

# EPISODE 1/CHAPTER 1 – The Crew Assembles

NARRATOR. Vit-0-Pep presents the Spaceship Zero Adventure Hour!

## INTRO MUSIC, TITLE BLOCK

NARRATOR: Chapter One: The Crew Assembles.

NARRATOR: SpaceCorp HQ. On the forefront of human space exploration. Sixteen hundred hours. Brilliant rocket scientist Professor Cornelius Ashton discusses his Better-Than-Light Drive with Heidi Mensa, Spacecorp Executive.

ASHTON: Miss Mensa, I feel I must reiterate that there is absolutely no need for a human pilot during this phase of testing. The Better-Than-Light Drive doesn't need any "rocket jockey" to correct course. All foreseeable adjustments can be made by myself or my robot. Adding superfluous humans only serves to introduce an unwanted X-factor into my careful calculations.

MENSA: Ashton, English is not my first language, but there is one word that I'm very familiar with: culpable. Now heaven forbid anything should go wrong with this test flight, there will be a serious inquiry into who is responsible. Now, who do you think --

KNOCKING.

MENSA: \*AHEM\*...COME IN.  
DOOR OPENS, CLOSES

MENSA: Gutentach, Captain Stackhouse. Make yourself comfortable. I was just fixing myself a drink, can I get you one?

SFX: ICE IN A GLASS

STACKHOUSE: You know damn well I quit drinking two years ago. Do you really need to start this meeting off with a

square-block-round-hole trained ape test?

MENSA: It's in my shareholders best interest to affirm your resolve hasn't slipped, Captain. For the record I never doubted you. I was always convinced the man who led the Mars Colonization Mission of 2012 would have no trouble keeping his demons in check.

ASHTON: (INTERRUPTING) Can we save the banter for later and move on to business? I still have 30 hours of checklists to oversee.

MENSA: Captain Glen Stackhouse, may I present the tenacious, rather intelligent and frequently impatient Professor Cornelius Ashton.

STACKHOUSE: Good to meet you, Professor. I can't wait to get that newfangled engine of yours out for quick tour of the big empty.

ASHTON: Hmm, I see. I expect you'll be treating the Better Than Light drive with more gravitas once you're at the helm of a vessel with the device installed. I fear by your tone you regard this operation as some kind of hot-rodding time trial, and that you have no doubt already fantasized bragging about it to your "mates" down in the Officers mess. What you fail to appreciate is that the BTL drive can allow a vessel to span great distances in the blink of an eye. The whole apparatus works by manipulating the gravitational forces of -

MENSA: (INTERRUPTING) Yes, thank you Professor for the lesson on the device we've all been working on for the past 3 years. Glen, how are preparations coming for tomorrow's flight?

STACKHOUSE: Spanner and his team are performing the last set of level 3 diagnostics. He's informed me he'll be done by 22 hundred hours. We'll be ready to launch on schedule.

MENSA: Good, I'll let the board of directors know. Be at the shuttle dock at oh-five hundred hours for

transport to the orbital science platform.

STACKHOUSE Roger that. I'll be in my quarters if you require my attention on anything further, or if you feel the need to crank up the gravity on anything else from my official record.

SFX: BUTTON PUSHED, Space Door opens, footsteps, DOOR closes

ASHTON: I can already tell that it will be more productive to have that man stored in the deconstitutor than it will to have him stumbling around my equipment and interfering-

MENSA (interrupting) PROFESSOR, we have invested BILLIONS into your work, and although the board is impressed with the preliminary results, I am still not convinced that you or your little device is worth all the hub-bub. And don't think for a second that anyone has forgotten that you currently owe SpaceCorp a rather significant dollar value. It is my intention to personally guarantee that you, sir, will make good on your part of the contract. I strongly suggest that you learn to play nice with all parties involved INCLUDING Glen Stackhouse if you want the continued support of SpaceCorp. Are we clear, Professor Ashton.

ASHTON: Yes, ma'am.

MENSA: Good. Hand over the backups from today's computations, delegate what remaining tasks you can to the robot and crew, and prepare yourself for tomorrow's shuttle flight.

INTERMISSION MUSIC,

Announcer: Say there, SpaceCorp cadets! Exploring the galaxy is hard work. Isn't it time for a VITE-O-PEP break? VITE-O-PEP will help put that spring in your step, a gleam in your eye, and give you all the confidence you need to tell The Sandman to take a powder until tomorrow! VITE-O-PEP is scientifically manufactured to give you maximum power! Filled with more sugars, nutrients, and chemical molecules, VITE-O-PEP comes in three fantastic

flavours; Chocolate, Vanilla, and Red! Kids, ask your mom to look for it at your local grocer's! Get ready to BLAST OFFFFFFFFF with Vite-o-pep!

