

“Coming on live on our news channel is the report based on a ground breaking milestone ever achieved in the history of human space research- the first ever human communication with aliens. The three scientists carrying out the research are Dr. Rhonda Stevens, Dr Marie Clement and Dr. Caroline Thomas. So let us talk about this news report live with the researcher herself Dr. Rhonda Stevens. So Dr, is this milestone an attempt to increase the prestige of science or something much beyond that?”

Marie smiled as the reporter interrogated her best friend, on television. Sitting on a couch in her four-storey bungalow, she wondered, “There you go, Rhonda”. She saw earnestness fill up the eyes of Rhonda as she replied “this is not done to increase the prestige or fame of science, but this endeavor is undertaken to inculcate a belief among humans in achieving the impossible and never thought of. It will make us believe in a world that is outside our huge plane of mortals”. “How far have you reached in the research?” asked the reporter. “We have sent the messages through the radar and we have received a reply, however, we are yet to decipher the message.” Rhonda replied with a tinge of disappointment.

After a few days: In California research center.

“Do you mind me asking the password to your secret computer?”

“It’s okay, you are my best friend” said Rhonda to Marie. Marie looks at her, and smiles. “Are you happy working with me”

, Rhonda asked. “Happy? I am very happy and all because of you....you gave me a chance to work with you, I will always be indebted to you” Marie said. “It’s okay. No big deal, no need to say thanks, you are a friend, I never had a family, you are the only one I have in my life,” Rhonda said genially. “Yes, but both of us are enough , you and me and are each other’s family”

Marie said. “Yes, perhaps that’s why your mother used to attend all the meetings not only for you but also for both of us in our school days, well your birthday is approaching, there is a gift I have bought for you,” saying thus, Rhonda produced a beautiful gold necklace, “Why do you buy such expensive gifts, you know I don’t wear gold,” Marie was overwhelmed but admonished her friend all the same, “Hey, let me give you some happiness in return for being my family, I have got nobody to spend my money on....by the way, why don’t you take a look into the glass chamber, it has been a week since they arrived and we haven’t been able to decipher anything being said by them.”

Marie entered the chamber where aliens were kept, she looked at the creatures, they looked like masses of flesh, except that Marie was not sure whether they were made of flesh or not. These aliens just made an oval peach shaped appearance in the chamber. And released sound waves through the only embellishment on their bodies, a radar, removing that they would look like skin colored oval shaped insects, without sense organs, nails , eyelashes or any other human attribute. As soon as Marie enters, she hears something but fails to decipher what is being said. She stays there for about 30 minutes and attempts to fathom what this very consequential discovery of science wants to convey to them, but without success.

“May I come in?” Mr. Thomas said from the door.

“Since when did you started needing our permission to come in this cabin?” Marie said.

“Yes, but now I will, you are a celebrity, once you decipher the message, govt will shower you with money,” Thomas said.

“None of us worked so hard for money, no big deal” Rhonda said.

“Yeah, but you are going to be famous, can you deny that...imagine you reaching that ultimate destination, you are going to be the first person being able to decipher the message, from aliens, the things that people only dream about,” “Hey,

you are forgetting, its not just me, there is my friend, it is not my work, it is ours,” Rhonda said.

Marie’s eyes shone, this was an unfamiliar sensation, and definitely an unnerving one. Weird thoughts ran in her mind, she couldn’t make out why was this fire of ambition burning her up and why was she so envious of her best friend “Hey, Rhonda, you should kill your friend and get the money” Thomas teased. “My friend is my life, I won’t kill her or get away from her even if you offer me the whole world” Rhonda retorted. Marie had gone pale, it was as if the world was reflecting her thoughts

“Marie, we want to talk to you, Marie listen, we can help you...” the noise came from the glass chamber. Rhonda had gone out of the chamber talking with Thomas. Marie entered the glass chamber “Marie, you are destined to be great, we can kill your friend such that nobody even knows that you had anything to do with murder, think about it, than you can free us, how about it, you deserve that glory, that fame, that moment of triumph,” Marie couldn’t tell what kind of sound was that, it was not angry, not impatient, not evil, not like anything ever heard before. It was so plain and clear that it looked inhuman, it was the most mechanical sound she had ever heard. Yes, that was it, inhumane. The three aliens did not request, they spoke as if

they were sure that Marie was going to agree and that their emancipation was decided.

“I have not even decided it, it was just a thought that crossed my mind, what are you, who are you and how can I understand you now and not before” Marie was perplexed.

