

SPACE AGE



A LONG THE HOT AND FIERY SANDS OF PROXIMA CENTAURI'S FIRST PLANET, JET BLACK AND JAK TAL STAGGER WEAKLY. WITH HALF A CANTEEN OF WATER, WITHOUT FOOD, WITH SPACE PIRATE'S ON THEIR TRAIL, THEY FACE GRIM DEATH. AND THEN REASON SEEMS TO SNAP! FRIENDS NO LONGER, THEY QUARREL THEMSELVES INTO...
THE ADVENTURE OF THE INVISIBLE PIRATE'S !!

-FRED GUARDINEER

SUDDENLY JET BLACK WHIRLS - HIS HAND DARTS OUT...



THE HEAT OF THE CENTAURI DESERTS IS STIFLING AND MADDENING! BUT IS IT ENOUGH TO SNAP MEN'S BRAINS? JET BLACK AND JAK TAL - ROVERS OF THE SPACEWAYS, STARS OF THE PATROL - FIGHTING? CAN THE MAN AND BOY ADVENTURERS HAVE TURNED UPON EACH OTHER?

MANHUNT

MINUTES TICK BY AND THEN A MYSTERIOUS INVISIBLE GLOBE APPROACHES JAK TAL...

I'LL TAKE THE WATER! IF ONE OF US HAS TO DIE... YOU CAN BE THE ONE!

THAT SUITS ME FINE! I WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE - WITH YOU!



ALONE AND WEARY, BARELY ABLE TO MOVE HIS LEGS, SPACE ACE STAGGERS OFF ACROSS THE SANDS, DESERTING HIS YOUNG COMRADE, LEAVING HIM TO FACE SURE DEATH!



A SPACE PATROLMAN WHO QUARRELED WITH HIS SUPERIOR! MAYBE I CAN USE SOME ONE LIKE THAT...



HE OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE PLATINUM MINE SHIPMENTS! AND HE'LL BE MAD ENOUGH TO TALK ABOUT THEM!



RAT ON THE SPACE PATROL? YOU BET I WILL! WHAT'D THEY EVER DO FOR ME? A PAL JUST TOOK MY WATER CANTEEN - LEFT ME TO DIE!

I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU! I'M NEV RAN, HEAD OF THE INVISIBLE PIRATES. BY USING A SPECIAL KIND OF METAL - THAT BENDS LIGHT WAVES BEHIND IT - EVERYTHING MADE OF THAT METAL BECOMES INVISIBLE! OUR SPACESHIPS, GLOBE-ROLLERS, EVEN SOME CLOTHES!



TELL ME THE DISPOSITION OF THE SPACE CRUISERS AND WHERE THE PLATINUM SHIPS WILL BE - AND I'LL SEE THAT YOU GET ANYTHING YOU WANT! I'LL MAKE YOU RICH!

SOME MILES AWAY...

A SPACE PATROL FLIER! HEY... UP THERE, CAN YOU SEE ME? HEYYY!!



MANHUNT



JET! YOU LOOK ALL DONE IN! BUT WHERE'S THE KID, JAK TAL?

HE - HE DIED... BACK THERE... AND I BURIED HIM!

NEXT DAY

COMMANDER BLACK REPORTING, SIR. ASKING FOR SPECIAL DETAIL DUTY. IT'S ABOUT THE INVISIBLE PIRATES...

YES, I KNOW! PERMISSION GRANTED. BLACK - AND GOOD LUCK!



I START MY VIGIL ON THE ROOF TOP NOW. WAITING AND-HOPING! I HAVE FOOD ENOUGH AND THESE INFRA-RED FIELD GLASSES...

