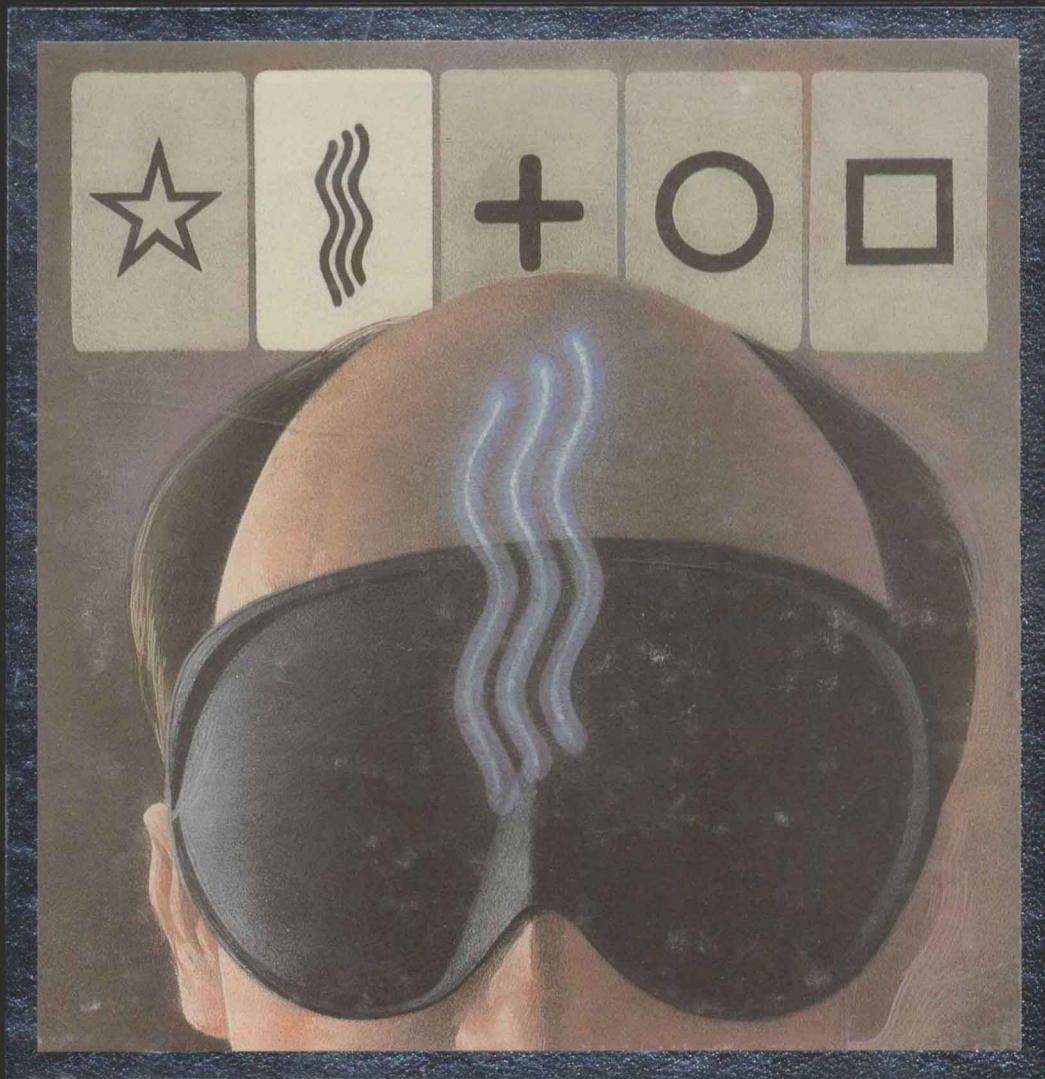


MYSTERIES OF THE UNKNOWN

# Psychic Powers



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*By the Editors of Time-Life Books*

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# Other Ways of Seeing



**I**n the world of everyday existence, the five senses reign, but their powers are sharply limited. We perceive the universe in glimpses through narrow portals, acquiring our knowledge by sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. But what if knowledge has wider gateways and thresholds? What if, beyond vision, humans have another way of seeing?

