



Telempathy
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Huckster Heaven, in Hollywood, set out to fulfill the adman's dream in every particular. It recognized more credit cards than it offered entrées on the menu. Various atmospheres, complete with authentic decor, were offered: Tahitian, Parisian, even Afro-Cuban for the delectation of the Off-Beat Client. In every case, houris glided to and fro in appropriate native costume, bearing viands calculated to quell, at least for the nonce, harsh thoughts of the combative marketplace. Instead, beamish advertisers and their account executive hosts were plied so lavishly that soon the sounds of competitive strife were but a memory; and in the postprandial torpor, dormant dreams of largesse on the Lucullan scale came alive. In these surroundings, droppers of such names as the Four Seasons, George V, and the Stadium Club were notably silent.

Campbell ("Cam") Schofft was ostentatiously honored as one of the Huckster Heaven "in-group." His business card (die-bumped and gold-dusted, of course) was one of those enshrined, under glass as it were, in the foyer. His advice concerning California land speculation was sought by the maitre d', a worthy who had sold his own posh oasis in Escondido in order to preside at H. H., as the communications fraternity affectionately styled the restaurant. Today, however, Cam was aware of Michel's subtle disapproval as they glided into the Caribbean milieu.

And little wonder: The character awaiting Cam in the booth was definitely not the H. H. type. Far from being cast in the approved lean, sickly, bespectacled mold, Everett O'Toole featured jowls wider than Cam's natural shoulders; and his gut threatened to thrust their tiny table into the houris' concourse. Manhattan innkeepers often confused Everett with Ralph Kramden, a classic comic character of the Sixties still cast occasionally for the *cognoscenti*.

Cam viewed this great flow of flesh with dispassionate eyes. The behemoth spoke:

"Can't resist a fast megabuck, eh, Cam?"

"As you know, hippo, I agreed to meet you here in the naive hope that you had something to contribute to the science of marketing," said Cam.

"Science! Hah!" Everett sucked on his goblet. "I do have something to sell, but it's probably over your head."

"Very possibly. In which event, I'll whirl on to something more productive, and you can pick up your own tab for those half-gallons of equatorial garbage you've been gulping."

Sobered by this threat, Everett looked about with a conspiratorial air and leaned across the table.

"You and that giggle gang you call the Market Research Group have been groping around like so many blind mice. How would you like to know in advance, beyond any cavil, the exact future reaction to any product, new, old or sea-changed—or to any campaign to be inflicted on the peasantry?"

"How would *you* like to be Duke of the Western World, with your castle in Acapulco?"

"That's what keeps alive my faith in you," said Everett. "You *do* understand, a little bit. That's what we call Empathy."

Cam signalled for a Bellafonte Sunrise to fortify himself for the forthcoming adventure in non-Aristotelian ratiocination.

"Empathy is our merchandise," Everett continued, looking around again. "My associates and I have discovered our propensity for experiencing vicariously—with unfortunate intensity—the emotional reactions of others."

"I have encountered many ridiculous routines," Cam advised the Dominican beauty placing new potables before them. "But this wins the Freberg."

"Exhibit A coming up." Everett lapsed into a pose of deep concentration, like a two-bit swami. Cam noticed a tiny, rodent-type nose thrusting itself up from Everett's side pocket. "Fear ... I detect great apprehension—panic—hysteria verging on the loss of reason ... third booth this side of the runes ... Valhalla."

Cam rose and went to the Nordic banquet hall. Vikings with groaning platters and great horns of mead almost knocked him down, but he fought his way to the curtained stall described, and eavesdropped.

"He ain't gonna take no for an answer this time, Quiverton," rasped the guttural tones of one occupant. "Gable has to host the new series, with Jean Harlow for the first guest star—or, he gets a new agency."

"Bu-but Fred, they're both dead."

"He ain't gonna stand still for any more alibis. It's up to you—produce, or else! You got a week."

