

LUCKY HIGHTOPS AND THE COSMIC CAT PATROL™
Episode One

"CAPTIVES OF THE DOG STAR"

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THE CHARACTERS

LUCKY HIGHTOPSA woman who wears adventure like a watchband

CIRRUS CALICOAn elegant but scrappy calico cat

RUFUS TABBYA red tabby tomcat terrific

COMMANDER RIALTO*Spaceport Commander

GUARD*Security guard at Spaceport

DOG-ROBBERA fierce, piratical pooch

THE MONGREL GANG.....Three dogs gone bad:

YELP*

PATCH*

BUTCH*

*Can be double cast.

Additional parts of aliens at Spider's Place may be played by actors, set pieces or soft sculpture puppets.

THE SETTING is the distant future when two intelligent cats assigned to Vector Patrol Sergeant Lucky Hightops follow her through the galaxy protecting the starlanes. In this episode, Lucky is captured by Dog Robber, the most ruthless pirate in known space, and the cats rocket to her rescue.

RUNNING TIME is one hour.

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“Captives Of The Dog Star”

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(THE SETTING is a dark space with an upper and lower area. The spacecraft, actually a COCKPIT frame with three seats, may be onstage at the top or brought on later. The COCKPIT resembles a carnival tilt ride, a metal frame on long rocker runners which allows the ship to rock back for liftoff and slide across the stage. All set pieces in the play are portable. Backlighting on cyclorama reveals two dashing silhouettes, male and female, standing on each side of COCKPIT. Slowly they become visible as LIGHTS UP.)

THEME MUSIC

FANFARE MUSIC AND AUDIO ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

AUDIO: At a time far in the future, there will arise the ultimate space-cadet! Courageous and loyal, with ultra-keen senses and a boundless spirit of adventure! Rufus Tabby, rusty-red champion for justice! Cirrus Calico, she IS justice! They are the Cosmic Cat Patrol! Fearless felines who prowl the starlanes with their stalwart Sergeant Lucky Hightops! Blast off with us now for the adventures of... Lucky Hightops and the Cosmic Cat Patrol! This episode, "Captives of the Dog-Star!"

(MUSIC - COMMANDER RIALTO enters. The Commander has a voice like rocketblast and wears a robot parrot on one shoulder.)

COMMANDER: Sgt. Hightops! Front and center!

LUCKY: Yes, Commander!?

COMMANDER: Your Cadets... Once again...

LUCKY: Commander, I can explain it...

COMMANDER: Every time they get in trouble you can explain it, Sergeant! And those two cats have given me more trouble than any cadet this fine old Academy has seen in a hundred light years!

LUCKY: They are very young and...

COMMANDER: They are rebellious, undisciplined, incompetent and they can't play baseball! (The cats fidget nervously.) They made us lose the Interplanetary baseball playoffs!

LUCKY: They are cats, Commander, it's their instincts, they like to chase the ball...

COMMANDER: I'll say they like to chase the ball! They batted and swatted the ball like it was a mouse, off the field, through the dugout and out of the stadium! Sergeant, I assure you that in the great game of baseball you swat the ball with a bat, not with your hand!

LUCKY: Paw, Commander.

COMMANDER: Paw. We lost the game. We still can't find the ball. (RUFUS takes a split baseball from his pocket and hopefully offers it to LUCKY, she waves him back so COMMANDER does not see him. RUFUS quickly hides the ball under his arm.) I can still hear the people in the stadium laughing at us!

LUCKY: Please, Commander, give them another chance. They are cats, they are different from us, but they have what it takes to be good cadets and I'll see to it they stay out of trouble from now on. I'll be responsible for them.

COMMANDER: Sgt. Hightops, if it was anyone but you... well, all right. I'll give them another chance. But if they foul

up one more time, they re out and you'll lose your stripes! I hope they're worth it! Dismissed!

LUCKY: Atten-shun! (COMMANDER Turns to exit as LUCKY and the CATS snap to attention and salute. The baseball falls from under RUFUS' arm and rolls on the floor. COMMANDER sees it, goes to it, picks it up, looks about to cry, turns away exits.)

LUCKY: CADETS! Front and center! (The cats run to LUCKY and stand at attention.) Well. I hope you're satisfied. You've managed to get me in trouble with the Commander. You know what happens when I get in trouble with the Commander? YOU GET IN TROUBLE WITH ME! Now I want you both to think about that. Trouble. What does it mean? It means that if you step out of line once more... (As she talks the cats sink to the floor.) ...if you misbehave again, I'll personally see to it that you lose eight of your nine lives and the ninth life won't be worth your bootlaces! (The cats are both as flat as they can make themselves, trying to sink into the floor.) DO YOU READ ME, CADETS!?

RUFUS: Meow?

LUCKY: All right. All right. Stand at attention! (The cats spring to attention) Since you are on report you may not accompany me on my mission to Canis Major, the inhabited planet in the Dog Star system, to apprehend and bring to trial the space-pirate known as Dog-Robber.

CIRRUS: Sergeant, you can't catch Dog-Robber by yourself!

LUCKY: Are you saying I can't handle this mission, Cadet Cirrus?

CIRRUS: No, Sergeant.

RUFUS: What Cirrus means is... well... what is it you mean?

CIRRUS: You always told us Patrol Officers travel in pairs. Never go on a mission alone.

LUCKY: Thanks to you two I have no choice. I'm the only available Patrol Sergeant in Spaceport right now. I have to go and you can't come with me.

RUFUS: But, Dog-Robber is the most ruthless and crafty bandit in this sector of the galaxy!

LUCKY: If I don't catch her now who knows when she'll surface again? We can't afford to lose her. She's been robbing innocent space-travelers long enough, her and her Mongrel Gang! They think they're safe in their hideout on the Dog-Star! We'll see about that!

CIRRUS: Couldn't we come along? No one would have to know!

LUCKY: Have you forgotten that Cadets have a code of honor to uphold? No, you must stay here and take your punishment. I should not be gone more than three days. I expect you both to be on your best behavior. Do you read me?

