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FEBRUARY - APRIL

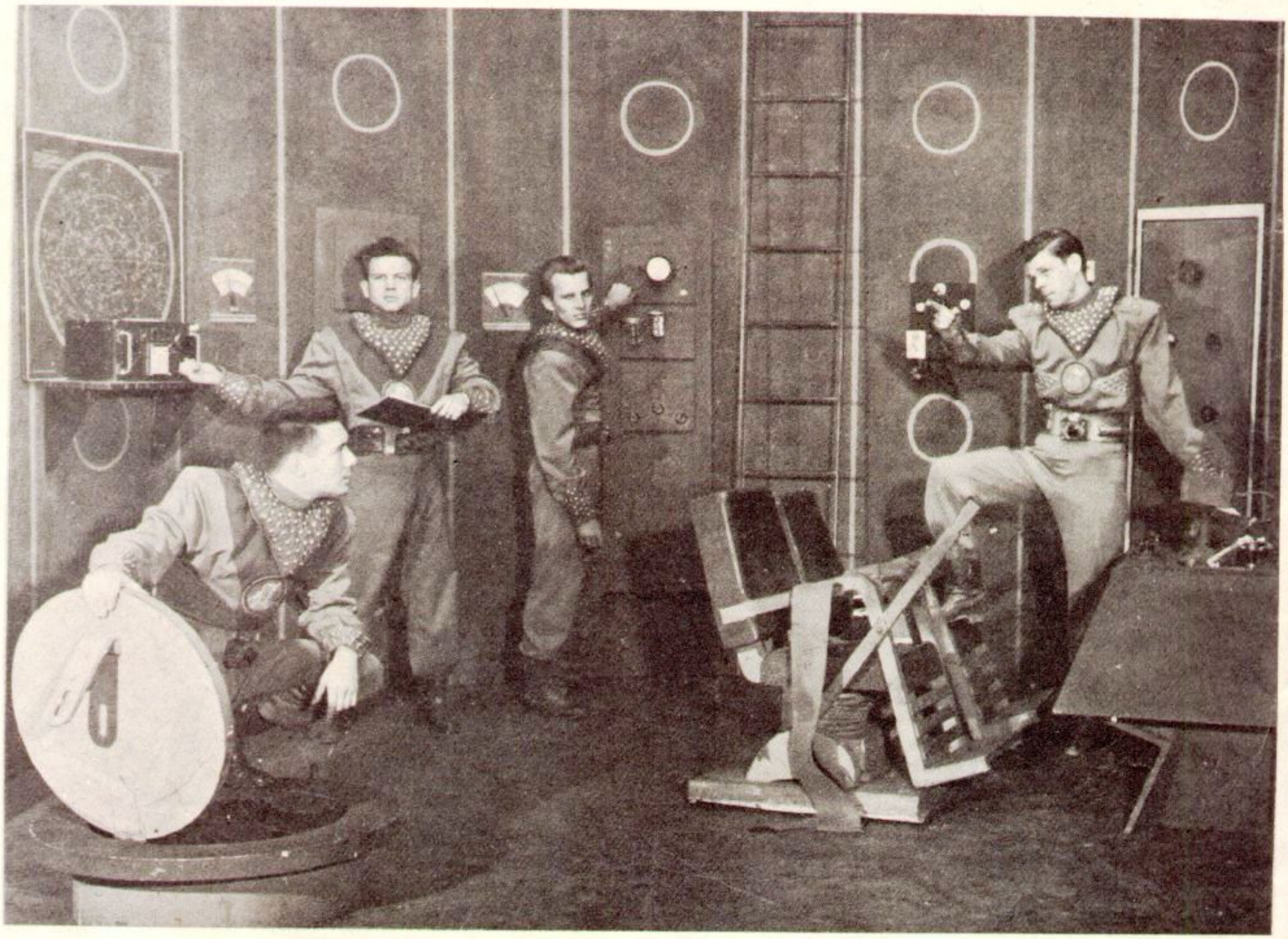
TOM CORBETT SPACE CADET

SPACE ACADEMY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PLANETS

Everything taught at Space Academy is checked and double-checked by the Space Cadets through actual expeditions into space and to the far-flung stars!

In the photograph below, *Cadet Astro, Cadet Tom Corbett and Cadet Roger Manning receive final instructions from Captain Strong, just before rocketing off to the moon— and the strange and exciting adventure which you can* ***read for yourself on the next page!***



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TOM CORBETT

SPACE CADET

THE SMUGGLERS OF THE MOON

ON THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, CAPTAIN STRONG GIVES HIS SPACE CADETS A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT...

BECAUSE CADET ASTRO RECEIVED A LOW MARK IN HIS CLASSROOM WORK ON ASTRO-GATION, THIS WHOLE SQUAD WILL HAVE TO MAKE UP FOR IT WITH THIS SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT.

GREAT GALAXIES! WHY DO TOM AND I HAVE TO DO EXTRA HOMEWORK, JUST BECAUSE THIS VENUSIAN LUNKHEAD---

THAT'LL BE ENOUGH GRIPING FROM YOU, CADET MANNING! YOU KNOW THAT MARKS ARE COUNTED FOR A 'SQUADRON AS A GROUP, NOT INDIVIDUALLY!

BESIDES, I DON'T REMEMBER ROGER COMPLAINING WHEN *HE* FLUNKED THE ENGINE ROOM TEST---AND ASTRO HAD TO MAKE UP FOR HIM!

YOUR TEST IS TO SURVEY 180 DEGREES OF SPACE AND MAKE AN EMERGENCY SPACEMAP!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

YOU HAVE ONE HOUR TO COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGN-MENT! I'LL TAKE A WALK WHILE YOU'RE WORKING!

YOU MEAN WHILE *I'M* DOING THE WORK! THESE SPACE-JOKERS ARE ONLY IN THE WAY!

ALL RIGHT, ROGER, STOP BLASTING OFF YOUR ROCKETS AND GET TO WORK!

LET HIM, TOM! WE'LL HAVE THIS TEST FINISHED LONG BEFORE HE FINDS OUT WHERE WE ARE.

GO AHEAD AND TAKE YOUR SIGHTS, ASTRO. I DON'T NEED TO WRITE DOWN YOUR FIGURES... I CAN DO THE PROBLEM IN MY HEAD!

PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE SPACE GENIUS, ASTRO! LET'S HAVE YOUR READINGS!

STRANGE... THAT LOOKS LIKE A SMALL SPACE SPEEDBOAT!

IMPS OF SPACE! THAT SHIP IS GOING TO CRASH RIGHT SMACK INTO THE WALL OF THE CRATER!

AT THE LAST SPLIT SECOND BEFORE THE EXPECTED CRASH, A SECRET OPENING APPEARS IN THE SIDE OF THE CRATER!

THAT'S STRANGE! A ROCKET-PORT BUILT RIGHT INTO THE SIDE OF THE CRATER! AND THIS AREA IS SUPPOSED TO BE COMPLETELY UNINHABITED EVEN BY MOON PROSPECTORS!

I THINK I'D BETTER FIND OUT WHO IS LIVING THERE... IT DOESN'T LOOK SHIPSHAPE TO ME!

NO SIGN OF ANY SECRET OPENING... I THINK I BETTER CALL THE CADETS!

CAPTAIN STRONG CALLING THE SPACE CADETS! CAPTAIN STRONG CALLING THE SPACE CADETS!

CUT YOUR COMMUNICATIONS! FAST---OR I'LL RAY YOU DOWN!

CADET CORBETT SPEAKING! COME IN, CAPTAIN STRONG!

THAT'S FUNNY! I COULD HAVE SWORN THAT CAPTAIN STRONG CALLED US. BUT WHEN I ANSWERED .. THERE WAS NO REPLY FROM HIM!

AW... GO JUMP IN THE MILKY WAY! YOU'RE JUST HAVING A MOON MIRAGE, TOM! CAPTAIN STRONG WOULDN'T CALL ON US UNTIL WE FINISH OUR WORK!

INSIDE, SNOOPER! THE CHIEF IS SURE GOING TO BE GLAD TO SEE YOU! HE'S ALWAYS GLAD TO SEE AN OFFICER OF THE SOLAR GUARD---SO HE CAN KILL HIM!

I HOPE YOUR *CHIEF* HAS A GOOD EXPLANATION FOR CAPTURING ME! IT ISN'T A GOOD IDEA TO POKE GUNS INTO THE BACKS OF THE SOLAR GUARDSMEN!

KEEP YOUR JETS SHUT AND GO AHEAD!

MARCH RIGHT AHEAD! THE CHIEF IS EXPECTING YOU!

WELCOME TO MY CASTLE ON THE MOON, OFFICER! I AM CAPTAIN ROGASH... AND YOU MIGHT CALL ME A GENTLEMAN ADVENTURER--- AND MERCHANT OF THE GREAT SPACEWAYS!

YOU HAVE A STRANGE WAY OF BEHAVING, CAPTAIN ROGASH... FOR AN *HONEST* SPACE MERCHANT, THAT IS! I AM CAPTAIN STRONG!

I NEVER CLAIMED TO BE HONEST, CAPTAIN STRONG!

I SMUGGLE ATOMIC FUEL FROM EARTH... AND SELL IT TO TRAVELERS IN SPACE. AT A NEAT PROFIT!

WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME ALL THIS, CAPTAIN ROGASH?

BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT GOING TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO REPORT IT TO THE SOLAR GUARD STATION ON THE MOON!

ATOMIC FUELS ARE AVAILABLE TO EVERY-ONE. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SMUGGLE THEM?

MY CUSTOMERS DO NOT LIKE TO REPORT THEIR DESTINATION AS ALL SPACE SHIPS MUST .. YOU SEE... MY CUSTOMERS ARE PIRATES...SMUGGLERS... AND GENTLEMEN WHO DO SHADY BUSINESS IN SPACE!

THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH SPACE GAB, CAPTAIN STRONG. THROW HIM INTO THE SMALL CAVE IN BACK...

AYE, AYE, CHIEF!

I DON'T EXPECT TO BE PUT OUT OF THE WAY WITHOUT FIGHTING BACK, CAPTAIN ROGASH!

HO! HO! A NEAT TRICK, CAPTAIN STRONG!

IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD TO STAND UP AGAINST ROGASH!

DRAG HIM INTO THE LAST CAVE! THEN GO OUT AND SEE IF HE HAD ANY MEN WITH HIM! BRING THEM HERE .. DEAD OR ALIVE!

AYE, AYE, CHIEF!

MEANWHILE, THE SPACE CADETS HAVE FINISHED THEIR ASSIGNMENT...

EVERYTHING IS PACKED AWAY, TOM!

WHERE'S CAPTAIN STRONG? I WANT TO GET BACK TO SPACE ACADEMY AND GET OUT OF THIS SPACESUIT!

I DON'T LIKE IT, FELLOWS! I'M SURE CAPTAIN STRONG TRIED TO COMMUN-ICATE WITH US... AND SOMETHING HAPPENED!

WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO HIM OUT HERE? YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO BE A SPACE HERO AGAIN!

IT ISN'T LIKE CAPTAIN STRONG TO FORGET US AND JUST GO OFF

I'M GOING TO CONTACT CAPTAIN STRONG... JUST TO MAKE SURE HE'S ALL RIGHT!

CALLING CAPTAIN STRONG! CADET *CORBETT... CALLING CAPTAIN STRONG!* COME IN, CAPTAIN STRONG!

NO ANSWER! I'M FOR MAKING A SEARCH FAST! HE MIGHT HAVE HAD AN ACCIDENT!

TOM'S RIGHT!

WELL, WHAT ARE YOU LAZY SPACE JOKERS WAITING FOR? COME ON!

THE CADETS' SIGNAL WAS PICKED UP AT THE CAVE OF THE MOON SMUGGLERS...

THEY WERE CALLING FOR CAPTAIN STRONG, ROGASH! I'VE TRACED THEIR LOCATION ON THE LOCATORS!

SEND SOME OF THE MEN OUT TO PICK THEM UP!

THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY. SPREAD OUT AND TAKE COVER! THEY'LL BE WALKING RIGHT INTO OUR TRAP!

CAPTAIN STRONG WENT IN THIS DIRECTION...

HE MIGHT BE SOMEWHERE UP AHEAD!