There was a sound of blubbering from within, interspersed with piteous cries like those emitted by a rabbit transfixed by headlights. They sounded to Cam like an account man he knew over at GFR&O; and this in turn meant that the ultimatum was probably proceeding from the fabled throne room of Occidental Tobacco itself, which billed more in one week than some of Cam's clients knew had been printed. Cam even had a blinding inspiration as to the means by which Occidental's

megalomaniac prexy, William McKinley Krog, might be satisfied in this latest necrophiliac whim: Spectaculars built around the classics of the Golden Age of the Silver Screen ... (By Godfrey! Not a bad series title!) ... using film clips of deceased movie greats, and emceed by Stanislaus Von Gort, who everybody thought was dead and therefore might as well be.

With this melee raging in his skull, Cam dodged back to Everett. He found that worthy sliding liquidly from the booth, his side-pocket familiar now half-emerged and regarding his gross symbiote with more-than-animal concern.

"Quickly," cried Cam to the slave-girl. "Stimulants!"

"We only serve rum drinks in this section," unctuously responded the Nefertiti of the Horse Latitudes; but a blazing glance from Cam sent her scurrying, every cheek a-dance.

"You can see what this takes out of me," said the patient, treating himself with deep draughts of Cam's Sunrise. "I don't know how many more of these I—we—can take."

"Take it easy, boy. I conditionally buy your bit. Save your strength." The small inhabitant of the side pocket was regarding him with some asperity. "Who's your little chum?"

"I'm hep to your devious mind," giggled Everett. "You charlatan, you've got it figured that he's one of my associates."

"You're stoned," said Cam, leading his obese charge stumbling and falling out of the Caribbean grotto, past the Michael Mouse shrine and the framed Exceptional T & E Vouchers (to which no exception had been taken, thus attesting to the achievement of their authors).

"Get this, you call-boy of the communications complex," shrilled Everett hilariously in the muted beauty of the business-card foyer. "You're right; he is one of our *Gestalt*; but there's a couple more. And Our Gang will cost you, Schofft, cost like crazy... . But you'll pay, through the nose; because your clients will pay through the nose and ears! He, he, he!" The pained features of the maitre d' reflected exquisite pain as he ushered them into the sunlight.

Cam's car materialized at the curb, and he hustled the sodden Ev into its dark, merciful confines.

"Granted that this entire affair is not some outré hoax ... a possibility on which I don't entirely close the door ... your 'merchandise' might better be labelled *Telempathy*," said Cam.

"Button-down lingo," sneered Ev.

"What is that miniature monster in your pocket ... Marmoset? Mutated rat?"

"Super-mongoose. The result of certain esoteric nuclear experiments off Madagascar."

They hove to at "MAB"—the Merchandising Arts Building, West Coast hub of influence on the docile consumer.

They floated up the exterior tube to the 39th Floor (Socio-Economic) which was actually the hotbed of the political efforts of Cam and his associates. Entry through the wall-port brought them face-to-fang with Father Sowles ("Save Your Souls With Sowles"). The lank, fiery pulpit-pounder had been tabbed as a political natural by certain elders whose money was known as wise; and in consequence, his campaign for the Directorship of North America's Western Zone was being master-minded by Pacific Persuaders, Inc., a pseudopod of the MAB complex.

The crusader struck a Charlton Heston pose and snarled: "In the name of Christendom, what peculiar intruder bring you before me?"

Everett meticulously assayed the gaunt, fanatic figure before him, clad in apostolic robes. "I'll do a lot for a dollar, as the girl said to the soldier, but this is ludicrous. Who needs Telempathy? This cat is so phony, any gossoon can peg him."

Sowles motioned to a monkish aide at a desk, who scribbled furiously in a drab notebook. Cam walked to the aide's side and read: "Gossoons."

"I don't have to look, Cam," said Everett. "I have just issued the death warrant for gossoons, if this vampire ever comes to power, and if he ever finds out what they are."

"Down, boy," said Cam. "Father Sowles, this man and his group appear to possess an instinct or faculty that could make the difference between success and failure. Everett, belay the commentary and look sharp: This is your chance at the large dinero."

"Curt!" Cam called the wall-com. On its screen appeared Curt Andrews, bright young assistant account man, reflexively simulating activity at his desk. "Bring in the Name-O-Scope, please."

