

# MINE FOR TONIGHT

## The Billionaire's Obsession



An Erotic Romance  
By J. S. Scott

# **Mine For Tonight (The Billionaire's Obsession)**

**By J. S. Scott**

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# Chapter 1

Simon Hudson stood silently in the shadows of the opulent lobby, his hands in the pockets of his jeans and one shoulder propped against the frame of a large window that faced the street. His whole body was tense, his dark brown eyes scanning the sidewalk with the intense and total focus of a mad man.

Where in the hell is she? It's ten forty-five.

He knew Kara was working tonight. She had called in sick for the last two evenings, but was back to work at Helen's Place, waiting tables on the swing shift. He had checked. His mother owned the bistro where Kara worked and was generally pretty forthcoming with information when Simon wanted it, but he was careful. If he wasn't, his only parent would be hounding him to find out why he wanted information on Kara. His wonderful but inquisitive mom would be like a bloodhound after a scent if she thought that Simon's interest was anything but casual. He would be nagged to death, his mother wanting to know exactly what his intentions were with Kara.

Simon frowned. Like he had any intentions? He had fantasies and all of them involved Kara spread out on his bed, screaming his name as he made her come, over and over.

Simon took a deep breath and slowly blew it back out, trying to get his body to relax and telling himself that he must be insane to take exactly the same position, night after night, for some woman that he had never officially met. But here he was... again, his back to the curious doorman, leering out the window like an unbalanced stalker, waiting to get glimpse of Kara Foster. Something about the woman brought out strange, territorial and protective instincts that kept him here, keeping watch, waiting for her to walk by his condo building on her way home from work.

And then, when he spotted her, he'd do the same thing he always did. He'd follow her at a distance, trying not to alarm her, and wait until she had let herself into her apartment safely before he turned around and walked back home.

He wouldn't talk to her, or even get close to her. He never did. It wasn't that he didn't want to, but Kara was going to nursing school and working full-time at his mother's restaurant. According to his mom, Kara adamantly refused to date because she didn't have the time or energy to put into a relationship. She was probably right about that. The insane woman didn't sleep enough, eat enough. She had no one who even worried about her except for his mother...and Simon. Hell...in the last year, Simon had probably cared more about Kara's well-being than a dozen family members would have, and he couldn't even call her a friend. Problem was...he wasn't a family member, and his feelings were far from brotherly.

God, she was sweet!

Simon had to bite back a groan of frustration as he thought about the first time he had seen Kara, her blue eyes flashing with humor, black tendrils of silky hair escaping from her ever-present ponytail and her lithe body moving gracefully from table to table at his mom's restaurant. At the age of twenty-eight, she still retained a look of innocence and vulnerability that had Simon caught in her unintentional web. He'd been a prisoner there ever since.

His mother spoke about Kara as if she were her daughter, and Simon knew that Kara and his mother had a special bond; one not formed by blood, but by a special friendship. Shit...if Kara were

younger...Simon was pretty sure his mother would adopt her. Lips twitching slightly, Simon hoped his mother never expected him to be like a brother to Kara. It wasn't happening. His cock stood at attention, rock-hard and ready, every time he saw her. What in the hell was it about this particular woman that made him so edgy and restless?

Simon had fucked women who were more attractive, more sophisticated, and not a single one of them had ever touched any of his emotions. He was a loner, preferring to spend his time with his computer rather than attending social functions, but there were times when he needed a woman's company for physical relief. Occasionally taking himself in hand just wasn't getting it done. Simon had certain female acquaintances for those occasions, women who gave him the control he needed and had to have in the bedroom, without a lot of demands or questions. Damn it! That had been enough for him...until he had seen Kara.

Grimacing, his eyes never leaving the street, Simon shoved his hands deeper into his pockets and adjusted his position, giving his shoulder a break by resting his hip against the wall. God, he was getting pathetic. How long would he moon over a woman who had never even acknowledged him? Until she finished nursing school and moved away? Until she got married?

He nearly growled at the thought of another man putting his hands on Kara's delectable body. Simon fought a purely feral instinct that rose up at the thought of another man touching his woman.

She's not your woman, asshole. Get a grip.

For once in his life, Simon wished he were more like his older brother Sam, the other half of the Hudson Corporation. Sam would have no problem putting the moves on Kara. Charm, conquer and discard had always been his brother's style and Sam wouldn't have given a thought to the possibility of rejection. Probably because Sam never failed! His only sibling went through the female population like a person with a nasty cold went through tissues. Sam would have broken down Kara's defenses, charmed her out of her panties and then discarded her for his next conquest.

Oh, hell no. Simon loved his brother, but he'd be damned if he'd ever let Sam seduce Kara. He didn't even want the two of them in the same room together.

Because she's mine.

Simon shook his head, surprised at his own behavior. Yeah...he liked control, actually needed control, but he had never wanted one woman in particular. Now, he could think of little else but the pretty waitress who had snagged his attention a year ago.

You're afraid of her.

Simon scowled at the thought. Like hell he was! He wasn't afraid of anything, and he definitely didn't fear Kara Foster. She just...was not a likely lover. Why bother?

He fucked.

He didn't date.

And he liked it that way.

His brother Sam was the face of the company, the marketer. Simon was a computer geek, happy to stay in the background. What did he know about seducing a woman? He'd never needed to coerce a woman to his bed. The females he fucked were only with him for personal gain. He was known for being a generous lover. He wasn't fool enough to believe they had any personal feelings for him. That, he understood. That, he could handle.

Maybe I need to find a way to fuck her and get over this crazy obsession.

Would it be enough? Could he actually get free from his fixation with this woman if he could find a way to have her?

Christ! He had to do something. His irrational preoccupation with Kara had grown worse and worse over the last year, causing him to want no other woman except her. He hadn't gotten off with anyone except himself in well over a year, and he really needed to scratch that itch. Yet...he couldn't. If he tried to take action, to make a move to call another woman, he would see Kara's pretty girl-next-door face and hang up the phone.

I'm just that fucking obsessed with her.

Simon glanced at an approaching figure, his mind almost immediately starting to dismiss the dark-haired woman who was dressed in a short, black, leather mini-skirt and a bright red sweater. He'd never seen Kara dressed in anything other than jeans and a t-shirt that sported the restaurant's logo; standard casual dress for employees of his mom's restaurant.

