There is no letup in the training of the Cadets of Space Academy. Intense physical training develops the bodies of Space Cadets to stand up under the severe strain of space travel. Continuous classroom study trains their minds for the great problems that flight through the cold distances between the stars presents. Constant practice with complicated machinery and controls develops instinctive dexterity in handling the giant spaceships.

And finally a day comes when Space Cadets are trusted to take a space cruiser off the earth without the strict supervision of an officer of Space Academy!

Here, Tom, Astro and Roger are at the controls of the Polaris—as they blast spaceward, for the first time on their own!
THE EAR-PIERCING SHRIEK OF A SPACESHIP OUT OF CONTROL SHATTERS USUAL ROUTINE AT THE SPACEPORT...

SOUND THE ALARM! WE'LL NEED EVERY MAN WE CAN GET FOR RESCUE WORK!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THAT PILOT? HAS HE GONE BLIND?

AS THE SCREAM OF THE EMERGENCY ALARM SWEEPS THROUGH THE GROUNDS, CLASSROOMS AND DORMITORIES OF SPACE ACADEMY...

IMPS OF SPACE! WHAT'S HAPPENED?

WE'LL SOON FIND OUT! LET'S BLAST OFF!

IT'S THE SPACEPORT EMERGENCY SIGNAL! HEAD FOR RESCUE STATIONS!

THERE'S YOUR ANSWER, ASTRO! A SPACESHIP JUST BLEW UP AT THE SPACEPORT!
Hurry up, you space crawlers! We've got to walk into that mess to look for survivors!

There won't be anything alive in there by the time we get into one of those ships!

Take the third ship, space cadets! The others had no passengers!

Aye, aye, sir!

Stick close together!

What a mess! This ship must have smashed head-on into the spaceport!

In here! We'll check through this ship!

Tom, get the safety sheet! There's someone in here!

Stop blowing your fuses! I'm working as fast as I can!

He's knocked cold, but alive! Let's get him out of here before the smoke suffocates him!
I checked through the rest of the ship... he was the only one aboard!

Report to the officer in charge, Roger... and meet us at the first-aid station!

He'll be all right, Space Cadets! I'll put him into a healing sleep—and he'll be as good as new when he wakes up!

But he'll sleep for days, Doctor! If he's the pilot—Commander Arkwright will want to question him!

I can't delay, Space Cadet! It means saving his life...

Commander... Arkwright... tell him... I'm sorry... Spaceblindness got me... couldn't see instruments... didn't know——

Spaceblindness! So that's what caused the accident!

Well, I hope that information helps Commander Arkwright. He'll have to wait for this man to wake up before further questioning.

I wish I'd come sooner! Now we'll have to wait to find out what caused the accident?

He told me before he fell asleep, Sir!

He mentioned Spaceblindness, Sir!

Spaceblindness! Another one!
DID YOU... DID YOU SAY ANOTHER ONE, SIR?
YES, I DID, CADET CORBETT! BY THE RINGS OF SATURN, THE SOLAR GUARD MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PUT A STOP TO THIS SITUATION!

HOW CAN THE SOLAR GUARD CURE SPACEBLINDNESS, SIR? ISN'T THAT SOMETHING THE SPACE MEDICINE DEPARTMENT SHOULD HANDLE?
I'LL EXPLAIN LATER, ASTRO. GET CAPTAIN STRONG AND REPORT TO ME AT MY OFFICE AT ONCE!

COMMANDER ARKWRIGHT LOOKED REAL MAD WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT SPACEBLINDNESS. I WONDER WHAT'S UP?
WE'LL SOON KNOW, ASTRO! GET CAPTAIN STRONG AND MEET US AT THE ACADEMY. WE'LL STOW AWAY THE EQUIPMENT!

I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF IT, ROGER. THE COMMANDER MENTIONED OTHER CASES... AND I THOUGHT SPACEBLINDNESS WAS SOMETHING THE MEDICS LICKED A LONG TIME AGO!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GETTING ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR SPACEMAN'S HUNCHES!

THAT WRECK ISN'T A HUNCH, ROGER! IT'S PRETTY REAL TOO REAL!
ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN! THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO START BLOWING SPACE BUBBLES!

I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID, ROGER. I'M AFRAID TOM IS RIGHT! WE'VE GOT TROUBLE... PLENTY OF IT! BUT I'LL LET COMMANDER ARKWRIGHT TELL YOU ABOUT IT!
SPACEBLINDNESS IS PREVENTED BY VITA Q, AS YOU KNOW... THE WAY CARROTS PREVENT NIGHTBLINDNESS.

BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF VITA Q ON VENUS, SIR!

PLENTY ON VENUS, YES? BUT NONE HERE! OUR SUPPLIES FROM VENUS HAVE NOT BEEN COMING THROUGH?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT! WHEN WE WERE THERE LAST TIME, THE SWAMP PEOPLE WERE VERY ANXIOUS TO TRADE WITH US?

THE SWAMP PEOPLE HAVE STOPPED TRADING WITH OUR PEOPLE! WE DON'T KNOW WHY... BUT TRADERS WHO USED TO GO INTO THE SWAMP FORESTS FOR VITA Q DON'T DARE GO NOW! TOO MANY OF THEM HAVE BEEN KILLED!

THERE MUST BE SOME GOOD REASON, SIR! I WAS BORN ON VENUS... I KNOW THE SWAMP PEOPLE! THEY BELIEVE IN JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY?

MAYBE, ASTRO, MAYBE! ALL I KNOW IS THAT THEY'RE ON THE WARPATH---AND WE'RE SUFFERING FROM SPACEBLINDNESS AS A RESULT!

I AM ORDERING YOU AND YOUR SPACE CADET SQUADRON TO GO TO VENUS, CAPTAIN STRONG! I WANT YOU TO GO INTO THE SWAMPS...

FIND OUT WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS WAR OF THE SWAMP PEOPLE AGAINST US... AND SETTLE THE TROUBLE! REMEMBER---WE MUST HAVE VITA Q AT ALL COSTS!

I UNDERSTAND, SIR! WE SHALL BLAST OFF FOR VENUS AT ONCE!
PREPARE THE POLARIS FOR BLAST OFF, TOM. I'LL JOIN YOU AT THE SPACEPORT!

AYE, AYE, CAPTAIN STRONG!

YOU KNOW THAT THE SWAMP FORESTS OF VENUS HAVE NEVER BEEN EXPLOR ED, STEVE. THE ORIGINAL VENUSIANS WHO LIVE THERE ARE A STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS RACE.

BUT THEY'RE A PEACEFUL PEOPLE, SIR!

SO WE THOUGHT... BUT THEY HAVEN'T BEEN PEACEFUL DURING THE LAST THREE WEEKS! THEY'VE KILLED SEVERAL SWAMP TRADERS!

WE SHALL BE CAREFUL, SIR!

SPACEMAN'S LUCK TO YOU, CAPTAIN STRONG!

THANK YOU, SIR! I HOPE WE WON'T NEED IT!

BLAST OFF WHEN READY, CADET CORBETT!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

STAND BY FORE AND AFT! BLAST OFF IN FIVE SECONDS! FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE... ZERO!
WITH A FLAMING ROAR, SKYWARD AND SPACEWARD SHOT THE POLARIS!

WHILE TOM STANDS BY AT THE PILOT CONTROLS, WE'RE GOING TO STUDY EVERY BIT OF INFORMATION WE HAVE ON THE SWAMPS OF VENUS.

SO THE LONG DAYS IN SPACE PASS...

YOU'RE LUCKY, ASTRO! YOU WON'T HAVE TO DO ANY STUDYING AT ALL... SINCE YOU'RE A VENUSIAN SWAMP WORM TO BEGIN WITH...

NEVER MIND THE SPACE-JOKES, ROGER! YOUR LIFE WILL DEPEND ON WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SWAMPS...

SO GET SOME INFORMATION INTO YOUR HEAD!

WHY, YOU BIG BAG OF SPACE-GAS!

YOU VENUSIAN MUD MONKEY!

STAND BY YOUR STATIONS! WE'RE LANDING ON VENUS!

SOFT AS A FEATHER, SIR! TOUCHDOWN AND LANDING COMPLETE!

GOOD WORK, TOM! NOW LET'S GO ASHORE AND SEE WHAT KIND OF WELCOME AWAITS US.
EVERYTHING IS AS QUIET AS THE SPACEWAYS!

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT, ROGER? A PARADE?

NOW I KNOW WHY ASTRO IS SUCH A GROUCH! LOOK AT THESE VENUSIAN SWAMPER'S ... YOU'D THINK IT COSTS THEM SOME-THING TO CRACK A SMILE!

THEY DO APPEAR SULLEN...

WELL, WELL! LOOK AT THE SPACE HEROES! NOW ALL OUR TROUBLES WILL CLEAR UP!