CIRRUS & RUFUS: Aye-aye!

LUCKY: Right, then! I'll leave the Spectrum Crusader here in Spaceport and take a light cruiser. I'll need the extra space to hold Dog Robber and her gang. Review the Cadet Training Manual! That's an order! And practice your fielding. When I have safely reached Canis Major I'll send a communication to the Tower. See you soon... with Dog-Robber in tow! (Strides off to exit, stops, turns, then...)
Watch out for each other. (LUCKY Exits)

RUFUS: I don't think the Sergeant can bring in Dog-Robber by herself. I've heard stories about her and her Mongrel gang. They hide out on Canis Major and rob passenger ships and freighters. They're mean and they'll stop at nothing!

CIRRUS: What can we do about it? We're on report. We can't go with her.

RUFUS: I feel awful. Did you hear the Commander yelling at the Sergeant?

CIRRUS: Did you hear the Sergeant yelling at us? If we make one wrong step we'll be booted out of the Academy. I don't know about you, but from where I stand career choices for a cat are very limited. For me it's Space-Cadet or nothing!

RUFUS: Cirrus, it isn't that simple! The Sergeant isn't just our Sergeant, she's our friend. We've been with her practically since our eyes opened. Since we were kittens. Who was it sat up with me when I had a reaction to my Rabies shot? It was Lucky, that's who! And who was it saw you through that bad spell with the hairballs? Lucky! And now because of us off she goes to bring back Dog-Robber by herself.

CIRRUS: She can do it. If anyone can bring back Dog-Robber, it's the Sarge!

RUFUS: I feel awful.

CIRRUS: Me, too.

RUFUS: Let's go to Spaceport Tower and wait for her to report in!

CIRRUS: We can't! We have orders to study the Cadet Manual!

RUFUS: We can study at the Tower!

CIRRUS: Rufus, we're on report and...

RUFUS: You can stay here I'm going! I'll let you know if I hear anything!

CIRRUS: (As he exits.) Wait for me! (They exit.)

AUDIO: Night falls on the ivory towers of Spaceport (BOOM!) as our devoted duo awaits word from Lucky en route to the Dog-Star. Curfew rings and there is still no message. Both of our Cosmic Cats shudder as they think the same chilling thought; "What has happened to Lucky?"

GUARD: (Enters, strolling, talking to his communicator.) Twelve O'Clock and all's well! Twelve O'Clock and all's well!

CIRRUS: (Enters with RUFUS. Reading from manual.) 'A cadet must faithfully follow the rules of the Cosmic Cadet Code of Honor. Transgressions of the Code are only allowed in cases of extreme danger or emergency as defined in paragraph one subsection three-two...' (She cannot see the page and looks up, realizing for the first time that it is dark.) Oh, no! It's dark! I told you we'd be late! We'll never make it back in time for bed check! Now we're in for it!

RUFUS: I'm more worried about Lucky! She should have reported in by now. Cirrus, I think we should. ..

CIRRUS: Look! The night guard!

RUFUS: Oh, we can sneak past him!

CIRRUS: Quiet!

GUARD: (Struts, singing to himself.)

Come all ye brave spacefolk who follow the stars,
Way, hay, blow the sun out!
We'll chase the old comets and hunt the quasars,
Give me some time to blow the sun out!"

(The cats try and sneak past the GUARD as RUFUS notices the moon is full.)

CIRRUS: Oh, no! Don't look at the moon! You know what happened the last time... (RUFUS is transfixed and begins a low, mournful wail. CIRRUS claps a paw over his mouth.) Are you trying to get us caught? (The GUARD listens and frowns but does not see them as they resume their prowl.) We made it! (She removes her paw from RUFUS' mouth. Big mistake. He fights a massive internal battle and loses.)

RUFUS: ROOOWWRRRRRR! ! !

GUARD: Who goes there?

RUFUS: MMMMEEEEEOOOWWWW! ! !

GUARD: (Palms a communicator, speaks into it.) This is guard seven, unauthorized personnel at station twenty-three, please advise, over! (To the cats.) Halt! Identify yourselves or be shot!

AUDIO: Whatcha got, John, invaders from Planet Burp? (Laughter from others in Tower is heard.)

GUARD: I have unauthorized personnel! Am taking them into custody!

CIRRUS: (A paw over RUFUS' mouth.) Cadets Cirrus and Rufus here!

GUARD: Well, Cadets, you've broken curfew and you're on report!

CIRRUS: We're already on report.

GUARD: Then you're in the Clink! (He throws them into the Clink)

CIRRUS: Meeeeeooow! Hissss!

GUARD: Security control, this is Guard seven, I have the unauthorized personnel under restraint.

AUDIO: Thank you, John, the universe is safe now.
Security base out.

GUARD: Some kind of cadets you are! Sitting here in the Clink and we just got word that your sergeant's light cruiser was found drifting in orbit around Canis Major. Since she hasn't checked in, Patrol Command is assuming she has been captured. You two were so busy prowling around AWOL that your sergeant had to go on a mission alone!

CIRRUS: It wasn't like that, we wanted to go...

RUFUS: Forget it. He isn't interested.

GUARD: Dog-Robber probably has her right now at his hide-out. You'll never see her again. Lucky Hightops, wasn't that her name? Not very lucky! (He laughs and resumes his guard patrol)

CIRRUS: You're the one who's lucky! You're lucky I'm in here, or I'd scratch a test-pattern on your face!

RUFUS: Now what?

CIRRUS: We have to get to Canis Major!

RUFUS: Right! After you!

CIRRUS: We can get out of here, easy.

RUFUS: Sure!

CIRRUS: You're the reason we got caught! You had to do your singing act and get us thrown in the Clink! Tomcats!

RUFUS: I can't help it! No Tomcat since the dawn of time has been able to resist a full moon!

GUARD: Hey! Keep it down in there!

CIRRUS: We'll use the old rabies trick.

