

The Call

She heard her alarm but it sounded different. Then it dawned on her she did not set her alarm. Her next flight left Kennedy at two that afternoon. There it was again. “The phone!” her mind screamed. She had forgotten to turn it off. She grabbed for it, bumped it with her fingers and it slid off the nightstand onto the floor and she dove after it. “Please don’t hang up,” she pleaded softly. She punched the button to open the receiver as soon as her hand found it. “Hello?” she said hastily.

“Hi Tres! Did I wake you?” Seth’s smooth voice sounded in her ear.

“Yes, but its okay.”

“I’m sorry,” he was silent a few seconds. “...I shouldn’t have called.”

“I want you to call,” Tres said softly.

“Where are you?”

“At my sister’s house.”

“You... he paused. “I’d better get off the phone and let you rest.”

“Seth ...please don’t hang up.”

“You feeling lonely?”

“Uh-huh. I always do, but sometimes it worse than others.”

“I have six more days here and then I go back to Florida. Uh ...maybe we can get together.”

“I’d like that.”

“Okay, let’s keep in touch.”

“Alright.”

“Better let you go.”

“Do you have to?”

“Yeah,” he was still. Then he hung up leaving a hum in her ear.

“Bye!” she said into the dead connection.

That evening Tres, Jill and Scott were going on short hop duty to Washington D. C. on one of the 717’s the Airlines uses for national flights. Then a flight out of there to Dallas and from there to California and the same rout back. Sixteen hours up in the air. These were her favorite flights. She would return home very tired but she stayed busy nonstop and that made the time go by fast and kept her interest.

When she got back to Kennedy she checked her phone anxious to see if there was a message from Seth. There was and it said, “Hi Tres. Had a few minutes and thought I would call. Learning some Fench. Call when you can.”

She was so pleased that there was a message that she sat down in the airport and called him back. However, all she got was his voice mail. “Hello Seth. Just got in from a flight. Sorry I missed your call. Thanks for calling. Bye!”

She was dog tired by the time she got to her sister’s house. But she would be off tomorrow and she and Flo could go “mallng” as they called it.

As she got out of the car she heard someone call her name. She froze in her steps. It was Tony! She could not mistake that voice. She turned around and he came jogging up the drive in a running outfit. She wanted to run, but was shaking too hard. No, she didn't want to run. She watched him approach and fought the desire ...to run to meet him. She was too tired to deal with this. She had no fight left in her. There was a big grin on his handsome face and he pushed a lock of golden hair aside as he came to a stop in front of her. She caught her breath. She had forgotten how wonderfully he was built and how his every move was so sexy.

"You're hard to catch," his voice played in her stomach like a bow on violin strings. His deep blue eyes sent arrows of desire into her as he studied her a minute. "You've been missing me, haven't you, baby," it was a statement, not a question. His voice was causing all kinds of eruptions in her. Oh how she needed him to love her. But she wanted to be free from him. He had successfully rendered her speechless.

Then he touched her cheek with his hand and it set ablaze the smoldering desire she had tried so hard to suppress. Why was she fighting what her desire cried out for? "Come on home, baby," he said in sultry tones, "Tony will make everything all right." Oh how well she knew he could do that, and that was what she needed, wanted. Then a voice behind her sent a chill through her.

Stan said, "I told you to stay off my property." He pushed between her and the answer to her need and want.

"Stan," she pleaded, "I..."

"Get inside!" Stan growled, but stood his ground. Then he said to Tony, "You might whip me, but it will be a hell of a fight."

"No!" Tres screamed, and suddenly there was an arm around her and Flo was turning her toward the house. "Don't hit him!" Tres called as her sister turned her. She wanted to tear away and run into Tony arms. She made an

attempt, but Flo clung to her and dragged her away. She heard Tony shout her name and she tried to escape once more. Flo almost lost her hold and frantically made a grab with her other hand.

“Come on, Tressa,” she pleaded. There was always something definite when Flo used her full name. It was like a threat or that she had come to the end of her patience. She was sure that if she had not been so tired, her sister would not have prevented her escape. As it was, she finally managed to get her into the house while the men yelled and screamed at each other. Flo led her into the den and seated her in a chair and stood there defying her to get up. “I will not let you destroy your life.”

“It’s my life!” Tres yelled at her and immediately wished she hadn’t as tears came into her sister’s eyes and ran slowly down her cheeks. After all, wasn’t she trying to cut her ties with Tony and wasn’t she needing her sister’s help to do that? “I’m sorry,” she said quickly. “I know you’re just trying to help, but... sometimes I don’t want help,” she finished in defeat.