SURE, THEY'LL SMILE AT THE SWAMPIES -- AND EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE AGAIN!

WHY DON'T YOU SPACE SOLDIERS LET US HANDLE THE SWAMPIES OUR WAY! WE'D SOON MAKE THEM BEHAVE!

AND WHAT'S YOUR WAY OF HANDLING THE NATIVES OF THE SWAMPS?

THEY WON'T TRADE WITH US. OR EVEN LET US INTO THE SWAMPS! I SAY WE GO IN THERE AND BLAST THEM INTO SPACEDUST!

SURE... AND HAVE A NICE HUNDRED YEAR WAR ON OUR HANDS!

THE SOLAR GUARD IS HERE TO TAKE CHARGE OF THIS TROUBLE WITH THE SWAMP NATIVES. AND YOU BETTER REMEMBER THAT! THERE WILL BE NO SHOOTING... NO KILLING AND NO THREATS!

WAIT UNTIL YOU MEET THE SWAMPIES! YOU'LL CHANGE YOUR MIND!
COME ON, SPACE CADETS! THE SUPPLIES WE SPACEGRAMMED FOR SHOULD BE READY FOR US!

RECKON YOU'RE CAPTAIN STRONG! I'M SAM JERVIS, SIR. CHIEF TRADER AROUND THESE PARTS. I'VE GOT ALL THE SUPPLIES YOU ORDERED READY FOR YOU!

MAYBE YOU CAN TELL ME WHY ALL THESE MEN ARE SO ANXIOUS TO SHOOT UP THE SWAMP PEOPLE?

I CAN, SIR. THEY EARN THEIR LIVING TRADING WITH THE SWAMPIES—AND NOW, FOR NO REASON, THE SWAMPIES STOPPED TRADING. MORE THAN THAT...THE SWAMPIES HAVE KILLED SOME OF OUR MEN WHEN THEY WENT INTO THE SWAMP!

THERE'S YOUR BOAT, SIR. THE FOOD AND THE SUPPLIES ARE PACKED ON BOARD!

MOSSBACK BILL AGREED TO BE YOUR GUIDE, CAPTAIN STRONG!

AGREED, NOTHING! THAT SCOUNDREL JERVIS IS FORCING ME TO GUIDE YE! ON ACCOUNT OF I OWE HIM MONEY!

I'D THINK YOU WOULD BE GLAD TO GET THIS JOB...

GLAD? I BEEN IN THESE SWAMPS FOR MANY YEARS, SON! ONE THING I LEARNED...WHEN THE SWAMPIES GO ON THE WARPATH, STAY OUT OF THE FORBIDDEN FOREST!
HOW ABOUT CUTTING OUT THE SPACE CHATTER AND GETTING STARTED? THESE VENUSIAN SWAMP CRAWLERS SCARE PRETTY EASY!

YOU WOULD, TOO, ROGER, IF YOU KNEW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THESE SWAMP FORESTS!

ROGER IS RIGHT, ASTRO, WE DON'T HAVE ANY TIME TO WASTE, PREPARE TO CAST OFF!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

I WISH I COULD CONVINCE YOU NOT TO GO, CAPTAIN STRONG! IT'S DANGEROUS...

WE'RE USED TO DANGER, MR. JERVIS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP... AND GOOD-BYE!

HUH... HUH! I HAVEN'T SEEN A THING TO BE SCARED OF YET! I'M EVEN BEGINNING TO ENJOY THE QUIET AND PEACE OF THIS PLACE!

WE'RE GOING IN DEEPER... WAIT UNTIL WE REACH THE INNER SWAMPS, ROGER! THAT'S THE FORBIDDEN FOREST!

BAH! YOU SPACEGOOFS ARE TRYING TO SCARE ME! WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN WHEN WE GET THERE?
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN, MOSSBACK?

RECKON THIS IS AS FAR AS WE KIN GO! THAT SPEAR IS A WARNING FOR US NOT TO GO ANY DEEPER INTO THE FORBIDDEN FOREST!

AND WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO IF WE PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE WARNING?

NEXT SPEAR ISN'T GOING TO MISS YOU, THAT'S WHAT!

WHY DON'T WE MAKE CAMP HERE, SIR? PERHAPS THE SWAMP PEOPLE WILL COME TO SPEAK WITH US?

SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA! WHAT DO YOU SAY, SPACE CADETS?

I THINK THAT'S THE BEST THING TO DO, SIR! IT WILL SHOW THEM WE ARE FRIENDLY AND RESPECT THEIR WARNING!