RUFUS: Oh, come on, he won't fall for that!

CIRRUS: Got a better idea?

RUFUS: Okay, let's try it. (RUFUS yowls maniacally)

CIRRUS: HELP! HELP! Guard! GUARD!

GUARD: All right! What's all this, then?

CIRRUS: (As RUFUS writhes on the floor mewling piteously.) Open the door! Quick! He needs help!

GUARD: What's wrong with him? (Opens door, walks in.) He looked okay a minute ago.

CIRRUS: Rufus! Talk to me! Say something! (RUFUS turns on them with a maniacal expression, hissing and growling) Oh, no! RABIES! He has RABIES! Oh, I told him to get his RABIES shots!

GUARD: Rabies... RA... RA... Stay away from me!

CIRRUS: Get back! (RUFUS 'bites' CIRRUS and she immediately begins hissing and spitting madly, too.)

GUARD: Stay away! I don't want no Rabies! Help! Help!
(He dashes madly to exit.)

CIRRUS: Come on! (They run out and barely miss the
GUARD who has doubled back, sees them, they hiss and
writhe once more for good measure and GUARD runs the
other way.)

AUDIO: As our triumphant tiger-twosome race for the Tower
all of Spaceport is thrown into chaos! The alarms ring out
across the landing pads! (Klaxon SOUNDS, Beacons flash.)

RUFUS: (Slides to a halt near SPACESHIP.) Here! Hurry
up! (They enter the COCKPIT and strap in.)

AUDIO: Attention! Attention! Unauthorized persons on
launch-pad! Security has been summoned! You will leave
the space vehicle and return to the tower immediately!

RUFUS: Hurry!

CIRRUS: (Flipping switches) I have to do my flight check!

RUFUS: We don't have time!

CIRRUS: Fuel?

RUFUS: Check!

CIRRUS: Atmospheric?

RUFUS: Check!

CIRRUS: Ready! (Picks up headset) Tower, this is
Spectrum 5511 Uniform! We are prepared for takeoff!

TOWER AUDIO: Attention unauthorized persons! Security
is on the way! Step out of the spacecraft! Prepare to be

taken into custody!

CIRRUS: We're going to Canis Major to rescue Lucky!
Don't try and stop us!

TOWER AUDIO: You have no clearance. Shut down engines. You do not have clearance for takeoff!

CIRRUS: Affirmative, Tower! We are leaving! (There is a volcanic sound of thrusters) Give us clearance, Tower, or eat rocketblast!

TOWER AUDIO: You can't make it out of Spaceport, pilot!

CIRRUS: Well, then I'll take Spaceport with me! (She hits a switch and both cats are thrown back in their seats. There is a faint glow from the control panel. RUFUS and CIRRUS working controls)

RUFUS: Screens are clear. We've lost them! We made it!

CIRRUS: Lay in our course for Canis Major! We have an appointment with a Canine Criminal!

AUDIO: Meanwhile, back on the Dog-Star at the malevolent mutt's hideout, Lucky Hightops is in chains!

(Along one wall a shadow appears. A black-hooded MONGREL enters leading a shackled LUCKY HIGHTOPS. DOG-ROBBER steps into a dim light, LUCKY squints up at him, unable to see his face.)

ROBBER: Well, Lucky Hightops! At last I have you where I want you!

LUCKY: You won't get away with this, Dog-Robber!

ROBBER: You're in my territory, now. This is my planet and my Mongrel Gang will take good care of you until I can

ransom you back to Spaceport for my freedom!

LUCKY: You'd better kill me now, Dog-Robber, because I'll never let you go free! I'll hunt you down and bring you to justice!

ROBBER: For a woman in chains, you talk big. Don't worry, Lucky, nothing will happen to you. I want you in prime condition to sell back to your beloved Vector Patrol! With my freedom and a rocket fleet I can control the spacelanes! I will rule the galaxy! Then this dog will have his day! (laughs) By the time Spaceport sends relief troops I'll be gone. And so will you! Take her away!

LUCKY: (As the MONGREL drags her away) You're too sure of yourself, Dog-Robber! You made a big mistake when you captured me! They'll be coming for me! THEY'LL BE COMING FOR YOU! (She is dragged away into shadows as DOG-ROBBER exits laughing)

RUFUS: We are in orbit around Canis Major.

CIRRUS: Okay, let's make it quick and clean! (She flips a switch and AUDIO of blasters. The cockpit vibrates.) Got some cloud cover at 30,000!

RUFUS: We're clear below! Looking good!

CIRRUS: Running lights! Retros! (Gentle AUDIO rumble of rockets) Touchdown! (The cockpit shakes and is still, the cats flip switches and unstrap)

RUFUS: Ooof! I thought cats were able to land gently!

CIRRUS: What are you complaining about? We made it! Get out!

RUFUS: (As they step out) Okay, now what?

CIRRUS: You tell me, you're the tactical expert. This place gives me the creeps.

RUFUS: Now we find the local hangout, buy two fingers of top o'the milk bottle and listen for the local gossip. Maybe someone will know something about Lucky.

CIRRUS: Okay. (Pulls old jackets from COCKPIT) Put this on. We can't walk around here in Cadet uniforms.

RUFUS: Right.

CIRRUS: We have to look like we belong here.

RUFUS: Pulls 'Budget Rocketfuel' cap out of pocket, puts it on. Right, we need to look a little more... more...

CIRRUS: Hangdog? (Barks and laughs, puts on 'Zebo's Land 'N Go' cap.)

RUFUS: Okay, come on.

CIRRUS: Just hold it a minute! Let me take a reading with my ODL.

RUFUS: You brought an omni-directional locator? Where did you get it?

CIRRUS: I grabbed it from the storeroom as we were running for our lives across the landing pad.

RUFUS: You stole it!

CIRRUS: Just like WE stole the spacecraft.

RUFUS: But...

CIRRUS: Rufus, we're in so much trouble now, one ODL isn't going to make any difference. I'm getting lifeform

readings.

RUFUS: From over there.