He did a surprised double-take as the woman got closer, gaping when her face came into view. Holy Christ! It was Kara. She was close enough that he could see her features, the same face that haunted his wet dreams every damn night, but the outfit....

What in hell is she wearing?

Simon could see almost every inch of her long, slender, shapely legs in the ultra-short mini and the whole outfit molded over her breasts, torso, and ass like a glove. His cock was instantly standing at full attention and he pulled his hands out of his pockets. They curled into tight fists as a bead of sweat rolled down his face. Followed by another. And another.

Goddamnit! What was she thinking? Dressed that way, she was practically begging for some man to come and snatch her up off the street.

And, by God, he was going to be that man. He wasn't leaving that opportunity to another male, someone who might do her harm.

Didn't she realize that this was Tampa? A major city! It wasn't some tiny town where she could walk the streets at night and not be noticed or accosted.

Simon unclenched one fist and gripped the window frame for support, his eyes never leaving the approaching female. Gritting his teeth, Simon knew that today was the day he was going to have to get close to her, closer than he'd ever been before. He couldn't handle these animalistic and rampant emotions anymore. He didn't like them, wasn't used to them. All he wanted was his sanity back, to return to his computer and work on his passion for developing computer games without erotic thoughts of Kara taking over his brain.

Sense. Reason. Control. That was how he functioned and what he needed in order to be himself again, and dammit, he'd get back to his normal state of mind, no matter what drastic measures he had to take to achieve it. Somehow, he would purge himself of this incredibly stupid and raging desire for Kara Foster.

His mind made up, Simon pushed off the window frame and stood up straight, lowering his "mask" until his face was devoid of emotion. He was good at that. He'd been raised in an area of Los Angeles where most normal people would never even enter; a place where being weak, slow-witted or fragile in any way meant being destroyed.

If nothing else, Simon Hudson was a survivor. His guise firmly in place, he ripped his gaze from the window, turned sharply and strode purposefully toward the door.



Kara Foster was having a seriously bad day!

She hefted her backpack to make it sit more solidly on her shoulder and reached for the hem of her ridiculously short skirt, yanking it down hard to cover her ass. The clothes looked great on her classmate, Lisa, who was several inches shorter and seven years younger than Kara. Unfortunately, they didn't look quite the same on Kara's taller, fuller body. The sweater hugged her generous breasts and the skirt was too damn short, barely concealing the cheeks of her ass.

She was a street-smart woman, having grown up in one of the worst areas of Tampa and coming through the experience intact. Kara knew how to protect herself, how to avoid any unwanted attention. So what in the hell was she doing in an outfit that was bound to get her in trouble? Stupid, Kara. Really, really stupid!

Frowning, Kara forced herself to keep walking. No big deal. She was in a decent area. So what if she looked like a sex kitten in sneakers? Eight more blocks and she would be home, free to finally strip off the ludicrous outfit and put on her own comfortable jeans and t-shirt.

Kara heaved a sigh as she focused solely on arriving at the tiny apartment that she shared with another student. Her legs were cold and she shivered, walking faster to get her body warm. It was January in Tampa, and while the daytime hours were pleasant, it got chilly at night. She should have brought her jacket, but she had been running late this morning.

She hadn't planned on having her legs bare and her behind flapping in the breeze.

The day is almost over.

Thank God!

She had spilled coffee on her own jeans and t-shirt earlier in the day. With no time to go home and change before she had to get to work, Kara had gratefully accepted the offer of clean clothes from Lisa, a classmate who was never without a change of clothing in her car. It wasn't that Kara didn't appreciate the kindness of her classmate. She definitely did. Kara just wished she could wear the clothing with the same attitude as Lisa. But...she couldn't. She was used to keeping a low profile, and she was mortified that she probably resembled a call girl with bad shoes, functioning the entire day and evening with a hint of red on her cheeks and trying desperately not to bend over.

When she had arrived at the restaurant for her shift, her kind boss, Helen Hudson, had taken pity on her and dug in the drawers for an apron that reached Kara's knees and covered her exposed backside.

Wishing she had worn the apron home, she jerked again at the bottom of the snug skirt with more than a hint of frustration, hoping she wasn't flashing anything more than some bare thigh.

Exhaustion tugged at Kara's body and her stomach rumbled. She had gotten so busy at work that she hadn't taken the time to eat. The small, cozy restaurant had been busy, much busier than usual because it was Friday night. She had actually been grateful for the customers. The tip money she had in her backpack was all that stood between her and a completely empty bank account. Maybe she could buy a few groceries now that she had a few bucks from tips. Her cupboards at home were bare and her roommate seemed to be in even worse financial shape than Kara. Lydia never bought food and whatever Kara bought disappeared quickly.

Last semester! You can make it.

Damn...it had been a long four years, and Kara felt much older than her actual age of twenty-eight years. Actually, she just felt old. Period! Most of her classmates were barely legal drinking age and were all about college partying, while Kara could only think about making it through each day, getting one step closer to graduation.

Kara had lost her parents in an auto accident at the age of eighteen and was pretty much alone. After working for several years as a waitress, barely surviving, she knew she had to either go to college or resign herself to struggling through life with no end to poverty in sight.

She didn't regret the decision to go to college, but it had been difficult, an arduous and lonely road that she could only be grateful was almost over.

You'll make it. Almost there!

Kara stopped abruptly as the sidewalk started to tilt and her vision blurred. Oh, shit. Her hand reached out to grip the post of a streetlight to steady herself as her brain whirled and her body trembled. Dizziness made it impossible to function, to advance any further. Damn it. I should have taken the time to eat.

“ Kara!” She heard the low, no-nonsense baritone filter through to her foggy brain. The voice was abrupt, but it was reassuring to know that someone who knew her, who recognized her, was here.

Shaking her head, trying to clear her vision, Kara tightened her grip on the metal post and willed herself not to pass out on the cold stone pavement as her body swayed precariously, preparing itself for the fall.



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## Chapter 2

“ Christ, you look like hell!” The same voice, impatient and husky, broke through her hazy mind, and she felt a pair of solid, muscular arms come around her as she was lifted against a solid, rock-hard chest.