All over the world, from time immemorial, some people have been called gifted with what is known as second sight, the third eye, the sixth sense—powers of the mind that seem to bypass the usual sensory channels and transcend mundane reality. Shamans have communed with their gods, saints have seen visions, oracles have foretold the deaths of kings. And, from time to time, ordinary people have felt a moment's slippage into the inexplicable and uncanny.

Researchers have begun trying to codify psychic experiences. Among the categories posited are clairvoyance, or the ability to see objects and events beyond the range of physical vision; telepathy, the ability to read minds and transmit thoughts; precognition, the ability to perceive future events; and retrocognition, the ability to see into the past. In the following pages, a scientist bears clairvoyant witness to a distant fire, a doctor peers into a vanished past in a moment of retrocognition, a mother hears, telepathically, her child's inaudible cries.

For years, such experiences have been claimed and studied. But they have not, as yet, been fully explained.



## A Fire that Raged in a Mind's Eye

**O**n the evening of July 19, 1759, a pleasant party was just beginning at the home of a prominent citizen of Goteborg, Sweden. Suddenly, unaccountably, the most eminent of the sixteen guests—the famed scientist and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg—left and walked outside without explanation. When he returned a short time later, he was pale and shaken. A fire was raging, he said. It had already destroyed a friend's house and now threatened his own.

The guests exchanged startled glances. As they all knew, Swedenborg did not live in Goteborg, but in Stockholm. And Stockholm was almost three hundred miles away.

The party proceeded, but Swedenborg left the house several more times and returned to report the blaze was still spreading. Finally, at 8:00 P.M., he announced that it had been extinguished—only three houses from his own.

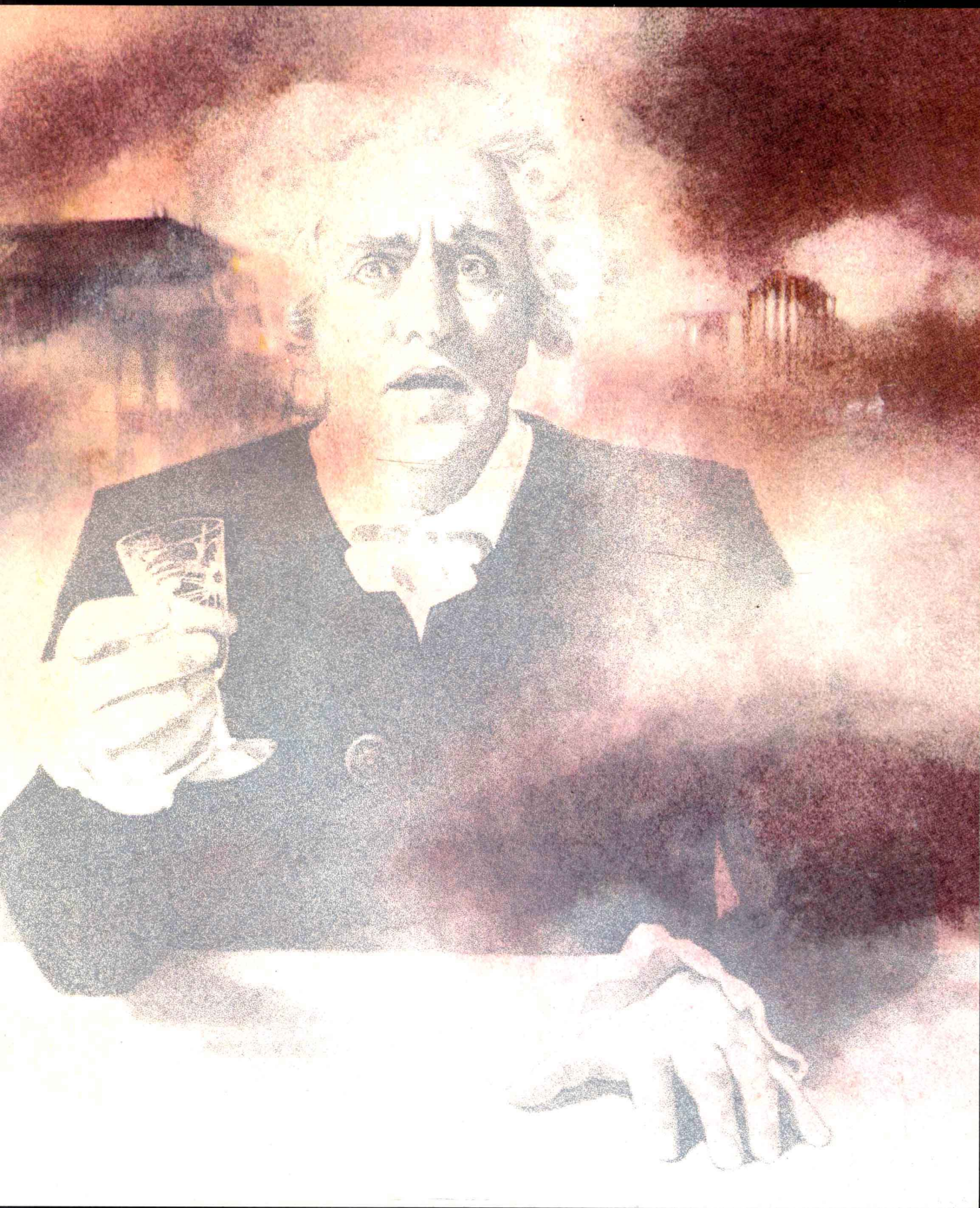
By the next morning, a Sunday, Swedenborg's vision was the talk of Goteborg. Had there really been a fire? Or was the seventy-one-year-old's imagination running amok? An apparent answer came the following night when an express messenger arrived from Stockholm with news of a great fire. Three days after the vision, a second messenger brought more details. They matched Swedenborg's account of the blaze and confirmed that it had halted only three doors from his own and had ended, just as he said, at 8:00 P.M.