BOTH OF YOU ARE SPACE GOOFY! THE CRATER WALL IS AHEAD--- AND NO ONE CAN CLIMB OVER IT. SO HE MUST BE SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE...

AS THE SPACE CADETS WALK TOWARD THE CRATER WALL, SUDDENLY . . .

ALL RIGHT, YOU SPACE BRATS! PUT UP YOUR HANDS AND COME ALONG QUIETLY!

WHA---? SO SOMETHING LIKE THIS MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO CAPTAIN STRONG!

TAKE OFF YOUR SPACESUITS WHEN YOU GET INSIDE!

LOOK! CAPTAIN STRONG'S SPACESUIT!

WELL, WE'LL BE SEEING HIM SOON! HE'LL TELL US WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

WE COULD HAVE BEEN SAFE ABOARD THE POLARIS . . . IF YOU GUYS WEREN'T SO ANXIOUS TO BE SPACE HEROES! NOW LOOK AT THE MESS *ALL* OF US ARE IN!

GO BLOW A JET, ROGER! WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE US DO... DESERT CAPTAIN STRONG? WE *HAD* TO GO LOOK FOR HIM!

I DIDN'T INTEND FOR ANYONE TO GET AWAY! ONCE YOU STUMBLE ON MY SECRET HIDE-OUT... I WOULDN'T REST UNTIL YOU ARE MADE *SAFE!*

MADE SAFE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU SPACE BRATS WILL SOON SEE. *TAKE THEM TO JOIN CAPTAIN STRONG!*

CAPTAIN STRONG...

I WAS HOPING YOU CADETS WOULD ESCAPE!

NONE OF YOU SHALL ESCAPE! YOU'LL DIE HERE IN THIS CAVE... AND I'LL SELL YOUR SPACESHIP TO SOME SPACE PIRATE! THE SOLAR GUARD WILL BE WONDERING FOR MANY YEARS WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU!

STAND BACK, MEN! I'M GOING TO PUT THESE SPACE COPS OUT OF THE WAY FOR GOOD!

ZZRROOOM

THE SPACE CADETS AND THEIR CAPTAIN WILL SUFFOCATE IN THERE! YOU MEN GO OUT AND GET THEIR SPACESHIP!

AYE, ROGASH! AND A NICE PIECE OF BOOTY SHE'LL BRING US!

MEANWHILE, BURIED ALIVE BENEATH HUNDREDS OF TONS OF MOON-ROCK!

COVER YOUR HEADS, CADETS! KEEP DOWN!

LOOKS LIKE THE ROCK SLIDE IS OVER! WE'RE SAFE, ANYWAY...

SAFE? BURIED ALIVE? ROGER, YOU'VE GOT SPACE ROCKS ON YOUR BRAIN!

HOW...HOW LONG DO YOU THINK WE CAN LAST, CAPTAIN STRONG?

MAYBE TEN MINUTES, ASTRO. THIS IS ONLY A SMALL ROOM... AND THE AIR WILL SOON BE USED UP!

SIT QUIETLY...BREATHE LIGHTLY. THAT WAY, WE'LL MAKE THE AIR LAST A LITTLE LONGER...

WHAT WILL A MINUTE LONGER MEAN FOR US? WE'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD NOW... LIKE SPACE RATS IN A TRAP!

FUNNY THE WAY MY CAREER HAS TO END...TRAPPED HERE ON THE MOON! AND I WORKED SO HARD TO PASS MY EXAMS TO GET INTO SPACE ACADEMY! IN THE JUNGLES AND SWAMPS OF VENUS, I USED TO DREAM ABOUT BECOMING A SPACE CADET!

TAKE IT EASY, ASTRO! YOU ARE A SPACE CADET--- AND A GOOD ONE!

SLOWLY THE MINUTES DRAG ALONG, UNTIL ROGER BREAKS UNDER THE STRAIN!

DEVILS OF THE SPACE WAYS! WHY DOES THIS HAVE TO TAKE SO LONG? IF WE'RE GOING TO DIE--- *WHY DON'T WE DIE!*

GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, CADET MANNING! EVERY MINUTE SEEMS LIKE A DAY TO US, TOO!

ROGER IS RIGHT, CAPTAIN STRONG! I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT MY WATCH... AND IT'S TWENTY MINUTES SINCE WE WERE BURIED IN HERE. *BUT THE AIR SEEMS AS FRESH AS EVER!*

TOM'S RIGHT! THE AIR IS STILL *FRESH!*

AIR MUST BE COMING IN THROUGH SOME CRACK... OR OPENING!

EXAMINE EVERY INCH OF THE WALL, BOYS! THERE *MUST* BE A CRACK...IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE OF GETTING OUT OF HERE!

HERE, SIR. I FEEL SOMETHING LIKE AIR BLOWING THROUGH!

IT'S AN OPENING ALL RIGHT! GET STARTED DIGGING HERE... USE YOUR BELT BUCKLES... HANDS... ANYTHING!

BUT, SIR... *THIS WALL IS TOWARD THE INTERIOR OF THE MOON!* WHERE DOES THE AIR COME FROM?

WHEREVER THIS MAY LEAD... WE'LL BE BETTER OFF *THERE* THAN BURIED IN OUR CELL! AT LEAST WE'LL HAVE AIR TO BREATHE!

THE EXPLOSION THAT BURIED US, MUST HAVE OPENED UP THIS CRACK IN THE WALL!

WE SHOULD BE THROUGH SOON, SIR! I WONDER IF WE'LL FIND OURSELVES IN ANOTHER PART OF THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE?

WE'VE BROKEN THROUGH, CADETS! NOW WE'LL FIND OUT WHERE WE ARE— ——

THIS DOESN'T LOOK AT ALL LIKE PART OF THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE, CAPTAIN STRONG!

IT SEEMS TO LEAD *DOWNWARD*... AND I CAN'T SEE ANY END TO IT!

THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS TUNNEL, SIR. IT...IT LOOKS ALMOST AS THOUGH IT WAS *MADE BY PEOPLE!*

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, TOM! LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THIS WALL!

CADETS, WE'VE STUMBLED ON SOMETHING! THIS TUNNEL WAS MADE BY HUMAN BEINGS! AND FROM THE LOOKS OF IT.. THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO!

