

*Space Commander Jeremy Rogers  
and the Great Snake of Baldor  
by Jerry W. Petermann*

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This is the story of Commander Jeremy Rogers and the Great Snake of Baldor.

It all began with our visit to the desolate and distant moon Dunham. We landed, as always, on the bleak plain of Baldor near the Red Palace of the Most Noble Emperor Edmond. His second in command, Lieutenant Johnson, met us and offered refreshments. It had been a long voyage and we were grateful.

We came in our magnificent Grand Explorer, a spaceship so tall it reached hundreds of feet into the blue afternoon sky of Baldor. It was the most amazing sight as it sat tall and vertical only a stone's throw behind the Red Palace. The two fire beasts of the Red Palace sat silent in the afternoon sun that day. Lt. Johnson spent his time coiling and uncoiling several snakes in front of the fire beasts on the very stones of the Palace drive.

We set to our tasks immediately. Refreshment! Rations were issued and the official drink of the Red Palace was consumed. Suddenly, from the command cabin of the Grand Explorer, an alert was sounded. Incoming marauders were headed our way! But, this time would be different. We were ready. We had the surprise of a lifetime in store for these villains.

At this point I must tell you, each and every time we visited the remote plain of Baldor, a villain by the name of Captain Billy Williams would gather his evil band of Starcycle Rangers and attack the Grand Explorer. They never did any real harm but Williams had begun to make even more dastardly and vile threats.

In the past, the band had merely hurled clay grenades and H2O bombs at the Grand Explorer but with little effect. Now Williams, on his previous attack, had promised bovine doo-doo bombs....stinky and slimy green. We could not let the Grand Explorer take such vile insults.

It was rumored that Captain Williams, who stood a head taller than all his Starcycle Rangers, used threats on his own men, but we were not sure. We did know the reason he attacked our starship so often. We knew he was jealous of me and the Grand Explorer. His father had never flown in space and he had certainly never passed down to his son such an amazing craft. It was more than Captain Williams could take. He had had to be content to merely navigate the desolate moon Dunham with his Starcycle Ranger misfits. I almost felt sorry for him.

But, this was war! My men and I stepped behind the Grand Explorer and tied the Great Snake of Baldor to the Red Iron Stump. The snake gurgled approval. Slowly, the snake uncoiled ready to do battle. The dust from Captain Williams Starcycle Rangers filled the air and came to rest not more than twenty feet from the Grand Explorer.

Captain Billy Williams stepped from his machine amid his men and growled, "You sorry space scum, come out now or we are coming in after you!" Again, the Great Snake gurgled with anticipation. "Let's do this men!" I said in a low voice as we stepped from behind the spaceship.

"What have we here?" taunted Williams, "Little boys playing with a big snake....don't you know snakes can bite?"

"Well, Captain, let's find out!!!!!!!" and I yelled as the Great Snake of Baldor spit a giant stream of venom directly at Williams knocking him over backwards into the dirt. Snake venom and mud clung to his face and hair. "Why you dirty, rotten, flea bitten moon dogs...I'm Captain Williams, Commander of the Starcycle Rangers..." Suddenly, the

Great Snake spit again hitting Williams in mid-sentence and planting him face first in more venom and mud.

Slowly, his loyal and trusted Starcycle Rangers began to laugh, quietly at first, then with a thunderous chorus. "Hey, Captain, call us after you've had a bath..." and they all blasted off leaving Williams in the muck on the lonely plain.

"Had enough....Captain? Let me explain it this way....you are never to attack the Grand Explorer or its crew....ever, ever again..... Understood?" Williams mumbled something under his breath. The Great Snake gurgled loudly. Williams' eyes grew large and he turned and ran as fast as he could go leaving his precious Starcycle Cruiser in the muck.

"Well men, we need to return the Great Snake to the Red Palace before the Most Noble Emperor Edmond discovers we borrowed it without permission. Let's go." So, we coiled it up and carried it to the back of the Red Palace almost undetected. Well, almost. There, standing almost nine feet tall in his shiny black boots, the great emperor bent down and ask, "What have we here?"

"Most Noble Emperor Edmond Sir, we are returning the Great Snake of Baldor. We wish to thank you for its loyal and valued service to the crew of the spacecraft Grand Explorer. Is over here okay?" We hefted the wet snake onto the drying rack. The emperor merely rubbed his chin and smiled. "Yes, yes that will do quite well. Thank you....but next time Ask, okay."

"Yes sir," I responded. We headed back to the ship and left Baldor in a cloud of smoke and dust. It wasn't until we got to the galaxy Andromeda that we stopped long enough to think about what we had done....We had bested the dreaded Captain Billy Williams and his surly band of Starcycle Rangers...for good! So, we all put our feet up on the spacecraft's dashboard and popped the official drink of the Red Palace and of the Most Noble Emperor Edmond....cold Frosties!

Post Script:

“Say Chief, I guess you saw what that Rogers kid did to that bully Williams boy...”

“Of course, why do you think I didn’t get upset when they first took the fire hose? The other kids had it coming. The Rogers kid and his two friends aren’t quite nine yet and the Williams kid is eleven and a half. That’s a lot of difference. By the way, do you know where their spaceship playhouse came from?”

“No, did his dad build it for him?”

“No, his grandfather Baldor built it for his father Jim Rogers in the early seventies. That thing is thirty five years old. It even has electricity. Story is, that old man Baldor even got the local propane dealer to come by and repaint it silver every four or five years. Early on, the city inspector got wind of the electricity inside and demanded it be removed...that is, until he found out the second in command of the Grand Explorer was his own son Steve. Seems since then, well ...the city has just sort of forgotten to read the meter each month.”

“What about the name of the spaceship, Chief?”

“That’s really cool...Jim Roger’s uncle owned a wrecking yard. One day he spotted names on an old Grand Cherokee and a name plate on a Ford Explorer right next to each other. He just pried the two plates off and took them over and screwed them onto the spaceship above the door. The rest is history.”

“Just how big is that thing?”

“Well Lieutenant, the grandfather began by nailing 4 x 8 foot plywood sheets to an old electric construction utility post on his vacant lot. He

nailed three sheets vertically. Guess that makes the whole thing about twenty four feet high. Then he added the other sides and three floors and several plastic covered portholes. I know there's a ladder inside and it's about 20 feet tall. Jim created an engine room on the bottom, crew quarters on the second floor and the command module on top."

"What ever happened to Jim Rogers?"

"That's the darnest thing. He works as a subcontract engineer for NASA. The city inspector's son became an Air Force pilot....you just never know."

"Chief, what made the Roger's boy call you Most Noble Emperor Edmond and the Dunham Fire Station the Red Castle?"

"Buck Rogers I guess...but I really don't know. Maybe it's just that I'm six foot six and I wear shiny black boots and had white hair since I was 43....you know boys."

"What do you think will become of the Williams kid?"

"Most likely...he'll become a chiropractor one day!"

The End