

Very Verrucian
The Trouble with Tribbles
by Tony Folden

PAGE ONE:

Panel 1: This is a wide panel of the interior of the Martian Intergalactic Spaceport. Through the windows we can see ships loading and unloading. Inside we see spaceport employees and travelers milling about. Some of the travelers are going through security, some getting their bags checked in customs. The man in charge of customs is Amos Morton, a shape-shifting Verrucian.

1 CAP: Martian Intergalactic Spaceport

Panel 2: Another wide panel, same as above only pushed in tighter. We see Amos giving a particular passenger a difficult time. Amos is searching through his bags and questioning him about a mundane ordinary article.

2 CAP: Amos Morton. MIS Customs Agent. Verrucian shape-shifter. The Verrucians are a narcissistic breed. Amos takes that quality to extremes.

3 Amos: What's this?

4 Passenger1: It's a TOOTHBRUSH.

5 Amos: Toothbrush, eh? You wouldn't be trying to smuggle ILLEGAL CONTRBAND across Martian lines...

6 Amos: ...WOULD YOU?

Panel 3: Tighter shot on Amos with another passenger. Amos holds up a container full of some sort of gelatin. The passenger is hanging her head in shame.

7 Amos: Is this Venusian Quark Jelly?

8 Amos: I can't let this cross Martian lines. I'm going to have to confiscate this.

9 CAP: Verrucians LOVE Venusian Quark Jelly

Panel 4: A tighter shot with another passenger. This passenger looks nervous as Amos rifles through his suitcase. A bag full of marijuana looking substance with the words PURPLE PLUTONIUM across it sit in the corner of his bag near Amos' hand.

NO CAPTIONS OR DIALOGUE

Panel 5: Amos is motioning the same passenger from panel 4 through. The passenger has a look of shock on his face as he grabs his suitcase, clutching tight and quickly moving through the line.

10 Amos: Keep it moving!

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PAGE TWO:

Panel 1: Amos is walking through the spaceport with other employees and passengers milling about in the background as he passes by Air Marshall Ronan Broja. Ronan is a stern, physically fit human wearing tight fitting clothes that show off his physique. Amos has a smirk on his face.

1 CAP: Ronan Broja, MIS Air Marshall.

2 Amos: No arrests in SIX weeks, eh Ronan? You'd better get crackin' or someone might steal your job.

3 Ronan: No arrests means no threats.

4 Amos: You just keep tellin' yourself that.

Panel 2: Amos is smiling to himself, checking his look in the mirror on the wall as he passes by moving on towards another area of the spaceport. Other people are looking at Amos with confused and disgusted looks as they watch Amos admire himself.

NO CAPTIONS OR DIALOGUE

Panel 3: Amos is continuing through the spaceport, still people milling around in the background. Amos is passing Ryoko Ohai, Security Officer, at her post. Ryoko is an Asian human, attractive and physically fit. Her uniform fits snugly against her curves. Amos is shaking his head at her and giving her a "tisk tisk". Ryoko has a scowl on her face.

5 CAP: Ryoko Ohai, MIS Security.

6 Amos: Tsk, tsk, tsk. You're falling behind, Ohai.

7 Amos: TWELVE collars behind me.

8 Ryoko: Don't you have somewhere else to be?

Panel 4: The luggage handler, Shallow Chartreuse, is throwing suitcases at the conveyor belt. Shallow is a robot with a human brain that is 187 years old. He's not the sharpest tool in the shed. Bags are lying all around the belt, making THUNKS and PLOPS as they land, while a few are riding along the belt haphazardly. Amos is giving Shallow the kind of look HE was getting from others.

9 CAP: Shallow Chartreus, 187 year old human brain, robot body, MIS luggage handler.

10 SFX: THUNK! PLOP! SPLAT!

Panel 5: Amos has stretched his body and is standing tall over Shallow. He is wagging his finger at Shallow and has a scowl on his face. Shallow has a computerized frown on his face as if his feelings have been hurt. A bag is caught on the conveyor belt making a whirring sounds.