CIRRUS: That's right, how did you... (She looks up and sees a weathered sign that reads 'Spider's Place - Last Stop Watering Hole')

RUFUS: (They walk up to sign, he nods and points.) Okay, let's be doggy.

(RUFUS and CIRRUS enter the hangout which sports a short bar with a SPIDER serving drinks. Various soft-sculpture Extraterrestrials are at the bar. Music is playing and AUDIO sound of voices. Three MONGRELS in hoods are talking in a corner.)

MONGRELS: (Dog babble.)

Hey, how 'bout them Mastiffs?

When's the game on?

Do youse creeps have wide screen hologram?

Refill this dish of bones, willya?

(As the cats enter, on cue, all talking on AUDIO stops. They walk in, MONGRELS eye them. AUDIO talking and music resumes.)

RUFUS: Follow me. (He walks up to the bar, pounds a paw on it and barks) Gimme cream! (SPIDER shoots a shot glass across the bar, RUFUS does not catch it in time, it falls to the floor) I always let the first one slide past, huh! Gimmne 'nother. (SPIDER shoots a second glass and RUFUS misses it but CIRRUS catches it)

CIRRUS: He always lets me catch the second one, huh!

RUFUS: Let's mingle. (They walk over to three of the extraterrestrial FIGURES and pose as toughs) We been out

in space, long time, what's the news hereabouts?

EXTRA-TERR: (High-pitched and super fast) Gefork glek hebong barrada klattu nikto ifgefork menok!

RUFUS: Thanks, pal! (RUFUS looks at CIRRUS and shrugs)

CIRRUS: Now what?

RUFUS: Just follow my lead. (He struts around woofing to himself and scratching.) Yeah, Spike, we sure led that Vector Patrol on a chase, didn't we? They will never catch us!

CIRRUS: Spike? Oh! Uh, yeah, Rover! They don't have enough sense to chase their tails!

RUFUS: They thought we had one of their Sergeants on board.

CIRRUS: I wonder what gave them that idea?

PATCH: (To his fellow MONGRELS) Did ya hear that?

YELP: Yep! Yep!

PATCH: Shhh!

RUFUS: Some stupid Sergeant, huh?

CIRRUS: I wonder where she... is... (She does not finish for the three MONGRELS circle them, sniffing.)

RUFUS: Can we do something for you fellas?

PATCH: What was you sayin' about a Sergeant?

RUFUS: Well, we were just runnin' some illegal.... uh...

CIRRUS: Directional velocity receptors.

RUFUS: (He looks at her as if to mentally ask what those are.) Yeah, illegal... ones. We just squeaked past a Patrol out looking for some Sergeant they lost hereabouts.

BUTCH: Sergeant?

RUFUS: Yeah.

PATCH: And you lost 'em?

CIRRUS: We left a hot ion trail around Rigel and doubled back!

PATCH: Well... how about that? Anyone who can outsmart Patrol deserves a drink. (Squeezes them over to the bar.)

YELP: Yep! Yep! Yep!

BUTCH: Just where were these patrols again?

RUFUS: Just off Rigel.

PATCH: Hey! Bug-face! Couple a muddy pond waters over here! (RUFUS makes a face.) For my new pals! (SPIDER snaps out two seriously disgusting shots of muddy water with twigs.)

CIRRUS: Thanks!

PATCH: Hey! Are there bugs in these drinks? (SPIDER snaps an arm.) Okay! (To RUFUS) S'okay! He used the good stuff!

BUTCH: Drink up!

RUFUS: Uh... a toast! (All turn to him.)

May the path before you
Always be sandy
And lined with trees.
May your days be bright
And sunny,
And free of fleas!

(MONGRELS drink as cats toss muddy water smartly over their shoulders.)

BUTCH: That was beautiful!

YELP: (Sniffs RUFUS) Woof!

PATCH: What? (Sniffs RUFUS.) My friend here says you smell like cat. I think you smell like cat, too.

RUFUS: (Barks a laugh.) Did you hear that? He says we smell like cat!

CIRRUS: That's pretty funny, Spike!

RUFUS: That's pretty funny, Rover!

PATCH: I thought you was Spike and he was Rover.

CIRRUS: Yeah, well, we been in space together a long time... you forget these little things...

PATCH: I don't know if you're cats and I don't care if you're cats, but to me you smell like cats and that's good enough.

CIRRUS: Good enough?

RUFUS: Good enough for what?

PATCH: For a little game.

BUTCH: (Growls) A little game!

PATCH: A little game. We call it, 'there's more than one way to skin a cat!' And you're going to play it with us!

CIRRUS: Can I say just one thing?

PATCH: Sure, you say just one thing.

CIRRUS: (Pulls a wrench from pocket, holds it up and shouts.) Here, boy! Go fetch! Go fetch! (The mongrels bark and pant and whine and leap, she throws the wrench and they chase it. Before PATCH brings it back she and RUFUS creep behind the bar.)

RUFUS: (To SPIDER) Keep quiet and I'll make it worth your while!

PATCH: Hey! Where'd they go? They tricked us!

RUFUS: (Behind the bar, using a squeaky voice) They went that-a-way!

PATCH: Thanks! Let's go get 'em!

(The MONGRELS exit snarling and growling.)

RUFUS: I thought they'd never leave!

CIRRUS: We still don't know how to find Lucky! (SPIDER wiggles and taps a foot.) I think he's trying to tell us something. (SPIDER points.) Thanks, pal! (They start to leave and SPIDER stops RUFUS with a leg.) Pay him! (RUFUS lays down a coin and SPIDER wiggles a leg as if to say 'keep it coming'. RUFUS lays down two more coins, SPIDER salutes him and the cats exit.)

(Lights dim, cats enter below)

RUFUS: It's no use! That eight-armed bandit told us a fib!
He didn't know where Lucky is!

CIRRUS: (Stops, listening.) So you hear that?

RUFUS: All I can hear is my stomach growling. I wish we
had stopped to pack food.