Swedenborg was a respected engineer, inventor, and author whose intellect encompassed sciences ranging from psychology to zoology. When he was in his late fifties, however, he received what he regarded as a visitation from God. Thereafter, he turned his full attention to theology, metaphysics, and the exploration of his psychic powers, which seemed abundant.

To many parapsychologists, Swedenborg's reported vision of the Stockholm fire is an example of clairvoyance: the ability to see psychically what the eye cannot perceive.









## When Past Met Present on a Country Road

**D**r. Edward Gibson Moon, a country physician in England, considered himself a hardheaded man of science, but an experience he had in the early 1930s shook his faith in orthodox notions of time. One of Moon's patients was Lord Edward Carson, who lived on the Isle of Thanet. The front steps of his house, Cleve Court, led to a semi-circular driveway that opened at either end onto a country lane. A tall hedge screened the house from the road.

Lord Carson was very ill, and Moon saw him daily. After one morning's visit, the physician stood at the head of the steps, deep in thought about his patient. As he told the story later, he was not much mindful of his surroundings when he happened to glance up toward the hedge.

But there was no hedge. Nor did a road lie beyond where the hedge should have been. Try as he might, Moon could not see a single familiar landmark. There was only a muddy track stretching across empty fields. Odder still was the man walking up the track toward the house. He carried a flintlock and was wearing breeches, riding boots, a caped overcoat, and a top hat with a narrow crown—haberdashery long out of fashion—and he appeared to belong in another century, perhaps the late eighteenth or early nineteenth.

To Moon it seemed the stranger saw him as well. The visitor stopped midstride, and for a moment the two men gaped at each other. Trying to orient himself, Moon turned to see whether Cleve Court was still behind him. It was, and when he turned again he found the landscape had righted itself. The hedge and the road were in their accustomed places, and the stranger had vanished.

Some parapsychologists interpret the doctor's vision as an instance of simultaneous retrocognition and precognition. Through a tear in the fabric of time, Moon was peering into the past—retrocognition. The stranger, if indeed he saw the doctor, experienced precognition—seeing the future.









