

**Gerald A. Browne**  
author of Il Harrowhouse

78725-\$1.50

# HAZARD



*makes ESPIONAGE history.*

bit Hazard overheard. With no sympathy, Hazard thought that would be the best Richland and Whitley could do—a couple of hurry-up hookers.

Meanwhile, Whitley was still proving he had a mean eye for unnecessary or excessive spending. Now he was suggesting that Kersh cut back some on all operations' costs. Kersh didn't give in on that, and Hazard noticed Whitley didn't press the point, just poured himself another double bourbon and folded.

As soon as Richland was off the phone, Hazard took it over. First he dialed Carl's number direct and got a busy signal. At least Carl was home. He dialed another number. After the third ring he heard it pick up. As usual the person on the other end said nothing. Hazard said his code letters, T-R-A-K, which alphabetically corresponded with the last four digits of his own New York number reversed. Deliberately loud enough to be heard by Richland and Whitley, he asked what the line was on the Mets that night at Shea. He listened and then said, "I'll take the Mets for a nickel." Betting five hundred, despite his better judgment that Gibson of the Cardinals would have the underdog Met batters striking, grounding, and popping out all night.

After that he gave Carl's number another try. Still busy.

For the exercise it was decided that Richland would stay at the installation with Keven and Kersh. Whitley would go along with Hazard and Kersh's first assistant, a young Ph.D. named Lowery. Lowery's primary responsibility would be to see that certain controls were maintained. Also he would keep an exact chronological record of each image that was chosen. For this purpose he had an oversized clipboard holding a pad of special, printed forms. Attached to the upper part of the clipboard was a special, very accurate watch with a green signal light set in the center of its face. Lowery also would be in charge of the images, which were in a metal box. About a thousand of them.

Hazard, Whitley, and Lowery went out and down the slope to the private landing and a twenty-meter power

Fetch that Kersh had hired for the day. The owner and his son had sailed the boat over from Westport.

The three men went aboard, the mooring lines were unhitched, and immediately the idling gurgle of the ketch's engine changed to a louder boil, getting under way.

They headed straight out. It was a bright, nearly cloudless day. The wind was cool, but Hazard took off his sweater anyway to get the sun. For some protection he sat on the deck leeward of the rear cabin house.

Hazard looked forward and noticed how out of place Whitley seemed there in his suit and tie, having trouble keeping his balance against the ship's pitches and rolls. He watched Whitley take out a cigar and try to light it in the wind. Whitley didn't give up, used almost a whole book of matches, and must have inhaled plenty of sulphur before he finally got the cigar going. He puffed hard and some of the tobacco's aroma was carried back to Hazard. Hazard wasn't a cigar smoker but he knew an authentic Havana when he smelled one. Probably gets them via Canada, Hazard thought, suspecting that Whitley's political hypocrisy wasn't limited to such minor transgressions.

At the installation, Keven was being made ready. She was seated in a contour chair in the center of a windowless room. The walls she faced, those on both sides and the ceiling, were blank and black, not painted but covered entirely with a felt fabric so that the black was softer and unmarred. Behind her was a partition of special, dark glass, something like a two-way mirror with reflection. It allowed unobtrusive observation from the adjoining laboratory area.

Keven knew what to expect, having been through these procedures numerous times before, but it usually took her a while to get used to the room. The feeling of being enclosed alone caused an uneasiness that she called "the claustics." She usually got over that soon enough, but then there were all the wires and terminals. Kersh had explained the purpose of each and reassured her that there was no danger. Still, she couldn't help feel edgy about them. Also, the possibility that she might not do

well, might fail completely and disappoint Kersh and everyone was another source of her apprehension.

It was expected that everything would come to her and, through her, be fed into the computers just below. The computers would record, process, and relay immediately whatever came to the monitors in the laboratory.

In Keven's opinion it was awfully complicated. With the confidence she'd acquired over the past six months, she was sure she could do just as well without being all wired and connected up like some living instrument. She told Kersh that and he agreed with her. But, he explained, personal experience, no matter how valid it might be, was not scientifically acceptable. That was especially true, he said, in researching this subject, which was already handicapped by countless personal experiences over hundreds of years.

Thirty-six electrodes were attached to Keven's scalp. Kersh placed them himself and was very exact about it.

In several ways the procedures differed from the usual electroencephalograph. Interpreting the results of a regular EEG always required guesswork because of the electrical activity between various areas of the brain. It was like trying to analyze the recording of a thousand-piece symphony orchestra, hoping to isolate a single instrument from the whole. For this very reason, neuroscientists had eagerly taken any opportunity to implant terminals deep within the brain itself.

However, the electrodes being used by Kersh overcame the old EEG problem without having to resort to delicate surgery. They probed the brain with the same precision as implanted terminals but did so electronically. Each electrode was present to record at a certain fixed depth. Those voltages, for example, that originated in the occipital lobe would be recorded independently from those that came from the adjacent cerebellum. The electrodes were color-keyed and numbered according to where they would be positioned on the scalp. Also, the electrodes themselves were much more efficient than those usually used. They were made up of an alloy of platinum and

element 44, ruthenium, a very scarce and extremely hard metal more sensitive to electricity than any other known substance. Capable of picking up charges well beyond fifty millionths of a volt, the average potential of the human brain, which is actually much less than the electrostatic charges that occur when a person combs his hair.

Methodically, precise to the centimeter, Kersh applied the tiny, silvery-white discs to Keven's head. The contact surface of each electrode held three points that penetrated the skin. However, they were so sharp and fine that Keven hardly felt them go in. Anyway, she was brave about it, said it didn't hurt nearly as much as the pain inflicted on herself whenever she plucked her eyebrows.