CIRRUS: We were too busy escaping... I hear... (There is
a tapping noise and the CLINK door, now the door to
DOG-ROBBER's dungeon, is above. A hightop shoe is
lowered through the bars.)

RUFUS: Lucky! It's Lucky!

CIRRUS: Wait a minute! We need to make sure there aren't
any of those mongrel guards around!

RUFUS: We can take a reading off ODL, set it to search for
canine lifeforms... (RUFUS looks up to see TWO moons!
He begins a titanic inner struggle. Tiny mews escape, he
wiggles and quivers.)

CIRRUS: The two moons of Canis Major! Oh, no! Rufus!
Not now! Fight it!

RUFUS: I can't! MMMMMRRRRROOOOOOOWWWWWW!
!!!

CIRRUS: Shut up! You'll get us killed! (She knocks him
down and sits on his chest with both hands over his mouth.)
Quiet! (The MONGRELS walk up behind CIRRUS.)

RUFUS: Mffff nmmmmgffff!

CIRRUS: What?

RUFUS: Mffa mnnnn ullll!

CIRRUS: What?

RUFUS: Nnndd uuu gnnnk uff mmmm?

CIRRUS: Oh! (Gets off of him)

RUFUS: I said...

PATCH: He said 'there's three big, bad dogs behind you, you dumb cat!'

RUFUS: That isn't what I said... but it's close enough. (The cats bolt and run and the MONGRELS follow in pursuit.)
Backtrack! Cross trails! Confuse them! (The cats weave a pattern across the stage as the MONGRELS try to 'scent' them and the dogs end up all running into each other.)

CIRRUS: Let's quit playing with them and finish them off!

RUFUS: Right! (As the MONGRELS recover the cats arch their backs and hop around hissing and swiping in a series of moves that looks like something between Kung-Fu and fly-swatting.) HSSSS! HSSSSS! HYA! HYA!

CIRRUS: SSSSSSSSSS!! NYA! NYA!

MONGRELS: GRRRRR! (Cats swat at them.) YIIII! YIIII!

CIRRUS: Let's make hush-puppies!

RUFUS: You're tuna fish, fellas! (Just as the dogs are about to break and run, DOG-ROBBER enters with LUCKY in tow.) Lucky!

ROBBER: Very amusing, my foolish felines. I admit, my Mongrels are not the most noble or inspired warriors, they need stern discipline and simple commands. SIC 'EM! (The MONGRELS attack and capture RUFUS as CIRRUS escapes.) No! Don't harm him! Bring him here to me!

(They do.) Well. A human and a Cat. Quite a haul for one day!

LUCKY: Let him go! He can't hurt you and he isn't worth anything! I'm the one you want!

RUFUS: I won't leave you, Lucky! I won't run away like Cirrus did!

ROBBER: Such devotion! How touching! Throw them in the dungeon while I ready my Ultimate Weapon! (She exits, laughing, into the shadows.)

PATCH: Figure a way out of this, Cat!

BUTCH: He's scared of you, Patch! He's a 'Fraidy Cat! (MONGRELS exit barking and laughing.)

RUFUS: I guess we didn't do such a great job of saving you, did we, Lucky?

LUCKY: You did fine, Rufus. You got this far. Now we just have to find a way to defeat Dog-Robber and get back home.

RUFUS: I sure never thought Cirrus would run off like that. Like a... a coward.

LUCKY: Hey! What's this? You have to have faith in your partner! She wouldn't leave us here! I'll bet she has some plan working already.

RUFUS: Maybe so.

LUCKY: That's one of the things you have to learn as a Space-Cadet. Teamwork. Trust your partner to never let you down.

RUFUS: I guess we let you down, huh, Lucky?

LUCKY: You found me, didn't you?

RUFUS: We didn't save you.

LUCKY: Not yet.

RUFUS: Did you know we would come looking for you, even if it meant stealing a starcruiser and breaking out of the Clink and violating our probation and leaving Spaceport without clearance?

LUCKY: (Through a pained expression.) I had a feeling nothing would stop you. Did you really leave Spaceport without clearance?

RUFUS: Yes, Lucky.

LUCKY: You're a good cat, Rufus.

RUFUS: Lucky?

LUCKY: Yes?

RUFUS: Are we going to die here?

LUCKY: I don't know, fella. But I do know as long as we're still alive we're a team. We can do anything.

RUFUS: I don't feel like I can do anything. I'm only five years old. I'm too young to die!

LUCKY: In cat years that's... about thirty.

RUFUS: I 'm thirty?

LUCKY: In cat years.

RUFUS: Red cats live longer. I'm still too young to die.

There has to be a way out!

LUCKY: There is always a way out!

RUFUS: (Lifts chains.) I might be able to pick the locks with one of my claws!

LUCKY: Try it. (He goes about picking the locks.)

ROBBER: (Enters from shadows, out to audience) I'll bet you're wondering about my plan for galactic domination, aren't you? Of course you are. Do you know what galactic domination is? It's very simple. I make everyone to do exactly as I say, no one gets to disagree with me, I get my way all the time and I have everything I want! That is galactic domination! (Laughs maniacally) I've wanted to rule the galaxy since I was a little warm puppy. Well, that isn't exactly true. First I wanted to rule my box and my blanket. Then I wanted to rule the kitchen floor. Then the backyard, then the street, then the block, after that the precinct and then the city, then the county! THE STATE! THE REGION! For a while I settled for the region. THEN THE COUNTRY AND TOMORROW THE WORLD! Mad tyrants always say 'tomorrow the world'. WHAT WAS LEFT AFTER THE WORLD? Well, I skipped the solar system and went right to the galaxy! And how will I do this? Don't answer me! You don't know! With my Mongrel Gang today I will unveil the Ultimate Weapon and with it, I will be INVINCIBLE! That's another thing mad tyrants have to have. An Ultimate Weapon. Can you say Ultimate Weapon? The Ultimate Weapon that no one can withstand! (Laughs maniacally) I worked on that laugh for years! You can't rule the galaxy without a really good maniacal laugh! I'll let you in on a secret. This Mongrel Gang is just temporary. I'm going to replace them as soon as possible with Purebreds. More my style, you know. Maybe a couple of Afghans... At any rate, Vector Patrol, you have been warned! No one, nothing can interfere with my plan for galactic domination! And nothing can withstand my Ultimate Weapon! Bring me the prisoners!

