

# I Just Called to Say I Love You

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*This little one-shot is a prequel of sorts to my story Iced. I've had a few folks asking about the marriage between Jessica and Seth that was portrayed in that story (and yes, I am planning a multi-chapter fic about how they got there), so here's a little slice of newlywed bliss, just as a teaser of things to come.*

*I want to thank Flammentanz for the inspiration for this story. Her Tumblr post about Seth and Jess calling each other, and then her video set to "I Just Called to Say I Love You," got my creative juices flowing. Thanks, girl.*

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"Hello?"

"Hello yourself."

Although it was only two little words spoken over the phone, Jessica Fletcher felt a sappy smile spread over her face when she heard the gruff, beloved voice on the other end. "Hi," she said, not caring if she sounded like a schoolgirl with a crush. "How are you?"

"Strugglin' through my work day. I've got my good patients visiting, and then there's the ones with all the drama. I've already told one of them I can't give him a shot if his butt is gonna be permanently attached to his shoulders. Might affect his brain, not that it needs to be affected any more than it already is."

Jessica laughed. "Poor baby."

"You are talking about me, right?"

"Of course. I can sympathize. I deal with drama of another sort, remember? But still, you never know what someone may be going through. A person's a person, no matter how small."

"Leave it to you to quote *Horton Hears a Who*."

"You know I love Dr. Seuss." Jessica smiled and propped an elbow up on the kitchen table, resting her head in her free hand while she held the phone to her ear. "So what's the occasion?"

"Whatcha talking about?"

The temptation to say *whatchu talkin' 'bout*, Willis crossed Jessica's mind before she answered the question. "I mean, what's the occasion? It's not my birthday or Christmas or Valentine's Day. It's not any special day."

"Does it have to be a special day for me to give my own wife a call?"

*Wife*. Lord, how long it had been since she was called that by a man, not since Frank's death. She never thought she would be any man's wife again... at least, up until she remarried only last week. Married again, to the man whom she had long considered her best friend. It had taken her years to realize that he had loved her from afar all that time, and even longer still to realize that she loved him in return. She had always been too afraid to admit it, for fear of betraying Frank, of being hurt all over again, of losing a friendship that meant more to her than anything else in the world. Now, she knew that she never had any reason to be afraid. After nearly 20 years, Jessica finally said yes to Dr. Seth Hazlitt, and their friendship was still unbroken. In fact, it was even stronger, thanks to the love that now bound them as husband and wife. The old saying went that the best marriages were built on friendship and that your spouse had to be your best friend. In this case, it was never truer.

"No, it doesn't. You can call me anytime; you know that."

"Well, if that's the case, then why did you ask me what the occasion was?"

Jessica put a hand to her forehead. "I'm sorry, Seth. I'm so used to you calling whenever you need my help in something or if you want to plan an outing that..."

When he spoke again, the smile was evident in Seth's voice. "You didn't think I'd be calling just to say I love you."

"Oh, Seth... is that why you called? To tell me you love me?"

"Jessica, considering that I waited nearly two decades to say 'I love you' to your face, I think I'm entitled to say it more than just twice a day."

Jessica had to laugh at the truth in that. She never considered what a relief it must be for Seth to freely say *I love you*, especially now that they were married. Then again, she'd never thought about what a relief it was for her as well. "Trust me, Seth; you are more than entitled to say it. Lord knows you waited long enough." She waited for a minute while there was a pause over the line. "Well? Are you going to say it?"

"I thought I did."

"That wasn't a proper *I love you*, and you know it," she teased.

Seth chuckled. "Woman, you are the contrariest thing."

"It's part of my charm. You'll learn to love me for it."

"I already do."

"Then say it."

A pause. "Say *it*," she ordered, trying desperately not to giggle and ruin the whole thing. "Say *it*."

Another pause, and then sweet relief. "I love you, Jess."

"I love you too, Seth."

A happy sigh filtered through loud and clear. "Lord, I can't tell you how good it feels to hear that."

"Same here, my darling." Jessica glanced at the clock, noting that it was almost the time when Seth took his usual lunch break. "Would you like to meet for lunch?"

"Well, actually... I was thinking I'd come home for lunch today."

"Oh, really?"

"Ayuh. And then maybe we could, uh... take a little afternoon nap together."

Jessica felt warmth pool in her stomach as the implication of his words became clear. "Well, I'm not surprised you want to," she teased. "You were awake until all hours last night."

"Maybe so, but you're the one who kept me awake, remember?" he retorted, his own tone of voice every bit as teasing as her own.

Jessica laughed again, heat sweeping her cheeks as memories of last night - and several nights before - flashed through her mind. *With my body, I thee worship.* On their wedding night, she and Seth rejoiced in the freedom that marriage brought them, reveling in each other until they were both too breathless and boneless to do anything but fall asleep in each other's arms. Ever since that night, they had indeed worshiped each other's bodies, the jasmine-rose aroma of her perfume and the cedar spice of his cologne intermingling in a delicious fragrance as lips kissed, hands caressed, and limbs tangled beneath cool cotton sheets. Never did she think she would be so loved, so cherished, all over again, but Seth's love filled her soul, agape and eros meeting to heal old wounds and open her to a new life. "Oh Seth, I love you."

"I love you, too. See you soon."

"Don't be too long." Jessica blew a kiss into the phone before whispering goodbye to Seth and ended the call. She then set the phone down on the table, saved the work she had been doing on her newest book, shut her laptop down, and set about preparing lunch. While she worked, her heart thumped with anticipation for the afternoon to come. Imagine, it had all started with one phone call and three little words. *I love you.* And to think, he would probably call her every day to tell her he loved her. Jessica released a grateful sigh, happier than she had been in a long time. There was no feeling in the world more wonderful than knowing you were loved.