When the depth electrodes were all securely in place, more electrodes of a different type were attached to various other parts of Keven's body, to measure her heart and metabolic rate, breathing, blood pressure, body temperature, and muscle reactions. Two final attachments were made to the outer corners of her eyelids.

She remained seated upright, eyes open, facing the soft blackness of the wall. Nothing else in sight, but her mind was racing, changing, presenting a hodgepodge of unrelated images. Nothing definite. She again was worried about failure.

A keyboard of numbers and letters was swung automatically into position, so that it was easily within her reach. Also an electronic apparatus that looked like a slanted easel.

In the adjacent laboratory one of Kersh's assistants determined that all systems were functioning properly.

Kersh was in the laboratory now. He quickly looked over the bank of monitors that were presenting a computerized translation of Keven's physical and mental processes at that moment. Kersh saw that everything was within normal range. There was the expected alternating between alpha and beta brain waves, with more betas coming through because Keven was acclimating herself to the surroundings and circumstances.

From where Richland was seated in the lab, he also

had a good view of all the monitors. To emphasize his official presence, he asked about the brain waves, the alphas and betas he'd heard Kersh mention.

"Alphas are the primary waves that occur when the mind and body are at rest," Kersh told him.

"Everyone has them?"

"The average brain transmits eight to thirteen alphas a second at a range of two to fifteen millionths of a volt. Each alpha pulsation lasts about ninety thousandths of a second."

Richland nodded as though he understood. "So where do the betas come in?"

Kersh doubted that Richland was genuinely interested, but he also couldn't just ignore the man. Unfortunately, "An abrupt change in brain-wave pattern takes place each time a person experiences any sensory stimulus or is required to make a mental effort of any sort. What happens is the alphas cease entirely and the betas take over."

"How do you know one from the other?"

"Betas are obviously different. They're lower in voltage, have longer duration, and come at a faster rate, normally from eighteen to thirty per second. As soon as the brain accepts the stimulus or becomes used to it, the betas disappear and the alpha pattern returns."

"You mean we're always going back and forth like that?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"No one knows for certain. There have been various theories but as yet no definite explanations."

"Shows how little anybody knows."

"About the brain, yes," Kersh admitted.

That verified Richland's opinion. He wasn't the only one there who didn't know what was going on.

Kersh waited until he saw alphas now coming more consistently from Keven. Then, satisfied that she was settled enough, he spoke to her via the intercom. "Test the keyboard."

Keven had learned the keyboard by touch. She hit three of the keys.

On a monitor screen in the lab appeared the letters y-o-u. Also, predictably, the beta monitor showed temporary activity. Twenty-three cycles per second, normal voltage, average duration.

"Now try the graph."

Keven's fingers found and took up a thin, metal stylus. It felt cold to her touch, and she realized that her hands were moist from tension. She used the stylus like a pencil on the slightly grainy surface of the easel, careful that only the very tip of the stylus made contact. She drew the shape of a heart. No image appeared on the easel but its pressure-sensitized surface electronically relayed a clear outline of the image to a corresponding monitor in the lab.

Richland saw the heart shape appear, scoffed to himself, and shifted impatiently.

"We're ready," Kersh said. He pressed a square button on the console, which caused the remote signal on Lowery's clipboard to light green. By then the ketch was about four miles out on the sound. It came about sharply, reduced speed, and ran parallel with the Connecticut coast. The wind had picked up considerably and the tide was running strong. The ridges of the swells were white and spraying.

Lowery motioned for Hazard to join him at midship. Lowery also tried for Whitley's attention, but had to go forward to get him. Hazard noticed Whitley's face and even his neck had lost color. The man appeared cold, but there was perspiration on his forehead and above his lips.

With the wind and sea as they were, Lowery nearly had to shout when explaining to Whitley the controlled conditions under which the exercise would be conducted. Whitley merely gave a single emphatic nod every once in a while. Not really listening. His cigar had gone out but he still held it tight between his lips. Hazard imagined the end of the cigar soaking in Whitley's mouth.

Lowery opened the box of images to show Whitley how the four-by-five cards were always concealed. He demonstrated how the battery-powered box rotated the cards on a spindle, how it automatically selected and

presented one card at random out of more than a thousand. The face of each card was entirely covered with an opaque adhesive paper that Hazard would peel off. No one but Hazard would get a look at an image until after it had been transmitted. That way they'd be absolutely sure only Hazard was doing the sending, explained Lowery.

A final approving nod from Whitley. He gazed longingly at the far-off horizontal strip of gray that was land. Wishing he were back on it, he pulled the knot of his tie down, unbuttoned his collar and breathed deeply through his nose.

Hazard's look told Lowery he was ready.

Lowery activated the box. The spindle rotated the cards for several seconds and then pushed up a single card.

Hazard took it. He carefully peeled off the opaque adhesive and glanced at the image. An easy one, he thought.

It was an ordinary circle with a much smaller circle at its center.

Hazard immediately fixed his mind on that image. He had to force his senses to detach, ignore everything else—Lowery, Whitley, the sea, the wind. It wasn't easy. It never was. Because success depended on more than simple concentration. It required that he focus his thoughts not only on the image as he saw it but also as Keven would see it. That meant concentrating simultaneously on two related but separate things. Not easy. Ordinarily impossible.

Circle containing a smaller circle.

I see it, thought Hazard, and I see it as she sees it.

He visualized Keven's eyes, their special blue color with slivers of silver in them. Her eyes set on the circle containing a smaller circle. Her eyes delivering that image to her brain.

He felt a spray of cold sea water on his face, distracting. He was momentarily aware of Lowery and Whitley nearby, a peripheral impression of them. But he used the sea, its repetitive chopped-up mass, to bring his mind back to nothing but the circle containing a smaller circle.

There it was again, isolated in his mind's eye.

