET OF SPACE ACADEMY----TURNING INTO A COWARD!

TOM, THIS APPEARS TO BE BEYOND SIMPLE EXPLANATION?--

I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING! IF YOU GUYS WERE SMART----YOU'D COME ALONG AND JOIN MCKAY!

WAIT A MINUTE, CORBETT! I'VE GOT A GOING AWAY PRESENT FOR YOU!

HE---HE JUST GOT UP AND WALKED AWAY WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING---

LISTEN, ROGER! I CAN'T BELIEVE TOM WOULD DESERT US? WHY, SPACE ACADEMY IS HIS WHOLE LIFE!

WAIT A MINUTE, TOM! I'M GOING WITH YOU!
I know how you feel, Steve! I'm sorry.

Two of the best space cadets I've ever had—Joan! I never expected Tom and Astro to desert anything but that!

I've failed the space academy—failed the boys!

You've got to forget them, Steve! No matter how much you loved those boys! Come, there's work to do here if the colony is to survive!

Meanwhile, aboard the Polaris, blasting spaceward with increasing speed...

Well, Corbett, I've got to say you're a smart space brat. Do a good job—and I'll give you a big split of the treasure!

I'll need it, McKay! My career at space academy is over!

Take that Venusian pal of yours and hit the sack! I'll stay at the controls until we're far away from Io—just in case you change your mind and want to go back!

You don't trust me, McKay—well, it's all right with me!

Hello, Astro! Why so gloomy?

I'm just thinking of how Captain Strong must have felt seeing us desert?

Tell me the truth, Tom! You aren't really a deserter? You came because you had a plan in mind to seize the ship away from McKay! Tell me, Tom?
YES, ASTRO! I DIDN'T HAVE ANY PLAN --- BUT ONE OF US HAD TO STAY ON THIS SHIP AND TRY SOMETHING! IT'S THE ONLY CHANCE THE COLONY HAS!

I'M GLAD I BELIEVED IN YOU, TOM! NOW WE CAN BOTH DO SOMETHING!

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO TO CAUSE CONFUSION ON BOARD? WHAT?

WELL, TURNING OFF THE ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY WILL CERTAINLY CAUSE A MESS.

THAT'S IT, ASTRO? GET OUT OUR MAGNETIC BOOTS? WE'LL KILL THE GRAVITY PLATES AND LET MCKAY AND HIS MEN FLOAT IN THE AIR!

THE FEED LINES TO THE GRAVITY PLATES ARE IN HERE, TOM!

DISCONNECT THEM, ASTRO!

THAT'S IT! MCKAY AND HIS MEN MUST BE FLOATING AROUND BY NOW!

COME ON, THEN! WE'VE GOT TO DISARM THEM!

I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU SPACE BRATS TO COME HERE AND TAKE OVER THE CONTROLS! THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT THIS GUN READY --- TO BLAST YOU INTO LITTLE ATOMS!
YOU CAN'T FIRE THAT GUN, McKay! The kickback will smash you against the bulkhead! Try it---go ahead!---

I'VE BEEN IN SPACE LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW YOU'RE RIGHT! YOU WIN!

TAKE OVER THE POWER DECK, ASTRO? WE'RE GOING BACK TO ID?

AYE, AYE! AND, OH--BOY! I'D LIKE TO SEE ROGER'S FACE WHEN HE SEES US COMING IN!

CONTROL TO POWER DECK? MAKE 180 DEGREE TURN? STAND BY WITH FULL POWER ROCKETS?

POWER DECK TO CONTROL STANDING BY WITH FULL POWER!

IT MUST BE BORING TO FLOAT AROUND LIKE THAT, TOM! HOW ABOUT TURNING ON A SPACE BROADCAST TO ENTERTAIN THEM?

GO AHEAD, ASTRO! SEE IF YOU CAN PICK UP THE INTERPLANETARY NEWSCAST!

STILL TOO FAR AWAY TO BE SEEN ON JUPITER'S MOON, TO, THE POLARIS MAKES A COMPLETE TURN AND SPEEDS BACK TO THE COLONY...

