



ALAN SWYER

THE ORACLE

Warning signals were present right from the start.

"We love that little movie you made about baseball," said the emissary, an earnest sort named Herb Klein who was part of a group visiting Los Angeles for a few days.

"What little baseball movie?" Leibowitz asked.

"That exciting one that runs ten minutes or so."

"Except it's not a movie. It's a promo for the film I'm finishing."

"But what would it take to do something like that on meditation?"

"A promo?"

Herb Klein nodded.

"Same thing as with baseball," Leibowitz explained. "I'd have to shoot the film, then cut excerpts."

"You couldn't just—"

"Shoot ten minutes or so of footage?"

Again Herb Klein nodded, though with considerably less hope.

"In what you saw," Leibowitz said, "how many people are on screen?"

"At least ten."

"Try fifteen. If I'm going to shoot that many interviews, think it makes sense to get one sound byte per person? Except for post-production, it's no different than making a full-length film."

"L-let me get back to you," Herb Klein mumbled awkwardly.

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Since most overtures from outside the world of filmmaking inevitably proved to be what Leibowitz, in moments of kindness, termed *fishing expeditions*—and in less benevolent moments, *wheel-spinning*, *courtesies*, or *total fucking wastes of time*—he expected that the meditation project would vanish as surely and swiftly as those regarding kickboxing, sports nicknames, teaching experiences in Fiji, and the wonderful world of S&M.