IT'LL MAKE THEM THINK WE'RE AFRAID!

I SAY WE GO RIGHT INTO THE SWAMP AND SHOW THEM WE'RE NOT AFRAID! GO ON—OW!

LOOK OUT, ROGER! YOU HIT THE RELEASE BRAKE!

AS THE RELEASE BRAKE IS KNOCKED OUT OF POSITION, THE SWAMP BOAT SPURTS FORWARD AT FULL SPEED.
THAT DID IT! ROGER, YOU OUGHT TO GET A SPACEHERO'S MEDAL FOR THIS!

THAT'S RIGHT! BLAME ME! YOU ALL SAW IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!

RECKON WE GOT NO CHOICE NOW? WE'VE GOT TO GO AFTER OUR SWAMP BOAT! WE'LL NEVER GET OUT ALIVE IF WE DON'T FIND IT!

IT CAN'T GO FAR! THE SWAMP TREES AND VINES WILL CATCH IT!

TOM'S RIGHT... BUT JUST THE SAME, EVERYBODY BETTER WATCH HIS STEP! THERE'S STRANGE THINGS IN THIS SWAMP!

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THE BOAT! REMEMBER ALL OUR SUPPLIES ARE ON IT!

FUNNY... I THOUGHT FOR SURE THE SWAMP BOAT WOULD BE AROUND THIS BEND IN THE STREAM...

MAYBE A WATER CURRENT JUST HAPPENED TO TURN IT AWAY INTO THE CLEAR WATER...

WELL, THIS HERE IS A VERY SHARP TURN... THAT BOAT SHOULD BE HERE!

I'VE GOT A HUNCH... A HUNCH THAT IT WON'T BE AROUND THE CURVE AHEAD OF US!
PHOOEY! I JOIN SPACE ACADEMY TO FLY THE SPACEWAYS AND WHERE DO I END UP? SLOSHING THROUGH A SWAMP!

DON'T BLOW YOUR JETS SO MUCH, MICROBRAIN! ALL THIS WAS YOUR FAULT!

BACK! BACK EVERYBODY! THERE'S A DART BUSH AHEAD!

TOM---COME WITH ME! WE'VE GOT TO GET MOSSBACK OUT OF THE RANGE OF THE DART BUSH!

I'LL KEEP US COVERED WHILE YOU GET MOSSBACK!

RIGHT!

GET HIM UP ON THAT DRY BANK, TOM!
RIGHT, SIR!
ALL CLEAR, ASTRO!

HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT IN A COUPLE OF DAYS, SIR!

BUT WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO MEANWHILE? WE'VE GOT NO SUPPLIES!
THANKS FOR SAVING ME, SPACE CADETS! THAT THERE DART BUSH WOULD HAVE Turned ME INTO A MARTIAN PORCUPINE IF YOU HADN'T DRAGGED ME AWAY...

I'LL BE ALL RIGHT HERE BY MYSELF! YOU GO ON AND LOOK FOR THE SWAMP BOAT! WITHOUT THAT BOAT... WE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF STAYING ALIVE IN THIS SWAMP!

WE'LL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER BY SPACEPHONE, MOSSBACK?

RIGHTO! THE BOAT CAN'T BE FAR FROM HERE...

IF YOU NEED US... CALL ON THE SPACEPHONE!

I'M SAFE ENOUGH HERE! SPACEMAN'S LUCK TO YE!
HURRY BEFORE OTHERS RETURN! TO OUR CHIEF GURLI-VA WE SHALL TAKE OUR PRISONER!

THE OTHERS, LATER WE SHALL CAPTURE?

NOT A SIGN OF OUR SWAMP BOAT! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT!

WE'VE BEEN WADING THROUGH THIS MUD FOR AN HOUR NOW... AND MOSSBACK HAVEN'T CALLED US?

I'LL CALL HIM...

CALLING MOSSBACK BILL? CADET ASTRO CALLING MOSSBACK BILL! WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER? SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM?
ON THE DOUBLE, SPACE CADETS!

GONE? WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITHOUT OUR GUIDE?

LET'S LOOK AROUND AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!

CAN YOU FIND ANY TRAILS, ASTRO?

WELL, SOMEONE CUT VINES HERE... PROBABLY TO MAKE A RAFT OF SOME SORT!

TREES WERE CHOPPED DOWN HERE...

A RAFT... AND IT WAS TO CARRY MOSSBACK BILL! I GUESS IT WASN'T A WILD ANIMAL THAT CARRIED HIM AWAY?

