

LUCKY HIGHTOPS AND THE COSMIC CAT PATROL™

Episode Two

"THE ATTACK OF THE CRAB NEBULA"

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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

DR. MARIA LOPEZ A Xenobiologist on the Crab Nebula Exploration Team

DR. JIM MCCALL* Exploration team botanist

DR. PUTTEE* Exploration team leader

STACY* Exploration team pilot

SNAPPER A fierce, fantastic, rapping fiddler crab

THE CLAM TRIO* A backup trio of doo-.wopp shellfish

THE RESENTFUL FOREST* A group of alien trees with an attitude problem

Total cast of eight,*double cast.

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. Lucky and the cats travel to the Crab Nebula to investigate the disappearances of Planetary Exploration Team members. With the sole survivor, Dr. Lopez, they set out to meet the planet's strange inhabitants, rescue the missing team and solve the menacing mystery of the Crab Nebula.

RUNNING TIME is one hour.

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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 (DOOM MUSIC)
"Attack of the Crab Nebula!"

LUCKY: Cats front and center! Cats run to LUCKY) Attention! Eyes forward! Shoulders back! Whiskers out! Paws straight in a line with the seams of your trousers! (She examines them) Very good. Cirrus, I see you trimmed your ruff, good! Very sharp. Rufus... (She eyes him, he fidgets) claws clipped... good! At ease. Now. (She pulls a silver disc and box from her pocket) About our next mission. I have a communication from the patrol outpost on the Crab Nebula. As you know that is an unexplored region. We have been very anxious to learn what is Out there. We have

lost contact with our explorer team. The last voice transmission was as follows. (She snaps the disc into a small box)

AUDIO RECORDING: (Lots of static) This is the patrol base on Crab Nebula! We've lost half the crew! We don't know where they have gone! If you don't send help soon, we'll be next! We... No! No! It's... AAAAAaaaggghhh! (The transmission ends with screams and growling sounds. LUCKY puts away the player and disc)

LUCKY: I have volunteered us for this mission to find out what has happened at the Crab Nebula. Any questions?

CIRRUS: Will we take any weapons with us?

LUCKY: Cadet Cirrus, do you imply that I NEED weapons for this mission?

CIRRUS: Well, no Sergeant, it's just that... (She elbows RUFUS)

RUFUS: It sounded as if we might be up against a... a monster.

LUCKY: So? What else is new? Maybe it is a monster, do you have a problem with that? (RUFUS and CIRRUS shake their heads grimly) Whether it is a monster or a burned out battery we are Vector Patrol and we will do our duty! Now. Cadets! Prepare for takeoff! I want a full boosters tuneup of the starship Cat's Paw!

CIRRUS: Yes, Sergeant!

LUCKY: I want a full navigation and tactics report on the explorer base!

RUFUS: Yes, Sergeant!

LUCKY: Cadets! Dismissed! (The cats trot off to 'hut-huts' in unison) Good pair of cadets I have here. (She looks at her watch, taps her foot. The cats hut-hut' back on each carrying a small Space-Patrol shoulder bag) What kept you? Ready?

CIRRUS: Cat's Paw is tuned, fueled, ready and waiting at Spaceport!

RUFUS: Mission navigation and tactical ready!

LUCKY: Let's go! (MUSIC as they climb into the COCKPIT, CIRRUS at the controls, LUCKY beside her, RUFUS stops and looks at them)

RUFUS: Do I have to get in the back again? (CIRRUS points to the back and he resignedly gets into the little space behind the seats)

LUCKY: Preflight!

CIRRUS: Fuel?

LUCKY: Check!

CIRRUS: Atmospheric?

LUCKY: Check!

CIRRUS: Coloring book!

LUCKY: (Reaches into compartment and hands RUFUS a coloring book) Check!

CIRRUS: Ready! Tower this is Cat's Paw out of Spaceport with Alpha Charlie prepared for blastoff!

AUDIO: Roger, Cat's Paw, take a vector and report your destination.

CIRRUS: Our destination is the Crab Nebula.

AUDIO: (Pause) You re kidding.

CIRRUS: Say again, Tower.

AUDIO: Ah, come on! No one in his right mind would go on that mission to the Crab Nebula! You'd have to be crazy! Who is this, really? Evelyn, are you kidding around again?

LUCKY: Tower, this is Patrol Sergeant Lucky Hightops on board the Cat's Paw bound for the Crab Nebula, do you have a problem with that?

AUDIO: No, Sergeant, it's your problem! You have clearance!

LUCKY: Thank you! (To CIRRUS) Let's go!

CIRRUS: Aye-aye! (She hits a switch and there is a rising sound of AUDIO rocketblast, a screech of boosters as they lean back into the seats rocking the COCKPIT into a near-horizontal position. LIGHTS dim to blackness and star gobos fill the stage. There is a faint glow from the control panel) Screens are clear. We are on our way. Next stop is the Crab Nebula.

AUDIO: Meanwhile back at the exploration base on Crab Nebula (A pair of wings appear, scuddy vines and growth representing the planet) the surviving crew members meet and discuss their perilous situation.

JIM: (Enters following MARIA, both are wearing coveralls torn and soiled, they are exhausted) Maria! Slow up! I have to rest. We can't go on like this! We can't take much more! When will they send a relief team?

