

Julie Jupiter



“All right, *freeze*, lady! One false move and you’re a goner!” Young Julie Jupiter cursed to herself. She’d let her guard down at the worst possible time! She’d been on the surface of the Planet of Puppets tracking Ming the Munchkin. Making progress, too, for she’d trailed him right to his hideout near the Cave of Cauliflowers. But somehow Ming had slipped out and gotten the drop on her. “I know you’re thinkin’ you have the fastest trigger finger in Space,” continued Ming in a voice so syrupy that it hurt her teeth, “but I should warn you that I’m not alone.” “That’s right,” said Binky Blasto, powering up his raygun. Julie knew that distinctive sound better than almost anything else in Space, having been introduced to one when she was just a toddler by her crazy but lovable Uncle Xenon. And she knew it could deliver a wallop powerful enough to flatten a giant space poodle. Hmm, she had to do *something* to turn the odds to her favor. *Turn* – that was it! Slowly – much too slowly for the normal human eye to see – she turned. At the same time, she leveled her own raygun at Binky and fired. The shot blew the pajamas right off the startled youngster. Equally slowly, she turned her gun on Ming. But he was nearly as slow as she was and he adroitly dodged the blast. Off he scurried, with Julie hot on his heels. But she couldn’t keep up with him as he raced through the abandoned space luncheonette. Suddenly, he was nowhere to be seen. Warily, she inspected the astro-dumpster, the deep space Happy Meal recycling centre, even the Venus Rising brand slip ‘n slide. And then from inside a pint-sized rock directly *above* her came that same, syrupy voice: “All right, *freeze*, lady!” “Good grief, here we go again!” thought an exasperated Julie Jupiter as she turned to look up ... ever ... so ... slowly.