# An Apprehension of Danger

One day in 1955, five-year-old Joicey Hurth of Cedarburg, Wisconsin, came home from a birthday party to find that her father and two brothers had gone to a movie without her. The theater was only a block and a half away, so the little girl dashed out to join them.

Shortly after the child left, her mother, also named Joicey, was washing dishes at the kitchen sink when suddenly, inexplicably, she knew her daughter had been in an accident. Without hesitation, Mrs. Joicey Hurth ran to the telephone and dialed the theater.

"My little girl was on the way to the theater," she told the woman who answered. "She has had an accident. Is she badly hurt?"

"How did you know?" stammered the confused theater employee. "It—the accident—just happened."

Indeed, it turned out that the child, in rushing to join her father and brothers, had run into the path of a moving car just outside the movie house. After being hit, she had bounced off a fender and landed on the pavement, but she was not badly hurt.

"I did not see or have a mental image of a car hitting Joicey," the mother recalled, "but I did have the impression so strongly that I did not question it or hesitate to call the theater."

Recounting the episode some years later, the daughter said that just after she was hit by the car she ran to the side of the street, crying and calling out in her mind, "Mama, Mama, Mama!" She was, she believed, "screaming inaudibly."

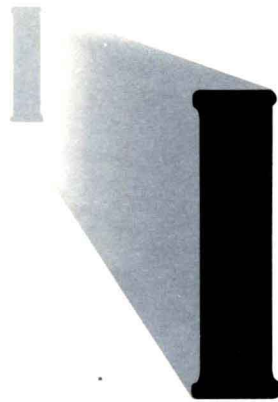
Since Mrs. Hurth neither heard nor saw anything that could have alerted her to her daughter's mishap, parapsychologists studying the case attributed her knowledge of it to telepathy—direct mind-to-mind communication occurring without the five senses.







# Beyond the Five Senses



If Samuel Clemens of Hannibal, Missouri, had been content to spend his life as a riverboatman, a remarkable episode in psychic lore would have been lost to history. But his often-autobiographical writings in later years as the author Mark Twain made some of his most personal thoughts public. Among them is the story of a dream he had about his younger brother Henry in 1858.

At that time, Sam Clemens was an apprentice pilot on the steamboat *Pennsylvania*, which plied the Mississippi River between New Orleans and St. Louis. Henry, a likable and handsome lad of about twenty, was a clerk on the same vessel. One night, when the *Pennsylvania* was berthed in St. Louis, Henry stayed on the ship while his older brother lodged at a boardinghouse on shore. Sam dreamed that he saw a metal coffin resting on two chairs in the sitting room, and in the coffin the laid-out body of Henry. On Henry's chest was a bouquet of white flowers with a single crimson flower in the center.

The vision was so vivid that when Sam awoke in the morning he did not realize he had been dreaming. "I dressed and moved toward that door," he wrote in his autobiography, "thinking that I would go in there and have a look at it, but I changed my mind. I thought I could not yet bear to meet my mother." He went out on the street and walked about a block. And then: "It suddenly flashed upon me that there was nothing real about this—it was only a dream."

He told a sister what he had dreamed, but he mentioned nothing of it to Henry on their trip downriver together. In New Orleans, Sam was transferred to the steamboat *Lacey*, which was to head back upriver two days after the *Pennsylvania*. On the night before Henry sailed, Sam got to talking about disasters on the river and what to do in case of accident. "Don't lose your head," he advised his brother. "The passengers will do that!" What Henry should do, he said, was to help the women and children into the lifeboat and then swim to shore himself. On that note the brothers parted, and hours later the *Pennsylvania* sailed.