MARIA: (She places her pack on the ground) They had better send more than a relief team! They better send a Patrol Squad!

JIM: I wouldn't blame them if they never came. Well, would you come knowing there's some vicious and mysterious force picking US off one by one?

MARIA: (Opens pack) We only have enough supplies left for a few days. (As she talks she wanders downstage. JIM nods in agreement) We can't survive here. This place is so dismal, so desolate, the jungle goes on and on forever. Dark, forbidding, alive with who knows what? It's enough to drive you mad. (As she talks, from behind the vine curtain a huge crabclaw enters, seems to look around', targets on JIM and creeps toward him. He hears it, turns and stumbles into the claw which pulls him offstage) Sometimes I just want to throw back my head and scream!

JIM: AAagggghhh! (Exits clutched in crabclaw)

MARIA: Yes, just like that. I'm glad you understand, Jim. It's getting dark. Come on, let's get back to the base. We'll try and send out another distress signal. (She swings the pack to her shoulder without a backward glance and exits)

LUCKY: How s it going back there?

RUFUS: Oh, okay. So far I colored a horsie and a ducky.

LUCKY: (Looks) You didn't do the doggie.

RUFUS: I don't do doggies!

CIRRUS: I have a signal from the base, it's pretty weak! Running lights on! Uh oh! Turbulence! (They shake around in the COCKPIT) Retros! (She hits a switch and AUDIO booms retros) Touchdown! (They sit forward securing the COCKPIT in an upright position)

LUCKY: Nice landing, Cadet! Everybody out! (They step out of COCKPIT and lights are gloomy. On the backdrop a slow light pulses up and down like murky water rippling)

RUFUS: What is that?

LUCKY: Starlight.

RUFUS: I never saw starlight like that!

LUCKY: The crab Nebula is an irregular pulsing supernova.

RUFUS: Oh.

CIRRUS: This place is very spooky.

LUCKY: Everything is fine, Cirrus. We're on patrol! There is nothing we can't do and no one that can stop us. Remember that. (Looks around) I don't see any sign of the exploration crew.

RUFUS: Maybe we got here too late.

LUCKY: HELLO!? ANYBODY HOME!

MARIA: (Enters, staggers on) At last! I thought you'd never come!

LUCKY: I'm Sergeant Lucky Hightops from Vector Patrol, this is Cadet Cirrus and Cadet Rufus.

MARIA: I'm Dr. Maria Ruiz, the team zoologist.

LUCKY: What's going on here? Where is the rest of the crew?

MARIA: I 'm the only one left! (DOOM MUSIC) The other have all been taken by some monstrous force! Some creature! I don't know! I never got a good look at it!

LUCKY: I see.

MARIA: How many troops did you bring?

LUCKY: Troops?

MARIA: You mean... you're it? Sergeant, we have to go into the tangled jungles of the nebula to hunt this monster down and destroy it! We need pulse lasers and blasters to blaze a trail! We need proton rifles to fend off the predators! What kind of weapons did you bring?

LUCKY: (Both cats look at her) Which way did it go?

MARIA: It seems to have made a trail through there!
(Points, at the wing drape of vines)

LUCKY: Cadets! Fall in! Sound off!

CIRRUS: One!

RUFUS: Two!

LUCKY: Let's go! (AUDIO sound of jungle creatures and hissing wind as they file out through the wings)

AUDIO: Meanwhile in the dark and forbidding jungle...

JIM: Lemme go! Lemme go! Help! Help! (Enters crawling and screaming, as he gets onstage we see he is held at the ankle by a crabclaw) AAaggghhh! (It relentlessly pulls him off. JIM exits dragged by crabclaw)

LUCKY: (Enters followed by the cats and MARIA) The trail is very plain. See it? It goes this way.

CIRRUS: (Pointing in the opposite direction) It goes this way.

LUCKY: Hmmmm. (Opposite them two very strange things enter and they look like a cross between a weeping willow and a fireworks explosion. They stand together and are the guardians of the RESENTFUL FOREST) I think the trail circles and comes out... (They follow her and she comes face to face with the FOREST guardians) Hello?

MARIA: Get back! They are the tree guardians of the Resentful Forest! They have never allowed us to go beyond this point!

LUCKY: Why not?

MARIA: I don't know.

LUCKY: Rufus, ask them.

RUFUS: What? (He edges up to the FOREST) Pardon me, but...

FOREST: WWWWHHHHAAAAA! (They shake their branches at him and wail. He hotfoots it back to LUCKY)

LUCKY: Well?

RUFUS: They said... WWWWHHHHAAAAA!!

LUCKY: Cadet, stand aside. (She approaches FOREST) Greetings from Earth!

FOREST: WhMHHHHHAAAAA! (They wave branches threateningly)

LUCKY: (Calmly) Stop that. (They do) We would like to pass by you. We are on a rescue mission and according to

interplanetary trade law any group on a rescue... (FOREST swats her with a branch) Stop that. (FOREST swats her again) Excuse me. (She goes to cats) Observe me closely Cadets. This is an important lesson in interplanetary diplomacy. (She returns to trees) We have a right to pass by you. We come in peace on a mission of mercy. (FOREST raises a branch) If you swat me again I will have to take action. (FOREST swats her) Excuse me. (She goes to MARIA) You say they have never let you pass by them?