IT MAY BE WORSE THAN ANIMALS, CADETS! LOOKS LIKE THE SWAMP PEOPLE CAPTURED MOSSBACK!

THEY WENT THIS WAY, SIR! SEE HOW THE RUSHES WERE BENT UNDER THE RAFT?

AND THAT'S THE WAY WE'RE GOING, TOO! ON GUARD EVERY SECOND OF THE WAY! WE'VE GOT TO FIND AND SAVE MOSSBACK BILL!
WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE OF FINDING MOSSBACK! I'M FOR TURNING BACK AND GETTING OUT OF THE SWAMP!
AND LEAVE OUR GUIDE BEHIND? FINE SPACE-MATE YOU'D MAKE!

I'M ONLY THINKING OF HOW WE CAN SAVE HIM! WE'D HAVE SOME CHANCE IF WE WENT BACK AND GOT A NEW SWAMP BOAT --- THIS WAY WE'LL NEVER FIND HIM?

THIS IS NO TIME FOR FIGHTING AMONG OURSELVES, ROGER, LEAD THE WAY!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

DO YOU THINK WE'LL EVER CATCH UP WITH MOSSBACK AND THE SWAMP PEOPLE WHO CAUGHT HIM, SIR?

THEY'RE TAKING HIM TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS, TOM... AND THAT'S WHERE I WANT TO GO!

GREAT GALAXIES! AM I SEEING IT... OR IS IT A SWAMP MIRAGE?

RUN FOR IT! THAT'S A VENUSIAN WATER BRONC!
CAN'T MAKE IT! IT'S GAINING ON US!
GO ON, ROGER! I'LL STAY BEHIND AND TRY TO SHOOT IT DOWN!
A BLASTER WON'T STOP IT, SIR! NOT QUICKLY ENOUGH TO SAVE US!

I THINK I KNOW HOW TO STOP IT!

THIS BETTER WORK... OR I'M A GONER!

I HOPE THIS STICK GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT BEYOND MAKING A MEAL OF US!

THAT'S GOING TO KEEP HIM BUSY LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO GET AWAY FROM HERE!

ALL RIGHT, SPACE CADETS. WE'RE GOING TO TRAVEL BY A SAFER WAY FROM NOW ON! FOLLOW ME!
These trees are big enough and close enough to each other to make a road!

I'll be glad to get out of the water, anyway! I'm soaked through to my bones!

This is safer and faster! Maybe now we can overtake the raft with Mossback Bill!

Wait a minute, Tom! I think I hear something below!

A splashing in the water! Maybe it's the raft!

This way, Captain Strong! They can't be far ahead!

Advance in silence from now on!

There's the raft! And Mossback Bill is on it!

Shall we jump them, Captain Strong?

No! Get down into the water slowly! It's our chance to make contact with the swamp people... and we don't want to start a fight!
You cadets get going... I seem to be stuck on this limb!

That’s funny... I can’t move either!

Me, too!

Imps of space! We’re caught by an octopus tree!

Get your blasters out! Our only chance is to shoot off the limbs at the base!

The swamp people will hear us! They’ll get away!

We’ll find the swampies later! Start shooting, Tom!

All right, Astro! Get set for a fall!

Hurry, Tom! This octopus tree is squeezing the breath out of me!
It's dangerous to wade through the swamp... dangerous to go through the trees... why don't we do what the swamp people do? Build a raft!

Leave it to Tom to think up ways for us to work! We could have caught up with the swampies by this time!

Sure... or maybe we could have been caught by a swamp lizard!

Push and push hard, space cadets! Even if we don't catch up to them... at least we're on the track of the swamp people. We might discover their swamp city!

There is a legend here on Venus about the swamp people... that they have a great city in the middle of this forbidden forest! But no one has ever seen it!

Well, that must be just space-gas! There's open water ahead...

Look! A great stone castle in the water!
SPINNING GALAXIES! IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE FOUND THE MYSTERIOUS CITY OF THE SWAMPIES!

NOW THAT WE'RE HERE---HOW DO WE GO INSIDE? I DON'T SEE ANY DOORS... OR EVEN OPENINGS!

WE'VE ALMOST MADE A COMPLETE CIRCLE AROUND THIS CASTLE... AND HAVEN'T FOUND EVEN A CRACK IN THE WALL!

BUT THERE MUST BE SOME WAY INSIDE!

THE SWAMPIES ARE WATER PEOPLE... PERHAPS THE DOORS THEY BUILD ARE UNDER WATER?