RUFUS: (Stands holding loose chains.) I did it! We're free!

ROBBER: Bring me the human and the cat!

RUFUS: We're free! We're free! (MONGRELS drag them from the DUNGEON.) We're going to be hurt!

LUCKY: Remember, Rufus, never let them smell fear on you.

RUFUS: (He sniffs himself, then yowls in fear)
Yeeooooommm! (Catching LUCKY's eye, he tries to compose himself and `butch cat' up, with limited success)

ROBBER: What a pitiful pair you are! Is this the best that Vector Patrol can send against me? My success is guaranteed!
I should rule the galaxy by next Saturday, at least! (Laughs)

LUCKY: Laugh while you can, Dog-Robber! You'll be whining for mercy, soon!

ROBBER: That's what I like about you, Lucky, you never realize when you have lost!

LUCKY: I haven't lost yet. And you haven't won.

ROBBER: (To MONGRELS) What do you think? Has she lost? Has she lost this one?

PATCH: Me, I think so.

BUTCH: I think it's important to be a good loser.

YELP: Yep, yep.

ROBBER: There you are.

LUCKY: I know your kind, Dog-Robber! You're a big dog in a little yard! You think all this matters? I've brought dozens like you to justice! You're going to be just one more pooch in the pokey, soon!

ROBBER: You may sing a different song after you've seen my Ultimate Weapon.

LUCKY: You're bluffing! You have no Ultimate Weapon!

ROBBER: I have the weapon that will bring Vector Patrol to its knees!

LUCKY: Bring it out! Let me see it!

ROBBER: All in good time. Now I think we'll tidy up around here. This place looks messy.

PATCH: Messy.

ROBBER: You know what makes it look so messy?

BUTCH: I know. (Eyes RUFUS)

ROBBER: Nothing makes a place as messy as a cat.

YELP: Yeah, yeah.

PATCH: Me, I think cats are messy.

RUFUS: Actually I've always been complimented on how tidy I am.

ROBBER: Let's clean this cat out of here, what do you say, boys?

YELP: Yeah, yeah.

PATCH: Clean him out! (They close in on RUFUS and LUCKY steps in front of him. PATCH grabs LUCKY and the

MONGRELS close on RUFUS growling.)

LUCKY: Don't let them get you without a fight, Rufus! Let them know you're a Cosmic Cadet, fella!

RUFUS: I have to warn you, my claws are registered as lethal weapons!

ROBBER: I really must leave, I can't abide violence of any kind! (Laughs and walks to exit in shadows)

PATCH: What do you say I grab a leg and you grab a leg and we run in opposite directions!?

YELP: Yeah, yeah.

BUTCH: If there was four of us, we could run in uh... **four** directions!

YELP: Yeah, yeah, four. (The dark shape of DOG ROBBER enters from the shadows. Her hood is pulled down over her face.)

ROBBER's SHADOW: Then I'll take a leg and we'll all run in opposite directions!

PATCH: That s my kind of game!

BUTCH: Hey, what about her? (Indicates LUCKY.)

ROBBER's SHADOW: Oh, let her go. (Lets a catspaw escape her cloak. LUCKY looks down to see CIRRUS' feet.) You won't interfere, will you, human?

LUCKY: No, I won't interfere.

RUFUS: (Stricken) Lucky!

LUCKY: Take it like a cat, fella.

PATCH: All right, then. Everybody take a leg! (Rufus is prone, yowling, they each take a leg. CIRRUS nods to LUCKY)

And a one, and a two. ..

LUCKY: And a three! (CIRRUS and LUCKY pull PATCH's and BUTCH's hoods down over their faces and they stumble around. YELP has taken off running dragging RUFUS by a leg.)

YELP: Yep! Yep! (CIRRUS taps him on the shoulder and he turns.) Yep? (She pulls his hood over his eyes.) Aw, it got dark!

LUCKY: Come on! Let's run for it! (RUFUS gets up and he and CIRRUS spin the MONGRELS around so they run into each other. DOG-ROBBER enters bound and gagged, her feet tied, she hops in view and tries to get one of her MONGRELS to untie her.)

RUFUS: Why, Dog Robber! You're enough to make a cat laugh! (The cats laugh, LUCKY waves them off and they all exit.)

PATCH: What happened?

YELP: Night-night! (ROBBER surveys her assorted stooges with malevolent disgust.)

(CIRRUS enters and goes to COCKPIT, followed by RUFUS and LUCKY)

CIRRUS: See? Here it is! We have just enough fuel to get us home!

RUFUS: I sure thought I was done for! Now we can come back with a squadron and wipe out those curs!

CIRRUS: Maybe you'll trust your old partner next time! Let's go! Rufus, get in the back...

RUFUS: Why do I always have to get in the back!

CIRRUS: Come on, Lucky. The sooner we leave the sooner we... (LUCKY is shaking her head) ...can come back with the troops... what?

LUCKY: One thing still bothers me. What if Dog-Robber really has the Ultimate Weapon?

CIRRUS: What do you mean?

LUCKY: How do we know she wasn't bluffing?

RUFUS: Of course she was bluffing! She's an insane inter-galactic criminal!

LUCKY: We can't take the chance. We can't leave until we find out.

RUFUS: You mean...

CIRRUS: You want us to go back to her hideout?

LUCKY: We have to find out if she really has the Ultimate Weapon, and if she does, we must destroy it.

CIRRUS: Can't we go back to Spaceport for reinforcements?

LUCKY: That would give her enough time to launch an all-out attack on Spaceport. Or even Earth.

CIRRUS: She's right.