WHO CARES? WHAT I'D LIKE TO FIND IS SOMETHING TO DRINK AND EAT! WE'RE GOING TO DIE OF THIRST AND STARVATION IN HERE!

MEANWHILE, FAR OVERHEAD, THE SMUGGLER CHIEF GETS A REPORT...

CHIEF, WE CAN'T GET INTO THE SOLAR GUARD CRUISER! THE PORT IS CLOSED!

YOU FOOLS! WHY DIDN'T YOU THINK OF GETTING THE KEYS TO THE SPACE-SHIP FROM THE SPACE CADETS? NOW WE'LL HAVE TO DIG OUT THEIR BODIES AND FIND THE KEYS!

HURRY! DIG! WE'VE GOT TO GET THAT SPACE-SHIP TO A HIDING PLACE BEFORE A SOLAR PATROL SPOTS IT!

AND BELOW, DEEP INSIDE THE MOON . . .

THERE'S NO END TO THIS TUNNEL! WE'LL NEVER GET OUT ALIVE!

SHUT UP, ROGER! WHAT WOULD YON HAVE US DO? GIVE UP? WE'RE GOING ON... THERE *MUST* BE AN END! THIS TUNNEL WAS MADE BY *SOMEONE* OR *SOMETHING* FOR A REASON!

I'M EXHAUSTED... I CAN'T GO ON! IF ONLY I HAD A DRINK OF WATER... AH! COOL... SWEET WATER...WATER...

HE'S FEVERISH, CAPTAIN STRONG! WE'D... WE'D BETTER REST A BIT!

CAPTAIN STRONG! TOM! ROGER! LOOK! LOOK WHAT'S AHEAD!

A FOREST OF TOADSTOOLS! LOOK!..THERE'S *LIFE ON THE MOON!*

LIFE ON THE MOON! THIS IS FANTASTIC! NONE OF OUR SCIENTISTS HAVE EVEN SUSPECTED THIS AMAZING FACT!

WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO US TO FIND THIS? WE CAN'T EAT IT...

NO, BUT TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THIS! IT SEEMS THAT THESE PLANTS HAVE WATER OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THEM!

WHY... THESE THINGS ARE ALMOST MADE OF WATER!

THE PLANT SEEMS TO BE JUST A SACK FOR WATER...

I'M GOING TO DRINK IT!

HOLD IT, ROGER! LET ME TEST IT FIRST! IT MAY BE POISONOUS!

I DON'T CARE IF IT IS POISON! I'VE GOT TO HAVE A DRINK!

LET HIM GO, BOYS! THIS TASTES LIKE PURE WATER!

THESE QUEER PLANTS SEEM TO MANUFACTURE WATER IN SOME NATURAL WAY... LIKE PLANTS ON EARTH MANUFACTURE CHLOROPHYLL, FROM SUNLIGHT! THIS PROCESS SHOULD BE CALLED HYDROSYNTHESIS.

LET'S GO ON!

I'VE GOT A FEELING WE'RE GOING TO MEET UP WITH MORE STRANGE THINGS!

I'M READY FOR ANYTHING. .NOW THAT I'VE HAD A DRINK OF WATER!

CAPTAIN STRONG! IS...IS THIS PLACE GETTING LIGHTER OR ARE MY EYES PLAYING TRICKS ON ME?

I'VE BEEN NOTICING IT FOR SOME TIME NOW, TOM! THERE IS LIGHT COMING IN FROM SOMEWHERE!

AN OPENING AHEAD! AND THERE'S SUNLIGHT AND AIR!

WHERE IN SPACE CAN WE BE? I DON'T LIKE THIS!

A WHOLE WORLD. INSIDE THE MOON!

LIGHT... AIR... WATER! THIS DISCOVERY WILL STAGGER AND ASTOUND THE SCIENTISTS IN THE SOLAR ALLIANCE!

HOT ROCKETS! AND IT WILL MAKE US FAMOUS! WHY, I'LL BET WE'LL GET THE SPACE HERO'S MEDAL FOR THIS DISCOVERY!

THAT MOUNTAIN.. OR PYRAMID IS LIGHTING UP THIS WHOLE PLACE — — —

IT'S RADIO-ACTIVE! HIT DIRT! DOWN AND LAY FLAT BEFORE WE GET A DOSE OF RADIATION!

TAKE A READING ON YOUR GEIGER COUNTER, TOM! THIS PLACE MAY BE DEADLY FOR US!

I'VE GOT MY COUNTER HERE, SIR! I'LL CHECK AT ONCE!

BACK AT THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE, ROGASH AND HIS MEN DIG THEIR WAY INTO THE SMALL CAVE...

BY THE BLAZING FIRES OF THE SUN! THEY'VE ESCAPED!

HERE'S THE PLACE, ROGASH! AND THERE'S AIR!

THEY CAN'T BE FAR! SHOOT TO KILL IF YOU SPOT THEM!

FAR BELOW, IN THE STRANGE LUNAR WORLD...

GEIGER COUNTER READS BELOW DANGER MARK, SIR! I'D SAY THERE WAS NO DANGER FROM RADIATION, CAPTAIN STRONG!

SIZZLING COMETS! I SURE HAD A SCARE!

THAT PYRAMID MUST BE MADE OF SOME NEW KIND OF RADIO-ACTIVE ELEMENT...SOMETHING WE MIGHT CALL URADIUM! IT SUPPLIES THIS LUNAR WORLD WITH LIGHT AND WARMTH LIKE THE SUN DOES TO OUR EARTH!

NO POINT IN JUST STANDING AROUND! WE MIGHT AS WELL EXPLORE THIS PLACE...

AND MAYBE FIND SOMETHING TO EAT! I'M GETTING HUNGRY!

IN THE SAND! I .I'M SEEING THINGS!

I SEE IT TOO! AND GOLLY, I FEEL LIKE... LIKE A ROBINSON CRUSOE OF SPACE!

PEOPLE...ON THE MOON...OR INSIDE THE MOON! THEY LEAD UP TO THAT HILL!

EITHER SMALL PEOPLE... OR CHILDREN! LET'S FOLLOW! THEY CAN'T BE FAR FROM HERE!

WELCOME TO THE HOME OF YOUR ANCIENTS, BROTHERS OF THE LARGE WORLD!

HEY! WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE DOES HE SPEAK? I CAN UNDERSTAND HIM!