11 SFX: WHRRRR WHRRRR WHRRRR!

12 Amos: You've got the SIMPLEST job at the spaceport even a Salazaarian SPACE SLUG could do it.

13 Amos: And you STILL manage to screw it up. How USELESS can one creature BE?

Panel 6: Shallow, Ryoko, and Ronan are sitting at a table in the food court area of the spaceport. They are discussing how much they despise Amos. Ryoko and Ronan have burgers in front of them. Shallow is staring longing at the burgers with only and oilcan in front of him. Since Shallow is a robot, he should speak with a computerized voice.

14 Ronan: I didn't think it was possible for someone to be so arrogant.

15 Ryoko: He's a Verrucian. He can't be anything BUT arrogant.

16 Shallow: I bet those burger sure do taste delicious.

PAGE THREE:

Panel 1: This shot is similar to the first panel on page one only we see Sally, a human woman, slightly overweight, wearing tacky clothing. She will be standing at the baggage area and her back is turned toward security. She appears to be hunched over slightly, concealing something.

1 CAP: Last security checkpoint before passengers board.

Panel 2: This is a tight shot of the back of Sally. She is still hunched over and protecting a Tribble (a small furry ball, an alien rodent type of creature that multiplies quickly like Gremlins), but we can't see what it is yet. Sally is stroking it and talking to it. The Tribble is making small, high pitched purring sounds.

2 Sally: That's a good little boy. You're gonna be nice and quiet in my suitcase right?

3 Tribble: Ddddrrrreeeee ddddrrrreeeee

Panel 3: Now angled in front of Sally we can see the Tribble. She is placing the Tribble into a duffle bag. No one seems to notice or care about the odd looking creature. We see Sally's face. She is the epitome of the lonely cat lady, funky clothes, disheveled hair, and stains on her clothes.

3 Sally: Shhhhh. Don't let anyone hear you or you'll get me in trouble.

4 Tribble: Prrrrrrrrrrrr

5 Sally: That's a good little... fuzzy wuzzy.

Panel 4: Sally is looking back over her shoulder toward security making sure not be noticed carrying what is definitely something she should be (the Tribble). Sally is shoving the Tribble into a duffle bag and zipping the bag closed. Behind her we see the other passengers moving through security.

6 SFX: ZZzzzzzzziiippppp

Panel 5: Sally is now checking her bags, including the duffle with the Tribble inside, before she moves through security. Behind the counter is a lovely agent explaining to Sally where she needs to go. The duffle bag is wiggling, but Sally is the only one that sees it. She has a slight look of worry on her face. The agent is handing Sally a ticket for her bags and directing her towards security.

7 Agent: Take this ticket to retrieve your bags once you've arrived at your destination and head over to the right to go through security before you board. Thank you for flying Martian Interplanetary Spaceport.

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PAGE FOUR:

Panel 1: This is a wide shot of the takeoff platform. There are a couple of ships parked as passengers are boarding. Accordion-like tunnels, like the kind you find at airports, are attached to the ships. Workers are busy fueling, washing windows, and loading luggage onto the spacecrafts. Shallow is loading the spacecraft on the right. There are suitcases lying on the ground randomly near the spacecraft cargo doors. He is flinging suitcases, but most of them are landing everywhere except the cargo bay.

1 CAP: Outside on the spacecraft platform, Shallow loads luggage onto the spacecraft. Well, sort of...

Panel 2: We push in tighter on Shallow. On the cart of luggage is the duffle bag with the Tribble inside. We know this from the size, shape, and the wiggle of the bag. Shallow doesn't seem to notice the wiggle as he plucks it from the pile.

NO CAPTIONS OR DIALOGUE

Panel 3: Shallow has launched the duffle toward the cargo door opening. It misses the opening and bounces off of the side of the spacecraft with a THUD. The Tribble, inside the duffle, lets out a SQUEAL.

2 SFX: THUMP!

3 Tribble: SQWEEEEEEEEEE!

Panel 4: We push in a tighter on Shallow standing over the duffle. He is scratching his glass dome head that houses his brain with a computerized confused look in his face.

4 Shallow (thought): What the?

Panel 5: Shallow is squatting down near the duffle, his face very near the bag as he starts to unzip it. The duffle is wiggling.

5 SFX: Zzzzzzzip...

PAGE FIVE:

Panel 1: Shallow has finished unzipping the duffel. From the Tribble's POV we see Shallow's robot face with a computerized expression of curiosity peering into the duffel.