Warm...so warm. Instinctively, she snuggled into the heat of the sturdy, heat-producing form, trying to use the body heat to unlock her chilled muscles.

She rested her spinning head against a very broad, very solid shoulder and sighed as the mystery man passed through a set of doors and into a warm building. Somewhere inside of her mind, she knew she should be fighting him, trying to break away from the strange man whose voice she didn't recognize, but she didn't have the strength.

Kara acknowledged the ping of an elevator bell and her stomach rebelled as the steel chamber lurched, moving upward at what seemed like a lightning-fast, head-spinning speed.

Moments later, she was gently lowered to a comfortable bed and covered in a warm comforter that eased the chill from her body. Her shoes were removed roughly and dropped to the floor. She opened her eyes and tried to focus. Struggling to sit up, she found herself pushed back down onto the pillows by strong hands on her shoulders. “ Don't move. Not one inch.”

“ I'm fine. I've had a little bug. I thought I was over it. It was just a little dizziness,” she argued as she tried to sit up again.

“ You're not fine,” the voice barked. “ The doctor is here to see you. He lives in the building. He saw you nearly take a nose dive into the pavement.”

“ Doctor?” Alarmed, Kara focused on another man who lurked behind the bossy one. “ I don't need a doctor.” She couldn't afford a doctor.

“ Too late. He's here. And you are being checked.”

“ I can refuse,” she answered hesitantly, her gaze finally meeting the dark eyes of her rescuer.

“ You won't,” he told her in a warning voice.

His perilous appearance kept a sharp retort from exiting her mouth. God, he was huge. Broad shoulders filled her vision as he crouched beside the bed. She had felt his muscular body while he was carrying her, but now she could visually appreciate the strength of those arms, and his solid bulk as her sight cleared and the dizziness began to subside.

Big. Dark. Dangerous. Kara's blue eyes clashed with his dark brown stare, his look so ferocious that it was almost frightening. He ran his hand impatiently through his short black hair, his expression grim. He wasn't handsome in any conventional way, his features too sharp and his olive complexion marred by a small scar to his right temple and another on his left cheek. But damn...he was appealing in a carnal, sensual sort of way. Kara could feel the intensity vibrating from his body and entering hers, making her nipples hard and sensitive. “ Who are you?” she asked him softly, remembering that he had called her by name.

“ Simon Hudson. Helen Hudson's son.” He stood and backed up to let the older man behind him step forward.

Helen's son? Simon. She had never met Sam or Simon, but she had heard all about them from her boss, a woman who had become a very close friend over the years. Simon was the youngest. In his

early thirties. A computer genius, he developed computer games that had started the Hudson Corporation on its way to becoming a company worth billions.

“ Young lady, I heard you’ve been sick. I’m Dr. Simms. Let me take a quick look at you.” A kind, middle-aged face replaced Mr. Tall, Dark And Unhappy. Kara let out a relieved breath and gave the jovial doctor a small smile.

“ I’m fine. A virus. Maybe I wasn’t quite over it and it’s been a long day. Just a little residual fatigue,” she assured the physician, wanting to put on her well-worn sneakers and run away from this humbling situation as soon as possible.

Simon stood behind the good doctor, his arms crossed and his face formidable. Geez...the man was fierce. It wasn’t that she hadn’t seen plenty of scary men in her life, but there was something about Simon that had her heart thumping and her body on high alert.

Kara let the doctor do his exam. Dr. Simms was kind and efficient with a bedside manner that had her smiling as he chatted absently during his evaluation. He gave her commands and asked the standard questions. She answered his questions as briefly as possible, wanting to get the exam finished and get out of Simon Hudson’s constrained presence.

Dr Simms stood with a congenial smile as he completed his exam. “ You need rest, food and more time to get over this virus. You might have been feeling slightly better for a day because your fever broke, but the fever is back and the virus isn’t completely through your system. You’re already run down and it doesn’t sound like you sleep or eat properly.” The doctor’s smile broadened. “ Typical of us medical folks. It may have been a while ago, but I still remember medical school.” After a pause, the doctor asked professionally. “ Any chance you could be pregnant?”

Kara’s eyes shot to Simon’s face, her cheeks burning with embarrassment. Did Simon really need to hearing all of this? His eyes locked with hers and his body seemed visibly tense as he waited for her answer.

“ No. Absolutely no possibility,” she answered with a timidity that was usually not part of her personality. There wasn’t a chance in hell that she was pregnant, unless a vibrator could knock her up, and lately, she was even too tired to use that. Her sex drive was dead from eighty hour weeks of work and school. The only action her bed got Kara, alone, sleeping for the few hours of rest that she got every night after her late-night study sessions.

The doctor breezed over the subject, instructing her to rest and treat the symptoms with over-the-counter fever medications.

Kara thanked him and gave him a tremulous smile before he turned to Simon, the two men talking quietly as they left the bedroom.

She sat up quickly, too quickly, and the room rotated for a minute before her head cleared. God, she was as weak as a kitten from the return of the fever and lack of food. She bent slowly and snatched her shoes from the floor, sitting on the bed to cram her feet into them without even untying the laces.

“ What in the hell do you think you’re doing?” Kara jerked up at the sound of the booming voice, her foot only halfway into her second shoe.

“ I need to get home,” she answered, uncomfortable now that she was alone with Simon. He was too big, too gruff, too demanding, too much of everything. There was something about him that made her feel off-balance, and it had nothing to do with her virus.

He swung her legs back onto the bed and pulled her shoes off. Damn. All of that hard work gone in seconds. Putting on those shoes had been an effort and she didn't appreciate having to do it again.

"You're sick and you're staying here," Simon told her sternly as his dark eyes swept over her and he grimaced.

"I can't. I'm working tomorrow. I need to get some sleep."

"You're not working for at least the next week. I already called mom and told her to replace you." His expression was disapproving as he covered her body with the comforter and sat on top of it, effectively trapping her. "I also took the liberty of grabbing your keys from your backpack so that my assistant can go to your place and get you some clothes in case your roommate isn't home."

"But I—"

"Don't argue! This discussion is over. I'm going to make you something to eat and you will eat it. Then you'll go to sleep." He stood and exited, the orders still reverberating through the rather impressive space of the bedroom.

