

## Chapter Four

### Too Many Eggs in the Basket

"It is never wise to count one's blessings before they have hatched."

- Metaphors Digest.

Galileo and Shakespear both clamoured for attention. Harry tried to ignore them and resume his hard earned rest. The message pod was not due to be caught until tomorrow; there was no life support problem, since other alarms should also have sounded. He was still exhausted. The luxury of his comfortable bed was very attractive, too attractive to bother with movement.

Service training eventually overcame age, tiredness and inertia. He sat up and wiped the sleep from his eyes, grumbling, too tired to curse, too tired to wander across to the command console.

"Shakespear, make me some coffee."

"Galileo, oral report."

"Transmission from the planet, on microwave, standard pattern antique terrestrial analogue television, but just sound. No signal on vision carrier. Short messages only."

"Galileo, is there any danger, are there approaching craft, or any other occurrences not on the priority list? Oral report."

"No."

"Right then. Where's that coffee? Ahh, that's better." Harry luxuriated in the taste and aroma of his corrosively strong black coffee, stretched, yawned, and finally snapped wide-awake.

"Shakespear, oral report."

"There is a sound transmission, in plain standard speech. I have recorded it. The message has been repeated approximately every five minutes."