NO CAPTIONS OR DIALOGUE

Panel 2: The Tribble has launched from the duffel and is flying toward Shallow. Shallow has dropped the bag and is falling backwards with a computerized look of terror on his face. Shallow is letting out a noise similar to that of the Tribble from earlier.

1 Shallow: SQWEEEEEEEEEE!

Panel 3: Push in tight on Shallow as he sits on the ground leaning backwards, propped up on his elbows. The Tribble is cuddling Shallow's robot neck and purring. Shallow's look has changed from terror to uncertainty.

2 SFX: Prrrrrrrrrrr

Panel 4: Shallow is smiling, stroking the Tribble as it cuddles with him. He is smitten. Maybe show little hearts bursting over his head.

3 Shallow: Awwwww

Panel 5: This is a mid shot inside the spacecraft. Sally is in her seat with a look of panic on her face. The pilot is making an announcement over the intercom. The passenger sitting next to Sally, looking directly at her, looks worried to be sitting next to her.

4 CAP: Meanwhile, inside the spacecraft...

5 Pilot (overhead intercom): This is your captain speaking. We apologize for the slight delay. There seems to be a small issue in the luggage area...

Panel 6: Same shot, but some of the passengers are groaning because of the delay. Sally is sweating bullets now.

6 Pilot (overhead intercom): ...but we expect to be on our way as soon as we eliminate the problem.

PAGE SIX:

Panel 1: This is a mid shot back outside on the spacecraft platform. George, Shallow's boss, is approaching him to find out about the delay. He's yelling from across the platform. Shallow, seeing him coming and knowing he is holding illegal contraband, quickly turns his back to George in an attempt to hide the Tribble.

1 CAP: Back outside on the spacecraft platform, Supervisor George questions Shallow...

2 George: WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE HOLD UP, CHARTREUSE?!

Panel 2: Shallow still has his back to George. We are in front of Shallow looking back as George comes up behind him. We can see the spaceport building in the background. George has a very stern look on his face. Shallow is clumsily trying to stuff the Tribble back into the duffle. His computerized face is showing panic.

3 George: WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU HIDING?!

Panel 3: Close on George and the duffle. George has pulled it from Shallow's grip. The Tribble is hanging out of the bag. George is looking at it with concerned wonder.

4 George: What the...?

Panel 4: Same shot except the Tribble has scurried from the bag and is crawling up George's arm. George cries out with a look on his face of part fear and part panic.

5 George: Aaaaaaahhhhhhhh!

Panel 5: This is a wide shot from behind George, looking over his shoulder. Now the Tribble is cuddling George's neck. We can see George's profile and he is smiling. The Tribble is purring. Behind Shallow, in the background is Amos walking towards them.

6 Tribble: Prrrrrrrrrr

7 George: You DO realize that Tribbles are considered illegal contraband, DON'T you, Chartreuse?

8 Shallow: But he's just SOOOOOOO doggone cute!

Panel 6: Same shot, but Amos is closer and George sees him. Shallow's head is turned looking toward Amos. Shallow's profile shows a computerized look of panic.

9 George: Shit! Speak of the devil. Here comes the illegal contraband stickler now.

PAGE SEVEN:

Panel 1: This shot is from behind Shallow. We see George with a scowl on his face. In the background is the spaceport. Shallow is running around in circles flailing his arms and screaming. George slaps him on his robot dome head, shouting at him.

1 Shallow: WHAT DO WE DO? WHAT DO WE DO? WHAT DO WE DO?

2 SFX: THWUMP!

3 George: GET BACK TO WORK!

Panel 2: This shot is from inside the spaceport. We see Tara Roeford, the resident homeless woman, staring out the window at all the commotion wondering what George and Shallow are up to. Other people/aliens are standing at various locations along the long window watching other spacecrafts as they take off and land. We can clearly see Tara. She is dressed in tattered, dirty clothes. Her face is dirty. She looks like a homeless person. Outside Shallow has calmed down and George is still holding the Tribble looking toward Tara. His plan is to run inside and give Tara the Tribble for her to hide.