MEANWHILE

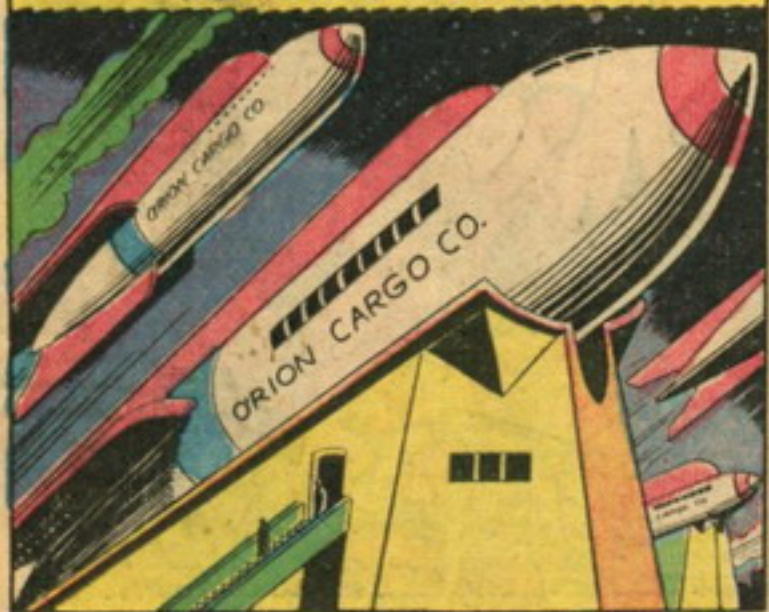


THANKS TO JAK TAL, WE KNOW WHEN THE PLATINUM CONVOY LEAVES. WE'LL ATTACK HERE... BEFORE THE PATROL CRUISER MEETS IT!



I ONLY HOPE THAT THIS MESSAGE GETS THROUGH...!

THREE DAYS LATER, THE PLATINUM VESSELS RISE FROM THEIR LAUNCHING CRADLES...



THERE THEY ARE! NOW WE'LL CLOSE IN AND ATTACK... WHILE THE SPACE PATROL WAITS IN UPPER SPACE... NOT KNOWING WE'RE ATTACKING IN THE ATMOSPHERE!



MANHUNT



LIKE ANGRY WASPS, THE SPACE PATROL SHIPS MOVE IN TO THE ATTACK...



AHEAD OF THE FLEEING PIRATE FORMATION, NEV RAN FACES JAK TAL...

MY SHIPS - SMASHED! MY MEN - SLAUGHTERED! THE PATROL WAS TIPPED OFF THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HAVE DONE IT IS - YOU!

WHY SHOULD I DO THAT? YOU SAW HOW JET BLACK DESERTED ME!

MANHUNT



I'LL FIND OUT HOW MUCH TRUTH THERE IS TO THAT! I'LL GET YOU ALONE AND TORTURE IT OUT OF YOU!

OHH!

I'LL STICK BARBED HOOKS IN HIM AND HANG HIM OVER A SLOW FIRE. IF THAT DOESN'T LOOSEN HIS TONGUE - HE GETS HOT LEAD ON HIS FEET!

AS NEV RAN SENDS HIS SHIP LIKE A FRIGHTENED DEER THROUGH THE AIR, JET BLACK'S FLASHING FISTS BLAST THE JAW OF A PIRATE CAPTAIN...

HANG TIGHT TO YOUR BRIDGEWORK...

AAAWF!



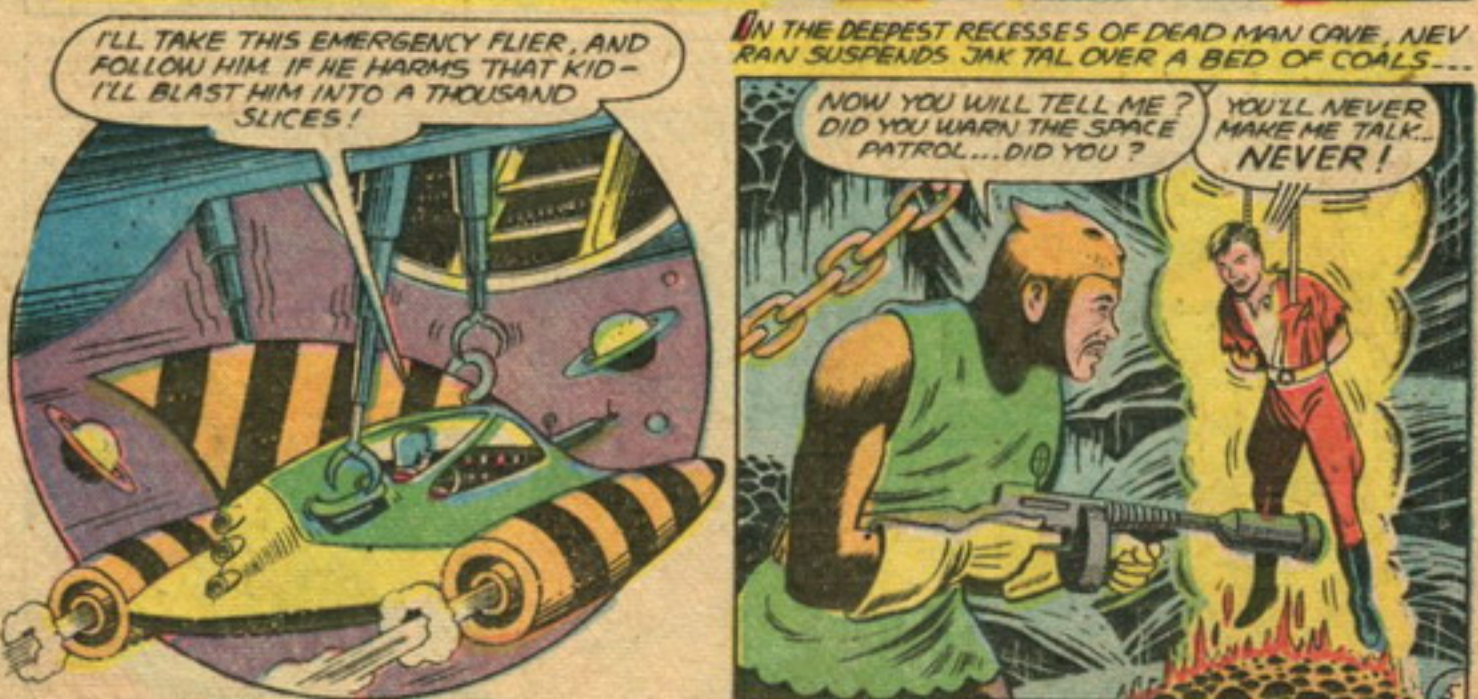
JUST A CHAIN-GANG! AND THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE ALL HEADED!