Fuming, Kara sat up and debated whether she dared to spring out of bed and through the door of what looked like a condo. A very nice condo! The bedroom was spacious and decorated in shades of tan and black. Tan, plush carpet and masculine dark furniture dominated the room. The bed was enormous and sat on a frame of intricate black ironwork that supported a canopy of what looked to be tan silk with woven black and brown designs. It was a beautiful room, bold and dark, just like the man who owned it.

Did he really expect her to stay here? Yes, his mother was her boss and friend, but she didn't know Simon and she wasn't sure she liked him. He was bossy, impatient and expected people to jump when he said jump. Or stay when he said stay--sort of like a well-trained dog. Unfortunately for him, Kara didn't take orders well. She had made her own decisions since her parents had passed away and the last thing she needed was a domineering billionaire calling the shots in her life. The only thing money meant to Kara was security. Other than that, she could care less about what money could buy; it was hard to miss material things that she had never had.

He called Helen to replace me? There was no way she could miss a week of work. Missing two days this week had already stretched her empty bank account. She relied on her tips to survive, and she didn't get tips by sitting on her butt at home. She had missed two evenings because she had no choice. The virus had eaten her up and spit her out, leaving her prostrate on her bed and sicker than she had been since she was a child.

She sighed and leaned back against the pillows. She was so tired and so damned weak right now. All she really wanted to do was bury herself in this warm, comfortable bed and sleep until she wasn't tired anymore. What would that be like? She couldn't remember a time that she wasn't exhausted. It had become normal for her to feel drained during the last four years; she only slept a few a night and her meals were sporadic, depending on what she could afford.

Kara looked up as she heard the clink of glass-on-glass and saw Simon coming into the room juggling dishes. She bit back a smile, thinking that it was a good thing that he was a computer geek, because he would never make it as a waiter. He had a glass in one hand and a plate in the other. A bowl was balanced precariously between his elbow and chest. She wanted to tell him it would be easier if he just put the bowl on the plate, but she bit back the suggestion.

"I don't know what you like," he grumbled as he put the glass on the bedside table and handed

her the bowl. He sounded cantankerous over the fact that there was something he didn't know. "Soup. Eat."

Talk about a man of few words. He issued commands like a drill sergeant. "Simon, I can't stay here," she told him softly as she accepted the bowl of steaming soup. Chicken noodle. Her favorite. Stomach rumbling from the tempting aroma coming from the bowl, she lifted the spoon and took a cautious bite. She could tell that it had come out of a can, but it tasted delicious and her rumbling stomach made her shovel it in like a starving woman.

"You are staying. Take these." He scowled at her as he held up a hand and dropped two pills into her open palm.

Extra Strength Tylenol. She popped them into her mouth gratefully and reached for the glass. Simon handed it to her before she could reach it. She swallowed and handed the juice back to Simon's waiting hand before replying, "I have to work. I can't afford to be off. I already took two days because I was sick. I'm sure I'll feel better by tomorrow."

"You bet your sweet, exposed ass you will. I'll make sure that you do," he replied, his voice irascible.

Kara continued to eat her soup as she eyed his expression. He was serious. Dead serious. How did a sweet woman like Helen end up with a crabby-ass son like Simon? "You're not my boss, Simon."

"No, but my mother is and she agrees that you aren't working. She didn't realize you were still ill," he told her, his expression surly. "Hell...I don't know how she missed it. You have black circles under your eyes that make you look like a raccoon and you look dead on your feet. Mom's definitely slipping. She can usually dig out any problem. Painfully, if necessary," he rumbled, as though he were remembering a few of those painful experiences.

"I was feeling better earlier. And she was trying to help me find something to wear over my skirt," she told him calmly as she finished off the soup.

"Where in the hell did you get that outfit? I've never seen you in anything but jeans," he queried softly, dangerously. Kara quivered as his eyes roamed over the quilt, as though he could see her scantily-clad body through the material.

"It was a loan," she said, accepting the plate that held a yummy looking sandwich, as he took away the bowl. "Like a complete idiot, I spilled coffee down the front of my clothes today and didn't have time to run home before work."

"You are not an idiot," he stated curtly.

Swallowing a bite of the delicious egg salad sandwich, Kara's eyes jerked up to his face in surprise. "We've never met. How did you recognize me? How do you know what I usually wear?"

He shrugged and diverted his eyes. "I've seen you around the restaurant."

"I've never seen you at the restaurant."

"I stop by to see Mom. I usually don't go out front."

Helen's office was in the back, so it made sense. Kara was silent while she wolfed down the rest of the sandwich. God...she was hungry...and grateful for the meal.

"Thank you," she told him sincerely as she handed the plate back to him and he set it on the bedside table.

“You need to eat. And sleep.” He touched the dark patches under her eyes softly with his index finger. “I’ve never been close enough to see how tired you look.”

“The virus kicked my rear,” she murmured lightly, feeling warmed not only by the food, but by the concerned frown on Simon’s face. “I’ll feel well enough to work tomorrow.”

He handed her the glass of juice. “Don’t even think about it. Finish that and sleep.”

Too tired to argue, Kara downed the juice and gave up the glass to his waiting hand. She’d deal with everything later. Her eyes were drooping and exhaustion pressed on her body like weights. She needed to close her eyes.

Snuggling under the quilt, Kara sighed and rested her head on the pillow. For the first time in years, she felt full, comfortable and...safe. Simon might be cranky, but he had apparently appointed himself her protector. It was somehow...comforting.

With that strange thought rolling around in her mind, she slept.

## Chapter 3

Kara woke late the next day, feeling completely rested and wondering where in the hell she was until she remembered the episode on the sidewalk and her subsequent rescue by Simon Hudson.

Was he here, or had he left for the day?

Slipping silently out of the massive bed, Kara popped her head out of the bedroom door, hearing nothing but silence. Scooping up a black, silk robe that probably belonged to Simon; she pulled open a door at the other end of the bedroom, relieved to find the master bathroom. She locked the door and stripped quickly, pulling her hair completely free of its confining clip, and letting her clothes lay in a puddle at her feet.

She needed a shower. And coffee!