Cam turned to explain to the waiting group: "This gadget coming up is another of our recent triumphs in the application of the scientific method to marketing. Just as a computer solves problems in a split second that would take human mathematicians months, the Name-O-Scope arrives at and presents all the bewildering array of possible cognomens for a given thing in a matter of hours. The proliferating combinations of possible name components are reeled off in a rapid fire for our evaluation."

Curt came in with what appeared to be a portable rear-screen presentation projector, with dials and an extra lead; which he attached to the conference table.

"With this device," continued Cam, "Edgar Rice Burroughs would not have to have spent weeks playing with nonsense syllables before styling his hero 'Tarzan'." He guided Ev to a specially constructed chair at the table, rolled up one sleeve, applied the clamp to his bicep. "The machine provided evaluation of alternate names on the basis of blood-pressure fluctuation. Till now, we've had to operate on the basis of a cumulative group reaction, with the obvious disadvantages of all group samples. With Everett & Associates, we may well have a single-unit, perfectly representative sounding board."

"Roll 'em, Curt. Ev, if this works, you've made the consultant roster."

"I trust that involves geetus," replied Ev.

Curt dimmed the lights. On the screen, three heraldic cornets sang a fanfare, followed by floating banners:

"POSSIBLE TITLES FOR THE SOWLES MOVEMENT"

This dissolved to an aerial view of the 20th Century war (mostly clips of the Normandy landings). The camera picked out one brave, clean column (new footage) and zoomed in on the device at its fore: A Cross of Lorraine with a Star of David at its center. Superimposed wavy letters faded in:

"THE NEW CHURCH MILITANT"

Curt studied the dial with the aid of a pocketlite, and made a notation. The scene and the martial music faded out, to be replaced by stock footage from medieval epics: Peter the Hermit exhorting knights to smite the Saracen, the clash of Mediterranean men o' war, chivalric pageantry featuring again the cross-and-star:

"CRUSADE FOR OUR TIME"

The eyes of the super-mongoose gleamed in the shadows as Curt took the reading.

Next came a montage of heroic scenes from two millennia of history: from Agincourt to Iwo, from the villagers marching on Frankenstein's castle to the Four Freedoms conference at sea. One familiar strain underscored all the stirring action; its key words flamed to life:

"SOWLES' CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS"

Everett's familiar emitted a shrill squeak. Curt gasped, "Cam! Right off the dial!"

"All right, Curt! Hit the lights... . We won't bother with the rest."

"What devil's work *is* this?" demanded the cadaverous Sowles, blinking as the lights went on.

"Father, for the first time in the history of mass opinion manipulation, we are scientifically certain, in advance, of optimum response. Everett and his Telepathetic *Gestalt* have proved to be the equivalent of the world's largest survey sample. In the past, whenever a product was about to be launched on the board waters of the American mercantile ocean, but lacked for a sobriquet, prides of copywriters and other creative people huddled late into the night fashioning Names, from which the entire marketing strategy would flow. Remember the Ocelot, Curt?"

"Lord, will I ever forget it. 18,000 names!"

"On behalf of our airplane account, gentlemen. Of those 18,000 names we dreamed up for the 1981 model, some truly ridiculous labels crept in when fatigue and inbred mental circumlocution weakened our defenses."

"The Dawn Play Air Coupe," recalled Curt, with a shudder. "The Pterrible Pterodactyl... . The Crimson Inca... ."

"Spare us, Curt. The point is that as a result of this grisly experience, we invented the Name-O-Scope. The name 'Ocelot' was ultimately selected, and worked out superbly—through sheer good fortune alone. For your campaign, Father, the Name-O-Scope came up with 3,248 possible slogan-names."

"I saw only three," Sowles said, dourly. His aide scribbled something in the notebook.

"I wouldn't inflict the whole wild roster on you, sir—or even on your adjutant there. But we did expose them to selected samples in thirty major markets; and the cumulative finding put these three in a class by themselves, at the top. Furthermore, these random tests agreed 100% with Everett in the selection of 'SOWLES' CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS' as the ideal motif, out of those pre-eminent three... . So we are doubly, even triply checked out before take-off; since these findings confirm the humble opinion of our own staff."

