

## THE SNAKE.

By James Collins.

Quitting time was 4:45 PM. Now it was 6:45 PM and the proposal had a lot of work to be done. We still had tomorrow but it was going to be close. Herby and I were the two professional gurus. I had the technical and costing while he had quality data, testing and qualification test. We were both busy and normally alone but the VP of engineering, just entered the area and was trying to be unobtrusive.

"Herby, what is Emile doing down here this late in the day? None of his people are here yet he appears to be nosing around."

"Oh he does that all the time, he snoops. He looks at everybody's desk and looks all the notes and memos and all the phone messages."

"What's he looking for?"

"Who knows he's a weird one."

Three weeks later, Herb came over to my desk, pulled up a chair, looked me straight in the eye, and asked, "Collins what are you up to? I know you are doing something because you are driving Emile nuts. As soon as you leave your desk each evening, he comes out from hiding, sits at your desk and goes over everything on your desk. I know you are doing something to get his attention. You have got to tell me what you're doing, what is it that has him so frantic?"

"Herby, remember a couple weeks ago we spotted him sneaking around behind the pillars, and I asked you what he was doing? You told me that he reads everything on everybody's desk. I had nothing of interest. Therefore, I decided to leave a couple of little notes to get his attention. I didn't want all his effort to go to waste for nothing."

"Look, I noticed that. What did you leave him?"

"Oh nothing that specifically mentioned him, but notes that were vague enough that he might interpret them that way."

"I'll give you a couple examples over a few days and you'll understand my thinking."

Note on a telephone response pad.

***Rumor has it that they are looking for a new VP.***

***They have hired a headhunter looking for candidates for the new VP.***

A telephone note with a scribbled name stated the following,

***XXXXYYYYXXX says E has no friends in the front office***

***They are meeting with the first candidate at a big restaurant tonight.***

***A secret meeting was held by the general manager and four key VPs at his house last Saturday.***

There was no such meeting, but since Emile did not attend any meeting, he assumed it occurred without him. Then the imaginary messages continued.

***The first candidate was good but the team wants to be able to select from more than one.***

***Two more candidates have been proposed by the headhunter.***

***Another secret meeting is scheduled.***

***They want to replace E before the bonuses will be given out.***

***They know E is on the way out, so many of the staff are trying to distance themselves from him.***

"Collins, you are going to drive Emile nuts."

"You know I like to write. These little notes are for my own amusement. I did not put them there for anybody else's attention. If somebody wants to read the notes on my desk without my permission and draw the wrong conclusions, who am I to correct them?"

"Collins, you are going to go to hell."

"I don't think so but if anyone goes down there, they will probably meet Emil as he has already sent himself there."

The intrigue went on for three more weeks and Emile resigned three months later to go to a new company.

THE END