Two or three days later, when Sam and the *Lacey* reached Greenville, Mississippi, they were greeted at the landing with grim news: "The *Pennsylvania* is blown up just below Memphis, at Ship Island! One hundred and fifty lives lost!" According to that first report, Henry was not among the casualties. But the news got worse as the *Lacey* moved from port to port upriver. By the time



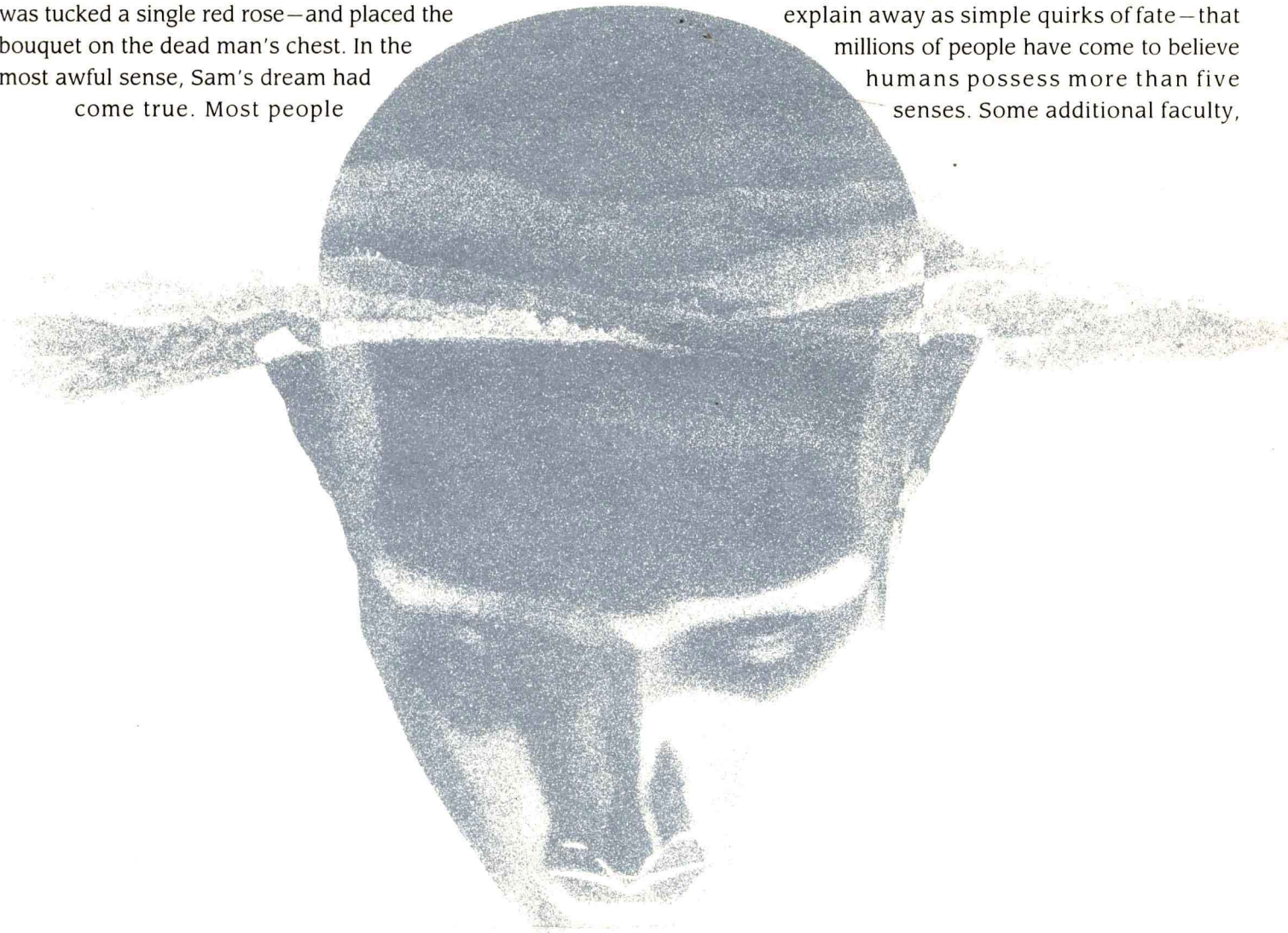
Sam reached Memphis he knew that four of the *Pennsylvania's* eight boilers had exploded, that many of the passengers and crew had been killed outright, and that others had been scalded almost to the point of death. Henry was one of the latter.