Flo squatted down in front of her. “Its okay, honey. I understand... really I do.”

Tres groaned, “I *need* him!”

“No, you don’t!” Flo challenged. “He makes you feel like you need him. That is how he controls you.”

The door opened and Stan came into the room his face red and breathing hard.

Tres summonsed her strength and stood up. “No, you don’t understand,” she snapped and pointed at Stan. “You have your man.” Tres snatched up her purse and saw fear rise up in Flo’s eyes and she looked quickly at Stan as Tres turned for the door.

“Oh, Tres! Please don’t go after him.” Flo pleaded, but Tres was being driven by her desire and the longing that was gnawing away at her like a wild beast. She was too tired to resist it. She didn’t want to resist it. All she wanted was Tony to love her and make the world go away

for a while. In the entry hall she heard it, her cell phone. Probably Seth ...Seth! She stopped, listening to it ring. Tony or Seth? No, Seth and then Tony.

She took the phone out and said, "Hello!"

He didn't say 'hi', 'hello' or anything. He said, "Tres what's wrong?"

"Nothing," Tres tried to control her voice.

"Honey, I am a better Marshal than that. I can hear it in your voice. What's wrong? What is it?" he insisted.

She felt herself began to tremble. He had called her Honey, like he did that night she spent with him. It was not the word itself, it was the way he said it. His voice held such concern and a little apprehension. Tres felt as though her knees were going to drop her on the floor. "Seth!" she clutched the phone hard against her cheek.

"Talk to me, Honey," Seth pleaded. She knew Flo and Stan had followed her and now she felt Flo's arm come around her shoulders and she was helping her back into the den. "Tres," Seth said softly. "tell me what is wrong. One alone to another." Tres felt tears stream down her cheeks as his voice brought a kind of a calm to her. Flo set her down again in a chair and stroked the back of her head.

"It's Tony," Tress said brokenly, rose and went into the entry hall and up the stairs to her room. She wanted what they said to each other to be private.

"Husband?" he asked after a silence. He could hear something, he could tell by her breathing she was moving.

"No," she shook her head. "He's... I use to live with him and now he won't let go. Maybe, I don't want him to let go."

Seth waited... listening to pick up what her voice was telling him. There was definitely confusion and doubt. Then he heard a door open and close. He needed her to say something. "Do you love him?" he asked slowly as though he really didn't want to hear the answer, but needed to ask.

"I need him," Tres almost whispered. She had stopped walking.

“Do you love him?” Seth insisted. He waited a few minutes.

Tress squeezed her eyes together and her lip trembled. “I only know I need him,” Tress choked.

“Like you needed me in Florida?”

“Yes,” she admitted.

“I see,” the sound in his voice frightened her, he might stop calling now.

“Seth?” she said quickly. “Like the first time, not like the others.” She knew he was still there but was waiting, debating what to do about her, she imagined. “We were together for five years.”

“Did you have a fight?”

“Oh, Seth, we have had hundreds of fights.” She sighed, “and then always ended up in bed.

“So what caused the split?” He had her talking now. If this was a hostage situation he knew that would bring things to a conclusion, but this...

“I got tired of the fighting... the life style. He has never been faithful to me, but I just lived with that to get to be with him. He does so many things to my emotions... Flo says he controls me with them. I don't know about that, I just know I need him. I need him to make love to me to take me into his world and make me feel all the things he does.” She was shocked at her confession, but all the bottled up feelings were flowing out like a coke bottle turned over.

“Does he make you feel things I couldn't in Florida?” He needed her to answer that because of the trouble in his own life. It might give him some answers.

“You make love wonderfully, Seth.”

“But not as good as him?”

“He drives me crazy and always leaves me wanting more,” she explained and wondered why she wanted him to know this. Why was she uncovering her whole ugly life to him? After a long pause she said, “Seth, it's not better... just different.”

He wondered if she was just saying that or if she really felt that way. Audrey always said he was good in bed, but he couldn't understand why she sent him divorce papers in the mail. Until Tres, he had always been faithful to her and even Tres came after he received the papers.

"Different?"

"Yes... Tony is more intense. Uh... you didn't leave me crazy for more, yet I wanted more because... of the pleasure it brought." She could never talk to Tony like this. He would either ignore her or explode.

"So... he drives you crazy, while I just give you pleasure. I think you should go back to Tony." Seth conceded his defeat. Tres was shocked. Well, she didn't really blame him. She did make him sound like he was not too good in bed.