“That’s because we choose the people we want to talk to, your friend is too sensitive and coward duckling, or rather emotional fool, we only talk to people like you, able and ambitious, tell us Marie, we want to make this world devoid of emotions and relations, they are the tendencies of weaklings, help us in our mission to make this world a strong place and better place to live in, free us and we will free this world of weaknesses like love, friendship and all those things that stupid people associate with meaning of life, and in return we will kill your friend in such a manner that nobody would even suspect that you had anything to do with their death.” The proposal of aliens was irresistible. Marie’s eyes enlarged at it but she left the chamber. When she reached home that night, she could not sleep for a minute. “Their voice was so unnatural and so promising, as if each word spoken by them was the destiny of the world, of this universe. Yes, she is my friends but if these creatures are helping me, bequeathing on me this out topping glory, refusing it would be downright foolishness, but what about all the things she has done for me, no this can’t happen,”

“What can’t happen?”, Marie scarcely realized it but her last statement was spoken out loudly, her mother had heard her disturbed expression, “Tell me Marie, what can’t happen,” Mrs. Clement inquired, Marie narrated to her the entire incident, Mrs. Clement was silent for few minutes than she said, “I always knew you were gifted, that’s why these supernatural beings chose to fulfill your ambitions, what are you thinking so much and why?” Marie was astonished, she said, “How can you say this, she is like a daughters to you,” Mrs. Clement replied, “Yes, but she is not my daughters, you are, I have lived for you, as long as she is alive, the prestige will have to be divided, kill her before anyone knows about that it was both of you who had managed to bring aliens down”. Marie said, “How can you say this so easily?” “Because you always wanted to have that fame and wealth, you have that opportunity now, what did you get by being principle oriented, it is Rhonda who is getting all the fame, leave her now,” said Mrs. Clement. “No, I can’t kill her, I won’t kill her,” Marie said anxiously, “Then continue being her stooge as long as you live, you know she is more efficient, do as I say, consider this the call of your fortune,” Mrs. Clement was leaving no stone unturned in instigating her daughter, “Mom, this thing kills me, stop it, she considers me her family, how can I do this to her,” Marie pleaded. “Marie this is what you want, you know it as well as I do, take it before it is too late, your ability in science won’t take you far, your ability in deception

would, take this as a signal from the destiny and kill her”. That was the final stroke from Mrs. Clement.

Next day: at the California research centre.

“Rhonda, Caroline, come fast, there are some developments with this research, come in the glass chamber, I have finally been able to make out what aliens are trying to say.” Marie said. “You know what you have to do, they are coming here, you do your job, and then I will do mine.” Marie said, turning to the aliens.

“I always knew you were a genius, tell me what the aliens want to say,” Rhonda asked and the incredulous look on her face could not be mistaken for a momentary delight, it was a look of triumph, an absolute, eternal triumph. “That you are a fool” Marie heard aliens say. The last looks on her face was of happiness and adoration as her verdict was so abrupt that fortunately, truth could not pervade her otherwise quick brain. It just took one second, one second to kill one friend and one conscience, surprising it looks how one day can alter the fate of a decade of friendship. Marie let the aliens out

and within a fortnight the news of three aliens' arrival on earth spread like a wild fire. Since Marie was the sole surviving scientist, entire credit was accrued to her, and so was the money. People knew that Aliens had given a reply, but the fact that both of them had managed to call them on earth was something that no one knew. However the bodies of both the scientists were found together floating in the river, there were suspicions going on, and that's why the government appointed an investigating officer to look into the matter. Since Marie was the best friend of the scientist, and had worked closely with her, she was summoned.

Charles Benjamin was the oldest investigating officer in the firm; he had a reputation of seeing all the aspects of a given situation and had a 99% success rate. But this case intrigued him, there has to be a reason for death, and postmortem could not detect that very reason. "Who worked here?" Charles asked, "Me and Rhonda," Marie replied, "Who started the reasearch?" Charles shot, "Me and Rhonda," "Who deciphered the message?" Charles asked. "Me and Rhonda," was the answer, "Because of whom did they come down?" was the next question, "Me and Rhonda," Charles raised an eyebrow "Media seems to say something else..."he said. " Well I am just used to the idea of doing everything with her, that's why, it was I who called them," Marie replied panting.

Next day: At the house of Stevens.

“So you mean to say that both Marie and Caroline failed to extract information from Aliens?” Charles asked.

“Yes, both of them had been trying very hard to get the information, but failed incessantly,” replied John, a servant at the house of Rhonda who knew about the arrival of aliens.