DON'T YOU REMEMBER YOUR LANGUAGE CLASS, CADET MANNING? THEY SPEAK ONE OF THE OLD EARTH LANGUAGES... A FORM OF SANSKRIT!

OUR LEGENDS ARE TRUE... FOR YOU HAVE COME BACK TO US AS THE ELDERS FORETOLD LONG AGO!

YOU... YOU SEEM TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT US. AND YOU SPEAK A LANGUAGE WE UNDERSTAND! YOU ARE NOT SURPRISED AT OUR APPEARANCE!

COME TO OUR HOMES, LONG LOST BROTHERS! OUR ELDERS, WHO HAVE WISER HEADS THAN I, WILL EXPLAIN OUR HISTORY. YOU WILL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING THEN!

WELL, ALL I HOPE IS THAT THEY HAVE SOMETHING FOR US TO EAT!

HERE YOU SHALL HAVE FOOD AND REST AND WARM FRIENDSHIP. OUR ELDER WILL TELL YOU OUR STORY... THE STORY OF OUR LUNA WORLD.

WE'RE VERY CURIOUS TO HEAR THE STORY OF YOUR PEOPLE... AND WE NEED FOOD AND REST VERY MUCH.

EAT AND REST...I WILL TELL YOU OUR LEGEND!

OUR LEGENDS TELL US THAT THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, THERE WAS AIR AND WATER ON THE MOON. WE LIVED ON THE SURFACE AND NOT DEEP UNDERGROUND. BUT OUR AIR WAS BEING LOST INTO SPACE. . AND OUR WATER WAS SEEPING THROUGH CRACKS INTO THE GROUND...

OUR WISE MEN KNEW THAT LIFE ON THE MOON WOULD SOMEDAY BE IMPOSSIBLE. BUT THEY COULD NOT DECIDE WHAT TO DO. SOME SAID: *LET US BUILD SPACE SHIPS AND MOVE TO THE NEAR-BY PLANET!*

OTHERS SAID: *LET US BUILD A NEW WORLD DEEP INSIDE THE MOON, SUPPLY IT WITH WATER AND AN ARTIFICIAL SUN.*

SO IT WAS DECIDED THAT SOME OF OUR PEOPLE BUILD SPACE SHIPS AND GO TO THE NEAR-BY PLANET... AND FROM THESE WE NEVER HEARD AGAIN. OTHERS BUILT THIS UNDERGROUND WORLD...

I SEE NOW THAT SOME OF OUR PEOPLE CRASHED ON THE PLANET... AND YOU ARE THEIR DESCENDANTS...

BUT THE DIFFERENCE IN OUR SIZE...WE ARE TALL AND YOU ARE SHORT!

ALL THINGS GROW IN PROPORTION TO THEIR WORLD. THROUGH THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF YEARS, YOUR PEOPLE GREW SLOWLY LARGER AND LARGER!

THAT SOUNDS RIGHT, SIR. WE GENERALLY ARE A LITTLE TALLER THAN OUR PARENTS! OUR GROWING IN PROPORTION TO OUR PLANET MUST STILL BE GOING ON!

WHILE THE SPACE CADETS AND CAPTAIN STRONG LISTEN TO THE OLD LEGENDS OF THE LUNARIAN PEOPLE...

A WORLD! A NEW, UNKNOWN WORLD FOR ME TO CONQUER! CAREFUL, MY ROGUES, THE SPACE CADETS MAY BE SOMEWHERE NEAR US! WE DON'T WANT TO WALK INTO A TRAP!

THAT MOUNTAIN IS RADIO-ACTIVE BUT HARMLESS TO HUMAN BEINGS!

GOOD! A MOUNTAIN OF ATOMIC FUELS! THE GREATEST FORTUNE IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM! AND OURS FOR THE TAKING!

A BOAT ALL READY FOR US, MY BULLIES! SET A GUARD AND A COUPLE OF YOU COME OUT WITH ME TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THAT MOUNTAIN OF ATOMIC FUEL!

BUT, CHIEF... THIS BOAT MUST BELONG TO *SOMEONE!* IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE SPACE CADETS!

YOU ARE RIGHT, MY BROTHER! THE BOAT IS MINE!

YOU MEAN IT *WAS* YOUR BOAT.

FROM NOW ON, IT'S *MINE!*

ALL RIGHT, TAKE UP A STRONG POSITION AROUND THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE AND DON'T LET ANYONE GET CLOSE TO YOU! I'M GOING IN THE BOAT. ..

IT IS BEYOND MY UNDERSTANDING! WHY DID HE KILL?

LET US TAKE OUR BROTHER TO THE ELDER. HIS WISDOM MAY EXPLAIN SUCH EVIL!

IT IS THE DEED OF ONE OF OUR BROTHERS FROM THE PLANT WORLD! TELL US, WISE ELDER, WHY HE DID IT? WHAT MUST WE DO?

IT WAS AN EVIL THING TO DO, BUT WE MUST FORGIVE THE DEED. HE WHO DID IT KNEW NOT WHAT HE WAS DOING! WE SHALL GREET THESE STRANGERS WITH KINDNESS AND THEN THEY WILL UNDERSTAND THEIR MISTAKE!

HE WAS SHOT WITH A PARALORAY GUN OPEN TO FULL BLAST, CAPTAIN STRONG!

THAT MEANS ROGASH AND HIS CRIMINAL GANG HAVE SOMEHOW FOUND THEIR WAY DOWN HERE! ALL OF US... AND THESE KINDLY LUNARIAN PEOPLE, TOO... ARE IN DEADLY DANGER!

WE ARE IN NO DANGER, MY FRIEND. WE SHALL SHOW THEM THAT KILLING IS WRONG!

YOU ARE DEALING WITH SPACE ROGUES AND CRIMINALS! YOU MUST TELL YOUR PEOPLE TO FIGHT THEM!

FIGHT? WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND SUCH THINGS!

THE MEN WHO CAME AFTER US ARE FULL OF GREED! THEY WILL ROB YOU AND MAKE SLAVES OF YOU!

IF YOU ARE AFRAID OF THESE STRANGERS, I WILL HAVE SOME OF MY YOUNG MEN LEAD YOU TO A SAFER PLACE. THEN WHEN YOU REALIZE HOW WRONG YOU WERE, YOU MAY COME BACK!