MARIA: No. In fact when Dr. Jorgesen tried to pass by them they ate him.

LUCKY: Hmm. Excuse me. (She returns to FOREST) In the interests of interplanetary goodwill I will give you one more chance. (FOREST swats her) That did it. (She goes to cats, whispers to them) Go on. (The cats approach and flank the FOREST) I think you are intelligent beings and so I will explain. These are cats. They are from the planet Earth, originally. They possess remarkable powers. Amazing abilities. Astounding perceptions. (Both cats hold up paws and splay them) And very sharp claws. In order for these claws to remain sharp they must be sharpened. (The FOREST begins to tremble as the cats hiss and turn on them) They do this by slowly, repeatedly raking their needle-sharp claws down the nearest available tree trunk! (Cats stroke the FOREST which howls and parts) How very reasonable you are. I thought you would see it my way. Come, Doctor. (To FOREST) Thank you. (They quickly exit past the FOREST as the cats stand guard. The cats follow them off watchfully. The FOREST petulantly shuffles off muttering and swatting itself)

AUDIO: Lucky and the cats and Dr. Ruiz make their way through the dense forest until they are exhausted. (They enter, tired) They travel farther into the threatening thicket than anyone has ever gone before.

MARIA: This is further into the thicket than I've ever gone before.

LUCKY: Let's take a break and have a snack. Cirrus?

CIRRUS: I have fruit bars and cold milk. (She passes them out)

RUFUS: I'm starved. It sure is hot!

LUCKY: I think we're closing in on the lair of the monster. (The others look at her, alarmed) Or whatever it is.

MARIA: When we landed here we had no idea there was anything hostile. It seems as if that is all we have found.

LUCKY: Every world has its evil and its good. We just have to find the good now.

MARIA: All we have found is dark jungles, fierce forests and lurking evil monsters.

LUCKY: It's a big world. There must be something worthwhile here. (The cats look at her. They all begin to silently eat. RUFUS sits on a platform. He puts down his milk. It is removed)

RUFUS: Where's my milk carton?

CIRRUS: I don't know. Did you drop it?

RUFUS: (Puts down his fruit bar) No, it was right here. (His fruit bar is removed) I... (High-pitched distant laughter is heard offstage) Hey, what's going on here?

LUCKY: Everybody! Quiet! (Distant chuckling laughter)

MARIA: Now what, Sergeant?

CIRRUS: Do you think it's those trees again?

RUFUS: Ug!

LUCKY: No. (Laughter off) Everyone, just stand still and don't make any threatening movements. We don't want to (RUFUS is suddenly pulled off of the up platform by something unseen and he vanishes) alarm them.

CIRRUS: I think we should go have a look at them!

LUCKY: No! Just stand still and let them come to us. Rufus, why don't you... (Looks around) Rufus? Where is he? Cadet Rufus! Front and center!

RUFUS: (Runs on covered with colored furry creatures)
Meeeeeoowwww! (Runs off to exit)

LUCKY: Rufus! Come back here!

RUFUS: (Off) Hooowwwllll!

LUCKY: Dr. Ruiz, what were those creatures attached to Rufus and are they harmful?

MARIA: I have no idea. We have never come across anything like them.

LUCKY: Amazing.

CIRRUS: they're like... furry bugs!

HUGUG: (Furry creature pops up behind the up platform)
Hugug! Hugug! (Vanishes)

LUCKY: Did you see that?

CIRRUS: Not very well. What was it?

MARIA: I think it said... Hug-Ug.

HUGUG: (Pops up elsewhere) Hugug! Hugug!

LUCKY: Don 't scare it! Don't scare it!

CIRRUS: What an ugly mug!

HUGUG 2: (Pops up) Hugug! Hugug! Cuddle! (Vanishes)

LUCKY: Greetings from Earth!

HUGUG: GreefumEr! Haha! (Vanishes)

MARIA: You know, Sergeant, they seem to be trying to speak our language.

LUCKY: Are you sure?

MARIA: Perhaps they have been (HUGUG pops up behind them) watching us (HUGUG 2 pops up) all the time (HUGUGs pop up all over) we have been here. Learning our language.

LUCKY: Hmm. Could be . Let 's try to make contact!

MARIA: Good! (They turn and see the many HUGUGs) You go first.

LUCKY: Greetings from Earth! ALL HUGUGS: Geetee fum Ert! (Laughter)

LUCKY: We come in peace. We are on a rescue mission. (CIRRUS approaches them slowly) Easy!

CIRRUS: I 'm just going to ask them where Rufus is.

HUGUG: Oofus?

RUFUS: (Enters covered with HUGUGs) I think they're harmless.

CIRRUS: Where have you been?

RUFUS: Making first contact! See?

LUCKY: Uhhh, what are they doing, Rufus?

RUFUS: As nearly as I can't tell, they're hugging me.

HUGUGs: HUG! HUG! HUG!

HUGUG 2: Cuddle!

LUCKY: Amazing.

MARIA: They seem to be warm-blooded. Such creatures do tend to seek affection, especially social creatures such as these.