The eagle-eyed leader bent his probing gaze on Cam. "So you say, wizard of words. But while you're rejoicing in these strange devices and stranger accomplices, the enemy draws nigh. The primary is but weeks away, and already the invective of the political jackal beats on the ears of the electorate like a stormy sea."

Everett lifted his shaggy head. "You mix a hirsute metaphor, Charlemagne, but my li'l friends tell me that that's the sort of chatter that the idiot voters will lap up like a friendly Frostee."

"You see, Father—this is the break we needed," pitched Cam. "With this weird talent of Everett *et al.*, we can pre-test every element of the great campaign. The pieces of the jigsaw will drop into place overnight, and we can kick off the Big Push next week... . Like with a monster rally by torchlight and Kleig in Hollywood Bowl... . Singing our hymn under the stars while millions view... . How 'bout that, Ev?"

The impresario of the impalpable nodded. "Should be great. Monstrous, in fact."

In the day that followed, Cam and all his cohorts in MAB let themselves go in a good old-fashioned creative orgy. With one large difference. In the past, copy, layouts, and other campaign ingredients were threshed out in endless conferences, and decisions were made on the basis of an informed group guess. Now, each new idea was exposed at infancy like a Spartan baby to the elemental reaction of Ev & Co., and instantly given the yea or nay.

The rotund oracle was kept under lock and latch in the "Think-Box." This room had been scientifically designed for sequestering agency people who had to give birth to slogans and such under deadline pressure. The walls were sound-proofed, the couch pulled out into a properly uncomfortable bed, and a refrigerator was stocked with snack makings. It was also served by dumbwaiter. Phones were banished, of course; as was 3-D and all other distraction—even windows. Visual motion was, however, provided by a giant clock. The only concessions to Ev were a special little hutch for the super-mongoose; and a bar, carefully regulated to make certain he never completely blotted out the hypothetical brainwave "network."

Cam did his best to pump Ev for the identity of his "Associates", but the old sack of iniquity was wise to his game. He'd rear back and squint at Cam like a Lebanese fruit vendor and thoughtfully pick his nose. "Like to know me confederates, is it?" he'd ask. Then, with a great show of candor: "Well, one of them is a sea creature, but I'll say no more than that. I know you'd never be able to live with the thought of being in business with a squid."

Then Ev would laugh wildly. "Ah, wouldn't he like to know!"

"It's only for your own protection," Cam expostulated. "I know there are more people in this lash-up. We've got to make certain that they're safe from accident—can't have the *Gestalt* disrupted."

"Bosh," was Ev's invariable verdict.

Meanwhile, Cam's little elves paraded through with all the paraphernalia of the Big Push. Livid posters, featuring a Messianic Sowles. Full-page ads, exhorting everyone with an ounce of American decency in his body, to attend the Rally Under The Stars. Subliminal commands were sneaked into the visiphone and 3-D circuits. Couples in Drive-Ins found themselves determined to be among those who stood up to be counted at the Bowl. Christian Soldiers across the continent chartered all manner of craft, from Ocelots to electromag liners, to bear them to the great event. Goodies by the thousand were stamped out to hawk to the faithful: Badges, banners, bumper stickers, wallet cards, purse-sized pix of Sowles, star-and-cross medallions and lapel pins... . The potential proceeds of the Rally alone began to assume war-chest proportions.

And above all they worked on the Speech. This had to be the greatest sockdolager since Goebbels explained Stalingrad. Cam's feverish brain had figured out a host of effects to catalyze the audience reaction. But in the last analysis, triumph or disaster would hinge on the oral effort of the Grim Reaper, as some of the minions at MAB had come to term Sowles.

So, Huckster Heaven became a memory, like a place in a previous existence. Other clients were neglected; and it was even left to Curt Andrews to follow up Occidental Tobacco.

Books were carted in, thumbed through for inspiration, and cast back into the outer corridor in disgust.