THIS IS NEWSCAST RELAY STATION ON MARS 57. SENDING YOU THE LATEST INFORMATION FROM THE SOLAR ALLIANCE. THE DISCOVERY OF SOLID URANIUM PLANETOIDS IN THE CENTER OF THE ASTEROID BELT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED ---
THE SOLAR ALLIANCE HAS DECLARED THAT ALL URANIUM ORES ARE NOW PUBLIC PROPERTY AND SHALL BE FREE TO ALL. THE ACTUAL PRICE OF URANIUM HAS FALLEN TO THAT OF COMMON TABLE SALT--- FOR THE SUPPLY IS UNLIMITED!

URANIUM WORTHLESS! IMPS OF SPACE! WE'VE GOT A SHIPLOAD OF IT!

AND IT'S NOT WORTH THE TROUBLE WE HAD DIGGING IT UP! WE'D HAVE BEEN A NICE PACK OF SPACE FOOLS ARRIVING ON EARTH WITH WORTHLESS URANIUM!

WE'VE GOT AN OLD PROVERB ON VENUS--- BREED MAKES FOOLS OF MEN! I GUESS THAT FITS YOU!

YES, IT DOES! NOW WE'VE GOT NOTHING!--- NO TREASURE!--- NO HOME ON IO?

YOU CAN CONNECT THE GRAVITY PLATES NOW. ASTRO. MCKAY IS LIKED AND KNOWS IT? HE'LL BEHAVE!

YOU'RE RIGHT, TOM! THERE'S NOTHING FOR ME ON EARTH OR IN SPACE NOW!

ALL MY LIFE I'VE ADVENTURED IN SPACE--- LOOKING FOR THE ONE IN A MILLION CHANCE TO FIND A TREASURE THAT WOULD MAKE ME RICH! AND WHEN I FOUND IT--- BANG! IT'S NOT WORTH ANYTHING!

MY FOLKS WERE COLONISTS--- THEY COULD HAVE GONE TREASURE HUNTING, TOO! BUT THEY FOUND OUT THAT HOMES--- FAMILIES--- THESE WERE THE REAL TREASURES IN LIFE!
I know that now, Astro. But it's too late! We're finished with the people on Io. They must hate me and my men.

I wouldn't be too sure of that, McKay!

You think they'd give us another chance to join the colony? We'd work our heads off to make it a success?

Maybe they will. You've all learned a lesson you'll never forget! Why don't you ask them when we land?

After the Polaris landed on Io...

I'm glad the colonists are going to take in McKay and his men! I know they're going to make good colonists now.

I was sure they would!

Tom! Astro! I owe you both an apology! McKay wasn't the only one around here to make a mistake! I did, too. And I hope you forgive me as the colonists forgave McKay.

Space Academy is going to be mighty proud of you boys!

Thank you, sir! But if you didn't believe we really deserted, McKay wouldn't have either!

What did those space jokers do anyway? If not for me -- the whole plan would have failed! I deserve some credit, too!
COME ALONG, JOAN! WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO! I THINK THE BOYS CAN SETTLE THIS BY THEMSELVES.

WHAT DID YOU DO, YOU BIG BAG OF SPACE GAS?

WHY, ASTRO, DON'T YOU REMEMBER? ROGER CLIPPED ME ON THE CHIN!

YES! AND IF YOU DON'T GIVE HIM ONE BACK — — I'LL DO IT!

WHY YOU DUMB VENUSIAN APE! I CLIPPED TOM JUST TO MAKE IT LOOK REAL! THAT'S WHAT CONVINCED MCKAY THAT TOM WAS REALLY DESERTING!

SO, YOU GUYS ARE HEROES BECAUSE OF ME! AND I WANT YOU TO SHOW YOU APPRECIATE IT!

WHY, ROGER, OF COURSE WE APPRECIATE IT!

AND WE'RE GOING TO SHOW YOU OUR APPRECIATION?

HEY! LET GO OF ME, YOU SPACE HAPPY CADETS?

A FINE WAY TO SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION! AND AFTER ALL I DID FOR THEM?