And then, there in his mind was Keven seeing it.

The image.

As he saw it.

As he saw her seeing it.

The two still consecutive.

For several minutes his mind shifted its intense concentration alternately between those two impressions. Back and forth, more and more quickly. Until the image became a constant and his mental view of it and his mental view of Keven seeing it superimposed one on the other for no more than the duration of an ordinary fragment of thought.

He couldn't hold the composite, didn't try. The impressions became consecutive again, individual thoughts in order, and he felt he might lose them altogether and have to start over. He knew he'd lose them if he tried too hard. So he released the intensity of his concentration slightly, just enough, and that kept the impressions there. Then he pulled the separate thoughts back together to form the necessary composite again. I see it and see it as she sees it. The image. He held it for as long as he could and then let it go.

There was the choppy sea, the sun and the wind that had been hitting him. He handed the card to Lowery.

During all that time Kersh's attention never left the laboratory monitors. He anticipated what might come through, so he was less surprised than pleased by what the computers picked up from Keven, swiftly processed and relayed.

Kersh recognized it as the same extraordinary sequence that had occurred in previous, similar exercises. Beginning with a regular, steady alpha-wave rhythm and then an abrupt block of all alphas as the beta waves took over. Indicating that Keven was responding to a sensory stimulus. Perfectly normal.

However, at this point came the first significant variation from the normal pattern. For no apparent reason, the beta waves continued, and quickly their cycles per second increased from twenty-three to fifty-four. There was also a sharp increase in beta amplitude to sixty mil-

livolts, and the beta impulses more than doubled in duration to eighty-five thousandths of a second.

Obviously Keven's brain was very hard at work. Relaxed as she was, and alone in that silent room, it was doubtful that she was responding to any external sensory stimulation. At least not to this extent.

Kersh noted the auxiliary channel that corresponded with the electrodes attached to the corners of Keven's eyelids. Indications of very rapid eye movement. Her eyes were shifting erratically, as though she were being bombarded by myriad visual attractions. Despite the fact that she was looking at nothing but a blank black wall.

All the while, the beta waves kept coming from her. Within less than a minute they had doubled again in frequency, voltage and length; were peaking up to a hundred and ten cycles; one hundred twenty-five millivolts, one hundred seventy thousandths of a second.

Kersh tried to identify with what Keven was experiencing at that moment. By comparative standards her brain was electrocuting itself. Yet he felt no pain.

The beats went on and up to one hundred thirty cycles, one hundred fifty millivolts, two hundred thousandths of a second. And then, abruptly—

The betas stopped.

As though someone had pulled the plug or severed the wires, the monitor that had been registering the beta rhythm indicated no beta response at all. Strange enough, but all the more so because the expected didn't happen—there was no reversion to an alpha-wave rhythm. The monitor that registered alphas showed no sign of activity. And the eye movement, so prominent before, had suddenly stopped.

Incredible as it seemed, every monitor relating to Keven's brain was now presenting nothing. Blank. It appeared that her entire cerebral cortex had shut down. For one, two, three, four, five seconds.

Then, while all other channels stayed void, there came a distinct pulsating wave of a different sort. It didn't begin low and build up—it came through full at once. Eleven cycles per second with a very high amplitude of two hundred fifty millivolts. Each wave was extremely

short, a mere ten thousandths of a second. Graphically, the pattern being recorded was one of long, sharp, individual spikes, like a symmetrical line of identical inverted icicles.

It was relatively easy for Kersh to determine from which part of Keven's brain these waves were coming. He only needed to see which of the keyed depth electrodes on Keven's scalp was picking up this isolated electrical activity.

The old brain. That was the point of origin. Deep down past the new bark, inside the old bark where the three earliest brain vesicals had evolved. Just anterior of the brain stem, those three known as the rhombencephalon, metencephalon, and thalamencephalon, also called the hind, mid, and fore sections of the old brain. In the evolution of the human thinking and sensory mechanisms, these three had been the first to develop. However, most of their earlier functions had since been taken over by newer brain parts.

Kersh suspected that the waves originating in the old brain were possibly the so-called lambda waves that neuroscientists had detected infrequently on the EEGs of certain subjects. It seemed that lambdas showed up with some subjects and didn't with others. Kersh wasn't sure they were that unpredictable and generally ignored the lambdas; so he arbitrarily called them something else. Psi waves.

Now, as abruptly as they'd begun, the psi waves coming from Keven cut off. Leaving once again that inexplicable, contrary one, two, three, four, five seconds of blank. Then in proper reversion sequence the recognizable beta waves returned as strong as before. Gradually they subsided to normal range.

Kersh focused on the monitor that corresponded with the graph, the easel-like electronic apparatus on which, earlier, Keven had drawn a heart.

Within seconds, there, on the silvery face of that monitor, appeared the image she had chosen to draw this time.

A circle containing a much smaller circle.  
Kersh didn't know, of course, whether or not that

image had been telepathically received by Keven, whether it was a hit or a miss. He wouldn't know until the rest of the exercise was done and the score was added up with Lowery.

"Know what that looks like to me?" said Richland from the rear of the lab. He'd gone for the bottle of bourbon and had missed most of what had happened. He wouldn't have understood it anyway. Now he gulped from a styrofoam cup and said, "It looks like a tit."

Kersh didn't turn to Richland, thought it better not to in order to control his flare of anger. He kept himself in check by once more reminding himself that his affiliation with Richland and all the others like Richland had been his own choosing. Out of necessity, yes, but he'd known pretty well beforehand how it would be.

In 1950 at the Cavendish Laboratory of Cambridge University Kersh was one of a small group of biologists working on the possible genetic importance of protein molecules. While at Cavendish, it became apparent to Kersh that the protein theory, then supported by so many scientists, was not going to prove itself out as the answer to genetic structure. He preferred to believe that the solution lay in the area of nucleic acids rather than the proteins.

