She - Morgan - All Quiet

20090705 : A variation on the Phoenix Paradox, this is one of the psionic approaches set on Earth.

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All was quiet when Morgan arrived home. Redleaf Manor was dark. The only light emanated from amongst the carefully manicured trees and bushes. She slowed to a stop at the head of the round-about and killed the engine. As her hand pulled back she had a strange feeling that something was not right. The feeling became stronger as she released the catch and started opening the door. As she looked up, it finally hit her. There was nothing special about turning off the ignition or opening the door, but in her memory, she had never performed those actions in her present settings before. She stared at the tall main doors and took a deep breath. Her husband had told her she would get a big surprise on her birthday, and he had been right. For the first time in eight years, her trusty, reliable, English butler was not standing there at the door with the staff. The young man who saw to the estate’s vehicles had not stepped up and opened the car’s door. No hand was extended to her before her own hand could fall on the ignition. None of that had really sunk in until the sudden silence.

Her shock made the strange clicks and whirring from under the sleek hood something to truly marvel at. Had she ever before taken the time to notice that the throaty sports car always took its time to go to sleep, purring to itself in contentment after loping across the countryside?

If they all plan to jump out and surprise me, she thought to herself, as she slipped out of the car and approached the door, why on Earth alert me by changing their whole routine? She shook her head with a wry smile and tried to press the latch. Her eyebrows flew up as the door latch resisted. It was locked. She glared at the door in disbelief. Here she was at the door to her own house, unable to let herself in because she did not even have a…

“The keys are still in the ignition!” she blurted in disbelief.

After mentally kicking herself, she bounced back over to the car. Once again, she was confounded by an unresponsive door latch. She heaved a great sigh. Looking through the window of the locked door, she saw the keys dangling from the ignition and started laughing. She never made these mistakes at the other end of her commute. She ran her fingers lightly over the handle and closed her eyes. In virtually all aspects of her life, she was autonomous. Her independent nature ran so strongly that she once found it impossible to depend on others to get things done. Stumbling around like an idiot over the simple details of getting out of her car and into her own house made her realize how much she had changed. Now that she was thinking again, she smiled.

It was time to demonstrate why the world rarely ever defeated her.

Like most of humanity, the vast majority of her mind’s potential lay dormant. In her case, that was a matter of choice. Unlike most of the people around her, she had discovered a long time ago how to wake that potential up. She quickly calmed and cleared her mind. She opened her eyes and looked at the world. It was a strange and unfamiliar place. Her eyes darted around, striving to nail everything down and put it into perspective. This was the difficult part, she forced herself to stop looking at the environment around her and willed herself to actually see it. Her gaze became unfocused and the realization finally came. She was dreaming. So, she opened her eyes. Nothing had changed. She looked at the world the same way. The only difference was now she was aware of it. Instead of being an isolated body within the world, she had opened her mind and let the world into herself. She glanced down at the car and her eyes saw the light reflecting off its surfaces. Directed by her sight, her vision unfolded, penetrating the car and revealing it to her with a sense that was entirely graphic but as deep and intimate as touch.

As she began to feel the car—kinesthetically, the way she normally felt her body—she became aware of the forces that acted on it and through it. A tremendous rushing force, an eternal waterfall, raced down from the infinite heavens, trying to carry her and the car along in the tide, but a powerful current was rushing up at the same time to meet it, a sea of rough and glittering particles bouyed up on each other in furious agitation. This storm of invisible forces collided in a tremendous standing wave and the world she was looking at danced in its grip.

Everything was in motion, but the net effect of that motion was the stillness of the world. A world that was an illusion, a product of an interface between space and time. A world that was resolving in a conjunction of force and form. It could all be quite intimidating, but—abstract or manifest—an expression, no matter how complex, intevitably boiled down to one thing. Information. Hence, matter and energy, the expression of structure in space and time, ultimately translated into thought. In what other media could information find its simplest expression—or its native home?

Science may not have reached the point where theories about the nature of the mind could be tested and applied, but nature did not wait for science. The holy grail of physics, a unified field theory, had been phrased, tested and applied—written in the complex manuscript of Morgan’s genetic code. An instinct, which circumstances had stimulated, that she had seized and carefully cultivated into something more sophisticated. Her mind embraced the information which defined the composition, state, and disposition of the inner latch. The information was both complex and simple. Her objective was elementary, so she ignored the high resolution details and focused on bluntest aspect of its design.

