

The Key Mind

(602 Words)

Helen sat nervously shaking her crossed foot, chewed gum and pounded the paper pad with her pen. Her old professor's words came back and haunted her. The human race was evolving. And it would be cataclysmic. Now there was a thought.

One more day like this and I climb the wall!

She began flipping the pages of the umpteenth manual she had been assigned to read as "training".

Training indeed!

With a graduate degree and fourteen years of experience, she was working with virtual youngsters, fresh grads, not an MSE among them and a maximum of two years experience for the best of them. But then, they were men. Humiliation went with her sex and women like her hadn't made it far behind the closed doors. The other women were, like her, assigned trivial tasks and boring ones.

To convince us that we shouldn't be here, playing with the boys.

"One more time," she thought as she fixed the eighth cup of coffee of the day. It was necessary if she was to stay awake while reading through the manuals, looking for something she did not already know. To vary the routine, she had access to old programs, stored on punched no less. She was transcribing the old scripts.

Two jobs and a house, a kid and a husband took its toll in wrenched nerves and neither job was at her level or near it. Boredom was the enemy. The biggest and deadliest

ghost of the worker had reared its head barely one week after the transfer, her fourth with the company as they tried to find a place for her that would not bind them to promotion.

If she knew that any other firm was different, she would beat a path to their door.

Unfortunately, she knew that they were not.

Suddenly she felt it, a surge in her thought process, a rebirth, new energy. It was not coming from within. This was different. It was coming from outside. Her telepathy activated, she stood up, dropping 2656 punched cards, an old COBOL unsequenced source deck slithered across the floor. Her office mates scrambled after the sliding cards while she stood transfixed.

It is here!

The key mind had signaled, and it was rounding up all of its subminds, awakening them, linking them together.

Excitement!

She could feel it. And she knew without knowing how that only those who had evolved would be sought. It was the beginning.

Then she sensed the panic in the mind's flailing search and she let her mind reach out to it, sooth it. To the other minds reaching her she fired off instructions, relayed that which she knew but had no recollection of learning. There is safety in numbers, strength - there would be a meeting place. She let her mind search for her husband's mind, found it weak before winking out, and she warned the others off. She ordered him home. She would shield him. But she did not know for how long. He simply did not have the mental capacity. He could not answer her. He was weak even with the shield.

Then, feeling the panic of the key mind again she grabbed her keys and headed for the parking lot, leaving behind her men who would be a long time floating among the sea of cards, no longer important to her. She barely acknowledged that they were no longer moving.

As she headed the old VW beetle out onto the deserted freeway she soothed the panicky mind that was now clinging desperately to hers.

"Don't cry honey. Momma's coming home!"