-YAWK!

GOT 'EM ALL, COMMANDER - EXCEPT FOR NEV RAN'S FLAGSHIP!

NEV RAN! HE'LL HAVE JAK TAL IN HIS POWER!

-NYAAA!



I'LL TAKE THIS EMERGENCY FLIER, AND FOLLOW HIM. IF HE HARMS THAT KID - I'LL BLAST HIM INTO A THOUSAND SLICES!

IN THE DEEPEST RECESSES OF DEAD MAN CAVE, NEV RAN SUSPENDS JAK TAL OVER A BED OF COALS...

NOW YOU WILL TELL ME? DID YOU WARN THE SPACE PATROL... DID YOU?

YOU'LL NEVER MAKE ME TALK... NEVER!

MANHUNT



BUT I'LL TALK, NEV RAN! I'LL TALK PLENTY!

SPACE ACE!

THE MERCURY LIGHT FROM THIS BEAMER IS SO INTENSE IT WILL BURN YOUR SIGHT AWAY...



NO! CAN'T LOOK... GOT TO RETREAT...



HALF-BLINDED, FUMBLING HELPLESSLY, JET FINDS A MIRROR UNDER HIS HANDS...

MUCH MORE OF THAT LIGHT AND HE'LL BURN... MY EYES... OUT! GOT TO DO SOMETHING... MIRROR! A MIRROR, YES!

WHIRLING, THE REFLECTING SURFACE OF THE MIRROR HELD IN FRONT OF HIM, THE ACE OF THE STARWAYS CATCHES NEV RAN OFF GUARD! FOR A LONG INSTANT THE PIRATE GAZES INTO THAT BLINDING INFERNO OF LIGHT...



I...!



BLIND! FOREVER BLIND AND HELPLESS...

JAK TAL! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, BOY?

OKAY, SIR! AND MIGHTY GLAD TO SEE YOU JET!

I THOUGHT YOU TWO WERE ENEMIES! BLACK DESERTED YOU, TAL... WE WERE ACTING, NEV RAN, THROUGH INFRA-RED LIGHT WHICH WAS NOT DETECTED BY YOUR GLOBE, WE SAW YOUR INVISIBLE GLOBE APPROACH. WE HAD TO GET A MAN INTO YOUR COUNCIL ROOM TO LEARN WHERE YOU WERE GOING TO STRIKE AT THE CONVOY.



WE PRETENDED TO QUARREL. JAK TAL WAS "RESCUED" BY YOU, TOLD YOU WHERE THE PLATINUM CONVOY WOULD BE, THEN SIGNALLED ME BY INFRA-RED FLASHLIGHT BEAMS THAT NO ONE COULD SEE! THE SPACE PATROL WAS THERE... READY FOR YOU...



JUST AS THERE'S A CELL WAITING FOR YOU IN MARS-JAIL - FOREVER!