Sam found his brother in Memphis and stayed with him until he died. A kind citizen of the city then took Sam in and gave him a bed. Exhausted with grief and strain, he fell into a profound sleep. When he woke, he went to the place where Henry's body lay. It was in a room with several other victims of the explosion, all awaiting burial services.

The coffins provided by the city were of plain white pine—except for Henry's. His youth and beauty had appealed to several ladies of Memphis, who had collected sixty dollars to buy him a special metal coffin. Sam Clemens saw his brother lying exactly as he had seen him in his dream: in an open metal coffin, resting on two chairs. About the only item from his dream that was missing was the bouquet of flowers. As he stood there looking on, an elderly woman entered the room with a large bouquet of white flowers—in the center of which was tucked a single red rose—and placed the bouquet on the dead man's chest. In the most awful sense, Sam's dream had come true. Most people

have never had an experience as searing as Sam Clemens's. But almost everyone has had experiences that are cause for some slight wonder. Someone thinks of a long-lost friend, and moments later that person calls on the telephone. A young man suddenly senses that his favorite uncle is dead, and a telegram arrives with the bad news. A mother writing to her daughter feels a sharp pain in her writing hand, while at the same time her daughter burns her right hand on the stove. A woman dreams of a disaster at sea, and two days later a great liner sinks with hundreds of passengers. A little girl refuses to get on a school bus because she thinks something terrible is going to happen to it, and the bus gets hit at a railroad crossing. How did she know? She just "knew."

It is of course possible to attribute any of these and thousands of similar events to coincidence. Considering how often we dream or sense or just "know" things that do not occur, coincidence no doubt is sometimes the likeliest explanation. And yet, so many instances of apparent knowledge have accumulated throughout history—some of them very difficult to explain away as simple quirks of fate—that millions of people have come to believe humans possess more than five senses. Some additional faculty,





they maintain, enables a person to sense an occurrence before it has happened, or apprehend what is in someone else's mind, or be aware of an event taking place far away. This faculty permits a glimpse into another plane of time or space, unreachable by the ordinary senses of hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, or smelling.

In ancient times, people spoke of prophecies and auguries and miracles. In our more rational age, such things tend to be lumped under the prosaic-sounding heading of extrasensory perception, defined as the apparent reception of information through means other than the known sensory channels. The experiencing individual is said to be psychic.

Three types of alleged extrasensory perception (ESP) are most commonly studied. The most familiar is telepathy, or mind reading, which is the transference of thoughts from one person to another without the use of words. Telepathy is said to occur most often with people—such as identical twins—who are very close to each other emotionally.

Clairvoyance, or second sight, is an awareness of distant objects and events. In its most vivid manifestation it may involve a prolonged vision of a fire or murder taking place a great distance away; more often, it is a quick mental picture of a train wreck or the contents of a sealed envelope or some

danger that is creeping up on an unsuspecting loved one. The third type of ESP is precognition, the knowing of something in advance of its happening—whether in a dream such as Mark Twain's or in a waking state, as, for example, the December 1969 prophecy of psychic Malcolm Bessent of London. "Starting with 1972-73," he said, "it will be a crucial year for the U.S.A. Water everywhere, resulting in social upheaval, anarchy, and political confusion. The people will be looking for a new leader, but none forthcoming." Psychics, who often interpret such predictions broadly, see in this statement a foretelling of the Watergate scandal, which preoccupied the American public for two years beginning in 1972. Literal flood did not occur and anarchy is an overstatement; but the entrance of the word "Watergate" into the language to stand for the political upheaval that led to President Richard Nixon's exit from office speaks for itself.

All ESP phenomena, because they seem beyond the limits of our present understanding, are said to be paranormal; serious investigators describe their research field as the science of parapsychology.

Many scientists and other skeptics scoff at ESP research as an extension of old-fashioned

*A physical resemblance between the young Samuel Clemens and his brother Henry (background) may have been accompanied by a psychic bond. Clemens, later famed as Mark Twain, foresaw his brother's death in a dream.*

