

Rawson picked up the paper from his desk. "I have just signed a recommendation that you be admitted to the class of the year 2356."

Young Seymour's freckled face spread wide in a grin—so wide that it drowned out his face. "Gee, sir. Thanks. Gee! *Star Point!*"

"I've been keeping an eye on you," Rawson continued. "I saw you studying in your spare time."

Rawson leaned back and reflected. "I was like that ten years ago. I worked hard! And this is my first command. I'm proud of it."

His voice cracked out suddenly like a whip. "And by God, no man, nothing, will make me dishonor my gold star or take it away from me!" His eyes stabbed at Seymour. "Now, what about Durk and the mutiny?"

"He says you're a sissy, sir. Afraid of the storm. He says you ain't got no business—"

"Very good, Mr. Seymour. That will be all."

Rawson watched with a fond smile as Seymour departed.

Rawson had no intention of letting his precious cargo of serum be lost or his first space ship wrecked because of Durk's desire for the captaincy.

He picked up a volume "*Cross Currents of Space*" from his book shelf and opened it. After poring intently through many pages, he snapped to his crane-like feet with a grin.

They were approaching Orus—the planet which was covered with borax sand.

Rawson drew together his gangling frame, hung together with tremendous muscles and casually strode on his long legs into the control room.

The crew worked under the emergency lights dismantling the control panel. Durk's bullying voice urged them to speed like the slave whips

of Jupiter. His face marked with his years in the space lanes like a freighter's meteor scars was covered with streaks of oil.

"Orus dead ahead," Rawson remarked with a grin. "It wouldn't do to set the *Star Flight* down for repairs."

Durk's mouth was bitter as an alligator's. "We're going down!"

Rawson strolled away whistling and grinning inwardly.

The rockets pounded as they were adjusted for the landing. It was a fairly simple job and Rawson knew Durk could handle it.

From the port in his cabin Rawson saw the *Star Flight* settle on a reef between a dark and forbidding pool and a swampy morass. Beyond was white, hilly sand.

Rawson turned sharply, on guard, as he heard heavy steps clump into his cabin. Durk and six

of the crew.

"Well, Mr. Smarty, we got you now!" Durk's hoarse voice bellowed in triumph. "Yore under arrest!"

Rawson's muscles rippled and his blue eyes cracked with electric sparks. "Arrest?"

"Yeah! Not bein' in command in an emergency! Put him in irons, boys!"

Todd Rawson looked at the faces of the crew. By the tough lines about their eyes, by the grime in their skins, they showed that they were one with the underofficer—veterans of the spaceways who bowed only to experience and strength.

"This is mutiny. You know that, Mr. Durk!"

"No, it ain't!" the other said flatly. "You deserted yore duty. Me and the crew'll make it stick before the court-martial back home!"

Rawson saw that the underofficer had the force to back him up. "You won this round, Durk. But it's only the first." He smiled coolly.

A young cyclone thundered into the cabin. "Hey, what's going on here?"

"Mr. Seymour!" This from Rawson.

Young Seymour hesitated, but his freckled face was blazing. "Yes, sir." He replied mechanically. But his fists were balled and he advanced angrily on Durk. "You can't do it! Captain's got more brains than the whole bunch of you!"

"Shut up, Squirt!"

Young Seymour lunged at Durk and pounded his fists against the alligator toughness of the underofficer. Durk deftly cuffed the cabin boy and knocked him into a corner.

Seymour rose slowly, wiping the blood from the cut on his lips. He charged again with head lowered and balled fists.