

[19] Antonio Del Sasso

Carla could hardly contain her excitement as Leighton led them quietly into a large, high-ceilinged room. It seemed almost too much to believe that she had located Viktor Khorev and, on top of that, to have been so easily invited inside this top-secret psychic research installation that she was certain at the very least was being funded by the CIA—and more than likely was totally under its control! Were her hopes too high and her imagination too keenly incited, or was this the Pulitzer-prize story she had been so certain she was pursuing? Whatever it turned out to be, she must keep her objectivity in order to present the facts to the public, and she must not be swayed by Frank's persuasiveness. Evaluating psychic phenomena was a very tricky business, as she well knew. It was never easy to separate the small amount of genuine from the vast amount of fraud.

Once inside the huge laboratory, Ken looked in vain for the “launching pad for journeys into inner space” that he'd invented and that Frank now called the Psitron. It was nowhere to be seen.

Frank detected the questioning search and whispered, “The Psitron's in another lab. Del Sasso doesn't need it anymore. He goes into Omega instantly. We've started training two others on it. They're just the first. One day there'll be thousands and eventually millions with Del Sasso's capabilities in every country around the world. It's fantastic, Ken, fantastic!”

In the center of the wall opposite the entrance was a raised platform occupied only by an oversized, cushioned chair with broad arms and a high back. In appearance it was almost thronelike and looked quite out-of-place in an experimental laboratory. On this lofty perch, in yoga position, sat a man whose giant size and commanding demeanor made him an intimidating figure even in the passivity of deep meditation. The full-length monk's robe he wore, with hood thrown back, was jet-black like his thick eyebrows and heavy, close-cropped beard. There was no need for Leighton to announce that this compelling person was the highly-acclaimed Father Antonio Del Sasso.

The hooded one! Viktor was staggered. So Yakov had been inside this very

installation! *Was it Del Sasso, or the Archons, who killed Yakov? Maybe there was no real distinction.* Viktor sensed that Leighton was watching him and tried his best to control his feelings.

Kay Morris gave Leighton an almost-imperceptible nod, then turned back to her relentlessly efficient direction of two assistants. One lab worker was preparing a remotely operated broadcast-quality video camera on wheels; the other was readying a computer next to a bank of monitoring needles and graphs. Ken noted that there were no wires connected to Del Sasso and wondered what was being measured.

Again Leighton sensed the unspoken question and whispered: “Antonio generates an incredible electromagnetic field and an anti-gravitational force—and some other strange forces we haven’t been able to analyze. I’ll explain more later.”

Then to all three he whispered, “You aren’t going to believe this!”

With the use of a small forklift, the two lab assistants began hauling from behind a storage wall on the far right side of the room a number of heavy articles. These they carefully spaced about 15 feet in front of Del Sasso. There was an empty 50-gallon steel oil drum, a late-model automobile gasoline engine mounted on wooden skids, a large electric motor similarly mounted, and a barbell with numerous large weights on it, which, Leighton whispered, weighed “more than 1000 pounds!”

When the objects were in place to the satisfaction of Kay Morris, she motioned to her assistants to join her behind a heavy steel shield that surrounded the monitoring equipment and controls. Then she quietly addressed the meditating psychic. “We’re ready, Father Del Sasso.”

A long and almost palpable silence followed. Carla and Viktor glanced at Leighton apprehensively. He flashed them a quick, confident smile. Suddenly the oil drum was lifted straight up by some invisible force. It remained motionless about ten feet in the air for a full minute. Then, with a sound like a sonic boom, it was crumpled into a ball and dropped back to the floor.

Viktor and Carla were stunned. They looked at one another and then at Leighton. He was smiling and nodding at them again. Ken’s facial expression had not changed. Somber and thoughtful, he avoided looking at the others.

Now the automobile engine started with a roar and revved up to a fast and steady idle. Then the electric motor started as well. No cord or cable connected it to any source of electric power. The barbell lifted from the floor and continued slowly to rise. With a triumphant grin, Leighton threw a quick glance at Viktor

and Carla. They were transfixed.

Ken's eyes, like Del Sasso's, were closed. "Father," he prayed silently, "in the Name of Jesus Christ and through His blood shed on the cross for our sins, I ask You to bind the demons who are empowering Del Sasso and that you will thereby expose the evil behind him and the true source of his power."

Suddenly the barbell hesitated in its ponderous levitation and began to wobble. Something appeared to be going wrong. Viktor and Carla looked in surprise at Leighton. His face registered stunned incredulity.

Del Sasso moved uncomfortably in his chair and became increasingly agitated. The suspended barbell jerked and dodged about crazily. Even the driverless forklift began to rock back and forth as though shaken by some unseen giant hand. The two motors sputtered and bounced spasmodically, then fell over on their sides and quit. At the same instant the heavy barbell slammed against the steel shield protecting the control center, bounced off, and crashed to the floor. Then all was silent.