Feeling more like herself after finishing in the shower, clean and wrapped in Simon's robe, she hesitated as she looked longingly at a toothbrush and toothpaste on the marble counter next to the dual sinks. Not wanting to intrude, but desperate for a toothbrush, Kara opened a few of the cupboards and almost giggled with happiness as she found a brand new toothbrush still wrapped in plastic. She put it to good use and tried to tame her wet hair with one of Simon's hairbrushes. Belatedly, she hoped he wouldn't mind. Make yourself right at home, Kara.

Like she would ever own a place like this one? The sheer decadence all around her nearly blew her away and she stared at the large garden bathtub with a heavy sigh. What she wouldn't give for an hour or so in that tub.

She wasn't a material girl, but still, she could appreciate a phenomenal bathtub. Her apartment only had a tiny shower and a good, long soak was something that would have to wait until she graduated from school and could get her own place. And it will have a bathtub. She decided right then and there that she would make it a requirement.

Turning away from the temptation of the huge oval tub, Kara tightened the robe around her and picked up her clothes and towel, trying not to picture Simon's muscular, naked body reclining in the water.

Stupid woman! Stop thinking about your boss's son and find your damn backpack so you can get the hell away from here.

Exiting the bedroom, she hesitated, not sure exactly where to go. The condo was huge. There were spare bedrooms, tastefully decorated, at the other end of the long hallway that led to the master bedroom. She almost gasped as she stepped out of the corridor and into a spacious living room with cathedral ceilings and beautiful, tan leather furniture.

Holy crap! Had she ever seen a television that big? The screen dominated one wall, making it look almost like a movie theater screen.

I soooo don't belong here!

Her bare feet left the plush carpet and landed on smooth tile as she walked slowly into a kitchen that would be any chef's dream. Decorated in forest green and cream, it had every convenience a person could ever want and several that she couldn't even identify.

Kara spied her backpack on the island table and unzipped it to stuff the borrowed clothing in the large center pocket, still clutching the wet towel because she wasn't quite certain what to do with it.

“How are you feeling?” She jumped as the low, inquiring voice spoke in the soundless kitchen. She covered her chest with a shaky hand as her heart accelerated and turned to Simon, who was watching her silently, one arm propped casually against the doorframe. His dark hair was wet, as if he had just showered, and he had on a pair of jeans that hugged his muscular lower body lovingly. A green fleece pullover shirt stretched to accommodate his massive shoulders and broad chest. The man was seriously...ripped.

His liquid brown eyes raked over her body, growing warmer with each pass. Up and down. Up and down. Kara pulled the robe tighter. “I’m sorry. I didn’t have anything else to wear.”

He shrugged as he pushed away from the door. “It looks a hell of a lot better on you than it ever did on me,” he answered in a husky voice as he sauntered over to the far cupboard. “Coffee?”

Oh, hell yes. He might as well have asked her if she wanted to finish nursing school. She was a complete addict. “Yes, please. If you don’t mind.”

“Sit. You’re supposed to be resting.” He motioned toward the island and she sat on one of the high stools.

She watched as he popped a cup into the coffee maker, dropped a coffee into a slot and closed it. The machine sputtered and came to life. Her coffee was done within seconds.

“Every coffee lover’s dream,” she sighed as he set the steaming cup in front of her.

“I hope you like it bold,” he commented as he pulled creamer from the refrigerator and placed the sugar bowl and the cream in front of her. “It’s a stronger blend.”

Kara breathed in the delicious aroma coming from the steaming cup and her mouth watered, “It smells fabulous.” He held out a spoon and she took it, their fingers brushing as she grasped the utensil. Her hand tingled from the light touch and warmth spread through her body. He was standing close, so close that she could breathe in his clean, masculine scent as his hand reached toward her silk-covered legs. Her breath caught as his fingers brushed against the silk, sending heat straight to her core.

“I’ll take this.” He lifted the wet towel from her lap, his knuckles sliding slowly along her thighs as he relieved her of the wet linen she had been holding.

She was trembling. Actually shivering, just from his light, casual touch. Dear God, she needed to move away. Somewhere that she couldn’t smell him, couldn’t feel his heat and unsettling vibrations of sexual energy. “Thank you.” Her voice was weak as she let go of the towel.

She breathed a sigh of relief as he strolled into a side room off the kitchen and returned without the towel. “You didn’t answer my question. How are you feeling?”

She diverted her eyes from his tempting body and dumped cream and sugar into her coffee. “I feel great. Fever’s gone. Thank you for helping me, but I need to get moving.” Her eyes closed and she nearly moaned as the rich taste of premium coffee hit her palate.

“You can’t leave. Not today. Not tomorrow.” Simon’s voice was neutral as he moved to the coffee maker and slammed another coffee into the machine, lowering the lid with more force than necessary.

“Why?” Her eyes popped open to give him a surprised look.

His eyes glued to his steaming mug of coffee, he sat across from her on another stool, lifted the spoon from the table and added a small amount of cream to his coffee. “You’ve been evicted.”



Coffee sloshed over her fingers as she jolted in shock, her eyes flying to his face, momentarily stunned. “That’s not possible. Lydia pays the rent. She gets my share every month.” She reached automatically for a napkin in the center of the island to clean her fingers, the pain of the superficial burn not even registering because she was too shocked by his statement. Was it a joke? Was his sense of humor completely twisted? Didn’t he know that it wasn’t nice to tease a near-destitute woman over that sort of thing?

He finally met her gaze, his eyes grim and holding a touch of sympathy. “I’m afraid your roommate has fled. All that was in the apartment late last night was a few boxes that contained some of your school documents, birth certificate and other paper items.”

Kara’s hands started to shake and she twisted them together on the marble counter. It couldn’t be true. It wasn’t true. “There has to be some mistake”

“It’s no mistake. My assistant checked with the landlord early this morning. Your roommate was evicted, has been going through the eviction process for some time. Yesterday was the last day.” Simon took a sip of his coffee, his eyes never leaving hers.

OhmyGod, ohmyGod, ohmyGod! Kara’s mind raced as she took in the implications of his revelation. No place to live. No possessions. What the hell?

“There has to be some mistake,” she whispered, her gaze landing on the coffee mug. Please let it be a mistake. There was no way she could catch up the rent or replace her possessions. “What about my things, my clothes?”

“Your roommate was thorough. There was nothing there except a few boxes.”