IT'S WORTH A TRY!

ALL RIGHT, ROGER! YOU DIVE IN AFTER ASTRO!

Tom and his space hunches? As if I wasn't wet enough already! Gotta go for a swim, too!

WE'RE IN, CADETS! SWIM OVER TO THE WALL... AND BE CAREFUL!

AYE, SIR! WE'RE THE VERY FIRST PEOPLE TO COME INTO THE CITY OF THE SWAMPIES!
THE AEROSLED! NO WONDER WE COULDN'T FIND OUR SWAMP BOAT!

THE SWAMP PEOPLE FOUND IT AND BROUGHT IT HERE!

THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE JUNGLE VINES DIDN'T STOP IT! THE SWAMPIES WERE STEERING IT!

AND HERE'S THE RAFT ON WHICH MOSSBACK BILL WAS LYING... IT LOOKS LIKE IT, AT LEAST!

MOSSBACK MUST BE A PRISONER SOMEWHERE IN THIS CASTLE. COME ON! WE'RE GOING TO FIND HIM!

THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE SPACE-WILLIES! THE QUICKER WE GET OUT OF HERE, THE BETTER I'M GOING TO LIKE IT!

WE CAN'T EVEN THINK OF GETTING OUT UNTIL WE FIND MOSSBACK BILL!

I'M GOING TO SLIP UP ON HIM! TOM, COME WITH ME! THE REST STAY BACK AND KEEP QUIET!

RIGHT, SIR!

GRAB HIS SPEAR, TOM!
LET'S HOPE WE FIND MOSSBACK BILL IN HERE!

IF WE DO—I WANT TO BLAST AWAY AS FAST AS WE CAN!

SPACE CADETS! AM I GLAD TO SEE YE!

LET'S CUT OUT THE SPACE GAB! WE'VE STILL GOT TO GET AWAY!

HOLD YOUR JETS, ROGER! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHY WE CAME TO VENUS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

OUR SPACEMEN ARE SUFFERING FROM SPACE-BLINDNESS BECAUSE WE LACK VITA-Q... AND WE CAN'T GET VITA-Q BECAUSE THERE'S A WAR GOING ON BETWEEN THE TRADERS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE SWAMP?

SUPPOSE WE MAKE HIM TAKE US INSIDE TO THE CHIEF OF THE SWAMP PEOPLE, CAPTAIN STRONG? WE MAY SETTLE THIS WAR RIGHT HERE AND NOW!

THAT'S JUST WHAT WE'LL DO, TOM!

THAT IS GOOD! WE TAKE YOU TO OUR CHIEF, GURLI-VA?

LEAD THE WAY! WE WANT TO MEET HIM!
IT'S GETTING SCARIER AND SCARIER! I DON'T LIKE THIS!

YOU'LL HAVE TO LIKE IT, ROGER... IF YOU EVER WANT TO WIN THE SPACE-HERO MEDAL OF HONOR! OR DON'T YOU WANT TO BE A HERO ANY MORE?

HERO NOTHING! YOU CAN BE THE HERO, ASTRO!

WELL, WE'LL SOON KNOW WHETHER WE'RE GOING TO BE SPACEHEROES OR SPACEDUST! HERE'S THE CHIEF OF THE SWAMP!

WE HAVE COME IN PEACE, GURLI-VAYA! WE WISH TO BE FRIENDS AGAIN AS YOUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FRIENDS WITH US FOR MANY YEARS IN THE PAST!

YOU LIE, SPACEMAN! YOU'VE COME TO TRICK US... AND TO CHEAT US AGAIN! MY PEOPLE WILL NEVER TRUST THE EVIL SOLDIERS OF THE SOLAR GUARDS!

YOU ARE WRONG, GURLI-VAYA! WE SOLAR GUARDSMEN DO NOT LIE... WE DO NOT CHEAT! OUR JOB IS TO UPHOLD THE LAWS OF THE SOLAR ALLIANCE! TO BRING PEACE AND JUSTICE EVERYWHERE!

HERE IN THE SWAMP, YOU'VE BROUGHT WAR AND LIES!
I WAS BORN HERE ON VENUS, SIR! I KNOW THE SWAMP PEOPLE EVER SINCE I'VE BEEN A LITTLE BOY! THEY NEVER LIE!

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON, YOU SWAMP CRAWLER! THE SOLAR GUARD HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF LYING — AND WE DON'T TAKE THAT FROM ANYONE!