THAT IS WISE, ELDER. GIVE US SOMEONE TO GUIDE US AND WE WILL GO!

WE CAN'T LEAVE THE LUNARIANS AT ROGASH'S MERCY, CAPTAIN STRONG! WE CAN'T DESERT THEM!

WE HAVE NO WEAPONS TO FIGHT ROGASH, TOM! OUR ONLY CHANCE TO HELP THE LUNARIANS IS TO GO INTO HIDING AND WAIT FOR THE RIGHT CHANCE TO BEAT ROGASH!

MEANWHILE, ON THE PYRAMID IN THE LAKE . . .

SAY... THIS ISN'T A NATURAL MOUNTAIN! IT WAS MADE BY SOME OF THOSE LITTLE PEOPLE!

LOOK AT THAT, CHIEF! WE CAN CARRY THE BLOCKS EASY! NO DIGGING OR WORK! JUST LOAD THEM ON THE BOAT AND ROW BACK TO THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE!

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO CARRY THESE BLOCKS THROUGH THAT LONG TUNNEL TO OUR CAVE. I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA! WE'LL ROUND UP AS MANY OF THE LITTLE PEOPLE AS WE CAN AND MAKE THEM CARRY THE STUFF FOR US!

ROW BACK, FAST! WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO!

ROGASH LOST NO TIME GETTING OUT TO THE RADIO-ACTIVE PYRAMID!

I'LL BET I CAN TELL YOU WHAT HE IS THINKING, SIR! I'LL BET HE IS WORKING OUT HIS PLANS TO LOOT THE LUNARIANS OF THEIR RADIO-ACTIVE MATERIALS!

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO NOW EXCEPT WATCH FOR AN OPPORTUNITY!

THE FOOTPRINTS OF CAPTAIN STRONG AND HIS SPACE CADETS SHOW US THAT THEY WENT ON TO THAT VILLAGE FURTHER ON ALONG THE SHORE! WE ATTACK IN FULL FORCE, CAPTURE THEM AND TAKE OVER THE VILLAGE!

IF YOU SPOT STRONG OR THE SPACE CADETS ---SHOOT TO KILL! THE LITTLE MOON PEOPLE WE WANT TO WORK FOR US...DON'T KILL THEM ---YET! NOW GET READY!

LET'S GO!

WE WELCOME YOU WITH FRIENDSHIP AND AN OPEN HEART!

YOU WELCOME US? YOU KNOW WE KILLED ONE OF YOUR MEN?

WE KNOW YOU KNEW NOT WHAT YOU DID! IT WAS A MISTAKE YOU MADE, AND WE FORGIVE YOU!

CHIEF, THESE PEOPLE ARE SPACE NUTS!

GLAD YOU FORGIVE US, LITTLE MAN! FORGIVE ME AGAIN FOR THIS--- BUT I'M BOSS FROM NOW ON!

TAKE OVER, MY BULLIES! GET AS MANY OF THEIR BOATS TOGETHER AS YOU CAN LAY YOUR HANDS ON! GATHER THEIR STRONGEST MEN... WE'RE GOING OUT TO THE SHINING MOUNTAIN AND LOAD UP ON THE ATOMIC FUEL.

FROM A SECRET HIDING PLACE NOT FAR AWAY..

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THEY DO SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS, MY FRIEND!

IT WOULD TAKE TOO LONG FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND IF I TRIED TO EXPLAIN! BUT KNOW THIS. THEY WANT TO TAKE AWAY FROM YOU WHAT IS YOURS!

THEN OUR ELDER WAS WRONG! FRIENDSHIP IS SCORNED BY THESE PEOPLE!

YOUR ELDER IS A GOOD MAN, KIND AND GENTLE! BUT HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH SUCH MEN AS ROGASH! COME, WE MUST REPORT WHAT WE SAW TO CAPTAIN STRONG!

WHAT CAN YOUR CAPTAIN STRONG DO TO HELP US?

I DON'T KNOW...MAYBE WE CAN FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.

SO ROGASH IS LOSING NO TIME...

FROM THE WAY HE IS GETTING THE BOATS READY, I THINK HE'LL START TRANSPORTING THAT ATOMIC FUEL RIGHT AWAY!

IF WE ONLY HAD SOME WEAPONS TO FIGHT ROGASH...

EXCUSE ME, SIR! BUT THERE'S A JUNGLE TRICK WE HAVE ON VENUS THAT MIGHT HELP US HERE!

WE HAVE REEDS LIKE THESE ON VENUS. THEY CAN BE MADE IN TO PRETTY DEADLY WEAPONS, SIR. IF WE HAD A KNIFE...

HERE IS MINE, ASTRO!

THESE REEDS ARE VERY TOUGH, SIR. BY SHARPENING A POINT ON THEM WE HAVE...

A SPEAR!

SO YOU VENUSIAN SWAMP MONKEYS ARE GOOD FOR SOMETHING AFTER ALL THIS IDEA IS PRETTY GOOD... ALMOST AS GOOD AS ONE I COULD HAVE THOUGHT UP!

I'VE GOT A SPACE MAN'S HUNCH YOU'LL CLAIM YOU THOUGHT THIS UP BY THE TIME WE GET BACK TO SPACE ACADEMY... *IF* WE EVER GET BACK!

NOW THAT WE'VE GOT THESE SPEARS, SIR--- WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

MOVE CLOSER TO THE VILLAGE AND WATCH FOR OUR CHANCE. IF WE CAN CATCH A COUPLE OF THE SMUGGLERS AND DISARM THEM...

CAPTAIN STRONG, ROGASH CAN'T TAKE THE WHOLE GANG WITH HIM WHEN HE GOES TO THE SHINING MOUNTAIN... HE'S GOT TO LEAVE SOME OF HIS MEN TO GUARD THE LUNARIANS.

GO ON, TOM! I THINK YOU'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA, THERE!

THIS WILL BE OUR CHANCE, SIR! RÓGASH WILL HAVE TO DIVIDE HIS MEN INTO TWO GROUPS... AND WE'LL ATTACK THE ONES HE LEAVES BEHIND!

RIGHT, TOM!