"Ev, catch this:

"The flaming light of the Lord shall go forward into the farthest reaches of this planet, to every village and commune where the Anti-Christ has ruled; and indeed it shall go beyond, with mankind's vaulting spirit, to the moon, the planets, and the stars!"

"Not bad," quoth the half-sodden seer, inspecting another treasure from his nasal passages. "My buddies say the marks will go for it like Gang-Busters."

"Kindly refrain from the pseudo-sophisticated jazz," said Cam, in pain. "One of these days your name's going to get written down in that little book. And besides, this *is* an intrinsically worthwhile movement."

"Kindly refrain yourself from the adman jargon and attempts to snow the troops. This Sowles is the worst mountebank since Charlie Ponzi, and you know it. You're in this for the fast megabuck same as me, so let's not kid ourselves."

"Euramerica needs just such a unifying figure now," said Cam. "And just such a cause, one that will inspire positive action against the

Commie Complex. Otherwise, the U. S. of E. will keep on floundering around in a morass of debate while They single-mindedly weave our doom."

"On a single-minded loom," sang Ev into a snifter. "Who would have thought that my great gift to the world would be put to such a perverse use right off the bat?"

"Speaking of bat, let's get back on the ball." And the hands of the clock rolled round and round... .

Two days before the Rally, an exhausted Cam tottered to the visiphone down the hall, and dialled Sowles' Temple.

The monkish aide answered. "Sowles' Christian Soldiers; Brother Kane here."

"What became of Abel?" asked Cam before his cortex could intervene. The aide's eyes glowed with a promise of vengeance, as he put Cam through to Sowles.

"How do the preparations progress?" asked the ex-cleric.

"Well, sir. Which is why I called. The first draft of the Speech is ready."

"I'll be there within the hour," said Sowles, and the screen blanked.

When Sowles arrived at MAB, an Execusec conducted him to the door of the "Think-Box." He stared disapprovingly after her. "When the Soldiers hold sway, modesty will be rigidly enforced."

Cam dictated a memo to his pocket recorder forbidding MAB girls to observe the current abbreviated fashions.

"Well, well; Friar Tuck," burred Ev from his customary prone position on the couch. "Have a toddy, and get that tired, cold blood circulating."

"Revolted," said Sowles.

"Politics make strange bed-fellows, eh, Sowles? Like you 'n' me! And let's not forget the Little Brown Jug! Ho, ho, ho!"

Sowles turned to (or rather, on) Cam. "The Speech?"

"Right. The Speech. Right here, sir." Cam tendered the manuscript.

The Grimmost of Reapers found the most uncomfortable chair in the room, sat, and began reading. The first page was peeled off and dropped to the floor; the second; the third; and finally, the entire effort was strewn beside Sowles, who rose in what he undoubtedly considered righteous wrath.

"You've missed the whole *Message!*" he hissed.

"Sir?"

"All this Pollyanna frou-frou is all right as frosting—but you've left out the *cake!*"

Cam was momentarily spooked—and not "on account of the account," either. Sowles looked fully capable of loosing a full-fledged Inquisition, complete with rack and thumbscrew, at Cam's well-barbered head.

Sowles continued to fulminate. "You haven't got one word in there about our *enemies!*"

"But Father, I refer several times to the Slave World and its evil rulers... ."

"Not just *Them!* What about the traitors in our midst—the sinister cabal of pinko liberals and moderate conservatives that have undermined our defenses... ."

"I thought the Smirch Society had staked out that claim," said Cam.

"Bah! The Smirchers are too mealy-mouthed for the needs of the hour. I think *they're* a little soft on Communism. And what about the race mongrelizers?" spluttered Sowles. "Trying to subvert America with an Afro-Asian Trojan Horse!"

"I suppose you can trace your ancestry all the way back to Caligula," muttered Everett.

"That's right, you human sewer! If I hadn't been assured you might be of use to the Cause—" He left the sentence unfinished.

"I get the picture, Father." Cam ushered Sowles to the door. "We'll get the new draft out right away."

"And don't forget the economic heretics," Sowles shouted as the door closed on him. "The fiends that concocted the income tax, and Social Security, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and... ."

"Wow," breathed Cam, when the torrent was finally cut off.