To research that field he left Cavendish in 1952 and established himself at Harvard. He was close to the nucleic acid answer when, in 1953, Crick and Watson proved he was right by beating him to it. A disappointment, but Kersh drew valuable self-confidence from knowing he'd been on the right track. That fact also brought him a certain amount of recognition.

Crick's and Watson's double helix discovery was a huge jump ahead. Kersh wisely jumped ahead with it. He stayed at Harvard, refocused his efforts, and over the years made numerous valuable contributions. His reputation grew within the scientific community and reached its height in 1968 when he was awarded a top international prize—just this side of the Nobel—for his work on the replication of DNA and RNA.

By then he was in his fifties, and late one Saturday night at his desk, having worked straight through without

inner, more or less out of habit, he paused for a moment, glanced at his plastic-protected prize certificate and realized how much he really hadn't lived, how much of his time he'd given to his work. Most of his best. It was a feeling that had been coming on for quite awhile. He decided he wouldn't rest on his laurels, stay in the rut. There was still time, and possibly he could make the best of it.

Soon afterward he took a leave of absence. Went to warm foreign places and tried not to think of such things as crystalline A-form DNA fibers. Within six months he had met Julie, loved her, married her, returned to Harvard, and found he couldn't pick up where he'd left off. Changed that much.

It was during his prolonged sabbatical that he'd developed an interest in extrasensory perception, particularly telepathy. Julie's influence had much to do with that. Her belief in it was emphatic and she enjoyed discussing it with Kersh. She related telepathy to something spiritual, a psychic phenomenon. Without belittling her theories, he naturally took a scientific position. If telepathy did exist, he said, there was a scientific explanation for it.

Did he believe there was such a thing as telepathy? Possibly.

"Then why," asked Julie, "hasn't science given it more important attention?"

He wasn't sure. Perhaps the most inhibiting factor was the religious belief that God, not man, works in strange and wondrous ways. Geneticists were getting some of the same treatment for their discoveries that chromosomal arrangements could be manipulated to predetermine human characteristics.

Julie didn't believe that was a good enough excuse.

Kersh agreed, and told her, "As much as they deny it, scientists also want acceptance outside their own special community. That's what often holds them back more than anything else."

Julie put the question to him again. "Do you believe in telepathy? Yes or no?"

"There must be something to it," he conceded.

There was an impressive amount of evidence in favor

of humans having such an ability. But little of it scientifically acceptable. Except for the work of J. B. Rhine at Duke and a few others, all of whom had gone at it rather defensively, attempting to prove the existence of telepathy rather than assuming it did exist and concentrating their energies determining how and why.

The new challenge of it appealed to Kersh. Also, for him, a not unimportant consideration was Julie's enthusiastic interest. Work was better when there was love in it.

He outlined a research program and submitted an official request to the appropriate board of grants at Harvard. The board, though taken aback by Kersh's proposal to research telepathy, did not turn him down. They just politely tried to dissuade him, urging him to continue with his brilliant work in molecular biology.

Kersh stood fast. The board stalled, suggested he take another sabbatical.

Kersh insisted.

Harvard lost him.

But where to get financing for the research of telepathy? One of the private foundations? Too controversial a field for them, Kersh decided. He looked to a more likely money source.

The letter he wrote to Washington was purposely vague, but it received a prompt reply and a week later Kersh flew the shuttle down to Washington for a meeting. As he was escorted down one of the wide upper corridors of the Pentagon, past offices with doors displaying gold-leaved eagles and stars and other emblems, he felt sure he'd come to the right place.

His timing was perfect. There were just six weeks left in the fiscal year and every federal agency was concerned with its dollars; not pinching to make do, rather trying to spend what remained of that year's appropriation. The worst thing would be to have money left over, which might cause next year's appropriation to be reduced. A federal agency could lose its standing if it were too conscientiously frugal. It was the season to be prodigal, and Kersh sensed the spirit of waste in the air.

He was led to and through double doors to his ap-

pointment with an Assistant Deputy Director of Plans. Kersh wasn't kept waiting, was shown right in to an office that had much the same durable character as the corridors, the most noticeable difference being underfoot—wall-to-wall gray carpeting. In one corner a stanchion held a drooping Stars and Stripes fringed cheaply in gold. On a wall were framed photographs in proper nonpartisan sequence. FDR, Harry, Ike, Jack, LBJ and Dick. Signed but probably not really by them. The only thing on the desk was a gray manila folder, not thick, not labeled. A dossier on Kersh.

The Assistant Deputy Director's name was James W. Mumford. So said a propped-up plastic strip. Mumford was in his late forties. He'd recently taken off twenty-five pounds and looked the worse for it, drawn and sallow. His gray suit hung on him, and his shirt collar, at least a size and a half too loose, was forced into gathers by the shoved-up knot of his tie.

Mumford did his best imitation of a warm smile. He began with some flattery and then got abruptly to the point. He let Kersh do most of the talking. Within fifteen minutes the proposition was laid out.

"Rumor had it that we tried telepathy with the submarine *Nautilus*," Mumford said.

Kersh remembered hearing about that. Surface to underwater telepathic communication. A futile attempt at best, never verified.

"Not true, of course," said Mumford. "We think the CIA started the story just to make us look foolish."

Rivalry between the various intelligence agencies. That was something Kersh was counting on. There were ten separate agencies sharing an annual six-billion-dollar budget. Among them were the FBI, the AEC, the Treasury Department, and the State Department's Intelligence and Research Bureau. None of these got a very big slice. At least not compared to the National Security Agency, the CIA, and the DIA. The last had the intelligence divisions of the Army, Navy, and Air Force under its authority making it the biggest spender.