HAVING MADE HIS PREPARATIONS TO LOOT THE PEOPLE OF THE MOON, ROGASH EMBARKS FOR THE MOUNTAIN OF RADIO-ACTIVE MATTER!

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THE SPACE CADETS, MY BULLIES!

AYE, CHIEF! WE'LL SHOOT ANYONE WHO COMES CLOSE TO THE VILLAGE!

THE MOON PEOPLE ARE PEACEFUL AND DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT FIGHTING--WHICH IS A GOOD THING FOR US, HEY?

AYE... AND THE ONES WHO KNOW HOW TO FIGHT... THE SPACE CADETS...DON'T HAVE ANY GUNS TO FIGHT WITH! HA! HA! THIS IS WHAT I'D CALL PERFECT!

NOT A CHANCE TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO USE OUR SPEARS, CAPTAIN STRONG!

THERE MUST BE A WAY! WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE OUR OWN CHANCE... INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR ONE!

ROGASH SHOULD BE RETURNING SOON. LET'S GET DOWN CLOSER TO THE WATER AND WAIT THERE!

BUT WE'LL BE LOSING OUR CHANCE!

WE NEED HELP... THE HELP OF THE LUNA PEOPLE! THEY MUST LEARN TO DEFEND THEMSELVES.

I GUESS THAT'S RIGHT! THE ODDS AGAINST US ARE TOO GREAT NOW!

LOOK, SIR! THE ELDER IS GOING TO DO SOMETHING!

I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT YOUR LEADER IS GOING TO TAKE AWAY OUR SHINING MOUNTAIN! I BEG YOU... DO NOT TAKE IT AWAY! ALL LIFE WILL STOP IF THE SHINING MOUNTAIN IS TAKEN AWAY! IT IS THE SOURCE OF OUR LIFE!

WE WANT THAT STUFF... AND NOBODY IS GOING TO STOP US, LITTLE MAN!

EVERYTHING HERE IN OUR WORLD IS BALANCED PERFECTLY! TAKE SOMETHING AWAY--- LIKE OUR SHINING MOUNTAIN---AND YOU WILL UPSET THE BALANCE!

WHAT DO WE CARE? IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, TRY AND STOP US!

KINDNESS AND FRIENDSHIP DOES NOT STOP THEM FROM DESTROYING OUR LIFE...THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY!

THE MAN CALLED CAPTAIN STRONG... WAS HE NOT RIGHT AFTER ALL? MUST WE NOT FIGHT NOW, WISE ELDER?

TELL OUR YOUNG MEN TO SLIP AWAY QUIETLY INTO THE MARSHES AND THE REEDS! THERE THEY MUST FIND AND JOIN CAPTAIN STRONG.. AND DO WHAT HE TELLS THEM!

WE SHALL DO THAT, WISE ELDER!

BY ONES AND TWOS, THE YOUNG LUNARIANS SLIP AWAY TO HIDE IN THE NEAR BY REEDS...

TAKE THESE WEAPONS! MY SPACE CADETS WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO USE THEM! AS SOON AS CADET MANNING RETURNS FROM HIS SCOUTING EXPEDITION, WE SHALL ATTACK!

THE BOATS ARE RETURNING, FRIEND ROGER!

WE BETTER DO SOMETHING QUICK! YOU GET INTO THE VILLAGE AND TELL YOUR PEOPLE TO BE READY TO FIGHT WHEN THE ATTACK COMES!

ROGASH IS COMING BACK, CAPTAIN STRONG! LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOT A COUPLE OF BOATLOADS OF ATOMIC FUEL FROM THE SHINING MOUNTAIN!

TOM... ASTRO! TAKE YOUR MEN AND WORK YOUR WAY THROUGH THE REEDS TO THE VILLAGE! I'LL CIRCLE AROUND AND ATTACK THROUGH THE VILLAGE! CADET MANNING, COME WITH ME!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

WAIT UNTIL MY GROUP ATTACKS BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING!

RIGHT, SIR!

WE'RE IN POSITION, TOM! HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WILL TAKE CAPTAIN STRONG TO CIRCLE AROUND?

NOT LONG, ASTRO! ANY MINUTE NOW!

WE ARE SMALL! WE CAN CREEP CLOSER TO THESE EVIL MEN BEFORE WE THROW OUR SPEARS!

GOOD IDEA! GO AHEAD!

BUT AS THE LUNARIANS CREEP CLOSER TO THE SMUGGLERS, AN ACCIDENTAL NOISE ALERTS THE GUARDS...

DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING? I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING IN THE REEDS?

DIDN'T HEAR A THING...BUT WHY TAKE CHANCES? I'LL GIVE THE PLACE A BLAST!

HEY! THERE WAS SOMEONE THERE! START BLASTING!

SOMETHING'S WRONG! TOM'S STARTED THE ATTACK--- AND THE SMUGGLERS HAVE BEEN WARNED!

THAT DUMB SPACE MONKEY! WHY COULDN'T HE OBEY ORDERS!

NO TIME TO ARGUE NOW! COME ON!

TROUBLE! IT MUST BE THOSE JETBLASTED SPACE CADETS!

JUST AS VICTORY IS WITHIN THE GRASP OF CAPTAIN STRONG AND THE SPACE CADETS, ROGASH AND HIS BOATS COME INTO RANGE!

RETREAT---BUT NOT TOO FAR! WE'VE GOT THE ADVANTAGE OF HIDING BEHIND THE VILLAGE BUILDINGS WHILE THEY STAY IN THE OPEN!

EVERYONE GET BACK A LITTLE AND SCATTER AROUND! AND KEEP THEM BUSY DODGING OUR SPEARS!

WE CAN'T STAY HERE IN THE OPEN... AND WE'LL HAVE A TOUGH JOB DRIVING THEM OUT OF THEIR HIDING PLACES!

THEN WHAT DO WE DO, CHIEF?

LOAD THE STUFF INTO ONE BOAT AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! WE'LL COME BACK LATER AND REALLY CLEAN THE PLACE OUT!

GOOD IDEA, CHIEF! WE ALREADY GOT ENOUGH TO MAKE US ALL RICH!

ALL SET, ROGASH! HURRY UP AND GET IN!