"How do you like Galahad now?" asked Ev from the bar.

"Build me one too," answered Cam.

Nevertheless, the revision had to be done, and done it was.

"That'll have 'em seein' Red, all right," pronounced Everett.

"It's got everything in it except a declaration of war on Switzerland," said Cam ruefully.

"Quiet—or he'll hear about that, and want it too," said Ev.

The Day of the Rally dawned bright and smoggy, but the weather boys promised a clear, cool evening. Naturally, the major 3-D nets were all set to 'cast the "birth in the Bowl" of a potentially historic campaign. Satellites would bounce the signal over oceans and continents, throughout Euramerica, as well carrying the presentation as to allies and unaligned nations from Tokyo to Karachi. The crusading aspect of

Sowles' candidacy had been tom-tommed so well that pundits were already predicting that Sowles might easily go on to the Governorship of North America two years hence—if, indeed, his Soldiers did not sweep to control of the U. S. of E. Parliament then. That, of course, would install the Grim Reaper in the Presidential Palace... . Cam shuddered and thrust the thought from his mind. But wild dreams aside, there was no doubt that two hemispheres' attention was riveted on the big-time debut of the West Coast's Angel of Vengeance.

En route to the Bowl, the "Soldier" theme was already manifest. Every few feet, a "Brother-Private" in a new, usually ill-fitting uniform was directing traffic or hawking MAB-confected wares. "Father-General" Sowles appeared to have lifted more than one leaf from the Salvation Army's book.

Cam himself had been verbally commissioned Brother Lieutenant-Colonel when the revised oration had been submitted to Sowles. The Reaper ate it up this trip. "You'd have thought it came down from Sinai on tablets," said Ev after Sowles left to begin practicing the Speech.

"He'll make it sound that way," Cam had remarked. "Above all, Our Leader is a great orator."

"Translation: bloody demagogue," Ev had replied.

Now their chauffeured air-suspension limo was tooling them up through the thickening crowds to the hill-cradled amphitheater.

Curt had come along to help. "What's going to happen to the overflow?" he asked anxiously, peering at the turgid sea of faces outside.

"Special buses will take them to closed circuit 3-D houses," said Cam.

"Fantastic," said Ev.

Inside, there were just about the same number of last-minute panics and snafus as at most 3-D spectacles. Power for the innumerable huge coaxial snakes was several times inadequate, which problem no one, of course, had foreseen. But eventually all the crises had had their moment and were coped with—and suddenly it was almost air time.

Cam, Curt, and Ev repaired to the control booth and found an area where they wouldn't be under the technicians' feet. (Cam had decreed a triple platoon system on this one: a fresh director and crew were alternated in every fifteen minutes.) Ev produced a flask, which Cam and Curt declined; but the super-mongoose took a few greedy licks at the cap.

"A lush *Gestalt* yet," muttered Curt.

"Don't insult the folks that put you in silk, sonny," advised Ev.

"Tell me about the others now," said Cam. "Everything's out of our hands anyhow."

Ev breathed deeply. "Okay, I'll tell you a wee bit. One of us is a Pathan valet in Bombay—which would cut up the Reaper worse than the fictitious *entente* with the squid. And the Pathan must have a few drops of Irish blood and, ergo, second sight—he contributes enormously to the acuity of our insight into potential human reaction."

"Mmmm. And?"

"My small friend here, the super-mongoose, is the amplifier. Some goofy new gland, I suppose—or as you guessed, a mutational development. In that tiny *corpus*, however it came about, is an organ that enables us to communicate on an elemental level among ourselves without regard to mileage; and to probe psyches anywhere in the world—as many as we want. Actually, we have to keep his output at a fraction of capacity, or else get swamped in a tidal wave of emotion."

"That accounts for three. But you indicated there were four," said Cam.

"No, I never! But you're right. There is a fourth. Twelve years old; IQ about 180. Never even leaves his room. But his mind—and his psi faculties—have seven-league boots. He runs our team."

"Where does he live?"

"High on a windy hill. He, he, he!" Ev hit the flask as a trout the fly, and an engineer glared. The gradually rising stage lights signalled the Zero Second in a symphony of changing color.