"Seth... I loved the way you made love to me. I really did. It was wonderful.

"Tres... why do you say you are alone?"

"That is the way I feel most of the time."

"Even with Tony?"

"Yes."

"I have a confession to make," Seth sighed.

That sigh disturbed her and made her tense up. "I'm not a priest," Tres said with a light laugh to release some tension.

"I probably need one."

"I was only teasing."

"I'm married, Tres." Somehow it didn't surprise her, and she was not too upset about it. "I got the divorce papers in the mail a week before I met you. Kind of funny isn't it? You want Tony, and my wife doesn't want me."

"I want you, Seth," Tres almost whispered.

"What about Tony?"

"I'm trying to break that off. That was the trouble I had tonight."

"I don't understand. You want him, but you are breaking up with him?"

“I don’t want to live that life anymore. He even brought one of his girls to the apartment while I was gone and made love to her in my bed.”

He knew he should just walk away from this and let it go, but she had touched him in such a way that he didn’t want to lose it. “Do you still want to get together next week?”

“Yes, very much.”

“You sure?”

“Yes.”

“Okay.” He returned and felt a sort of relief.

“Seth... keep in touch.”

“Okay,” then the phone went dead and she said bye into the receiver.

Nothing was said at dinner about the trouble. Tres didn’t watch TV with the family. She went on to bed and slept a troubled sleep. In the morning she went down stairs and Flo was doing the breakfast dishes.

“Morning, honey,” Flo said with a sweet smile. “Did you sleep well?”

“No,” Tres sighed.

“I came up last evening, but you were still talking to Seth.”

“Yes, we talked a long time.”

Flo took some eggs out of the refrigerator and broke them into a skillet. “Are you still mad at me?” she asked without looking at her sister.

“Flo, I wasn’t mad at you.” Tres sighed. “I was just...”

“Two eggs or three?” Flo injected.

“Two,” Tres replied going to the coffee pot. She took down a cup from the cabinet over it and watched the black liquid flow into it. “Where are the kids?”

“Stan dropped them off at the daycare.”

Tres came to the table and sat down. “Want to go malling?”

“Why do you think the kids are at the daycare?” Flo grinned, and set Tres’ plate in front of her. Tres looked at her sister’s bright eyes and said, “I’m sorry I yelled at you when you were just trying to help. I was...”

“Let’s forget all that. They have a sale at Caldwell’s and I saw this pair of shoes in the paper I would love to have.”

“Okay,” Tres nodded and ate.

It was a wonderful day. They shopped all morning, had lunch at Brownie’s and took in a movie. Flo called Stan to see if he would charcoal some steaks and he agreed, so they grabbed some steaks and headed home. While Tres and the kids played volleyball in the back yard and Stan was cooking the steaks, Flo was in the house making a salad. It was faint but she heard a cell phone ring and she thought she had left hers on, but it wasn’t.

She followed the ring and found Tres’ purse on the entry hall table. Flo stared at the purse and then opened it, taking out the phone. It wasn’t Tony, that was a relief. Maybe it was that Seth guy and she wanted very much to talk to him, so she answered the call. “Hello?”

There was no reply for a minute. “Tres?”

“No, this is her sister, Florence. Is this Seth?”

“Yes,” Seth answered and she could tell he was puzzled. She went to the kitchen door so she could see out into the back yard. She didn’t want Tres to find out she had talked to Seth.

“Tres is out in the back yard playing volleyball with the kids. Normally, I would have just let the phone ring but... I want to thank you for calling last evening. Tres was on her way out the door to go back to that ...uh ...to Tony in spite of all we had done to keep them apart.”

“She told me about him.” Seth informed.

“She was going to go running back to him last evening. There was nothing Stan and I could do to stop her, but your call stopped her. I think she really likes you. I have never seen her take an interest in anyone but Tony.”

“I like her, too.” Seth said softly.

“I just thought you should know. I’d better get off here before she catches me.”

“Okay,” he returned and the phone buzzed in her ear. She drew it back and blinked at it, turned it off and put it back in Tres’ purse. Then she went back to the salad.

The next few days were just routine flights. Tres checked her phone regularly and there were no calls from Seth. She had lost him by dumping her dirty laundry on him. She hated herself for it and carried a deep sadness on top of the frustration of dealing with her run away desire, loneliness and the depression that took up residence bringing her to tears at the drop of a hat.

She was never one to cry much, but now she cried about everything, felt abused and abandoned. She even thought about picking up someone, after all that was Tony’s way, but she never did. She had given up hopes of ever hearing from Seth again.