Dr. Morris and her two assistants frantically checked the graphs and computerized monitors. Leighton seemed paralyzed. Del Sasso opened his eyes like a man awakening from a nightmare. He sat in awesome stillness for a moment, staring at Ken. Then a terrifying roar—of anguish at first and then rage—erupted from Del Sasso's throat. Jumping to his feet with eyes blazing, he pointed an accusing finger straight at Ken and screamed, "*He did it! Get him out!*"

Unperturbed, Ken calmly returned his gaze. Viktor looked in bewilderment and apprehension from one to the other of these two apparent antagonists.

"You'd better leave," urged Frank in a low voice. "He has a violent temper."

"I'm not afraid of him. Are you?" Ken's challenge was clear.

"Ken, I don't want a confrontation."

"Get him out *now!*" Del Sasso thundered.

"Let's all go," whispered Frank in consternation. Ken willingly went along as Frank hurriedly led the way, followed closely by Viktor and Carla.

Outside in the hall, with his back against the closed door, Frank turned to Ken once again. "Now what was going on in there? What did he mean *you did it? What did you do?*"

"Could he be jealous of Ken?" suggested Carla tentatively. "Ken invented the Psitron and was the first to make contact. Psychics can be very temperamental."

"He *is* a prima donna," conceded Leighton. "And he can explode. But he's

never acted like this. But then, I've never known him to fail." Wiping his brow with a handkerchief, he turned to Viktor. "What do you think?"

Viktor was overwhelmed. "I don't know what happened, but I've never seen anything like this! Del Sasso's powers are... are..." He gave up trying to find the proper English superlative and shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"If he has such great powers, why doesn't he work them on *me*? Why does he ask *you* to escort me out?" Again Ken's voice carried that unmistakable challenge.

Leighton looked at Ken in amazement "What are you trying to say?"

"He's afraid of me, and I know why."

"You're crazy. He's not afraid of anything or anyone, I can guarantee that. And I already told you I'm not going to have a confrontation. I don't want *that* kind of a demonstration. Now what did he mean *you* did it?"

"I know what he meant and he knows that I know. But I'm going to let him tell you. You wouldn't like my explanation."

"Somehow Ken broke his concentration," suggested Carla.

"Concentration had nothing to do with it," retorted Ken. "That's a myth."

"Then what was it?" demanded Leighton.

"Frank, I told you to ask *him*."

"I'm asking you. Did you deliberately do something?"

Ken turned away without replying and began to walk back toward the lobby. Frank and the others followed him.

"Ken, I want to know—from *you*!" demanded Frank.

Ken turned slowly around to face them. "Del Sasso doesn't have any psychic power," he said quietly, looking Frank in the eye. "You're being deceived—badly."

Frank turned to Viktor and Carla in frustration. "No psychic powers?" he repeated scornfully. "Is this man crazy? You saw it."

"Oh, we all saw power," retorted Ken. "Lots of power. But it wasn't under Del Sasso's control. I just proved that. Humans don't have the capacity for psychic power. There's no way they can develop it. That's part of the delusion. The Archons are using Del Sasso—and you. That man's *possessed*—like I was."

"Come off it Ken! I thought you'd gotten over that fixation."

"You asked me to tell you what I did," said Ken evenly. "Okay, I'll tell you. I just very quietly, in the Name of Jesus Christ asked the one true God to bind the demons that were putting on that show. And you saw what happened."

Leighton's jaw dropped, and for just a moment he seemed shaken and

uncertain. Then his face reddened in anger. “That’s a coincidence,” he spat back. “Antonio is a very sensitive person. He sensed your hostility and it broke his concentration. This is a delicate procedure.”

“Ken, I find your explanation childish and self-serving!” Carla wanted to distance herself from his religious fanaticism immediately. A world-renowned journalist had an image to maintain, especially if that journalist was a woman.

Viktor was watching and listening in perplexed silence. Such a conversation could never have taken place in his lab in Russia! What did Ken mean by *possessed*? Was he referring to demons, and was he, like Dmitri, a *believer*?

At that moment the laboratory door burst open and Del Sasso exploded into the corridor. He immediately saw Ken and erupted with rage once again. “I told you to get him *out*!” he bellowed. “If I ever see him here again, I’ll *kill him*!”

“Why?” asked Ken quietly, in a very calm voice. “Why?”

“Get out!” Del Sasso started toward them.

Ken stood his ground, staring fearlessly into Antonio’s hate-filled eyes. “I’m not afraid of you. Greater is He that’s in me than the *demons* that are in you.”

