

# LIKE ICE

# IN THE SUN

A Fireball XL5 and Stingray Story

Written by

Robin Day & Keith Ansell

## **Contents**

- 1 Evening Star
- 2 The Creature From The Blue Lagoon
- 3 Depths Of Despair
- 4 Under Pressure
- 5 Powerless!
- 6 Breathing Space
- 7 With Friends Like These...
- 8 How Low Can You Get?
- 9 The Man From Atlantis
- 10 Seek And Destroy!
- 11 Off The Record
- 12 Means To An End
- 13 Defensive Strategy
- 14 Corruption At High Levels
- 15 Hijacked
- 16 Risking Everything
- 17 Collaboration In The Deep
- 18 Act Swiftly Or Die
- 19 Imposter
- 20 Baptism Of Fire
- 21 Awakening
- 22 Intercept
- 23 Sneak Attack
- 24 Lost In Space
- 25 Desperate Measures

Epilogue 1

Epilogue 2

*Robin Day and Keith Ansell have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.*

---

## **Chapter 1**

### **Evening Star**

Atlanta Shore stood by her car, waiting to greet her father as his aircraft landed at the floodlit Marineville airfield. A gentle night breeze ruffled her auburn hair. She loved Marineville, it was her home. Although it was a military base, the World Aquanaut Security Patrol's centre of operations, it was also a very pleasant self-contained town in its own right situated near the Pacific coast of the United States.

Atlanta watched as Commander Sam Shore's distinctive hover chair emerged from the plane, and headed towards her across the tarmac. "Hello father!" she called, hurrying forward to meet him.

"Hello Honey," the Commander said warmly as he steered his hover chair over to her. "It's good to be home. A few days at HQ seems like a month!"

Atlanta gave her father a hug. "How did things go in Washington?" she asked as she helped the Commander into her car.

"Oh... Lots of talk — as usual".

Atlanta stowed her father's hover chair and got into the car, "Anything interesting?"

"Well, the big news is that the World President is dissolving the World Security Patrol and closing HQ. I now report directly to the President, along with all the other section heads." Commander Shore sighed, "So I guess I'll be off to Unity City more often to attend meetings."

"But why?" Atlanta asked as she started the car.

“Oh, it’s all blamed on budget cuts, but between you and me, I think the President wants more direct control of the WASP and the World Navy, to allow him to push through some of his more radical plans.”

“Are they top secret ‘Radical Plans?’” Atlanta asked as she drove back towards their apartment.

“It is classified Atlanta...” Commander Shore chuckled, “But I guess I’m allowed to tell you. It seems, the WASP are going to be guinea pigs for some new underwater breathing drugs.”

“You mean like the Space Patrol’s oxygen pills?”

“Yeah... That’s the plan Atlanta. The World President is pressing for us to make more use of the oceans - and underwater breathing pills are the current bee in his bonnet.”

“Or is that,” Atlanta laughed, “WASP in his bonnet? Just imagine, without all that clumsy breathing gear, we could be living under water just like Marina’s people.”

“Yeah I guess that’s the ultimate goal... But I have my doubts it’ll work,” the Commander sighed. “Still, our orders are to give the project our full support.”

“And my orders are,” Atlanta told her father firmly, “that you relax, forget about work and enjoy the meal I’ve just cooked for you.”

The Commander put up his hands in surrender. “Message understood,” he grinned. “Proceeding With Orders Received, Lieutenant — I’m starving!”

-----

Several days later, two uniformed WASP officers were talking earnestly as they finished their breakfast in Marineville’s Tower Diner.

“Us Troy? Guinea pigs?” Lieutenant George Lee ‘Phones’ Sheridan asked, just a hint of concern colouring his Southern States accent.

“That’s the idea Phones.” Captain Troy Tempest shrugged, “You don’t have to volunteer with me if you don’t want to.”

“Hey, I’m with you Skipper. It just seems like a crazy idea.”

“Yeah... I know what you mean Phones. But Commander Shore wants us to be involved — so we can keep a close eye on the Space Patrol’s egghead. You know the Commander, he hates being kept in the dark about what happens on his own base.”

“But why all the secrecy Troy?”

“My guess is that it works this way. If the project is a success — the World President takes all the credit. If it fails... Well I guess there never was any such project — no egg on his face.” Troy grinned, “But I can’t say the same about you Phones...”

“Uh... Oh... Yeah.” Phones dabbed at his chin with a paper napkin, “Thanks Skipper.”

Troy gulped down the last of his coffee and checked his watch. “Between you and me Phones, the Commander is pretty sceptical about this whole business. But just think, if this idea works, we could be breathing under water just like Marina does.”

“Could be kinda fun Troy... I just hope it don’t turn our hair green!”

“Captain Tempest,” a voice on the wall speakers called. “Please report to the airfield, your transport jet is waiting for you.”

“See you later Phones. I’ll go pick up our egghead. Gee these eggheads all look the same,” Troy sighed as he grabbed his cap and headed for the door, “and talk the same.”

“Don’t forget Atlanta’s invited us over to dinner tonight Troy,” Phones called after him.