Since the Bay of Pigs fiasco the CIA had recouped its losses and apparently was the intelligence agency most



favored by the present administration. That left the DIA a poor second. Not poor in money but starving for prestige.

The CIA had come to be synonymous with U.S. intelligence. Few persons even knew the DIA existed. The Defense Intelligence Agency had been formed in 1961 by Secretary of Defense McNamara. The idea was to consolidate the intelligence units of the various military services. The move gave the DIA a big edge in personnel under command. The DIA was big, so big in fact that it got caught up in its own bureaucracy. It operated like a giant vacuum cleaner, sweeping up raw data gleaned by DIA agents over the world, but DIA suffered a glut of facts and a poverty of analysis.

Meanwhile, it was the CIA that predicted the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and Israeli's blitz victory in the Six-Day War. It was the CIA that engineered the putschs and coups like the one in Iran that put the Shah back in power and kept the Russians from getting control of the Iranian oil fields. It was the CIA that did the things behind the things that made the headlines. The smaller, trimmer CIA used clever footwork, beat its rival agencies to the punch, and had made itself the lightweight champion of the smart-ass, know-it-all division.

That being the case, Kersh believed that not the CIA but the DIA was his best prospect. He figured the DIA had more money to get rid of and would also be more receptive because of its secondary position.

However, after twenty minutes with this DIA man, Mumford, Kersh doubted his own strategy. Mumford showed no sign one way or the other; merely sat there riding his swivel chair, noncommittal.

Kersh went to his reserve ammunition.

He let Mumford know he'd only accidentally chosen to come first to the DIA with this proposition. Implying that his next stop would be CIA headquarters across the river at Langley.

That got nothing from Mumford, not even a blink.

Kersh brought in the Russians. He'd boned up on what they were reportedly doing in the field of ESP. A surprising amount of information was available in such ethical

publications as the *Foreign Science Bulletin*. And Kersh had access to papers written by Russian scientists, extracts of symposiums held at the geophysics department of Moscow University, the Leningrad Academy of Science, and the Kazakh State University. Among those involved was Dr. Leonid Vasilev, whom Kersh knew to be a top Soviet scientist. He was holder of the Lenin Prize, a member of the Soviet Academy of Medicine, and chairman of physiology at the University of Leningrad. Excellent credentials. Also participating was Dr. Ya Terletsky, the noted physicist, a chairman at Moscow University, and Dr. M. Bongard of the Biophysics Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow.

From what was reported, Kersh gathered that, unlike the United States, the Soviet Union had been seriously experimenting with ESP for the past twenty years. In 1966 the Russians conducted the first long-distance-telepathy exercise. A receiver-subject in Moscow successfully received several simple-image messages telepathically transmitted by a sender-subject in another city more than a thousand miles away. The exercise was performed under fairly controlled conditions. Since then, more complicated, highly controlled experiments had been conducted in Moscow, Leningrad, Prague, at various state universities, and most recently in Academgorodok, where the elite of Russia's scientists were stationed. Most impressive was the fact that the experiments were supervised by men of Vasilev's caliber. That indicated a priority interest by the state and meant, of course, that the military was also in on it. Evidently the Soviets, not deterred by any religious or other prejudices, had accepted the fact that ESP was possible and had gone full speed ahead to develop an understanding of it. In 1969 a center for the preliminary training of telepathic subjects was established at the University of Leningrad. Just a year later another for advanced training was put into operation at the State University in Moscow. Of course there was no way of knowing really how far the Soviets had progressed, but the advantages in using telepathy for security and espionage purposes were obvious.

Mumford acted as though this was last year's news.

He told Kersh, "If, as you imply, they've got it, why aren't they using it?"

"Perhaps they are."

Finally a reaction from Mumford. A thoughtful grin. It occurred to Kersh that possibly Mumford was enjoying a mental picture of someone putting one over on the CIA, even the Russians.

"How much money are we talking about?" asked Mumford.

Kersh presented a written estimate of costs. To his way of thinking, it was plenty.

Mumford studied the estimate for several minutes and then told Kersh that he thought the bottom-line figure was inadequate. Too low. His tone had the ring of objective criticism more than interest. He also mentioned that nowhere on the estimate did he see a provision for Kersh's personal salary.

That wasn't an oversight on Kersh's part. It just wasn't of first importance, so he'd left it out of this first presentation.

Mumford insisted that Kersh quote a salary figure.

Kersh thought first of a relatively modest amount but then remembered to triple it, hopefully catering to Mumford's need to spend.

Mumford ended with the vague promise that Kersh might be hearing from him or someone else in a month or two. Along with good-bye he shook Kersh's hand as though he didn't consider it an act of touching another person.

Kersh returned from Washington feeling that he'd failed. Ten days later there was a call from Mumford informing Kersh that the DIA had approved his proposal. It had accepted Kersh's original estimate and voluntarily added on thirty percent for contingencies. That extra thirty, Mumford explained, would avoid having to reapply for additional funds later on. It was good to have a little slush, he said. There were some DIA stipulations of a minor nature that Kersh would have to agree to, but the important thing, the project itself, had been given the go-ahead and would also be provided for in the DIA's budget for the next year.

Kersh got right to it. He acquired the big house in Fairfield and began installing the equipment he'd need. Within six months he was conducting experiments with various DIA agents as subjects. That was one of the DIA's so-called minor stipulations. Kersh had to use DIA personnel exclusively for his experiments. Perhaps the intention was to keep the CIA from knowing about the project, but more likely it was just that the DIA self-consciously didn't want *anyone* to know it was involved with ESP.