“But then...” John stopped mid way.

“What? Tell me; perhaps it will help me with the case.” Charles urged.

“Well, as far as I know, the night they were murdered, my mistress was quiet excited, Marie had called her saying that she had deciphered the message, they had gone to the centre, that’s all I wanted to convey,” John said.

Next day: At the times now bureau..

“Today we have with us the mother of a well known scientist, Marie Clement, Mrs Clement how does it feel being the the greatest scientist of this century.” The reporter asked.

“That feeling can’t be described in words, I am proud that Rhonda brought aliens on earth...” Mrs. Clement’s face paled at

her subconscious confession, but taking care of her mistake she chuckled and said, "I miss her so much, I meant I am proud that Marie brought aliens on earth"

Somewhere 10 miles away from the Times Bureau, Charles smiled in his office.

At the office of Charles:

"You want to work with me right? Well, Ben, I want this girl to speak all she knows about this murder case, elicit information from her as soon as possible," Charles ordered his would-be-assistant.

Ben went to the California research centre and inquired where can he meet this scientist, Marie's assistant replied, "She usually goes to – bar at this time of the day,"

At the bar:

"Who are you? You want to talk about her right? I talk....I talk about her everybody, you want to listen, you want to listen what I think of her... she was a bad person, she always forgave me for my mistakes, she....she made me who I am, what I am today, all that I am now is because of her, why was she so good that her ghost....no ...not the ghost, her character haunts me even after she is dead, I talk about her, think about her a lot..." Marie was mumbling in her drunken state, unaware of the fact that her she was lamenting to her executor, Ben was

listening to her quiet intently. “Tell me, when do you think about her, what do you think about her?” Ben pretended to be incredulous to this person whom he had recognized by her photo given to him by his mentor. “I think of her every night , you know what she has kept the password of both our computers, “it is okay, you are my best friend”, do you know my friend lived by her password, doesn’t it sound like she is forgiving me, I hope...I hope she never forgives me, I don’t deserve to be forgiven....” Marie was mumbling in her own world, “Where are the computers?” Ben asked, now confident from his accomplishment, “I ...I am very smart..... very smart... I disposed her computer, but I kept my computer, it is in the research centre, I want to tell you a secret.....you don’t tell it to anyone, don’t nod...promisepromise me...you are a stranger and nobody but my personal diary knows this...” before Marie could confess her crime, she fell asleep, unaware of the fact that after 2 days, her sleep was going to be lost forever.

At the office of Charles:

“Good, you get your job, I think I need to visit the California research centre,” Charles said, congratulating Ben on his accomplishment.

Next Day: At the California Research centre,

“It’s okay, you are my best friend,” Charles typed in the only computer of the research centre, since he was a government

official of a high designation he was given access to this chamber, however, Marie was still in her drunken state and was unaware of this legal intrusion in her chamber.

The computer blinked and on her desktop, Charles saw something that helped him solve this case,

The last entry was made on 29th June, 2003, exactly one day after the death of Rhonda Stevens, it read, “ I killed my best friend, I don’t know what took over me, but I agreed with the deal offered to me by the aliens, I let them kill my best friend in return for their freedom and accomplishment of their mission, I freed them, but now, who will free me of this guilt, all the prestige, glory is futile without a friend like Rhonda, I hate her, why was she so good, had it not been for her magnanimity, I wouldn’t have hated myself for this deed, it served her right, she reared a snake like me, she was stung.”

Charles produced this extract from her diary to the court; Marie was sentenced 10 years in jail. Sarah Clement committed suicide and as for Marie, she was never heard from again, some perceived her silence as the consequence of her punishment whereas some believed that it was from her belief in its insufficiency.

At the office of Charles Benjamin:

“You are intelligent and ambitious, you will benefit from joining us...” Having lost Marie, aliens tried their cards on other people who were ambitious and had the ability of fulfilling their ambitions. But this time, they received a different reply.

“I do not work for benefits, besides you are fools , emotions and relations are not the characteristics of cowards, cowards are those who flee from their loved ones, flee from their relations, fearing that they may stand in the way of their dreams, the fact is that a person may fly alone as much as he wants, when the wings deceive him , it is emotions and relations that reduce the pain of the fall, with them, the deficiency on an abyss loses its sting and without them, the most coveted mountain top fails to enchant me, its cold hurls itself at me, for no laurels of supernatural will I compromise on that feeling I get when my son says that his father is his hero. With my principles, I won't be a great human being, but default, but human is what I choose to be.”