First, the cross-and-star symbol grew from a tiny point on the stage until it became a living pillar of luminosity that seemed to dwarf the night.

Then came the distant music of fife and drum, augmented by cornet: "Yankee Doodle;" and in the traditional Revolutionary regalia, the musical minute-men led a parade down the aisles of the Choral Guard. They segued to "Onward Christian Soldiers" as they marched past the mesmerized audience, up to and onto the stage; and topped off the medley with "The Battle Hymn of The Republic." It was only great.

"The folks are already on the ropes," said Ev.

"Where does he live?" asked Cam.

A Brother-Major came forward and led the Choral Guard and audience in a responsive psalm that emphasized the smiting of enemies. With the "Amen," the cameras panned with the audience's eyes up to the pregnant night sky. You could hear an option drop.

Then the Guard did some fancy quick-step singing on stage: "God Bless America"; "Over there"; and "The Soldiers Are Coming", to the tune of "The Campbells Are Coming", complete with bagpipe brigade.

Next, a rather hard-featured Sister Captain told how the growing army of the Lord needed support. The Offertory was handled by Brother N.C.O.'s while super-imposed 3-D slides told the brethren at home exactly how to get their box to Sowles. Meanwhile a battery of organs swept through the "*Marseillaise*", "Land Of Hope And Glory", and other U. S. of E. songs. Finally, a Guard contralto came forward and got the whole crowd on its feet to join her in singing "The Star Spangled Banner."

"They're limp as old wet-wash," said Ev.

Now the Bowl went dark except for the pale light of the moon and stars. Minutes passed. Eventually, a spotlight picked out Sowles standing alone, quietly, meditatively, at Stage Right. He looked as though wondering if it was all right to come out. The audience went wild. Cam reflected that it probably would have, even without the clagues he had planted. As it was, had the Bowl had a roof, it would have been blasted off.

"We're picking up reactions like mad," said Ev.

"The U. S. of E. audience alone will hit at least 200 million," said Cam.

"All thinking—I should say feeling—like one great docile beast."

"Where does he live?" Cam asked again.

"Tibet," blurted Ev unthinkingly; then he turned and glared at Cam as he might at a tarantula in his daiquiri.

But Sowles had begun to speak. A huge rear-projection screen behind him visualized each thought uttered. He started with the theme of the West: how logical that a great new crusade should be born here where men of the cloth had first blazed Western civilization's trails; Berkeley was quoted about the Westward Star of Empire; this was the shore sought by the most valiant of the westering tide of pioneers; etc., etc. Meanwhile the 3-D living mural milked Western scenery to a fare-thee-well. Gaunt fishermen stared out over Puget Sound, and Big Sur underlined the concept of rugged strength. Mount McKinley and Mazatlan passed in review.

Then Sowles got down to business. This vital young giant—the West—was not going to let the effete pestholes of the East (by this he meant all the way East, including Stockholm, Athens, and Kashmir) forfeit the Caucasian heritage with their decadent goings-on. The Commie Complex was not going to be handed the rest of the planet on a silver platter because of Euramerican "marshmallow moral fiber."

He proceeded to the list of Hates: Welfare Statism; tyranny by tax ("Remember the Boston Tea Party!"); loose divorce laws; fraternal lodges; "promiscuous enfranchisement"; water fluoridation; and so on. These were but a few of the cancers, he screamed, that must be ruthlessly excised from the body politic so that a lean, clean Euramerica might face the Arch-Enemy on reasonably even terms.

"They're frothing at the mouth," said Ev.

Now Sowles really tore the rag off the bush. He described the Godless Atheists that held half the world in thrall. He rehearsed again the butchery of the kulaks and the kangaroo courts of Cuba. He showed the Mongol tanks rumbling into Budapest and the pinched-face terror of the East German refugees; the "human sea" charges in Korea and the flight of the Dalai Lama.

Suddenly Cam was struck by a wild surmise.

"Number Four—he's the Panchen Lama, isn't he?" Cam knew that the current Red puppet high priest was about twelve.

"You win the cigar," said Ev.