Del Sasso let out a roar of frustrated rage. Leighton grabbed Ken by an elbow, turned him around, and started moving him hurriedly toward the lobby. Ken went along without resisting. As they turned the corner in the corridor, Leighton called back over his shoulder. “I’ll see that he leaves, Antonio. I’m taking him out right now.”

“Wait for me in my office,” Leighton added to the others.

As he stepped into the lobby, with Frank still pushing him along, Ken heard Carla telling Viktor, “I’m glad we came in separate cars.” The words were like a knife plunged into his back.

Outside, they walked side by side in stubborn silence. When they reached the car, Frank put his hand on Ken’s arm. “I can’t believe you’d do this to me!”

“Do what?”

“You deceived me! I thought you were genuinely interested or I wouldn’t have invited you.”

“I was—and I am, Frank. And I’m concerned for you.”

“I think you deliberately came here to disrupt the program. You incited Del Sasso. You’ve resented that I bought you out, even though I’ve always kept the offer open to bring you back in.”

“I don’t want back in. But I came here genuinely interested to see what was going on, and I’m glad I did. I’ve met Del Sasso now, and he only confirmed what I already knew. I’m warning you, Frank: You’re heading for disaster.”

“I don’t know how you can say that Ken! If you only knew the potential available to mankind, not just to Del Sasso—he’s only the first—but to all of us!”

“I know the full deception of that false promise, Frank. And I know who’s behind it. They tried to kill me, and they’ll kill you when you’ve served their purpose and they have no further use for you.”

“Ken, I already told you there was a flaw in your original design. It was a slight mistake that anyone could make, but it was an important one, and that was why you freaked out and drove over that cliff. The Archons identified that flaw, told us how to correct it, and we did. This isn’t theory. We’ve proved that what they said was true. After we made that modification, Antonio had no more trouble—not the slightest.”

“He’s completely possessed!”

“I don’t want to hear that again!”

“Whether you want to hear it or not, it’s the truth.”

“Ken, listen to me. If you would only drop your fixation about demons and take another look with an open mind.”

“I took a look.”

“But with the same old superstitious prejudice. Ken, we’re on the verge of solving all human problems! We’re going to have a new world without poverty or disease or war!”

“And with the Archons in control, right?”

“So?” Frank conceded. “Now I suppose you’re going to find something sinister in that! How could it be otherwise? It’s their plan and they have the knowledge and the power. They have to be in charge, but only until we’ve got the power to do it ourselves.”

“A lack of *power* isn’t the problem, Frank. You should realize that. You know what this generation has been called: ‘nuclear giants but moral midgets.’ Remember? And that’s dangerous!”

Frank grew silent Ken climbed into his car and lowered the window. “Who are the Archons?”

“They’re highly evolved, nonphysical intelligences who’ve been guiding our evolution.”

“They’ve done a lousy job!”

“That’s why they’re intervening now—to prevent an ecological or nuclear holocaust. If we destroy ourselves, that could set back the karma of the whole galaxy.”

“What you’re giving me, Frank, is basic Hinduism. Why is *that* acceptable, but Christianity is unthinkable?”

“It’s not Hinduism. It’s science.”

“You know better than that. Karma, highly evolved Masters, magic powers through yogic trance—that’s *science*?”

Frank didn’t answer. He spun around and started to walk away.

Ken leaned out the window and called after him. “So I’m *persona non grata* from now on?”

Frank stopped and turned to face him again. “I wish it were otherwise, but what would be the point? Another blow up with Del Sasso?”

“You ought to be asking yourself some serious questions, Frank. For example, what happened to Del Sasso’s great powers? And where are the Archons? Are they so weak? They nearly killed me once, but I have no fear of them anymore. Face the facts! I told you the truth—what I actually did in the lab. I shut Del Sasso down with a simple prayer!”

Leighton looked at him with astonishment, and then with contempt “A brilliant mind gone to ruin—that’s what you are. Ever since that accident you’ve been suffering from religious delusions. You need professional help, Ken. I could arrange for the best psychiatric diagnosis and treatment.”

“Forget about ‘analyzing’ me, and analyze your own situation. You’re getting in over your head. You ought to stay awake nights asking yourself how you know the Archons are telling you the truth! Why do you trust them? Suppose they’re not who they say they are, and I’m right after all?”

Frank stared at Ken in silence. Then he turned away once again and, without another word, hurried toward the front door.

Ken backed his car out of its parking place and drove slowly toward the gate. He felt the weight of a heavy grief for Frank, and for Khorev, too—and an overwhelming sense of foreboding for Carla. As for Del Sasso, the man was evil personified and capable of almost anything. The Archons had chosen their instrument well.