It was a simple, two-position switch. In the normal course of events, an action would change the information at the core of the expression. In this instance, a change in the information would produce an action. She thought it, and the latch popped out of its recessed seating. She opened the door, and retrieved the keys.

The locking latch was ice cold when she went to lock the door again. “Oops,” she smiled softly. By changing the information that defined the latch, she had provoked a spontaneous action. In the absence of more specific direction, the energy to fulfill the imperitive—to correct the expression of the latch to match its altered definition—had come from the object’s internal store of kinetic energy. Such pronounced side effects happened when the scope of a translation was too narrowly focused. If a broader focus was used, the mind tended to minimize the impact of a translation by dispersing the reflex—the world’s reaction to the use of psionics—across a larger domain.

For Morgan, the whole procedure had involved little time or reflection. All she was concerned about was getting in the house and finding out what everyone was up to. In the process, her mind slipped back into quiessence.

The foyer was dark as she entered. Determined to try and be surprised when everyone jumped out of the shadows, she calmly closed and locked the door and walked cautiously through the darkened house. By the time she had toured half the house she realized that her suspicions had been wrong. She did not need awakened senses to tell that the house was deserted.

As she entered the kitchen, she turned on the light. The indicator on the answering machine blazed a steady red, announcing that there were no messages waiting. A quick sweep of the table and counters revealed a void of communication as well. No note, no message; she was actually beginning to worry as she flopped down in a chair. She debated for a moment, and then got up to retreive the phone. She carried the remote back to her seat and checked her voice mail.

After listening to the chain of missives waiting in the message queue—all business, and nothing personal—she placed a quick call to the servant’s quarters. Through the window, she saw a light go on in the building opposite, and then the reassuring voice of her butler came on the line.

“Quarters,” Chase Montgomery answered in a calm, clear tone.

“How on Earth do you manage to sound awake and alert when we both know you were dead to the world a second ago?” she asked pleasantly.

“Ms. Morgan,” he stated, almost concealing his surprise, “conscious or not, a good servant always has his mind on his responsabilities. On the other hand, a call from the main house was rather unexpected this evening, so if you’ll forgive me, I was startled quite awake.”

“I see,” she replied. Then, after a second recanted, “No. I don’t see. I am not angry, but tell me why you would be surprised to get a call from me when no one was here to see me in?”

“Madam,” he responded with a hint of embarrassment, “the entire staff, myself included, were excused from the main house for the evening by your husband. When Mr. Morgan left this afternoon I assumed he intended to meet up with you at the office and take you out for a birthday celebration. Your daughter accompanied him, but, to be honest, he did not confide his full intentions to me.”

“He didn’t confide in me either, I’m afraid. He hinted at some big surprise for tonight but I never received any calls or messages suggesting anything like that. Then again, I did finish up early today and I didn’t exactly come straight home.” She sighed, imagining the look on Ash’s face when he showed up at the office and learned she had gone home. Since it was Athena’s birthday as well, he would not have ruined her evening coming all the way back home just to collect Morgan. If he had, he would have probably shown up at the same time she had and most of the evening would have been wasted. “I expect that he will be entertaining Athena by himself tonight.”

“I suppose you haven’t eaten then,” Chase guessed. “I’ll be right up. There is still time to salvage the evening. I’ll personally prepare a suitable birthday dinner and get you settled in for the night.”

“No, Chase,” she replied wistfully, “No reason for you to go to so much trouble. I’m not really hungry. All I need is a swim, a bath and bed. I don’t often get the house to myself and I can’t remember the last time I went skinny dipping. You go back to bed.” Chase chuckled on the other end of the line and gracefully bid her good night. She smiled as she fondly remembered giving the poor man a shock the day they met.

The manor had been built atrium style around a series of interlocking pools and waterfalls. An abstract reflection of the house above, often times the quickest route from one part of the house to another was through the water. It was the perfect excuse to indulge her nudist tendancies, since skin dried about a hundred times faster than a bathing suit. When her dream house ended up being so big that a live in staff was an obvious necessity, Chase Montgomery had been the only applicant for the position of major domo who did not even bat an eye at the interview. When he arrived, Ash had simply handed him a stack of towels and sent him into the atrium. She swam in from the yard, slipped out of the water and started asking him questions. He paused only long enough to hand her a towel, and responded amicably to all of her questions—never once breaking eye contact or indicating in any other way that anything unusual was afoot.

As she had hoped when she hired him, the first time he caught her hovering six feet off the floor he reacted with the same aplomb.