BUT SOMEONE COULD HAVE DRESSED IN A SOLAR GUARD UNIFORM! I THINK GURLI-VA IS TELLING THE TRUTH!

TOM'S RIGHT! I THINK WE CAN GET AN EXPLANATION FROM MOSSBACK...

ALL RIGHT, MOSSBACK! START EXPLAINING! IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING, LET'S HAVE IT!

I KNOW PLENTY, CAPTAIN STRONG! THE SPACE CADETS SAVED MY LIFE BACK IN THE SWAMP WHEN THE DART BUSH ATTACK ME! I'M ON YOUR SIDE NOW!

I'LL TELL THE TRUTH... I HAD ORDERS TO SEE THAT YOU GET KILLED IN THE SWAMP! WITH YOU OUT OF THE WAY... THE CHEATING OF THE SWAMP PEOPLE COULD GO ON!
WHO GAVE YOU THE ORDERS TO KILL US?

JERVIS, THE TRADER? HE'S BEHIND THE WHOLE TROUBLE! HE DRESSED IN A SOLAR GUARD UNIFORM AND ROBBED THE SWAMP PEOPLE?

YOU ARE RIGHT, GURLI-VA! I AM SORRY I DID NOT BELIEVE YOU! NOW WE SHALL CATCH AND PUNISH THE EVIL MAN WHO CHEATED YOU!

BUT HOW CAN WE DO THAT, CAPTAIN STRONG? WE WILL NEED PROOF AGAINST JERVIS!

JERVIS IS TOO SMART TO TRY HIS TRICK WITH US AROUND!

YOU'RE RIGHT, ROGER! BUT THERE MUST BE SOME WAY.

THERE IS A WAY, SIR? WHAT IF JERVIS BELIEVES WE DIED IN THE GREAT SWAMP?

BUT WE DIDN'T, TOM!

MOSSBACK BILL CAN GO BACK AND TELL JERVIS THAT HE CARRIED OUT HIS ORDERS!

BY THE RINGS O'SATURN, I'LL DO IT!

TRUST US AND HELP US, GURLI-VA! I PROMISE THAT YOUR PEOPLE WILL HAVE JUSTICE!

SO BE IT, SPACEMAN! I WILL TRUST YOU AND DO WHATSOEVER YOU ASK!
JERVIS IS NEAR THE EDGE OF THE FORBIDDEN FOREST. I RECKON, WAITING TO HEAR FROM ME! THERE'S AN OUTPOST FOR TRADING BUILT THERE?

HEAD FOR IT, MOSSBACK!

GO THERE AND TELL JERVIS THE JOB WAS DONE AND WE'RE DEAD! LEAVE THE REST TO US!

AYE, I'LL DO THAT!

WHEN THEY GO INSIDE, SWIM FOR THE HOUSE AND GET UNDER IT!

AYE, AYE, SIR!

IT'S DONE, JERVIS! THEY WALKED INTO AN OCTOPUS TREE AND WERE KILLED... JUST LIKE YOU WANTED!

GOOD WORK, MOSSBACK! NOW I CAN GET INTO THE SOLAR GUARD UNIFORM AND GET BUSY AGAIN!

GURLI-VA... HAVE YOUR PEOPLE BRING VITA-Q TO TRADE, JUST AS I PLANNED!

THE RAFT IS NOT FAR... I SHALL HAVE DONE WHAT YOU WANT!

GRAB ON TO SOMETHING AND WAIT!

I JOIN SPACE ACADEMY TO BECOME A SPACEMAN AND THEY TURN ME INTO A VENUSIAN WATER RAT!
Hey, Jervis... here comes a swampy with a raft-load of Vita-Q weed!

Just in time! A few more jobs like this—and we'll all make enough to retire rich! Go out and help them unload!

I come to make trade! Sure, come on! We'll help ya get the weed in!

Here is swamp weed... I want many things!

Sure... I'll give you many things!

This is for what you brought in! Bring more and I'll give you more things!

This is not enough! More I want for my swamp weed now!

Here's more! Better learn not to argue with a Solar guard!

The game is up, Jervis! You're under arrest!

Huh? Captain strong alive?
YES, I'M ALIVE, JERVIS! AND I'VE GOT YOU WITH ALL THE PROOF I'LL NEED IN COURT!

YOU'LL HAVE TO GET ME INTO A COURT FIRST, SPACEMAN!

PUT UP YOUR HANDS, SPACEHEROS!

BETTER DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD--OR YOU'LL BE BLASTED INTO ATOMIC DUST!