LUCKY: So all they want is... hugs?

HUGUGs: HUG! HUG! HUG! Hug-hug!

HUGUG 2: Cuddle!

MARIA: They haven't hurt Rufus. They aren't threatening us.

CIRRUS: I think they're cute.

RUFUS: I think they're tight! (Tries to remove one, fails)

MARIA: I think if we start walking away they will let go of you
and return to their group.

RUFUS: Think so?

MARIA: Wait a minute! Let me try something. (Turns to HUGUGs) Hug! HUGUGs: Hug! Hug! Hug! Hug!

HUGUG 2: Cuddle!

LUCKY: So?

MARIA: Bug! HUGUGs: HUG! HUG!

MARIA: Mug! HUGUGs: Hug!

HUGUG 2: Cuddle?

MARIA: They respond to any sound that rhymes with... you know.

LUCKY: Hug?

HUGUGs: HUG-HUG-HUG-HUG-HUG-HUG!

MARIA: Exactly. It is their tribal cry like, well like...

CIRRUS: Like "Cadets, front and center"?

MARIA: Yes !

LUCKY: So as long as we don't say anything that rhymes with... you know, they won't follow us?

MARIA: Yes, exactly.

LUCKY: All right! No one is to say any word which rhymes with... you know. CIRRUS AND

RUFUS: Yes, Sergeant!

LUCKY: Dr. Ruiz, I think it is safe to assume that these harmless little creatures were not responsible for the disappearances of your crew.

MARIA: Yes, but, who is responsible?

CIRRUS: (Pulls out notebook and pen) Sergeant, how shall I list these creatures in our official report?

LUCKY: Encountered local species. Made contact. Considered harmless.

CIRRUS: (Writing) ...harmless. (Looks up) What shall I call them?

LUCKY: (Shrugs) Call them Hugugs. HUGUGS: HUG!
HUG! HUG! HUG! (LUCKY, the cats and MARIA exit rapidly)

HUGUG 2: (Mournfully) Cuddle? (Sound of woodblocks off)
Uh-oh!

HUGUGS: (Shivering) Uh-oh! Uh-oh!

HUGUG 2: Bye-bye!

HUGUGS: Bye-bye! Bye-bye! Bye-bye! (They all vanish as SNAPPER enters, a huge, multi-colored, fantastic fiddler-crab)

SNAPPER: (His rapid, rhythmic patter speech is accompanied by woodblocks, the sound of his claws clicking as he addresses the audience)

I don't wanna hear you talk!
I don't wanna hear you talk!
I don't wanna hear you squawk!
Now do you hear me?
Now do you hear me?

Listen to me!
Listen to me!
I don't want to hear you m-mutter!
I don't want to hear you sp-sputter!
I don't want to hear a sound!
Do you know why?
Do you want to know why?
I'll tell you why!
Cause all the sounds,
C-cause all the ssssounds,
Cause all the sounds are miiiiinnnee!

(He laughs and clicks his claws in rhythm)

You just sit still!
You just sit still!
Don't you move!
I don't want you to move!
Don't move now!
I don't want to see you quiver,
I don't want to see you shiver!
I don't want to see you move!
Do you know why?
Do you want to know why?
I'll tell you why!
Cause all the moves,
(He snaps his claw)
All of the moves,
(He skitters side to side)
Every one of the moves is mine!

(He laughs and extends his great claw in a snapping motion)

Yeah, all the moves are mine!
(He laughs)
I can laugh!
But don't you laugh!
Don't you move!

You look too much like... like... those little fuzzy things! They are bad little fuzzy things because they don't listen to me! They laugh and they carry on all day. You know what they do? Do you KNOW what they do? They... have... FUN! Yes! Fun! But I can stop that, I just come around with my snappers! (He snaps his great claw) I can make everyone listen to me! If they don't listen to me I just snap them up with my great, huge claw and I carry them off! And they are never seen again! (Laughs) And they are never seen again! (Laughs) AND THEY ARE NEVER SEEN AGAIN! Would you like to know what happens to them? Would you? (He clicks his claws) All right! EVERYBODY OUT AND... (Three round, flat CLAMS with legs and big eyes scurry out) CLAM UP! (Laughs) I turn them into clams! (The CLAMS line up and tremble) Here they are, just like I like them! Quiet! (One of the clamshells starts to "peek" open and SNAPPER whips a claw around) I saw that! Now! While you are clams you must do my bidding! I command you to follow those four intruders into our forest. They have made their way past the Resentful Guardians and even past those horrible furry things! They must not come any closer! They will threaten my peaceful seclusion! Do you understand!? (The CLAMS nod hastily and tremble) Good! You're trembling with fear! I like that! It shows a good attitude! A little abject terror never hurt anybody! (Laughs and exits. RED CLAM nudges PURPLE CLAM who nudges BLUE CLAM. They communicate briefly in a series of high-pitched hums. They arrive at a consensus. They exit in step, marching and humming)

LUCKY: (Enters cautiously followed by RUFUS, now free of HUGUGS and CIRRUS who has acquired a HUGUG attached to her arm. MARIA enters) Shhhh! I think we lost them!

RUFUS: Almost! (Points at CIRRUS' HUGUG)

CIRRUS: It likes me.

