

Chapter Eighteen

The Quick Way Out

"All that glisters is not gold, but often it's good enough."

- The Dreams of the Merchant of Venice.

Professor Welland strolled easily around the periphery of his improvised lab cum classroom. The students were hard at work, concentrating on the practicals in hand. A gentle murmur was evidence for the exchange of ideas; the lack of hubbub was a tribute to the keen interest being shown in the topics of the experiments.

He needed to remember every now and then to prevent his Cheshire cat smile from spreading across his face. Ever since the events of a month ago, his class on the new electricity had been fully attended by a revitalised student body. He now found it necessary to keep a roll call to eliminate outsiders who were sneaking into the course.

Even the Mathematician Zabney was discovering new delights to inflict on his classes, because of the easy communications with the moon base reference library. His classes were not as popular, except for those really keen to learn the basis for the astrogation theories, and the freshly unveiled mystery of quantum mechanics. The background mathematics for the electrical transmission was almost too simple for the august scholar, but he was surprisingly keen to teach it all the same. Several other courses also benefited from an injection of knowledge, all were crowded, many were oversubscribed.

Everyone wanted to be let into the big ship. Everyone wanted to play with the new toys. Welland wondered how long the enthusiasm could last, those that survived his course would be entitled to have a go, they'd have earned it! He even tripled the size of the syllabus to weed out the faint hearted. No longer was it restricted to the simple properties of batteries, resistance and magnetism, and their effects on the flow of currents. Now it included signal theory, electronics, transmission systems, active devices, superconductors, even an introduction to computers, with a link up to the unit on the moon.