“It had to be the wrong place.”

“It’s the right place, Kara. I’m sorry.”

Simon rattled off the address and the name of her landlord and roommate. “Everything correct?”

Tears filled her blue eyes as she nodded, unable to speak past the knot in her throat. Dear God... she had been balancing on a tightrope for years, without a net, and now she was plunging to her death just as she neared the end of the rope.

She rarely communicated with Lydia, but she never thought her roommate was capable of something like this. They were cordial to each other, but Kara was only home at night to study and sleep, making her encounters with Lydia sporadic. She left her portion of the rent and utilities on the tiny kitchen table every month, never doubting that her roommate used it to pay their bills. Apparently...she hadn’t. “This is not happening,” she choked out, feeling as if her whole world had just shattered. And actually, it had. Just a few words, one disaster, one betrayal was all it took to bring her life falling down around her.

“You okay?” Simon asked hesitantly, sipping his coffee and watching her cautiously.

“Yes. No. I don’t know,” she breathed incredulously. “I have to think.” What to do. Where to live! How to survive? She pushed the coffee cup away and buried her head in her arms in front of her. Dear God...she was destroyed. Think, Kara. Think. “I didn’t know. How could I not know?” She asked Simon, but mostly herself really, as she tried to understand how this could happen.

“Your roommate dropped out of school last semester. Apparently, she hid everything so that she could still collect your money up until she had to leave,” Simon answered, his voice edged with anger. “I’m sorry, Kara. You have enough on your plate without this happening.”

She raised her head and her confused, fear-filled gaze met his angry eyes with surprise. He was angry. At Lydia. At the circumstances. Simon obviously did have a heart. “E-everything is gone? The furniture, my bedroom stuff, my other belongings?” She stammered, tears choking her throat.

“The only boxes left were brought here by my assistant, Nina. They’re on the bed in the guest room,” he said gravely. “I checked everything out, Kara. It was legal. Your roommate took everything on the very last day. If you had gone home last night, you would have found an empty apartment. I’m glad you were spared that particular late-night surprise. Nina gave the key back to the landlord. The locks were due to be changed. You can’t go back there.”

No home. No bed. No place to go.

Despair and loss welled up inside of her and she suddenly couldn’t breathe, couldn’t think. Silent tears rolled from her eyes and all she could think about was the last four years of struggle and hardship. For nothing. All for nothing. She’d end up in a shelter, if she could find an available spot. School would have to wait until she could get back on her feet.

“No. Oh, God, no,” she sucked in a deep breath, trying to squelch her panic, but she couldn’t.

Her body heaving, her hands over her face, Kara Foster did something she hadn’t done since the death of her parents.

She wept.

## Chapter 4

The ice around Simon's heart cracked just a little as he watched the totally despondent, forlorn woman in front of him break down in tears, her hopeless sobs twisting in his gut.

Fuck! If he could locate her worthless roommate, he'd make her pay for every bit of pain Kara was suffering right now.

Unable to stop himself, Simon went to her and gathered her body against his own, lifting her into his arms with careful tugs until she came to her feet and put her arms around his neck, turning her face against his chest. He could feel her body quivering, her smaller form plastered against his own, keening her misery against his shoulder.

"Shhh...Kara. It will all be okay. I'll take care of you." Simon ran a hand down her silky black hair, knowing that he meant every word. It wasn't just something he was saying to quiet her, take away her pain. He wanted to take care of this woman who had seen more than her share of bad luck and hardship, bearing it with admirable strength. She was special, and her tears nearly undid him.

He took a deep breath and tightened his arms around her waist, splaying one hand along her slender back, moving the hand in soothing circles to calm her. She felt so good, so right in his arms. His cock twitched as he breathed in her alluring scent. She smelled like spring and Kara, a natural, enticing smell that made his mouth water.

He cursed his twitching cock as he held her pliant, soft body against his. Now was not the time to get hard, but he wasn't sure he could be within a mile of Kara and not get a raging erection. A warm sigh left his mouth, making a few tendrils of her hair flutter.

Simon wanted to make all of her problems go away; banish them like they had never existed. "We'll deal with it, Kara. I'll help you."

She pulled away from him, swiping tears away with the fingers of both hands. "I got you all wet," she hiccupped as she brushed at the front of his damp shirt.

Simon wanted to whine as she pulled herself completely from his arms. "It doesn't matter."

"I can't bawl like a baby all day. I have to see if I can find a shelter. This has put me over the financial edge." Her face was composed now, her expression lifeless.

"No shelter. You can stay here. I have plenty of space." He tried to keep his voice calm, but he was ready to wrestle her to the ground if needed. She wasn't going to a shelter. She might be broken at the moment, but she would recover. "Think reasonably, Kara. You need help. I'm willing to help you. You can finish your last semester and live here."

"Why? Why would you want me here? I'm a complete stranger to you?"

He wanted to tell her that she had never been a stranger, not since the first moment he saw her. Something had clicked inside of him, something raw, and something elemental. "You need help. Everybody needs help sometimes. I had my brother. I was lucky."

"Simon, I can't just take advantage of you."

Oh yeah, you can. Anytime you want to. Simon plopped back into his chair to hide his growing erection. Thankfully, she sat and pulled her coffee cup toward her. "You aren't taking advantage. You're just accepting a little assistance."

She snorted before taking a sip of her lukewarm beverage. “It’s more than a little. I still have over four months of school left. No money. No clothing. Nothing”

Even though he wanted to tell her to feel free to walk around naked, he answered, “Nina is getting you some clothes. No worries.” He took a deep breath before continuing, “I only have one condition. Otherwise, my assistance is unconditional.”

“What is it?” She looked at him cautiously over her mug.

“I want you stop working while you’re in school.” He had to bite back a smile as her face turned up in a stubborn, implacable expression. This was going to be a sore subject, but he wasn’t going to lose.

“I can’t stop working. I need to live. I have nothing,” she told him adamantly.

“No work. I’ll help you financially. You already do forty hours a week at school and that doesn’t include study time. My offer, take it or leave it.” He wasn’t about to watch her continue to fade away. After just one night of decent sleep, the dark circles under her eyes had decreased. It would be nice to see them gone altogether and watch her eat decent meals. She might have an inner core made of steel, but damn it, her body was fragile.