4 CAP: Inside the Spaceport, Tara Roeford, resident MIS homeless woman, watches the commotion.

5 Tara: ?

6 George: I've got an idea!

Panel 3: Same shot only over Tara's shoulder and pushed in closer making the outside clearer. George is sprinting towards Tara. He's half way between Shallow and the spaceport. He is cradling the Tribble close to his body. Shallow is turned facing Amos. Amos is grilling Shallow, finger wagging and all. In the background behind Amos we see another Tribble, a different one, scurrying towards the spaceport.

NOTE - Asimo is a reference to the Toyota robot.

7 Amos: I heard there might be some illegal contraband in the luggage area.

8 Shallow: Contraband? What kind of contraband?

9 Amos: Don't mess with me, Asimo! WHERE IS IT?

Panel 4: Back out on the platform, close on Shallow and Amos. Shallow is looking at Amos scratching his head. Through the spaceport window in the background we can see George talking to Tara.

10 Shallow: I must be having another memory leak. Damn this robot body!

Panel 5: Same shot only we see Amos in mid transformation into an Alien-looking bloodhound. He is howling as his shifts.

11 Amos: Aaaaaahhhhhhhh Oooooooooooooo!

Panel 6: Same shot except that now Amos, as the alien bloodhound, is closer to the spaceport. He is on all fours sniffing along the ground.

12 Amos: SNORK SNORK SNORK

Panel 7: Back inside the spaceport, this shot shows George and Tara from the side. The widow is behind them. Outside we can see Amos as the alien bloodhound sniffing toward the spaceport. Inside George is handing the Tribble to Tara. Tara has her hands out in front of her trying to push the Tribble away.

13 Tara: No way! That's illegal contraband!

14 George: Please, just hide him from Amos.

15 Tara: Not a cha--

Panel 8: We are close on Tara. The Tribble has climbed up her arm and interrupted her. It is snuggling with her. Tara is smiling as the Tribble purrs.

16 SFX: Prrrrrrrrrrrrr

Panel 9: This is a shot over Tara's shoulder. The Tribble is cuddling her neck. We can see her profile. She has a look of shock on her face. In the background, over George's shoulder, is Amos/alien bloodhound barreling towards them. George has his head turned toward Amos.

17 Tara: !

18 George: Quick, hide!

PAGE EIGHT:

Panel 1: Amos/alien bloodhound has tackled George and is sniffing him, slobber and nose drippings cover George's face. George is trying to keep Amos at bay, a look of disgust and frustration on his face. Behind them we can see Tara in the distance running away with the Tribble in tow.

1 George: Get the hell off me!

2 Amos: SNORK SNORK SNORK

Panel 2: POV of George as he pushes Amos/alien bloodhound off of him, drool and slobber falling from his jowls. Amos is in mid shift, changing back to himself.

3 George: GET OFF ME, YOU VERRUCIAN SLIME BUCKET!

Panel 3: Same shot only now Amos has fully returned to himself. George is trying to wipe the slobber from his face.

4 Amos: Where's the Tribble?

5 George: The what?

6 Amos: Don't play dumb with me!

Panel 4: Same shot as he continues to sniff George. George is still in a defensive position. Smelling Tara and the Tribble on George, Amos begins to shift into a homeless person.

7 Amos: SNORK SNORK

8 George: Seriously! Stop slobberin' all over me!

9 Amos: I knew it! I smell that dirty, storage closet living Tara!

Panel 5: This is a wide shot from behind Amos and George. In the background is the area where Tara disappeared into the crowd. Amos is leaping off of George, completely morphed into a homeless person. Off to the right and unnoticed by everyone (including Amos), weaving between the feet of people in the spaceport, is a third different looking Tribble.

10 Amos: You can't get away from me! I'm the best tracker in the universe!

PAGE NINE:

Panel 1: This is a wide shot as Amos/homeless person muscles through a crowd of people on his search for Tara and the Tribble. People that he pushes aside are giving him annoyed looks and he sniffs through the crowd.

1 Amos: SNORK SNORK SNORK

Panel 2: As Amos is pushing his way through the crowd of people, he runs into Ryoko. As he attempts to push past her, she grabs his arm. They are standing in a crowd of people.

2 Ryoko: Hold it right there, mister. Where are you off to in such a hurry?

3 Amos: I'm after a woman!

4 Ryoko: Are you, now? And just how does she feel about this?

Panel 3: We are looking over Amos' shoulder, Ryoko is standing in front of him, just off to the side. Amos is beginning to shift back into himself. Ryoko is smirking to herself. Amos has a determined look on his face.