Anyway, those initial experiments were not encouraging. At that time Kersh was just getting his own thoughts organized into workable theory. However, he believed the subjects the DIA assigned to him didn't help matters. They lacked, for example, the necessary positive attitude.

Kersh complained to Mumford several times, and was finally so adamant that the DIA decided to compromise. Kersh could experiment with subjects of his own choosing, but, first, each had to be cleared and enlisted into the DIA. Kersh agreed. At least it was an improvement over what he'd had to put up with.

Shortly thereafter, Kersh met socially with a long-time acquaintance and colleague named Albert Benson. He happened to mention to Benson that he was having difficulty finding qualified subjects for his research. Benson, who had been on the faculty at Dartmouth for many years, tried to be helpful. He gave it some thought and recalled a young man who had once attended Dartmouth—a young man with a remarkable mind, an amazing memory, actually a mnemonist. Offhand, Benson didn't remember the young man's name but he found it in the college records and phoned Kersh to tell him it was Hazard.

From a call made to Hazard's father, Kersh got Hazard's current New York City address. But the two letters Kersh wrote to that address received no reply. It was just a long shot anyway and Kersh gave up on it. But then one day while in the city for a meeting with Richland, Kersh had some time and decided to hell with form, he'd look up this Hazard.

He found him in a bathrobe, not yet shaved, hair mussed, sleepy looking and not very hospitable. It was

nearly noon. With unconcealed reluctance, Hazard invited Kersh in and as long as he was making himself a cup of instant coffee Kersh might as well have one. Kersh sat in the living room of Hazard's apartment and felt all the more an intruder when his glance into the bedroom caught on part of a bed and the bare legs of a girl, apparently still sleeping. As an afterthought Hazard closed the bedroom door, not quietly.

Kersh told Hazard why he was there. Hazard became interested when Kersh said what Hazard would get out of it. Five hundred a week for putting in only a couple of days a week; some weeks nothing would be expected of him, but he'd still get paid.

Hazard thought there had to be a catch and said so.

Kersh told him the DIA requirement of having to enlist. That cooled Hazard. He wasn't about to be recruited into any branch of the government.

Kersh didn't try to convert Hazard, saw that would be futile. But his instinct told him he'd found a good subject and he didn't want to lose him on a technicality that he also considered absurd. He decided it was the right time to make an exception. He wouldn't flagrantly break the DIA rule, couldn't get away with that, but it was worth the risk to bend a little. He suggested Hazard give it a try, say for two or three weeks, just to see how things went. No real commitment to the DIA or Kersh.

Hazard didn't jump at the offer, didn't much like the idea of promising any of his time to anyone. Although the five hundred-a week sounded like easy enough money.

Kersh waited a while before making a different sort of appeal. "I need your help," he said.

Don't be a sucker for sincerity, Hazard warned himself. But less than five minutes later he heard himself agreeing, "Five hundred."

The following Thursday Hazard went up to the Fairfield installation and Kersh ran him through some preliminary tests to measure potential. To put Hazard at ease, Kersh used a deck of ordinary playing cards instead of the usual ESP symbol series. He extracted two cards from the deck so Hazard would be working with an even fifty. The cards were reshuffled and put face

down into a small box that was placed on a table. Hazard's job was to try to identify the cards in consecutive order according to suit. Top card first and then down through the entire stack.

Hazard acted blasé about it and really was only slightly intrigued by the challenge. As he called out the heart, diamond, spade, or club that came to mind, Kersh tabulated each call in sequence on a score sheet.

On the first run Hazard had eleven hits. Only one above the average score that could be expected through mere chance. Hazard was disappointed but didn't show it. The second run he hit eight, and on the third run, nine. Discouraged and self-conscious about not doing well, he wanted to quit, but Kersh urged him to continue.

After fifteen more runs with less than a little more than average chance results, Kersh suggested a break. They went out and walked the grounds to the upper edge of the woods. Neither man was very talkative, but they were learning one another. They went down to the shore and along to the beach house that was shuttered tight and aging too quickly from neglect. Hazard felt sorry for the place which needed opening and care.

When they got back to the main house Hazard didn't want to undergo any more tests. He was supposed to stay over but he made the excuse that he had a long standing important engagement back in the city. Kersh didn't insist. Hazard left believing the whole episode had been a travesty. You'll never see me again, he thought.

But the next Thursday, there he was.

Kersh didn't seem surprised to see him, nor did he reveal how pleased he was. He liked Hazard.

More tests with the playing cards.

The first run, Hazard hit twenty-two out of the fifty. The second run, twenty-eight.

They did, altogether, a hundred runs, with Hazard repeatedly scoring in the twenty to thirty range. For the last dozen runs, Kersh asked him to try for the exact designation of each card: ace of diamonds, king of clubs, and so on.

Hazard's first attempt at that resulted in twenty-five hits. Of the other twenty-five, he got the correct value of

ten cards and the correct suit of twelve. He only completely missed three out of fifty. Remarkable. And he went on to do as well and frequently even better on the following runs. The odds against such consistently high scores were in the area of five billion to one.

Kersh praised him.

Hazard felt good, like a winner.

But what had brought about the drastic improvement over scores from the week before? The difference had to be in Hazard. All week long his pride and competitive nature had picked at him because he'd failed and so quickly retreated. There was that. And there was Kersh. Hazard found he liked the older man. That was exceptional because normally Hazard was as much a loner when it came to men as he was the opposite with women. Another motivation for Hazard was a practical one—the five hundred a week. Hazard needed it.

The three-week trial period they'd agreed on passed quickly. During that time they had six day-long sessions. Kersh accelerated the tests and exercises, made them increasingly more complex and demanding. Hazard seemed to develop right along with them. The greater the challenge the more determined he was to keep his scores above the probability level. Really bucking the odds.

