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\*\* *the stranded ones* \*\*

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Hugh McCahan is in the “security business”. The collapse of world patent laws has ignited a market in high-tech secrets and a boom in clandestine services. Hugh and Lewis Springer are spies for hire: thieves of secrets – or their guardians. One blustery night, Hugh treats a derelict to a hot meal, and learns of an explosion in Antarctica, a cover-up and a black government warehouse. Days later, Hugh confirms some of the facts, but his informant is now dead. Hugh then calls Gael-Falstaff Enterprises, the “information brokers”. They quickly hire McCahan and Springer for a black operation.

Hugh McCahan glanced outside his car window at the snow cloaked forest passed in gray columns. He stared, indulging the moment. It was minutes after sunset, early afternoon in Quebec. McCahan had entered a relentless calm, impenetrable by anything but a major emergency. When the Rolls Zephyr went into a sharp, diagonal skid along the narrow roadway, his eyes never left the article he was reading.

"Hugh, don't you think you should actually drive this bleeding vehicle?" The voice came from Lew Springer in the back seat.

"Sorry," Hugh muttered.

"You pulled my stitches again."

"Sorry!" Hugh repeated. "Bad road." He held one stubby finger poised over the manual override, but the gray columns of trees continued to pass by outside, and the late edition of the Times continued to scroll across McCahan's **LitePage**. Even when the Rolls Zephyr began to yaw back and forth in the snow clotted roadway, Hugh did not look up.

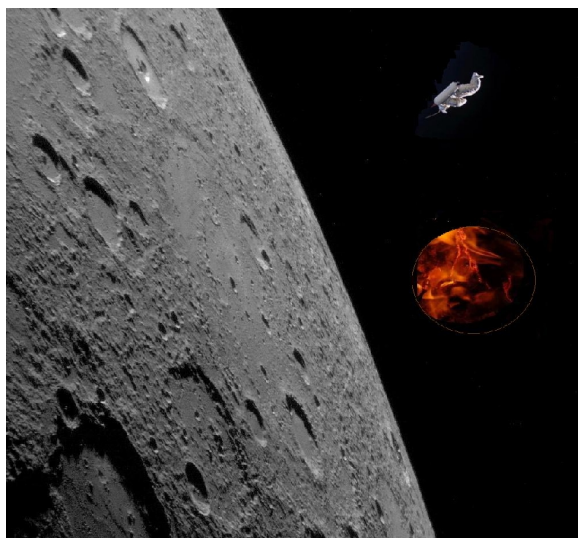
"Hugh!" Lew Springer was muttering from the back. "I'm a control freak when it comes to driving. How can you trust a simple minded guidance program? Humor an injured colleague: Drive this thing!" The answer was the steady click, click of the windshield wipers, the muted whine of the car's electric motors, and the low-pitched moan of the blizzard that roiled outside the window. Hugh's finger remained poised over the manual override. Finally, McCahan let his hand relax. The guidance program had brought the large car back under control.

"Go back to sleep, Lew," Hugh said.

"Sod it. I'm wide awake now."

McCahan glanced up into sheets of advancing snowflakes, random and gray, dissolving as they struck the heated glass...

**Hugh will soon meet the enchanting Samantha, expert in exotic biology, the enigmatic Jack Falstaff and his partner Finnegan Gael, and learn that colonies of stranded aliens are brokering a technological goldmine.**



**But Jack Falstaff has been hiding the most deadly secret of all.**

**Gaskill's new thriller is available only as an *E Book*.**

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**Jay B. Gaskill** is a California lawyer who left his “life of crime” to devote full time to writing.

His profile is posted at < [www.jaygaskill.com/Profile.pdf](http://www.jaygaskill.com/Profile.pdf) >.