LUCKY: You can't keep it.

CIRRUS: It followed me. MARIA: It would give me a chance to study it closely.

LUCKY: I don't know...

RUFUS: they're harmless! They don't do anything, they just grab hold and... (They turn and all place their hands over his mouth. He makes a hugging motion)

LUCKY: All right! Cirrus, you can keep it until we leave!

MARIA: Sergeant, according to my calculations we are in the darkest, wildest, most unknown part of the forest. If anything dangerous is to be found here we should see it soon.

LUCKY: This is one of the strangest planets I have ever encountered. Such unique life forms and vegetation. (The three CLAMS skitter on behind them, turn around and sit together so that they look like an arrangement of rocks) It's as if the laws of nature do not apply to this place. We have encountered trees that are resentful. Some mysterious hostile force is stalking us. Yet these harmless little... (They all look sharply at her) creatures are friendly and even affectionate.

MARIA: There are always monsters. (CLAMS turn to look at them, turn quickly back before they are seen)

LUCKY: Yes. Yes, there are. I wish it was easier to tell which ARE the monsters, right off. After all, just because something is ugly, that doesn't mean it can't be your friend. (CIRRUS looks at RUFUS. He hisses at her)

MARIA: I only hope we find more friends than monsters, here. (CIRRUS goes to sit on the rock formation that is

actually the CLAMS and they move out from under her. She falls)

CIRRUS: OW!

LUCKY: Those rocks! They moved!

CIRRUS: No kidding!

LUCKY: Stay back. (Walks up to CLAMS) Greetings from Earth, I... (BLUE CLAM turns around and stands) I'm Sergeant Lucky Hi... (RED CLAM stands) Hightops... (PURPLE CLAM stands) We are on a rescue mission and... do you understand me? Can you communicate in any way at all? (BLUE CLAM begins a high-pitched humming, it is "Row, Row, Row Your Boat") It's humming "Row, Row, Row Your Boat".

RUFUS: (RED CLAM joins in a round) They both are.

CIRRUS: (PURPLE CLAM joins) Maybe we should join them as a gesture of friendship.

MARIA: Good idea. (She joins)

CIRRUS: Come on! (LUCKY joins and then the cats, but they can't sing. All they can do is yowl.

CIRRUS AND RUFUS: Yoowwwlll ! Meeeoowwww!
(Everyone else stops singing) Yeeeoowwww! (The cats stop)

LUCKY: (To cats) Don't sing. Anymore. Ever.

MARIA: I just thought of something. If we have never encountered these creatures before and they live in the uncharted part of the forest, how do they know the tune to "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"?

LUCKY: Good point. (To CLAMS) I don't suppose you know "Old MacDonald Had A Farm"? (The CLAMS confer) they're putting their shells together on that one. (BLUE CLAM hums a pitch and they begin humming the song) This is very odd.

MARIA: More than odd. There is only one place they could have learned those songs - from the missing members of my crew! (CLAMS stop singing)

LUCKY: I think they know something.

MARIA: I think you're right.

CIRRUS: Want us to get them to talk?

LUCKY: They may not be able to talk (They start to close in on the CLAMS) but they are beginning to understand what we want. (CLAMS huddle together) We don't want to harm you, we just... (CLAMS form a huddle, confer, break and form a football defensive line) want to know where our friends are. What are they doing?

CIRRUS: Rufus! (The cats form an opposing lineup, LUCKY joins them. MARIA holds up a handkerchief as referee) Ready! Steady! (CLAMS squeak 'hut - hut' and charge) Whooooaaa!

LUCKY: they're getting away! (She chases them offstage followed by the cats)

CIRRUS: (Enters pursuing CLAM) Get that clam!

LUCKY: (Enters pursuing CLAM, tackles it) Got one! (It starts swatting her with its shell) Ow! That hurts! (RUFUS enters chasing CLAM, they exit)

CIRRUS: (As CLAM stops and turns on her, pawing the ground) Hold on! Easy! (Bellowing, the CLAM charges and chases her off as RUFUS enters chasing his CLAM which

immediately clams up and snugs itself flat to the ground. It is joined by the other CLAMS and they huddle flat together)

LUCKY: Get them up! (The others try to pry them up but they are snugged flat. One CLAM snaps its shell closed on RUFUS' foot)

RUFUS: Owww! Get it off me! Yeeoo !!!

LUCKY: Easy fella! Maria, Cirrus, grab the shell! One on each side! Now, pull it open! (They struggle but cannot open the shell)

RUFUS: It isn't working!

LUCKY: I have an idea! (She hums 'Shave and a Haircut' to which the CLAM replies in a hum 'Two Bits' and opens his shell enough to release RUFUS' foot)

RUFUS: Ahhhh! Thanks, Lucky!

LUCKY: I don't think we re going to get anything out of them.

CIRRUS: Yeah, they've just clammed up! (She laughs and they all stare at her solemnly)

LUCKY: Well, there's only one thing to do.

CIRRUS: Get the can opener?

RUFUS: I hear that clams open by themselves when you boil them in water. (CLAMS shudder and squeak)

MARIA: Actually, I think you have to steam them. (CLAMS whimper)

CIRRUS: I like seafood.