“I won’t Phones,” Troy waved as he left, “I wouldn’t miss Atlanta’s cooking for the world!”

Phones was thoughtful as he sat finishing his coffee. Was Troy ever going to make a choice between Marina and Atlanta? And how long was it going to be before the two girls fell out over Troy? Still, Phones would stick by Troy through fair weather and foul; he just hoped things would stay fair.

-----

Two hours later Troy Tempest arrived at the South Pacific Island that was home to Space City - headquarters of the World Space Patrol and the Earth’s gateway to the stars and planets. He’d glimpsed the WSP’s impressive control tower from the air as he’d brought his jet in to land. Now it dominated his vision as he was driven along the desert road towards it.

“Why does it do that?” he asked his driver.

“Do what sir?” she asked innocently.

“Why does the tower revolve like that?” Troy clarified. He’d read about Space City, he’d seen the odd TV documentary. Seeing the tower now though was awe-inspiring.

The driver considered thoughtfully for a moment, “Well Captain, I guess it’s to inspire awe.”

The car was soon drawing up at the steps to the tower entrance. The driver opened Troy’s door and smartly saluted. “You’ll find the Doctor’s office on the twelfth floor Captain. I’ll wait for you here sir.”

Still gazing up at the massive building as it turned effortlessly on its axis, Troy nearly tripped on the flight of steps.

“Careful Captain,” a young woman reached out a hand to steady him. “Your first visit to Space City?”

Troy smiled at the uniformed woman, embarrassed. “Yeah, this place sure is impressive.”

She smiled back, “Oh, we like it Captain.”

As Troy walked with her into the lobby, he observed that the girl was just as impressive as her surroundings.

“Twelfth floor?” she asked as they both entered an elevator.

“Er, yes... twelfth floor...” Troy found himself stammering as the door slid smoothly closed.

“Oh don’t be nervous Captain,” his companion grinned as the lift began its ascent. “The tower is perfectly safe.”

Troy glanced approvingly at the young woman standing beside him, and began to wish that he had more time to spend here at Space City.

“Here we are — Medical Centre,” the girl announced, as the elevator doors opened onto a brightly lit corridor.

“Thanks,” Troy acknowledged as they left the elevator, “Er... Nice meeting you.”

“My pleasure Captain. Now I just have to grab my bag... And then you can whisk me away back to your place.”

Troy wondered if he’d misheard, “Er... I’m here to pick up a scientist. A Doctor Venus...”

“Well, you have picked me up, Captain Tempest.” The girl smiled, “I must say I had heard of your reputation.”

Troy found himself off balance again...

-----

Surface Agent X2-Zero was not happy. He stood visibly cringing before the image of Titan on the huge monitor screen in his secret hideaway — a seemingly derelict old house on the otherwise barren Isle of Lemoy, situated only a few miles off the coast of California and relatively close to Marineville.

“Why,” the supreme ruler of the undersea city of Titanica demanded, “did you not report Tempest’s visit to the Terrainean base known as Space City?”

“I did not think it was important Your Majesty.”

“Important? I want to be informed when ANY member of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol visits that accursed island of lies. Do I make myself clear, X2-Zero?”

“Perfectly, Mighty One.”

“I want to know why Tempest flew to that devil’s isle.”

“I will go there at once,” X2-Zero said quickly, hoping to find approval with his lord and master.

“Fool! I already have a surface agent operating within Space City,” Titan said menacingly. “He reports that Tempest will soon be returning to Marineville, with a female doctor, to carry out certain experiments. You will gain access to Marineville and keep me informed on the progress of these... Experiments.”

X2-Zero could sense that Titan knew more than he had been told but he dare not ask any questions — that would be more than his life was worth. There was a strange look in Titan’s eyes as he cut the video link... Was it fear?

X2-Zero operated a control and watched as all of the electronic gadgets in the room were automatically concealed and replaced by drab furnishings



that matched the overall appearance of the old house. As the surface agent opened up the window shutters and daylight flooded into the room, he was deep in thought. How long had a surface agent been operating from Space City? Why was he always kept in the dark?

-----

Commander Shore looked just a little anxious as he waited in the Control Tower at Marineville. Atlanta tried to calm him down, “Father, please, it’s only another egghead.”

“Yeah, I know.” Shore spun his hover chair and began another brief trip to the other side of the control room before turning again. “They annoy me Atlanta. Why do they always have to be so peculiar; they give me the creeps. As soon as we’ve got through the formalities we’ll send him off to get on with his job. Hopefully he’ll keep out of our way.”

Atlanta turned to acknowledge an intercom message from the reception area, “Okay, thank you.”

“Is that...?” asked Commander Shore.

“Yes Father. Stand by for action! Troy and Doctor Venus are on their way up. Now just be civil — and don’t insult the poor guy.”

“Me?” asked Shore innocently.

The elevator door opened and they both turned to greet their boffin. Shore began his prepared welcome speech. “Welcome aboard Doctor Venus. I’m Commander Shore and... Er... Doctor Venus?”

“Thank you Commander Shore,” acknowledged Venus in her soft European accent.