[sotto voce]  
Keep out of reach from children, cats, and small breed dogs.  
[normal]

Act 2.

RETURN MUSIC, TITLE BLOCK

NARRATOR: (V.O.) SpaceCorp Orbiting Science Platform, Low Earth Orbit. Twenty one fifty hours. Engineer Stuart Spanner and his assistant Gearbox perform last minute adjustments to Spaceship Zero's xenon jets.

SFX: FADE IN SPACESHIP ENGINE ROOM BACKGROUND HUM, PRESENT FOR ENTIRE SCENE

SFX: RATCHETING, MALLET ON METAL, OTHER SOUNDS OF TWO MEN WORKING

SPANNER: Pass me that torque wrench there, wouldya Gearbox?

GEARBOX: Great Jumpin' space catfish, Spanner. I'm never gonna get through the deconstitutor checklist if ya keep sending me to gofer tools for you. If that poindexter's gizmo sends them a billion miles off course they may need this decon unit to get back to Earth before their pets die of old age.

SPANNER: (BELLY LAUGH) I take it you don't have very much faith in this Better-Than-Light Drive? They say if it works, it will open up new possibilities in long range space travel.

GEARBOX I hope it will mean I finally get paid for all the overtime I'm owed from accounting.

SPANNER: Haha, well you have a point son, you have a point. But my old grandpappy used to tell me "space credits can't buy the important things in life." Did I ever tell you about my grandpappy, Agnew Spanner? He really understood the value of making time for friends and family. After all, life just whizzes by you like a comet these days. I recall one time the two of us were on a cargo run from low Earth orbit

station Alpha to the Lunar Base on the shadow side...

GEARBOX: Stu, you know I love to hear you jet space gas about your grandpa, but let's save storytime for tomorrow when we're back from the test fight. I've gotta get me some shut-eye. These low orbit hours are killer on my insomnia and this instant sunlight-in-a-box jalopy has never cut it for me.

SPANNER: (LAUGHS) Okay, okay, Mister Gearbox, you win. Go grab some rack time, I'm gonna stay and get some last minute checks in before I call it a night. After all, my grandpappy, Agnew spanner; he always said "Measure twice, align your proton neuronets once."

SFX: FOOTSTEPS MOVING AWAY

GEARBOX: (OFF) G'night, Stu.

SPANNER Goodnight

SFX: HATCH CLOSSES. LONE MAN TINKERING SOUNDS, LOUDER BACKGROUND NOISE

SPANNER: (CLOSE) Alright, one more look at the tape drives, and we'll call it a day.

SFX: MAN FIDDLING WITH MECHANICAL BITS FOR 2 BEATS

SPANNER (CLOSE) Hmmm... that's odd. This can't be right...

SFX: MAN FIDDLING WITH MECHANICAL BITS

SPANNER: (CLOSE) I'll just run a quick level 1 diagnostic, and we'll see if that's not just a little light going on when it shouldn't.

SFX: MAN FIDDLING WITH MECHANICAL BITS, COMPUTATIONAL NOISES

SPANNER Well, I'll be the illegitimate son of an earthworm! That is the single most peculiar thing I have seen ALL ORBIT. (SIGHING) This whole system was ship-shape two days ago. Well, looks like I'm busting out that checklist again for the...

SFX: METAL PARTS CLATTER IN THE DISTANCE

SPANNER (STARTLED) Dammit, Gearbox. Go hit the rack, you cranky old salt. You're never going to sneak up on me if you keep tripping over your own feet like that.

(BEAT)

MUSIC: SUSPENSEFUL, QUIET, BUILDING

SPANNE Gearbox?

(BEAT)

SPANNER Jokes up, old man. You'll have to try again tomorrow.

SFX: METAL PART KICKED ACROSS FLOOR IN THE NEAR DISTANCE

(BEAT)

SPANNER (PANICKED) Gearbox? Is that you?

MUSIC: SUSPENSEFUL, PROMINENT, LEADING TO SHORT STING

SPANNER (PANICKED) OH MY!!!!

SFX: BLASTER NOISE

SPANNER (SCREAMS) AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!

MUSIC: SUSPENSEFUL STING, CONCLUSION

SFX: FADE OUT SPACESHIP ENGINE ROOM BACKGROUND HUM

OUTRO MUSIC, CLOSE TITLE BLOCK, COMMERCIAL BLOCK, CREDITS

NARRATOR: What is the terrible fate of Chief Engineer Stu Spanner? Find out in the next exciting episode "CHAPTER TWO - INTO THE BEYOND!" on the Spaceship Zero Adventure Hour, presented by Vite-O-Pep!