LUCKY: Well, that's a great idea, but can any of you cook? (They shake their heads) Neither can I. So what do we do now? (She looks around and they shake their heads) Well, how do you catch seafood? You go fishing! One of us will have to act as bait. Whatever or whoever is kidnapping the exploration crew is nearby. These creatures prove it.

MARIA: You mean we lure it out into the open by offering it one of us? That will be dangerous.

CIRRUS: (Pats her HUGUG, snuggled around her arm) Who will be the bait?

RUFUS: Don't ask!

LUCKY: I would never ask one of my cadets to do something I would not do myself. I will be the bait.

CIRRUS: No, Lucky! You're too valuable! You're in charge! I don't think it should be you.

MARIA: She's right! We need to send someone we can afford to lose! (RUFUS pretends not to hear them)

LUCKY: No, I should go!

MARIA: What about me?

LUCKY: No! We're here to protect you!

CIRRUS: (Steps forward) There is only one solution. (Pats RUFUS on the shoulder) I think Rufus should be the bait!

RUFUS: (Startled) Mew?

LUCKY: Thanks, fella, but this one is mine.

CIRRUS: He can do it, Lucky! I know he can!

LUCKY: Fella, I don't want to steal your thunder, but I have to go in after this thing myself.

RUFUS: I understand, Lucky. (CIRRUS starts to protest again but RUFUS shakes his head "No" violently) You go ahead, we'll back you up!

LUCKY: I know you could do it, so don't think I don't have faith in you.

RUFUS: I know, Lucky, I know!

LUCKY: It would be too dangerous, much too risky. I should go myself.

RUFUS: I would never question your decision!

LUCKY: On the other hand, I don't want to discourage you.

RUFUS: You wouldn't!

LUCKY: I don't want you to think I don't have confidence in you.

RUFUS: The thought never entered my mind!

LUCKY: I want to give you room to make your own mistakes, to face your own challenges.

RUFUS: I will! I promise!

LUCKY: Well ... okay! You can go! You talked me into it.

RUFUS: I did?

LUCKY: Go on, fella!

CIRRUS: Go get em! Bring em back alive! MARIA: It 's very brave of you, Rufus.

LUCKY: We'll wait here for your signal!

RUFUS: (Terrified) Sure! Ah, my signal! I'll just go into the woods...

LUCKY: Into the forest!

CIRRUS: The deep, dark forest. Alone!

RUFUS: I don't guess we could go back and get me a weapon? Just a little gun?

LUCKY: Rufus! What have I always told you? Weapons are excuses that people use...

RUFUS: ...when they can't do things for themselves. I know. Well, I guess I'll go into the forest now. Here I go. I'm going into the deep... dark... terrifying... monster-filled forest. Bye-bye. (He creeps toward exit. CIRRUS walks up and taps him on the shoulder. He jumps) Gaaahhhh!

CIRRUS: Don't forget to signal. Howl real loud when you find it.

RUFUS: Right! Howl... real... loud... (He exits)

LUCKY: He 's a real go-getter that one! (CLAMS jump up and skitter off) Hey! Wait! (CLAMS run over LUCKY) Whoa! Where are they going?!

CIRRUS: (Helps LUCKY up) We better follow them!

MARIA: They could lead us to the others.

LUCKY: Right! Let's go! (They chase CLAMS off and SNAPPER enters)

SNAPPER: Well, well, well! What an interesting development! They travel deeper into my forest and even set a trap for me. Little do they know I will be waiting for them with a trap of my own! (Snaps his claws) Come on out here you scurvy scallops! You obnoxious oysters! (CLAMS scurry out, fall over each other and stagger into lineup. At a signal from SNAPPER they form a doo-wopp line behind him and accompany his rap)

Now listen to me!
I say listen to the Crab!
The biggest, the baddest, the one and only Crab!
The crabbiest Crab!
My claws are sharp!
My claws are fast!
I'm quick on the grab!
I say quick on the grab!
Quick on the claw!
Quick on the draw!
So bring them to me!
I'll do the rest!
I'm the best!
I am hot!
Very hot!
Sizzling hot!
I'm so hot I'm
CRAB BOIL!

(Laughs) Now go on! Go bring them to me! (Settles down into a heap like a pile of rocks, manages a motivating snap at one of the CLAMS who moves reluctantly. The CLAM squeaks and exits. As the CLAMS exit SNAPPER nestles into a heap) I'm going to enjoy this!

AUDIO: Meanwhile Rufus travels alone through the forest, (RUFUS enters, terrified) his keen senses on the alert, his lightning reflexes on standby, the rusty-red Cosmic Crusader is ready for action!

RUFUS: Mew?

AUDIO: I said, 'Ready for action!' (RUFUS gathers himself and assumes an appropriate fearless stance) That's better!

RUFUS: I don't believe this! Lost and alone in the woods! I hate the woods, I'm a city cat! In the city I can catch a bus and go anywhere I want to go, usually. If I catch the right bus. If it runs on time. I like being able to get fresh fish at a take-out Sushi bar. I like being able to go home whenever I want to! Gosh, it's so dark I can barely see my paw in front of my face! It's hardest to be brave when you're all alone.

HUGUG: (Pops up) Cuddle?

RUFUS: (Jumps, then) Oh! Hi, there! Are you lost, too?

