

Chapter Two

The Man Inside the Moon

"The Moon is a sweet place to be; no flies, no debt collectors, no mothers-in-law."

- popular myth.

If someone told Jacob Ivanson that the 'light in the sky' was a battered old spaceship on final approach to making a landing on the moon, he would not have believed it.

He would have believed even less that there was only one crotchety man aboard, a grizzled prospector cast in the same rugged and independent mould as the forty-niners of old Earth, back in the fabled gold rush days millennia ago.

He would have said it was impossible that a month earlier the tiny ship had been in an adjacent star system and had been forced to flee from it with the greatest urgency.

Nevertheless, all these improbable facts were true.

Harry Napp would admit to being a loner, almost always had been, despite leaving a string of girls in numerous ports. He even had done his full time in the Navy. But this was rare since Navy time meant long months away and few returns to the same place. Navy relationships were at best only fleeting, and most of the sane long-term survivors were gleaned from the self-sufficient few. Eventually he was content when discharged with honour as Chief Engineer from the super-heavy battle cruiser Duquesne.

He had needed to work his way up from the bottom during his twenty-five years in the service. Good degrees in both fusion engineering and cybernetics at the Centauran University were only just enough influence to enlist him on a level with the lowest deck swabber. Without connections in the wealthy nobility, a commission was out of the question for such as him.