PUSH OFF, MY BULLY ROGUES! I'VE GOT AN ATOMIC PRESENT TO GIVE TO CAPTAIN STRONG AND HIS SPACE BRATS BEFORE I LEAVE! ONE THAT'LL BLAST THEM TO COMET DUST!

HERE'S AN ATOMIC HAND GRENADE FOR YOU! THERE'LL BE NOTHING BUT A BIG HOLE HERE WHEN WE COME AGAIN!

WE'VE GOT TO RUN FOR IT, SIR! WE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE!

TOM AND ASTRO IN THE REEDS! THEY CAN'T RUN AWAY

WE'RE TRAPPED, TOM! WE CAN'T RUN FAST ENOUGH THROUGH THESE REEDS TO GET AWAY FROM THE EXPLOSION!

IF WE CAN'T RUN AWAY--- THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO!

DON'T, TOM! YOU'RE GOING TOWARD THE BOMB!

THAT'S JUST WHERE I WANT TO GO!

YOU'RE CRAZY, TOM! COME BACK!

WHAT'S THAT SPACE GOOFY GUY TRYING TO DO? GET HIMSELF KILLED?

THAT SPACE GOOFY SPACE CADET IS TRYING TO SAVE ALL OF US---IN THE ONLY WAY WE CAN BE SAVED!

GOT IT! NOW IF ONLY I'M IN TIME... IF ONLY IT DROPS IN THE WATER BEFORE IT EXPLODES! THE WATER WILL KEEP DOWN THE DANGER AREA TO A MINIMUM!

SPACE MAN'S LUCK WAS RIDING WITH US THAT TIME! IT EXPLODED IN THE WATER!

LOOK! THE WAVES SET OFF BY THE EXPLOSION .THEY'RE SWAMPING THE BOAT!

HELP! DON'T LET US DROWN! SAVE US! CAPTAIN STRONG! SPACE CADETS! YOU'RE SWORN TO HELP THOSE IN DISTRESS! HELP US!

WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING, CAPTAIN STRONG! WE CAN'T JUST STAND HERE AND WATCH THEM DROWN!

WE'RE HELPLESS TO DO ANYTHING FOR THEM, TOM! LOOK

THE WAVES FROM THE EXPLOSION HAVE CARRIED ALL THE BOATS OUT INTO THE LAKE!

THESE MEN WERE DOOMED BY THEIR OWN GREED, MY YOUNG FRIEND! THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE OVERLOADED THE BOATS WITH WHAT THEY STOLE FROM US!

ARE THERE OTHERS AS EVIL AS THOSE IN YOUR WORLD, MY SON?

YES, WISE ELDER! I AM ASHAMED TO ADMIT IT... BUT THAT IS THE TRUTH!

YOUR SHINING MOUNTAIN CONTAINS A METAL VERY VALUABLE THROUGHOUT THE SOLAR SYSTEM! THERE WILL BE MANY WHO WILL BE TEMPTED TO ROB YOU!

THEN MY WORLD AND MY PEOPLE ARE DOOMED TO DIE!

THERE IS A WAY TO SAVE YOUR WORLD...

TELL ME WHAT THIS WAY IS! WE SHALL DO WHATEVER YOU SAY!

WE MUST RETURN NOW TO OUR WORLD . . . AND WE SHALL KEEP YOUR WORLD A SECRET!

IT SHALL BE AS YOU WISH, MY SON!

AFTER WE ARE GONE, HAVE YOUR PEOPLE BLOCK UP THIS PASSAGE! WE SHALL DO THE SAME THING ON THE OTHER SIDE. ONLY THE SECRET RECORDS OF THE SOLAR GUARD WILL HAVE A REPORT ON THIS LUNARIAN WORLD! GOOD-BYE, WISE ELDER!

BOY! THIS SURE TURNED INTO SOMETHING, DIDN'T IT, ASTRO!

SOME ROUTINE ASSIGNMENT TO CATCH UP IN OUR STUDIES. I'LL TAKE CLASSROOM WORK FROM NOW ON!

FROM NOW ON ... I'LL NEVER FLUNK MY TEST AGAIN!

OH, WHAT ARE YOU TWO SPACEJOKERS GRIPING ABOUT, ANYWAY? DISCOVERING LIFE INSIDE THE MOON IS GOING TO EARN US SPACEHERO MEDALS OF HONOR!

BAROOM

IN FACT, FOR DISCOVERING THE LITTLE PEOPLE INSIDE THE MOON--- WE MIGHT BE ELECTED TO THE SOCIETY OF SPACE EXPLORERS!

LITTLE PEOPLE INSIDE THE MOON? SAY, ASTRO, DO YOU THINK OUR SPACE MATE HAS BLOWN HIS JETS?

NOPE, JUST SPACE-GOOFY, TOM!

WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT ARE YOU GUYS TRYING TO DO TO ME? WE JUST LEFT THE LITTLE PEOPLE INSIDE THE MOON...

TSK! TSK! TSK! HE'S DELIRIOUS, ASTRO! NEXT THING YOU KNOW HE'LL BE TELLING US THERE'S A MOUNTAIN OF ATOMIC FUELS INSIDE THE MOON!

ALL THE SIGNS OF SPACE FEVER, TOM! THINK HE OUGHT TO BE PUT INTO THE HOSPITAL AS SOON AS WE RETURN TO SPACE ACADEMY?

WHY, I'LL KNOCK YOUR BLOCK OFF! TRYING TO MAKE ME THINK I'VE BLOWN MY JETS!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHY AREN'T YOU CADETS IN YOUR SPACE-SUITS? I'M GOING TO BLOW THIS WHOLE PLACE UP!

IT'S ROGER, SIR! HE'S NOT FEELING WELL! KEEPS TALKING ABOUT LITTLE PEOPLE INSIDE THE MOON. *I'M SURE HE'S IMAGINED THE WHOLE THING!*

HMMM... LITTLE PEOPLE INSIDE THE MOON! IT DOES LOOK SERIOUS!

FORGET ABOUT THIS ADVENTURE, CADET MANNING! YOU'RE NOT TO MENTION IT TO ANYONE... *THAT'S AN ORDER!* NOW INTO YOUR SPACE-SUIT AND BACK TO THE POLARIS!

BUT... BUT... YES, SIR!

I COULD HAVE SWORN... I WAS RIGHT... I WONDER?