LUCKY: You bet I am.

RUFUS: Okay. What do we do?

LUCKY: We'll attack!

RUFUS: With what?

CIRRUS: We have no weapons!

LUCKY: Cadet Cirrus, you must stop thinking in terms of Fighting and start thinking in terms of Winning! (The cats exchange a look which says they do not remotely understand.) Since when do I need weapons? What have I always told you?

CIRRUS and RUFUS: (By rote.) If you need weapons you obviously aren't prepared!

LUCKY: Correct!

RUFUS: I think we can say we're not prepared.

CIRRUS: We have a consensus. (They both nod vigorously)

LUCKY: (LUCKY gives them a look which humans usually reserve for transgressions in personal hygiene.) Then let us have a little lesson in the Fine Art of Planning and Preparation! (To CIRRUS) You're going on a little scavenger hunt while we keep Dog-Robber busy, and when you get back, we'll pay that megalomaniacal mongrel a visit he won't soon forget! (LUCKY explains as they exit)

(DOOM MUSIC)

ROBBER: (Enters, pushing a draped object, dancing and singing.) No bad cats! No bad cats! When all the cats are dead there will be no bad cats! (MONGRELS enter, tails between their legs.) Well! It's about time you came crawling back! And you didn't catch them, I see. Aren't you ashamed

of yourselves?

PATCH: Well... No.

ROBBER: What do you mean, no?

BUTCH: It wasn't our fault! (Whines) We was tricked!

ROBBER: By a cat! A cat! Three grown dogs outsmarted by a cat.

BUTCH: We...(whine, whine) we thought...

ROBBER: Please! Spare me your excuses! There is no time for whining now. Heel! We're close to launching a full-scale attack on Spaceport. My puppyhood ambition will soon be realized! Of course we could have used Lucky Hightops as a hostage, as our ticket in, past their defenses. She could have taken us past the lunar pulse rays... (PATCH whimpers.) Stop that, I'm waxing eloquent. Without her we will have to take out... (PATCH howls softly, mournfully.) What is it!?

PATCH: We're very sorry. (Whine)

ROBBER: Sorry? You no-count crowd of craven, cowardly curs! You let Lucky Hightops and her cats escape! You endanger my plans for galactic domination - and you know what that means to me - And you say you're sorry! (MONGRELS writhe on the floor and whine.) No matter! (MONGRELS stop whining.) With the Ultimate Weapon I can force my way in! My Ultimate Weapon, perfected after years of testing and made in the image of the most brilliant, fierce and vicious dog I ever knew... (She removes drape to reveal a snarling apricot poodle dog on wheels with a pink bow.) My mother!

PATCH: She looks like you!

DOG ROBBER: Do you think so? I really have captured her, haven't I? The steely eyes, the daggerlike teeth, the little pink bow.... And she will be my herald of victory! We will storm Spaceport and blast them into primal matter! (MONGRELS growl, showing their fierce willingness.) Of course, it will be dangerous and I might lose a few crewmembers along the way... (MONGRELS stop growling, look doubtful.) It has taken me years to develop this weapon! (Strokes it lovingly.) I only wish I had a victim to test it on. (She eyes the MONGRELS who whimper and cower.)

LUCKY: (Enters laughing.) I don't see any volunteers, Dog Robber! So, is your so-called Ultimate Weapon?

ROBBER: How good of you to return, Lucky.

LUCKY: I have returned to put you out of business, you fiendish Fido!

ROBBER: More big talk, Lucky? And you have no cadets to back you up? And no weapons?

LUCKY: The best weapons are never the most obvious weapons. So this is your idea of a weapon, eh? Go ahead, give me a demonstration. Show me this squirtgun you have, here. What does it shoot, water? Or maybe rubber bands? (Laughs)

ROBBER: (Turns weapon to face LUCKY) Keep laughing, it's easier to aim! (RUFUS enters.)

RUFUS: How about me, don't I make a better target? (To LUCKY) Okay, where is Cirrus?

RUFUS: She'd better get here soon, or there won't be anything left of us to rescue!

LUCKY: Give her time!

BUTCH: You! I'll fix your whiskers for you!

ROBBER: Stay back! I have a use for him, myself! After all, I did name it the Cat-Atonic Ray! (ROBBER hits the switch and RUFUS is bathed in a red light, there is AUDIO of continuous electronic dog-barking.) There you are, I have you now!

(DOOM MUSIC - Everyone on stage freezes into a tableau.)

AUDIO: Is it possible that our cunning and resourceful Lucky Hightops has led her Cat Cadet into certain death? Will the Cat-Atonic Ray finish our favorite furry red tabby? And where is Cirrus? Will she return in time to rescue her friends? Tune in next week for the conclusion of...

(MUSIC FANFARE)

Lucky Hightops and the Cosmic Cat Patrol in "Captives of the Dog-Star!"

(MUSIC THEME)

LUCKY: What? What did he say?

ROBBER: Not again!

RUFUS: I'm not standing here a whole week! (General muttering and grumbling from the characters.)

ROBBER: Wait!

LUCKY: Hey! Hey, you! Voice!

ROBBER: Hey, stop that music!

LUCKY: Give me that thing! (She turns the Cat-atomic Ray on the light booth.)

AUDIO: (As MUSIC winds down to silence.) AAaggghh!
Turn it off!

LUCKY: We want to finish this now!

ROBBER: We're not about to hang around, frozen until the next episode!

AUDIO: But that's the way it's done, it's a cliff-hanger! I have to say 'tune in next week!' Then, next week, we all find out what happens!

LUCKY: We're going to find out right now! You want to start this up again or shall I fry you into a potato-chip?

AUDIO: NO! I'll do it!

LUCKY: Get a move on you devious, disembodied voice!
(All voice approval.)

AUDIO: (After she turns off the Cat-atonic Ray) Uh... Here we are, back again with Lucky Hightops... (The characters resume their places in the tableau) ...and the Cosmic Cat Patrol, for the conclusion of, "Captives of the Dog-Star"! Whew!