“Er, yeah, right. Say, would you like to join us for dinner tonight Doctor?”

-----

Atlanta was muttering to herself as she worked in the kitchen of her Marineville apartment. "I'd better fix up an extra special dinner for tonight. Got to put on a good show. I wonder what Troy makes of the new 'egghead'... She's not quite what we were all expecting."

Sam Shore entered the kitchen, his hover chair gliding effortlessly across the floor. "Say Atlanta, I hope I didn't put your plans out by inviting Doctor Venus over for dinner."

"Oh of course not father. I was about to invite her myself. It'll be a real icebreaker for her. Troy, Phones and Marina are coming over this evening in any case."

"Yeah, that's how I figured it too." Commander Shore smiled, "You know, I might get to like having an egghead around here."

-----

By eight o'clock the four guests had arrived and were seated around the Shores' dining table enjoying an aperitif.

Sitting next to Commander Shore, Doctor Venus was feeling relieved to be made to feel so welcome at the WASP headquarters. She knew there was often a rivalry between the services — and sometimes it wasn't that friendly. "I must say Commander, it was very nice of you to invite me to join you all for dinner this evening."

"Just our way of saying welcome aboard Doctor," the Commander smiled. "Say, I hope you don't mind me asking, but are you French? I love your continental accent."

Venus smiled and shook her head, "No, of course I don't mind. And no, not French although I was raised in the South of France. Actually my father is Russian and my mother is Swiss."

Troy wanted to know all about this new ‘egghead’ himself, “So where were you actually born Doctor?”

“The planet Venus. You see my parents were working on one of those planetary research installations and I guess I arrived a little ahead of schedule.”

“So you are that Venus!” Commander Shore exclaimed. “I remember reading all about that. It made the headlines back in...”

“Father!” Atlanta admonished him.

“2035.” Venus informed them. “But I was too young at the time to read all those newspaper reports.”

“A toast!” Troy declared, filling everyone’s glass. “To our Venusian doctor of Space Medicine.”

“To our star guest,” echoed Commander Shore, Atlanta and Phones as they raised their glasses.

Marina picked up her own glass and smiled.

Venus laughed, “Thank you all so much.” She looked across to Marina. “From what I’ve read, Marina, you are something of a celebrity yourself.”

Marina smiled back but made no reply.

“That’s right,” Troy grinned. “Marina is a visitor from the undersea kingdom of Pacifica.”

Troy put a hand on Marina’s shoulder. “I guess you already know Marina doesn’t talk; none of her people do.”

“That’s going to change Troy,” Atlanta said as she put down her glass. “Marina was showing me a new gadget she’s just received from her father in Pacifica. She can type into it in her language and it outputs in English.”

“It does?” Troy asked almost choking on his glass of wine.

Marina nodded and smiled again.

“Once she gets the hang of using it,” Atlanta continued, “Marina can tell us all about her adventures on Stingray.”

Phones chuckled at the idea, “Say Troy, won’t that be just great!”

“Er, yeah...” Troy agreed, whilst taking the opportunity to flash Phones a warning glare. “That’s great news.”

Atlanta didn’t seem to notice Troy’s reaction - she was about to serve dinner. “Well, time for more talk later; now it’s time to eat!”

-----

After a delicious dinner and a little more wine, Venus was beginning to feel rather tired. “Atlanta, that was a really boss dinner. I hope you’ll all excuse me... It’s been rather a long day. I have to be up bright and early to supervise the installation of my scientific equipment at the hospital tomorrow.”

“I’ll get your coat,” said three male voices in unison.

“So eager to see me go?” teased Venus.

“I’ll walk back with you to your quarters”, Commander Shore said, as Troy went to fetch the Doctor’s coat.

“It’s really not necessary... But thank you Commander that would be most kind”.

After Commander Shore and Venus had left, Phones poured himself another cup of coffee, “I’d say the Commander is pretty impressed with our egghead...”

“Yes,” Atlanta agreed, a little irritably, “he does seem to be.”

Troy grinned, “Well she is very impressive... I mean... For an egghead...”

The door to the kitchen slammed and Atlanta was gone from the room.

“Now what did I say?”

Marina and Phones exchanged worried glances.

“Say Atlanta, let me give you a hand with the dishes,” Troy called as he opened the door and disappeared into the kitchen.

“Oh don’t worry Troy... It’s not as if I’ll lose my ring in the dishwasher.” A pile of crockery crashed into the machine.

“But Atlanta, you don’t wear a ring...”

Marina shook her head.

“Oh brother...” Phones muttered under his breath. “Guess we’re just gonna have to ride out the storm Marina.”

-----

X2-Zero had almost driven himself to despair over the last few hours trying to think of a disguise which would allow him to enter Marineville and carry out Titan’s instructions. He had managed to gain entry to the WASP base in the past but it was never easy — and he could not re-use any of his former aliases.

He needed a drink to steady his nerves — a strong drink.

He stared into his drinks cabinet and reached for a bottle.

Then a thought struck him... A thought, which made him cackle with delight. “Excellent!” he declared as he poured himself a large drink, “I’m a genius... A true genius.”