GET OVER WITH THEM, MOSSBACK! YOU ALWAYS WERE TOO HONEST A TRADER TO SUIT ME! THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL DOUBLE-CROSS ME!

RECKON I PREFER BEING ON THE SIDE O' THE SPACE CADETS, JERVIS... EVEN IF I GOT TO DIE FOR IT!

THE SWAMPIES! IT'S AN ATTACKY BARRICADE THE DOORS!

THEY'RE ALL TOO BUSY TO WATCH US...

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR THEN?

HEY! WATCH THEM!

TOO LATE, JERVIS!
HEH! HEH! THIS HERE LOOKS LIKE IT'S A-GONNA BE A GOOD CATCH!

A GOOD CATCH IS RIGHT, MOSSBACK! A GOOD CATCH FOR THE LAW!

ALL RIGHT, YE SWAMP BANDITS! STAND UP AGAIN THE WALL!

GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO PARDON THEM, MOSSBACK! THEY'RE IN NO CONDITION TO STAND ANYWHERE!

BRING SOME STRONG VINES WITH WHICH WE CAN TIE UP THESE MEN! AND TELL CHIEF GURLI-VA MY THANKS FOR THE SPEARS WHICH SAVED US!

I'M PLACING YOU IN CHARGE OF THIS TRADING POST, MOSSBACK! GIVE THE SWAMP PEOPLE EVERYTHING THEY NEED. AND CHARGE IT TO THE SOLAR GUARD!

BY GUM AND ALL THE GALAXIES! I'M A-GOING TO ENJOY THIS JOB!
FOR ALL THE CHEATING THE EVIL MEN DID, THIS WILL MAKE UP!

WE SUCCEEDED ONLY BECAUSE YOU STILL TRUSTED THE SOLAR GUARD, CHIEF. NOW THERE SHALL BE PEACE... AND TRADE... HERE IN THE LAND OF WATER PEOPLE!

WE ARE SORRY TO SEE YOU AND YOUR SPACE CADETS GO, CAPTAIN STRONG. AGAIN YOU WILL COME, I HOPE!

SOMEDAY, GURLI-YA... BUT I HOPE IT WON'T BE BECAUSE THERE'S TROUBLE HERE?

THE SHELVES ARE JUST ABOUT CLEANED OUT, CAPTAIN STRONG! MOSSBACK BILL WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THE REST OF THE TRADE!

THEN WE'LL START FOR THE SPACE-PORT... AND HOMeward!

SO LONG, SPACE CADETS... AND SPACEMAN'S LUCK GO WITH YE!

WE SHALL SOON BE OUT OF THE SWAMP, GURLI-YA!

I WILL LEAVE YOU AT THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP! TELL THE TRADERS TO COME... FOR THEY SHALL ONCE MORE BE WELCOME HERE!
WE SHALL LEAVE YOU HERE?

GOOD-BYE, CHIEF OF THE SWAMP PEOPLE! I SHALL GIVE YOUR MESSAGE TO THE TRADERS!

BOY! I WISH I COULD SWIM LIKE THESE GUYS!

LOCK THE PRISONERS ABOARD THE POLARIS AND PREPARE FOR BLAST OFF!

YES, SIR!

THE SWAMP PEOPLE INVITE YOU TO COME AGAIN INTO THEIR LAND AND TRADE! EVERYTHING HAS BEEN SETTLED PEACEFULLY!

I NEVER THOUGHT YOU SPACENHEROES COULD DO IT... BUT I TAKE MY HAT OFF TO YOU! THE SOLAR GUARD AND THE SPACE CADETS SURE KNOW THEIR JOB!

GOT THE PRISONERS ALL LOCKED UP, NICE AND TIGHT IN THE BRIG!

GUESS WE'LL HAVE TIME TO CLEAN UP AND GET INTO SOME DRY CLOTHES BEFORE WE BLAST OFF!
There go the traders! Vita-Q will soon be flowing into the refining plants again!

Right as space, Tom! And all because I knew what to do at the right time!

You knew what to do? Certainly! Didn't I send our aero-sled out into the swamp?

That's why we started exploring the swamp... looking for the sled and found the castle of Gurli-Va!

That's right, Roger! You were responsible... for our getting all wet to the skin!

Don't tell me you great heroes of space care about a little water! You shouldn't mind getting wet!

He's got something there, Astro!

Hey! Lemme go! What are you gonna do? Don't throw me into the water!

Don't tell us you mind a little water, Roger!

A space hero like Roger doesn't mind getting wet!