The Calling

He watched her come through the door and walk towards him.

His wife of almost 25 years, was still beautiful, emulated charisma, and still to some degree took his breath away.

Alex wondered how it had come to this. He had not been happy for a long time. He deserved to be happy. It was a hard decision to make but he could not turn back now.

She sat down and ordered a cocktail, remaining calm with a cool smile upon her face.

Gigi had decided to take the high road. She had genuinely loved Alex all these years and she just couldn’t make him happy anymore. He deserved to be happy.

She had not fought him over anything. Alex Jakarte was one of the highest paid attorneys in Los Angeles. The last several years he had made a killing, making more money than he knew what to do with. He had offered her more than enough to retire comfortably. She just wanted him to be happy. She had started taking a writing course as a distraction. Life was changing.

He put the papers in front of her and she signed them. There was sadness lingering in the air.

“What do you plan on doing now?” she asked, surprised at the ice in her words.

“I need a big change and I’m prepared to leave the law firm if that’s what it takes” “I don’t get the same rush I used to after draining my client’s bank account.” I want to do something that makes me feel good again. Something meaningful.”

GiGi hesitated to reply. This shouldn’t concern her now. They were to go their separate ways. She could tell he was struggling, actually floundering and she still cared about him, actually still loved him.

So she dove in… “Isn’t there something you’ve always wanted to do? Something you would do no matter what it paid? You’ve got more money than God right now. You’re only 50. There’s still the second half of your life to make into whatever you wish. Surely there’s a thought that brings joy to your heart. What did you love to do as a child?”

“Hmmm”, he looked up and off to the right, digging into his memory banks.

“When I was a boy, I used to play baseball. I was actually pretty good at it. I used to love the feeling of sliding into home plate and hearing the roars from the bleachers.”

I’d look up ready to see a familiar face but was always disappointed because my Dad never made it to the games. The other boy’s fathers would high five them after the game and take them for hot fudge sundaes but I would end up cleaning up the field and walking home alone. As good as playing made me feel it always left emptiness in my heart. If I could do something meaningful it would be to make sure that no boy ever felt that way again.”

“Well, there’s your answer”, Gigi smiled. “Just allow yourself to be truly who you are.” “Everyone has a gift that they were meant to share. When you discover what that is, just let the light shine through you.”

At that, she stood and gracefully walked out of the restaurant before the tear in her eye worked its way down her cheek.

Two and a half years later, Coach Jakarte stood on the field in Granada Park, with a whistle around his neck. He had never felt more alive than he did that day. His little league team scored three home runs and knocked their opponents out of the park.

“We did it, coach!” screamed Tommy Larkin, the eighth grader who Alex had taken under his wing.

“No, you did it, Tommy. Just keep believing in yourself and imaging yourself succeeding. There’s nothing you can’t do.”

Alex thought about how far he had come. He left his old life of late nights preparing long briefs and early mornings debating in court. He left the Armani suits for the jeans and sweat shirts, fast food lunches for fresh, whole foods and of course, he left Gigi for the single life. He realized, it wasn’t her that made him unhappy. He just needed to find the happiness in himself.

The crowd was cheering for his team and once again his eyes rose into the bleachers hoping to see a familiar face that was cheering just for him. He would have loved to have seen Gigi’s face.

He would have found her nestled in a tiki hut deep in the jungles of Vietnam, writing her book on war stories.

Neither one of them would have followed their dreams if they had stayed together but happiness comes with a high price.