5 Amos: It's me. Amos! I'm looking for that closet dweller, Tara and an illegal Tribble!

6 Ryoko: Why should I believe you? You Verrucians are crafty. How do I know you're not just some Verrucian disguised as Amos trying to immigrate illegally?

Panel 4: Amos pulls free from Ryoko's grasp in a gruff. Ryoko is laughing to herself as she calls after him, more harassing instead of actually trying to detain. Amos heads toward the storage area, sniffing along the way.

7 Amos: Grrrrrrrrr... SNORK SNORK

8 Ryoko: Hey! Show me your papers!

9 Ryoko: Ha ha ha!

Panel 5: Amos has found himself in front of a storage closet. He has both hands on the doorknob, pulling, trying to open the door. He looks angry as he jerks on the door.

10 Amos: Open the door! I know you've got illegal contraband in there! Open this door right now!

11 Amos: If you don't open this door I'll be forced to kick it down!

Panel 6: This shot is over Amos' shoulder as he kicks in the door. The door is wide open and inside is Tara sitting on the floor with hundreds of Tribbles all around. She looks overwhelmed.

12 SFX: CRRRRRRRAAAACK!

13 Amos: !

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PAGE TEN:

Panel 1: This is a wide shot over Amos' shoulder looking into the storage closet. Tara is sitting on the floor with Tribbles all over her. She has a look of defeat on her face. Tribbles are purring, some are running out of the open doorway.

NO CAPTIONS OR DIALOGUE

Panel 2: This is a reverse angle of the same shot. We are looking over Tara's shoulder, maybe a Tribble is resting there. Amos is standing in the doorway with a look of shock on his face as if he can't believe how many Tribbles there are. We see more of the Tribbles running out of the doorway.

NO CAPTIONS OR DIALOGUE

Panel 3: Same shot only now we have Ryoko, and Shallow standing to either side of Amos. Georges is behind them, bent over with an arm full of Tribbles and reaching for another. Ryoko has a comforting hand on Amos' shoulder. Shallow has a computerized look of joy on his face.

1 Amos: How am I ever going to recover all of this illegal contraband?

2 Ryoko: We'll help...

3 Shallow: Look at all the Tribbles! Wheeeeeeee!

4 George: Come back here...!

PAGE ELEVEN:

Panel 1: This is a wide shot back on the spacecraft where Sally is seated. She looks extremely nervous as the other passengers try to entertain themselves. The captain is announcing on the overhead intercom.

1 CAP: Meanwhile, back on the spacecraft with Sally...

2 Captain (overhead intercom): We apologize for the delay, folks...

Panel 2: Same shot except now some of the passengers are groaning and Sally is out of her seat climbing over the person next to her. Sally is trying to exit the craft as quickly as possible. The person she is climbing over is giving her an extremely irritated look. Sally is still looking panicked.

3 Passengers: Aaaaaaaaawwwwwwwwwww

4 Captain (overhead intercom): ...but it's going to take a little longer than expected. It appears the spaceport has been overrun with Tribbles...

Panel 3: Sally is now near the exit, but Ronan is standing guard. Sally is in a wide stance with her arms out to either side as if she is looking for another quick exit. Ronan has his arm reaching towards Sally, ready to take her into custody.

5 Ronan: Hold it right there, missy!

PAGE TWELVE: This is a splash page with Amos standing in front of hundreds of crates of Tribbles. Off to left of him is Ronan with Sally in handcuffs. To his right are Ryoko, George, and Tara. Tara and George have their fingers poking in the cages, petting the Tribbles. Ryoko is standing at attention. The window to the spacecraft platform is behind them all. In the background we see Shallow outside and is cuddling what appears to be a Tribble.

1 Amos: Thank you, everyone, for helping round up all of the Tribbles. They'll be on the next flight back to their home planet.

2 George: Coochie Coochie Cooo...

3 Tara: I'll miss you...

4 Ronan: And Ms. Sally here will be headed to lock up for transporting illegal contraband across Martian lines.

5 Ryoko: Hey, has anybody seen Shallow?

6 CAP: The End?