(MUSIC and they un-freeze.)

ROBBER: This is more like it! Hah! Take that, cat! Haaa!
(RUFUS yowls and curls up under the Cat-Atonic Ray.)

LUCKY: That's enough, Dog-Robber, you malevolent mutt!
Turn it off!

ROBBER: Haaa haaa! Burn, burn!

LUCKY: Okay! Cirrus! (Looks around.) CIRRUS! Come on! (Turns back to DOG-ROBBER) Turn it off! (She

charges DOG-ROBBER and she shifts the Ray to include her, Lucky curls up, moaning.)

ROBBER: I have you now!

CIRRUS: (Enters above) Wrong! I have you! Turn it off, Dog-Robber!

ROBBER: Get her! (The MONGRELS start toward her growling.)

CIRRUS: You forgot one very important thing, Dog-Robber, something Lucky Hightops did not forget! No matter how intelligent you are, you are still a dog with the inherited fears and instincts of a dog!

LUCKY: Get to the point!

CIRRUS: Right! Turn off the Ray or I'll come down there with... (She holds aloft the weapon she has been concealing behind her back. It flashes in the light, a shadowy baton, it is...) ...a rolled-up newspaper! Aha! (She leaps onto the floor.)

PATCH: No! No!

BUTCH: Anything but that!

YELP: YYYiiii! YYYiiii!

ROBBER: (Shields face as if a vampire confronted with sunlight.) Noooo! What will happen to my plan for galactic domination?

CIRRUS: (Holding the rolled-up paper aloft like Excalibur.) I got you now! (She approaches the snarling DOG-ROBBER and pops the newspaper across his paw. DOG ROBBER retreats. CIRRUS shuts off the Ray, RUFUS and LUCKY stand up.)

RUFUS: You sure took your time!

LUCKY: Where were you?

CIRRUS: I had to wait for the evening edition, they were sold out!

LUCKY: Leash them together! I'll take that. (Takes newspaper from CIRRUS carefully. BUTCH growls and snaps at her, she pops him on the nose, he yowls.) Hurry! (The cats leash the dogs together and hog-tie them, CIRRUS throws up both arms to indicate she is finished.)

RUFUS: The evening edition?

CIRRUS: The only place open was an all-night rocket fuel station! What was I supposed to bring back, a rolled-up credit-card application?

LUCKY: Well, we got these pups whipped and that's all that matters! (She waits, looks up.) WE GOT THESE PUPS WHIPPED AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!

AUDIO: Uhhh, now?

LUCKY: Yes, now!

AUDIO: Uhhh.... Back in Spaceport, with the canine criminals on a short leash, Lucky and the cats celebrate another successful mission!

(MUSIC FANFARE)

LUCKY: Come on! (The cats enter timidly.) The Commander won't be mad at you! You may have to go back on dry cat food for a while as punishment but it's going to be okay!

RUFUS: I don't know, Lucky, we really pulled some fast ones this time.

CIRRUS: He's right. That controller at Spaceport tower has already threatened to make me into a fur-collar!

RUFUS: The guard of the Clink wants to have me shot because he still thinks I have rabies!

LUCKY: Don't worry! Listen to me, both of you. It took a lot of courage and ingenuity to come to my rescue. I'll never forget that you were there for me when the going got rough. You did a good job, both of you. The Commander will take that into account. Trust me, Okay?

RUFUS: Okay.

CIRRUS: We did bring back the Cat-Atonic Ray!

RUFUS: That should count for something with the Commander.

COMMANDER: (Enters) LUCKY HIGHTOPS!? WHERE ARE YOU AND WHERE ARE THOSE CATS?

RUFUS: Uh oh!

COMMANDER: There you are! What s all this about breaking out of the Clink and stealing a starcruiser and leaving Spaceport without clearance and...

LUCKY: I can explain, Commander...

COMMANDER: You can always explain! Well, there will be no explanations this time! (Smiles) I know the whole story. Congratulations! Is this the Ultimate Weapon?

LUCKY: Yes, the Cat-Atonic Ray.

COMMANDER: Well, one thing we can't have is an Ultimate Weapon. It would be an eternal threat to galactic peace. Will you do the honors?

LUCKY: Certainly. (She reaches into the Ray and pulls out a handful of wires which she tosses over her shoulder.)

COMMANDER: And that's the end of that. As for your cadets... I think a couple of weeks on dry cat food and a few nights of sentry duty should satisfy the corps of cadets that they were duly punished for their offenses. They must pay for their misbehavior but, after all, we do encourage initiative and loyalty and courage. These two have certainly shown that. ATTENTION! (LUCKY and the cats snap to attention.) For performance above and beyond the call of space-duty, I hereby award you, Sergeant Lucky Hightops, the Patrol Medal of Courage! (Pins medal on LUCKY'S jacket.) Congratulations! Dog-Robber and his Mongrels are safely behind bars, thanks to you!

LUCKY: Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER: Dismissed! Oh... (Reaches into a pocket and tosses RUFUS a brand-new baseball.) Get some practice! (COMMANDER exits.)

RUFUS: How do you like that?

LUCKY: Cadets! Front and center! (They hop to.) You are very fortunate that the Commander took a generous attitude, for you have broken many regulations and it is your reward to be allowed to remain in the corps of cadets! If you are very good and very careful you may become patrol officers someday, just like your beloved sergeant!

RUFUS AND CIRRUS: Yes, Sergeant!

LUCKY: (To audience) And as for the rest of my cadets, in all your travels across the galaxy, may fair thoughts and

happy hours attend on you! (All salute out.)

AUDIO: This concludes another episode with Lucky Hightops and our feline friends from the future! Join us next time for...

(MUSIC FANFARE)

...Lucky Hightops and the Cosmic Cat Patrol in...

(DOOM MUSIC and the trio strike a heroic, watchful tableau as a silhouette of crab claws rises up behind them.)

"The Attack of the Crab-Nebula!"

(MUSIC THEME)

END

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