Cam made up his mind quickly. "Ev, listen to me and do exactly as I say. This is crucial."

"What?"

"Turn up the gain on the mongoose."

"What for? It's all I can stand right now!"

"Never mind. Turn it up."

"You're the account exec."

Now Sowles began telling in hushed whispers how it would be under the Reds. The huge mural became a panorama of rapine. Commie soldiers sacked Euramerican cities and hamlets. Girls were dragged off for the pleasure of drunken battalions. Barbarian guffaws rang out as homes and stores were pillaged and put to the torch.

"Ourch!" gritted Ev. "All this hate... ."

"Have another snort and turn up the gain."

The crowd began to low like a cow in labor. Sowles swung into the climax: A series of questions shouted to the audience... .

"Would you work night and day to crush this menace to your homes, your family, your country, your *God*?"

"YES!" The hills rang with the full-throated bellow.

"Would you fight, and if need be, die, to save our civilization and slay the Commie monsters in their lairs?"

"YES!"

Cam thought he could even hear answering shouts from outside the Bowl. "Turn up the gain again."

"Will you place in the hands of your servants, the Christian Soldiers, all powers necessary to crush the barbarian tide?" This last was fairly screamed. Sowles was draped across the podium, arms outstretched to the audience.

"YES! YES! YES!" thundered the reverberating response.

Fife, drum, and cornet struck up "Onward" very softly.

"Will you follow me to the ends of the earth—to the very gates of Red Hell itself—destroying every obstacle in our path—until the Anti-Christ has been annihilated root and branch, and we have come into our Kingdom? Will you follow ME??!"

Pandemonium. The crowd surged into the aisles, falling in with the Choral Guard, singing, shouting, weeping.

"He hit high C," said Ev.

"Full gain," said Cam.

Ev gulped more skull-buster and stroked the "amplifier" in the region of the pancreas.

Sowles' arms were uplifted, and one of Cam's clever little effects haloed his flying locks.

"KILL THE REDS!" he shrilled.

"Kill ... REDS ... KILL ... REDS ... " chanted the crowd, in time to the drum.

The bright feral light of the super-mongoose's eyes seemed to lance at Sowles, like an infra-red flash. Then there was a puff where the would-be messiah had stood—a crackle, and a smell of scorched air; but no more Sowles.

"He's gone!" said Curt.

"You're damn right, and thank God for it," said Cam, ministering to Ev who had slumped unconscious from his chair.

The mob broke up uncertainly, with the disappearance of the focus for its concerted bloodlust. The police asked many questions but none of the right ones. Finally, Cam, Ev, and Curt escaped to the waiting limo and started the long slow crawl downhill.

"Now—give," said Ev.

"Feedback. That's why I had you unleash Mighty Mouse. All that hate in hundreds of millions of people *had* to boomerang back through your *Gestalt* in some psi-fashion ... although I did not anticipate the pyrotechnics—or should I say pyrokinetics?"

"But what for, Cam?" asked Curt. "I've never seen such an effective job of mass influence."

"He could have been elected President tomorrow," said Ev.

"That's just it—we did too good a job. And I think that's the way your Tibetan quarterback wanted it." Cam tilted Ev's flask. "Sowles was a cinch to go all the way, which would have meant all-out war. Maybe your junior Fu Manchu figured he could pick up the pieces afterwards."

"How could he know you'd have a character like Sowles all set to go?" Ev said. "Oh, I get it—precognition. It's fortunate that his crystal ball didn't read as far as the outcome tonight."

"In any case, we'd better get your Pathan over here, and start rebuilding your *Gestalt*," said Cam. "You won't hear from the Panchen—he's undoubtedly constructing a new, all-Red unit right now. After this bit, psi faculties, including telepathy, have to be considered another weapons family in the Cold War ... a new set of pieces of the big chessboard. So you're going to have to find a substitute for the Himalayan Quiz Kid, and git crackin'."

"I'll consider your application," said Ev, giving his flask the *coup de grace*; and the lights of L.A. rushed up around them like a huge breaker—gaudy, garish, and beautifully comprehensible.

THE END

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