Kersh didn't bring up the DIA requirement. He was afraid Hazard would quit and he doubted he'd ever again find such a prime subject, surely not one so likable. But then it got to be four weeks, five, and one afternoon during a break when they were sitting out on the terrace Kersh put it to him.

It brought the usual bitter response from Hazard about the government. But no mention of quitting. Hazard's convictions hadn't weakened, but now there were other considerations. He was hooked. On admiration for Kersh, interest in the project, and surely the weekly five hundred. In the precarious balancing of his winnings and losses Hazard had come to count on that five hundred. He referred to it as his *fuck-you money*.

He asked Kersh, "Who would I have to answer to?"

"Only me."

"No Washington shit?"

"No Washington shit."

"I could quit anytime?"

Kersh nodded.

The decision was so contrary to his style that Hazard couldn't be direct. He looked down the slope in the direction of the beach house. "Maybe I could fix that place up and use it," he said. "Would that be okay with you?"

"Fine."

And so Hazard committed himself to enlistment in the DIA, although his motives for becoming an intelligence agent were something less—and more—than patriotic.

He opened the beach house, cleaned, and painted it. He slept there whenever he came up for his scheduled exercises and he also spent some of his other time there. More often than not he brought a friend along. Models, hardly ever the same one twice. Hazard liked being able to invite them to what he called his beach place up in Connecticut. He didn't ask Kersh's permission to have guests, but Kersh didn't mind. Sure it was a Government installation and undoubtedly the DIA would consider such conduct out of line. However, it wasn't unpleasant for Kersh to glance down to the beach and see a lovely young creature topless and sometimes also bottomless. That was the extent of Kersh's interest in any of the girls Hazard brought.

Until Keven.

She was different from the start. She didn't just lie on the beach or roam around the grounds as though the world were an eye aimed at her. Keven was actively curious about the project. She often intruded on the exercises. She kept asking Kersh to test her, claiming she wanted to know herself better. Kersh believed she was merely being competitive and he wasn't entirely wrong about that.

By then Hazard had made amazing progress. He enjoyed being number one. No one else was even a close second. An analysis of all tests and exercises showed, however, that he was a much better sender than receiver. As a matter of fact he was comparatively poor at reception. It would have been ideal had he been equally proficient at both sending and receiving, and perhaps the

latter could be developed over the long run. But for efficiency, Kersh decided to place total emphasis on expanding Hazard's strength as a sender.

That left Kersh looking for a receiver of equivalent ability. He found and tested several candidates, a few of whom showed potential. But they all lacked the required consistency. He even tested Julie, whose talents didn't approach her enthusiasm for the subject. It was a crucial problem for Kersh. To take his research to a higher level it was imperative that he have a sender-receiver team.

When he tested Keven he didn't have any high hopes. Mostly he did it only to accommodate her. But when he tallied up her scores and saw how consistently she hit high above the probability-of-chance level, he realized that it was Keven who was accommodating him. She was a natural. Kersh wondered, unscientifically, if such inclinations had been passed down by her superstitious Irish ancestors.

Didn't she mind enlisting in the DIA?

She didn't know what it was.

Kersh explained.

She told him she hated uniforms. As long as she didn't have to wear a uniform, okay. What she didn't tell him was that it saved her from having to look for another awful, steady job.

So Kersh now had his telepathy team. And a new problem: To make the team work and hold it together.

Much of his success or failure with that problem would be clear at the end of this present demonstration for the DIA men, Richland and Whitley. Ignoring Richland, Kersh again pressed the square button on the laboratory console, signaling to Lowery out on the ketch.

The exercise continued.

Lowery activated the box containing the images. The spindle rotated, moved up another card at random. Hazard took it and began peeling off its adhesive covering.

At that moment Keven felt a little itch in the center of her back. Unreachable. It was most distracting, could ruin everything, she thought. She tried willing it away and then resorted to flexing and rubbing against the

cushion behind her. But the itch was in that difficult-to-reach concave spot right between her shoulder blades. Damn! She was about to call in to Kersh to have him come give her a scratch when luckily the itch subsided on its own.

Reminded by this how delicate the line was between the success and failure of what was expected of her, she quickly brought her attention to the soft, black, felt-covered wall before her. She thought about what she was thinking and remembered something she'd once heard Kersh say—that the most amazing thing about the human brain was its ability to reflect on itself, and that was why man felt special enough to have what he called a soul. But it also brought on a lot of suffering, from a punishing conscience to neurosis to total insanity.

Keven tried to feel herself thinking and it seemed she could, although it was a neutral, nondescript, continuous sensation.

Clear your mind, she told herself, and again used the soft black confronting her to try to direct her mind into believing it was receptive.

Suddenly a profusion of images came to her, one after another, just bits and pieces not apparently related, as though her mind's eye were sighting through a rapidly rotating kaleidoscope. She wasn't aware that she was no longer aware of the soft black wall. Nor was she aware that those bits and pieces were increasing steadily in number, that she was presenting them to herself more and more rapidly, too rapidly for premeditation. It was actually a pleasant sort of confusion; so much for her mind's eye to see. Delightful! More and more. There didn't seem to be any limit, and then . . .

Change.

It was as though a vertical seam inside her abruptly parted and folded neatly back to reveal an emptiness inside. A void. Not black, but a white, substantial nothingness, clean and still as new milk.

A dormant region.

There on the white, as though projected, all of it, all at once, isolated in unmistakable contrast, was a picture of words. It remained only long enough to register be-

fore disappearing. Leaving a void as undisturbed as before. Then, as though reversing experience, a layer of impressions unfolded to envelop and join, replacing the nothing with enjoyable, entertaining, rapid-fire confusion.

Gradually that diminished.

To the point where Keven again thought about what she was thinking and again realized her eyes were open on the soft, black, felt-covered wall.