HUGUG: Snap-snap! Snap-snap! Uh-oh!

RUFUS: (As he moves to talk to the HUGUG a claw from SNAPPER's huddled form follows him) What are you talking about, little fella?

HUGUG: Op-op fella!

RUFUS: Yeah, fella! Oh! Maybe you are a girl?

HUGUG: La!

RUFUS: Sorry! (SNAPPER's claw circles RUFUS' foot)

HUGUG: OOOPLA!! UH-OH! Snap-snap-snap!

RUFUS: (Steps back) Whoa! Take it easy! (SNAPPER's claw retracts) Well, you know I'm on a mission. I can't stay and chat all day. (SNAPPER's claw moves out again) What's on your mind... what shall I call you? You're a lady Hugug...

HUGUG: Hug-hug! Snap-snap! Uh-oh!

RUFUS: I'll call you Ladyhug!

HUGUG: Hug-hug! (SNAPPER'S claw again threatens to grab RUFUS by the foot) Snap-snap!

RUFUS: (Steps toward HUGUG) Just what is this snap-snap business, anyway? (SNAPPER's claw retracts) I think you little creatures understand more than you let on. I just wish I knew what you are trying to say. Well, if I am going to be bait and get myself caught by this monster, or whatever it is, I'd better get a move on! I'm sorry I can't stay and talk to you. (SNAPPER's claw again goes out) I'll see you around, maybe, Ladyhug.

HUGUG: Snap-snap! Uh-oh!

RUFUS: Take care of yourself! (Starts walking as SNAPPER's claw misses closing on him by inches) Snap-snap to you, too! (Exits)

HUGUG: Whew!

SNAPPER: (Rises up, the HUGUG squeaks and disappears) What an infernal creature! I hate those nasty Hugugs! They are so... Cute! They are so... friendly! They are so... affectionate! They make my shell crawl! Auuughhh! Disgusting! Well, I missed one, but I will certainly get the others! Here they come, now! (Huddles back down)

CIRRUS: (Enters) He came this way!

LUCKY: (Enters with MARIA) Don't lose the trail! We can't let him get too far ahead! (SNAPPER's claws extend toward LUCKY and CIRRUS) I have a feeling we're closing in on our adversary! We will have him any minute now! (SNAPPER's claws close around their legs and he rises up, laughing triumphantly)

CIRRUS: Lucky!

LUCKY: Dr. Ruiz! Run! Find Rufus! Run! (MARIA runs but from each wing emerges the FOREST sentinels pushed on by the CLAMS)

MARIA: We 're trapped!

AUDIO: What's this? It looks as if our heroes are about to become the main course in a seafood luncheon special! Are they going to learn the true meaning of Crab-Claw surprise!

SNAPPER: At last I have all of you! All of you! (Laughs)

AUDIO: And what has happened to our Tabby Terrific? Where is Rufus?

LUCKY: That's a very good question!

CIRRUS: It's just like a tomcat! He's never there when you need him!

AUDIO: What will happen now!?

CIRRUS: We're trapped, but the Hugug can still escape! (Removes HUGUG from her arm) Dr Ruiz!

SNAPPER: Get rid of it! I hate those things!

CIRRUS: Glad to oblige, Crabmeat! (Throws HUGUG to MARIA)

MARIA: (Catches HUGUG) Got it! (She dodges and feints before the CLAMs and finally tosses the HUGUG safely over the FOREST and the CLAMs) I did it!

SNAPPER: The rest of you won't be as lucky!

LUCKY: Don't be so sure, after all, that's my name!

SNAPPER: I shall do with you what I did with the others!

LUCKY: And what was that, you Criminal Crustacean?

SNAPPER: You shall see! Soon enough! I have triumphed! I have won!

LUCKY: Don't be so sure of yourself, you Slimy Shellfish! We're still alive and Rufus is still free!

SNAPPER: Oh, you must mean the red one with the pointy ears! I'll take care of him later! Oh, victory! Victory! (CLAMS line up in doo-wopp line) I love to win And I always win!

CLAMS: Doo-doo waaah! Doo-doo-waaa!

SNAPPER: There s only one way,
My way!
There s only one side!
My side!
There s only one way!

CLAMS: His way!

SNAPPER: There s only one side!

CLAMS: His side!

LUCKY: Don 't forget, Rufus is still free!

RUFUS: (Enters) Did I hear my name?

CIRRUS: You mean, he was free! (BLUE CLAM grabs RUFUS)

LUCKY: Ah, Fella, I hope you have a plan!

CIRRUS: Yeah, I wouldn't want to think you just walked in here and got yourself captured!

RUFUS: As a matter of fact I do have a plan. It's happening even as we speak. Lucky, you always told us to remember three things.

LUCKY: Be courteous, Be prepared, and turn out the lights if you're the last one out of the spaceship.

RUFUS: As a good Cadet I took it to heart. I was courteous to the natives of this planet and with them I prepared a trap!

CIRRUS: What about the lights?

RUFUS: Let's see, Lucky was the first one out, I put up my coloring book, Cirrus got out... (He thinks)

SNAPPER: Enough of this nonsense! Now prepare to...