“But, I-

“That’s the deal. Take it or leave it?”

He watched her face turn red and her eyes clashed with his in a disgusted stare. Simon’s breath caught silently, and his heart began to race. It was a risky move, but where else could she go? What could she do? But for a moment, for an instant that felt like an eternity, he watched her face, certain that she was going to tell him to go screw himself.

He was dictating to her, telling her how to run her life, and instinctively, she wanted to rebel. Kara let go of a frustrated breath. His gaze was immovable and inflexible. No compromise, then. It was his way or the freeway. Did she really have a choice? She could look for a shelter, but it would mean giving up school for now and messing up the whole program. “What about my insurance, my benefits? What about the restaurant?”

“Mom’s place will be fine. She has waitresses who want to be full-time.”

Kara flinched as he made the statement, knowing it was true. There were other employees who would be only too happy to step into her full-time position.

“And I’ll make sure that you stay on COBRA. You won’t lose your insurance.”

She searched his eyes, trying to read him, but Simon was a mystery to her. Why was he doing this? Did she trust him? She hardly knew him. She trusted Helen, and Helen adored her sons. “Okay I’ll do it. But you need to keep track of the funds and I’ll pay you back.”

“No deal.”

“You said you only had that one condition.” She drained her coffee, trying to keep her hands steady by grasping both sides of the mug.

He shrugged. “It’s an add-on since you tried to change the original terms.”

“What are you getting out of all of this? I’m going to disrupt your privacy, take your money, and you get nothing?” She gaped at him, baffled by the whole arrangement.

“I don’t want your money. Can’t you just take the help without questioning my motives. I want to help,” he balked in an uneasy voice, finishing the last of his coffee, slamming the cup back to the table with an impatient whack.

“I want to do something, give you something for your trouble. I’ve always paid my own way.” Agitated, she stood and collected the cups. She took them to the sink and rinsed them before putting them in the dishwasher. Honestly, she should be kissing his feet in gratitude, but being in his debt somehow bothered her. She wasn’t used to taking. From anyone! She was a survivor, doing what she needed to do just to stay one step ahead of poverty. This was so foreign, so freaking confusing.

Kara turned around and slammed into Simon’s powerful body, a force that easily kept her body from advancing. The man was like concrete, fixed and immobile. She put her hands on his solid, muscular biceps to steady herself. “Sorry,” she mumbled, but he didn’t move away.

“There’s only one thing I want from you, Kara.” His voice was low and husky and he bent down and inhaled, as though he were breathing in her scent. He slapped a hand on each side of the counter, pinning her.

The man was like a seething kettle of testosterone, and every female hormone in her body was rising to happily meet the masculine lure. He surrounded her, holding her body in thrall, making her want to surrender to his dominance. Something inside of her melted, wanting to sway into his powerful arms. “W-What” What could he possibly want from her?

She shivered as he crowded her, feeling the heat radiating from his body. Kara was five-foot-eight barefoot, but Simon towered over her in height, strength and power. He leaned his head down, his lips nuzzling her ear. “You. In my bed. One night. Anything I want, anything I need.” His sultry,

low whisper sent fire careening through her entire body.

“Me?” She squeaked as his hungry lips trailed down the side of her neck, making her core clench tightly with need and her pussy moist.

“You. One night,” he repeated as his hands moved to her hips and stroked against the silk robe, exploring her body greedily.

Her head dropped to one side, giving him free access to let him explore the sensitive skin at the side of her neck. Oh Lord, he felt good, smelled good. She couldn't think as his mouth descended on hers.

Simon didn't ask, he demanded. His tongue pushed against the seam of her lips insistently and she gave way, letting him take her, his tongue owning her mouth with demanding strokes. She released an involuntary moan into his kiss, feeling ravished and overwhelmed, her response automatic and wanting. Pushing back, she entwined his tongue with hers, exploring him, tasting him.

Without releasing her from his impassioned embrace, his hands came up to spread her robe, running possessive fingers over the responsive flesh, the hardened nipples. He alternately pinched and stroked, heightening her desire until she was out of control. A strong, jean-clad thigh thrust between her legs and she pushed against it, desperate for the friction. Her hands plowed into his coarse dark hair, fisting as she rode a wave of erotic pleasure.

He pulled his mouth from hers, panting as though he had run a marathon. “God, you are so hot, Kara. So responsive.” Her body was pulsating as his hand moved over her stomach. “I want one night.”

She jerked as his fingers reached her saturated pussy, stimulating the pink, ripe flesh, moving his thigh back to explore her more thoroughly.

“So wet, so ready,” he husked as he circled her clit. “I can smell your arousal and it's making me crazy. I want to taste you.”

“Oh, God. Please.” Kara was caught up in sensation, heat sizzling over every nerve ending in her body. Her hands went to his shoulders, needing the support to keep standing.

“So sweet,” he murmured in her ear before his tongue trailed over the side of her neck, flicking in a rhythm that mimicked what he wanted to do elsewhere, overwhelming her with white-hot desire to feel it there, making her want that velvet tongue between her thighs.

Her hips flexed, needing more contact, more of those talented, teasing fingers. “Simon, I need-”

“I know what you need. The same thing that I need! But for now I can give you this.” His finger zeroed in on her needy bud, slipping through her moist folds, finding where she needed to be touched.

She moaned as he increased the pace, the intensity. She was mindless with raw need and a whimper escaped from her lips as one hand continued his erotic torture of her breasts, while the other kept up a relentless assault on her inflamed clit. “Yes. Oh, yes.” Kara knew the passionate, hot voice was her own, but she barely recognized it. It was high-pitched, keening, begging for relief.

His mouth swallowed her moan, as though he wanted every bit of her pleasure. She responded, nipping at his lip, opening for his possession, surrendering completely.

Her channel clenched and she could feel the impending climax all of the way to her toes. Ripping her mouth from his, she threw her head back and let out a long groan as a powerful orgasm took her over, making her ride on waves of pleasure the she had never experienced before.

Her head dropped against his shoulder as ripples continued to make her body shudder. “Oh, God. What in the hell was that?” She panted as Simon closed her robe and pulled her sagging body against his.

