

Broken Rib

By Traci Wingfield

It was a warm, starry summer night. Mark and Tyra had been out all day at the museums downtown. They ended their night with a late night walk by the monument and some ice cream. They sat on the bench, gazing at the night's sky simply enjoying each other's company. Suddenly, Tyra looked up at Mark debating to ask a question.

"What's on your mind Ty?" he said as he looked down upon her with her head rested on his shoulder. Mark stood at six feet seven inches to Tyra's five foot four.

Tyra looked up, smiled and said "Tell me. Who do you love most in this world?"

Mark chuckled and answered "You silly. From the moment I met you in line for pre-registration I knew we were meant to be together."

Tyra then sat up and looked at Mark for a moment before asking her next question.

"Ok. Honestly speaking, in your heart what am I to you?" she said awaiting a serious answer.

"What's with all these questions Ty? You know you mean the world and more to me. Are you nervous because I'm leaving for an assignment in a few months?" he replied.

"No, I'm not. I would just like to know, I like hearing this. Pretty please?" she asked with her bright eyes and a Colgate smile.

Mark sighed and agreed to give an answer. He thought for a moment and looked intently in her eyes and said, "You are my rib. It was said that God saw that Adam was lonely, during his sleep; God took one of Adam's ribs and created Eve. Every man has been searching for his missing rib, only when you find the woman of your life, you'll no longer feel the lingering ache in your heart. You will always be my rib, for me to protect and nurture you." he said as he kneeled down in front of her.

"Ty, going into the military is one of the greatest and scariest things I have ever done in my life but if I had you beside me through it I would always be a happy man." He said as a tear ran down his cheek and he pulled out this little red box with a ring in it.

Tyra was speechless. She never expected this moment and was completely stuck. The only thought in her mind was that he went to Jared's. Mark lifted her chin and looked into her teary eyes and asked her hand in marriage. She said yes.

The couple went on to legally tie the knot before Mark left for training and assignment through the courts.

Two months after the wedding, it was time for Mark to leave. It was a day of sorrow and tears.

“I love you so much please come back to me.” Tyra said as she gave Mark one final hug before he boarded his bus.

“Don’t worry babe, I’m counting the days. I love you so much more.” Mark replied squeezing Tyra in his arms.

She sat in her car and watched as his bus pulled off and was no longer visible, so she went home.

It had been three weeks since Mark left and she hadn’t heard anything from him. Not a call, a letter, or email. Tyra began to worry so she decided to go for a jog. Jogging became her way of keeping herself occupied during her lonely days. One day the phone rang.

“Hey Ty I miss you so much.” said Mark.

“Mark where have you been, I’ve been worried to death thinking something happened to you. You were supposed to call me when you got there.” Tyra replied with concern...

“Ty, I’m really busy now. I don’t have much time to talk anymore. I’m always on a new assignment and training new recruits. This is the only time I have to call you. I’m really sorry but I have to go. I love you” Mark replied.

Tyra sat with her arms folded and sighed “Okay I love you too.”

Over time the couple’s conversations were less frequent, shorter and sometimes filled with arguing. They began to drift apart due to their busy schedules of life and the never-ending worries of daily problems, their lives became mundane.

The challenge of Mark being in the Army and never having time for Tyra began to gnaw away their dreams and love for each other. The couple began to have more quarrels and each quarrel became more heated.

One day, after a quarrel over Skype, Tyra decided to leave the house and go for a quick jog. She jogged until she began to run, as if she was running to Mark’s arms looking for him to make everything better. She ran until she could run no more. She stopped to catch her breath in front of an abandoned building. As she gasped for air, she thought of what she had said to him and felt horrible. She hated arguing with him and only wanted to make it right. She was so deep in thought she had forgotten how late it was and that she was alone. While she rested and caught her breath, she was approached by a group of men dressed in all black. The first pointed a gun to her face and told her to empty her wallet. In a panic, she patted her pockets only to realize she had left it in the house. Afraid, she feared for her life and begged for them to leave her alone.

"Give us your wallet or I'll shoot!" the gunman said.

"I have no money. Please, please!" Tyra cried.

The gunman then hit her with his pistol knocking her off her feet.

"I'll give u to the count of three to empty your pockets" he said.

"I have no money somebody please help me" she screamed as she took off to run.

Tyra made it to a police station where she was able to file a suspect report. She met with Officer James Madison to give a description of the muggers.

"Mrs. Tucker if there is anything else I can do, here's my card. Give me a call. My office and cell number is there. Would you like an escort home?" the officer asked Tyra as his eyes inspected her full figure from head to toe.

"Yes, thank you" Tyra replied.

Meanwhile, Mark called her and left a message.

"Hey babe, I wanted to apologize for the arguing and everything I put you through. I promise I will do my best to make things work a lot better between us and I'm starting by coming home. I can't wait to see you. I'll be home in three weeks. I love you." Mark said sweetly.

As Tyra entered her house she immediately put on the alarm and made some tea to calm her nerves. Even though she was a bit rattled, he mind would not stay off of Officer James Madison so she decided to give him a call.

"Hello?" said Officer Madison.

"Hey, I feel a little scared by myself without my husband here, are you too busy to talk?" she said.

"No problem, what's on your mind" he replied.

That night, the James and Tyra talked all night until she fell asleep. Their conversations became a daily routine for about a week. They began to see each other during their lunch breaks and have dinner dates on the weekend. It was clear that they were smitten with each other now. Officer Madison made frequent visits to Tyra's house at night and would leave in the morning for work. Three weeks had passed and Mark had arrived at the airport in Virginia. He decided not to call Tyra so that he could surprise her. He stopped at the local florist and picked up a bouquet of roses then headed home. As his taxi pulled up outside of his house, he noticed another car sitting in the driveway. Confused, Mark entered the house looking around for anything out of the ordinary. He quietly walked upstairs to the master bedroom and abruptly opened the door to find Tyra scurrying to get Officer Madison's clothes together.

"What the hell is going on here? You have another man in our house? Why Tyra? What have I done

to deserve this?" Mark questioned. Tyra stood frozen in a panic and a loss for words.

"Where is he?" Mark asked as he began to search the house. He checked under the bed and the bathroom with no luck. He then looked to open the closet door. As he did Officer James pointed his gun at him and ordered him to back down. Feeling threatened, Mark refused and grabbed for the gun. The two men tussled and argued with the gun waving around in the air. Tyra begged both of them to stop, and then suddenly a shot rang out. Tyra fell to the floor with a gunshot wound to the head. She was dead. They both stood over her lifeless body not knowing what to do next. Then another shot rang out. Another body fell to the floor.

"This is Madison, car 423. We have two bodies here at 18907 Foster Street. Looks like it was a domestic dispute, both spouses are dead. I need backup and a coroner ASAP. Do you copy?" said the officer as he got dressed.

"This is headquarters. We copy. Investigators are on the way."

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