RUFUS: Wait! Before you send us to our fate we must recite the Great Secret Oath of the Vector Patrol Invocation!

CIRRUS: The what?

RUFUS: Ready? Cirrus? Lucky?

LUCKY: Uh, ready!

RUFUS: Now, all together. (RUFUS places his paw over his heart and so do CIRRUS and LUCKY. They stand for a moment, then RUFUS relaxes) Okay! We're ready!

SNAPPER: Oh, no! You recite the Secret Oath so I can hear it!

RUFUS: How can we? It's a secret!

SNAPPER: Recite the Secret Oath or I'll... (He squeezes his claws and CIRRUS and LUCKY squirm)

CIRRUS: Meerroow!

LUCKY: Rufus, if you're going to do something, do it now!

RUFUS: Very well. The Secret Oath is... you must repeat the oath ten times very fast.

SNAPPER: All right! All right! What is it!?

RUFUS: Ten times fast?

SNAPPER: Ten times fast?

RUFUS: Well, not everyone can do it!

SNAPPER: I can do it! Go on!

RUFUS: The Secret Oath is... Hungry Growing Goats Eat Tacks.

SNAPPER: That 's the Great Secret Oath of Vector Patrol?

RUFUS: I knew he couldn't do it!

SNAPPER: I can do it! I can do everything! (He pauses)
Hungry Growing Goats Eat Tacks? (RUFUS nods) I can do it!

(Takes a deep breath)

Hungry Growing Goats Eat Tacks!

HungryGrowingGoats Eat Tacks!

HungryGrowingGoats EatTacks!

HugryGowingGoats EatActs!

HuggyGoingOats EatAcks!

HuggoingOats EatAcks!

Huggoings EatAck!

HugUgs EatAck!

HugUgs Attack!
HugUgs Attack!

RUFUS: You said it! HugUgs attack! (A net of HUGUGS holding hands like skydivers falls on SNAPPER) HugUgs Attack!

SNAPPER: (Beneath an AUDIO din of HUGUGS chirping) Get them off me! Get these disgusting, soft, huggy things off me!

RUFUS: Let go of my friends!

SNAPPER: (Releases CIRRUS and LUCKY) Yes, anything.

RUFUS: Call off your Clams!

SNAPPER: Get back! (CLAM releases MARIA)

RUFUS: We want the return of the members of the patrol outpost!

SNAPPER: Yes, yes! Anything! Clams! (CLAMS snap to attention) I release you from the Curse of the Shellfish Supreme!

LUCKY: The Curse of the Shellfish Supreme? What... (The CLAMS' shells open to reveal the missing members of the patrol outpost, JIM is one of them)

MARIA: Jim! Stacy! Dr. Puttee!

LUCKY: Amazing! Total biological symbiotic metamorphosis!

CIRRUS: What?

LUCKY: He changed them into clams!

CIRRUS: Oh.

LUCKY: Well , what shall we do with our Crabby Captive?

RUFUS: I think he has learned his lesson.

SNAPPER: I have! I have!

RUFUS: With the HugUgs to guard them the patrol outpost should be quite safe and well-hugged. HUGUGS Hug-hug!

MARIA: Of course! (HUGUG pops up and MARIA takes it, wraps it around her neck) I think we can arrange something that will benefit both ourselves and the natives.

LUCKY: Can you escort this Cracked Crab into the forest and liberate him from his cuddlesome captors?

JIM: No tricks out of you!

SNAPPER: I know when I've lost! You win! You win! (Crew members escort SNAPPER and HUGUGs off)

MARIA: Lucky, Cirrus, Rufus, how can we ever thank you?

RUFUS: Hot cocoa would be nice...

LUCKY: Just do a good job here and take care of the HugUgs. After all, it is their planet.

MARIA: Of course, and we couldn't wish for better neighbors! Now we re all safe, thanks to you! (Exits)

LUCKY: Well, Cadet Rufus, that was good work!

RUFUS: Aw, Lucky, I just did what you taught me. I was courteous to the natives, I was prepared with the trap and... and...

CIRRUS: He forgot to turn out the lights in the spaceship!

RUFUS: Do you think the battery is dead?

LUCKY: (Snaps her fingers in rhythm, the CATS catch on and form a doo-wopp line) Who's the best?

CATS: We are the best!

LUCKY: In the galaxy?

CATS: We three!

LUCKY: It's plain to see! So when the monsters Come after you, Don't feel blue! We will come to your Rescue! We'll help you out! We're in control! All you do is shout...

RUFUS: Hungry Growing Goats Eat Tacks! (CIRRUS swats him)

LUCKY: Lucky Hightops and...

CIRRUS: The Cosmic Cat Patrol!

RUFUS: Hisssss! (CIRRUS and RUFUS break into a hissing and swatting match)

AUDIO: (MUSIC) That concludes this episode of Lucky Hightops and... I said, 'That concludes this episode... (CATS fall into line behind a scowling LUCKY) That's better. Lucky Hightops and the Cosmic Cat Patrol! Tune in next time for another thrilling adventure as Lucky Hightops and her Fearless Felines face... (FANFARE, LUCKY and the CATS turn, pose, ready for action as on the backdrop there appears a silhouette of a menacing robot) "Polaris, The Robot King!" (MUSIC THEME)

END

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