After a moment she extended her right hand to the electronic keyboard. She had to resist her present thoughts, keep them from distracting her. It was difficult. Her mind seemed to resent her concentration. It protested by offering various impressions, some divertingly erotic.

She nearly giggled, wasn't sure that she hadn't.

Her first finger pecked at the keyboard.

On the corresponding monitor in the laboratory appeared:

BIGBIRDEDETAIL715SECTION2VERIFIEDLRBM

Keven had no idea what that meant, didn't know BIG BIRD was the SR-71, the Air Force's new 2,000-mph, high-altitude surveillance plane, DETAIL 715 the code number of certain photographs taken by that plane during a particular flight, SECTION 2 an area in China one hundred fifty miles north of Peking, and VERIFIED LRBM that the plane's cameras had caught a long-range ballistic missile.

Out on the Sound aboard the ketch, Lowery was about to record the card that Hazard had just handed over. He read the message that was printed on it and shook his head. The box had selected a toughie, he thought, and doubted they'd score a hit on that one. On his exercise report sheet he noted the exact times of transmission and then in the allotted space he wrote:

BIG BIRD DETAIL 715 SECTION 2 VERIFIED LRBM

The exercise called for a run of eight images. The fifth image chosen at random was one designed to test

incidental accuracy. A drawing of an oddly spotted, one-eared, three-legged dog.

When Hazard finished sending that one they were through for the day. Also, Whitley was belly down on the deck, head over the side, retching up Old Granddad and sandwiches. To multiply the displeasure, he was doing it against the wind.

Hazard, feeling no pity, observed Whitley's anguish for a while and then went below to get out of range.

Less than an hour later they were all gathered again in Kersh's office to review the results. Lowery's record of images sent by Hazard was compared with what the computers had registered via Keven. Out of the run of five they'd scored three perfect hits, a partial hit and an apparent miss.

Kersh congratulated his team.

Keven beamed like a superstar. At that moment she was so high on herself that Hazard couldn't resist bringing her down. He blamed her for the miss.

"It wasn't my fault," she said, above reproach.

"Had to be."

"You didn't send it strong enough."

"Hell I didn't. Anybody could have gotten that one."

"Not true."

"You choked on it."

Actually the missed image was graphically the simplest of all they'd attempted that day. An inverted arrow without a tail. What Keven had gotten was a shape that resembled the flame of a candle.

"That's exactly what came to me," she said.

A scoff from Hazard.

"No doubt you had something else on your mind."

He thought she meant her. "Like what?"

"Yourself. You hardly ever get past that."

Hazard had intended only a little chaffing, harmless enough, but it was getting out of proportion.

"Admit it was your fault," she said.

He almost did just to get it over with, but stayed on top by nonchalantly pouring himself a cup of leftover coffee. It was cold and bitter, nevertheless he gulped it

down and to the empty cup said, "Slows down the sex drive." Her words that morning.

Her Irish went up a few more degrees. "That's for sure," she promised, and left the room, walking as though she were going a long way.

Kersh had an idea about what possibly had caused the miss. Hazard had sent the inverted arrow; Keven had received it. But at the moment it came to her, Keven's unconscious had interfered, changed the impression to another it considered more acceptable. This wasn't the first time her unconscious had resorted to such guile. But why this time? Kersh felt there was a connection between the two images. Vertical arrow could suggest penetration, aggression. Keven's unconscious had perhaps associated it with masculine dominance and defiantly opposed it, vetoed it, replaced it with an image that was more feminine. Kersh would have suggested all this to Keven if Richland and Whitley hadn't been there.

Richland was half drunk and Whitley was only half recovered. Richland kept saying, "Impressive, very impressive." And Whitley mumbled on about what a hell of a good sailor he'd always been, claiming something he'd eaten hadn't agreed with him.

They were anxious to leave. Kersh accompanied them out to their car. Handshakes and good-byes.

From behind the steering wheel Richland told Kersh, "Goddamn impressive." The motor was already running but he turned the ignition key again to cause a painful, grinding screech.

The Chrysler pulled away. Whitley lighted up a Havana and took two puffs before his stomach made him throw it out. "What a day," he moaned. "You didn't fall for all that crap, did you?"

"Hell no."

"It was rigged; they had it rigged."

"Yeah," Richland said.

"Some kind of hook-up from that guy what's his name."

"Hubbard."

"From him to the girl. A radio or something."

"That's what I figure."

"Bunch of real phonies."

A questioning glance from Richland.

Whitley got it. "Don't worry your ass, Fred. As far as I'm concerned, the project's full-ahead. I'd even say it's priority." Besides, it's only a spit in the bucket, he assured himself.

"You're one decent guy, Whit."

Whitley nodded. "Reminds me, at the last convention down in Miami I saw this guy in a nightclub. He was blindfolded and he could tell you everything you had in your pockets. Now, he was something. He could guess the number on your social security card, driver's license, everything. No shit. Damndest thing I ever saw."

USUALLY KEVEN didn't stay angry long.

Hazard thought she'd get over it, surely by bedtime.

But night came and she kept to herself in one of the upper bedrooms of the main house. Her things hadn't been moved back down to the beach house, which Hazard didn't find encouraging. He told himself it didn't matter and read some Camus, *Notebooks, 1942-1951*. For a while he forced himself to read word for word, line for line, like everyone else, but he soon reverted to taking it in an entire page at a glance.

Around eleven he got up and went down to the beach, from where he could see Keven's lighted window. He imagined her up there munching on sunflower seeds and dried apricots, probably hating her stubbornness, and trying to think of a face-saving way out of it. He thought about giving in, going up to get her, but decided if he did that this time she'd expect it the next. He returned to Camus and finished him.