“Pleasure. Just a taste of what we could have in bed,” he replied quietly, his large body rocking her slightly as she recovered. “I’d like one night, Kara. Not because you have to, but because you want it too. I’ll help you regardless. It’s your choice whether or not to give me what I want. But be warned...I like control.”

Still shattered, her mind in chaos, she asked haltingly. “What does that mean exactly?”

“Total surrender,” he answered in a low, hoarse voice that vibrated with barely-controlled passion. “Think about it. Say the word and I’ll give you every ounce of pleasure that I’m capable of giving.”

“I’m not really that experienced. I-I...you’d be disappointed.” She hadn’t had sex in over five years and even then, only with one boyfriend. It had been her only sexual relationship, one that had lasted five years and ended badly.

“I don’t want sexual expertise. I just want you,” he replied abruptly as he moved back, giving her space.

Kara noticed the tense look on his face, the grooves around his mouth. Eyes dropping to his groin, she could see his large shaft straining against the denim.

He leaned forward and gently kissed her forehead. “Decide later. You’ve been through a lot today and you need to get over your illness. Rest. Eat. Relax. I’ll be in my computer lab upstairs if you need anything. Nina will be here soon with your clothes. Feel free to keep the robe. It looks good on you. But just so you know...I’ll have a raging erection every time you wear it. I’ll remember every sweet sound, every delicious response from you while you were coming in my arms.”

Kara grasped the counter behind her, her knuckles white from the strength of her grip as he turned and sauntered away, muscles rippling in his perfectly formed ass and back as he casually left the kitchen.

“Did that really just happen?” She whispered in an astounded voice, hoping that this whole day was just a bad dream and she would wake up in her own bed, in her own tiny apartment.

Simon Hudson was a danger to her sanity, and she needed to stay as far away from him as possible.

Four months. Could she do it? She straightened her spine and wrapped the robe tighter around her body. She was survivor; she would survive. Simon had mentioned that sleeping with him wasn’t a requirement. It didn’t have to happen.

Kara took a deep breath, trying to relax her body. She’d do whatever she could to help Simon except sleep with him. She could cook, clean, help him out with whatever he needed to have done. Not having a job was going to leave her restless. There had to be other things she could do to repay him.

You want to. You know you want him.

She shook her head, trying to silence her wayward thoughts. Getting involved with Simon Hudson was not a good idea. The billionaire genius was the type who would leave her devastated after one night of passion. He had just proved it by rocking her world, and she hadn’t even had sex

with him.

But now you know it would be a one incredible night that you'd never forget.

And it would. That was her fear. It would be much too memorable.

Shaking her head, she suddenly remembered the clinic. She should have been there this morning.

Oh, shit. I have to call Maddie. How could I have forgotten?

Kara spent every Saturday morning volunteering at the free children's clinic with Dr. Madeline Reynolds. It was something Kara had been doing every Saturday morning for the last year and although she wasn't yet licensed as a nurse, she helped out by taking on every task she was capable of so that Maddie could see as many children as possible on clinic day.

Kara snatched up a cordless phone from the kitchen counter and hastily dialed the clinic number, explaining to Maddie what had happened and that she was sorry she didn't make it.

"It's not like you're a paid employee, Kara, even though I appreciate the fact that you keep showing up to help. I'm fine for today. Are you okay? Do you need a place to stay?" Maddie's voice was concerned and Kara's heart lifted. Maddie was so generous, so caring...but she couldn't impose on her friend. Kara knew that Maddie put every extra penny she had into the free clinic and she was fairly fresh out of medical school. Kara had heard Maddie say jokingly, more than once, that she would still be paying back student loans when she retired.

"Nope. I'm good. I have a...friend helping me out," she replied, hoping her voice sounded normal.

There was a pause before Maddie told her sternly, "You call me if you need help, Kara. You will, won't you?"

"I will. I promise. I'll see you next Saturday."

"Stay safe. If you ever find that bitch of an ex-roommate feel free to call me. I'll beat the shit out of her," Maddie said, her voice indignant.

Kara laughed. "You'll have to get in line. I'm pissed enough to do it myself."

With a few more assurances to Maddie that she would be fine, Kara hung up with a sigh and headed through the condo, wanting to see what was left of her belongings.

You'll make it. You've made it this far. Four months will be easy. You can replace whatever was taken some day.

A tingle went down her spine as she searched for the guest room that housed her meager belongings, sensing that the next four months would be more challenging than anything she'd ever faced before.

Poverty!

Loneliness!

Rejection!

Insecurity!

Fear!

They all looked like a piece of cake compared to several months with Simon Hudson.

Temptation was going to be a real bitch.



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## Chapter 5

Over the next six days, Kara discovered that living with Simon was easy...as long as he got his way. She caught herself grumbling, more than once, about his overbearing attitude and take-charge tactics. Without question, the man was generous and she had already had several conniption fits over how much money he spent on her. Clothes, laptop, iphone, ipod, ipad,- Simon loved gadgets that began with an “ i” – and anything he thought was essential to her wellbeing. She had tried to patiently explain that she had lived well enough without those things before, but Simon simply grunted and soon gave her another so-called essential item, all of which were definitely not necessities.

The only fight that she had actually won was the argument about him buying her a car. Kara had put her foot down and refused, telling him that she preferred to take the bus. Honestly, she hadn't really won that argument either. The only reason he had relented was because he had his driver, a delightful man named James, take her to school every day and pick her up again after class or clinicals. James seemed to be at Simon's beck and call even though Simon drove himself to the office every morning in a Bugatti Veyron. Kara had almost choked the first time she saw the outrageously expensive sleek automobile, a car that she actually had only seen previously in photos. Simon shrugged, telling her that Sam had one too, only Sam's was newer, a fact that seemed to irritate Simon whenever his precious vehicle was mentioned. Kara had rolled her eyes at him and walked away. Honestly...he was just like a boy...only richer, a lot richer and his toys a hell of a lot more expensive.

Nina, Simon's personal assistant and another employee to whom she'd taken an instant liking, delivered Kara's new clothes early morning the previous Saturday. And she hadn't come alone. It had taken a string of strong, able-bodied men to trail in with a whole new wardrobe that definitely hadn't come from Wal-Mart or a normal discount store. Kara now had a huge walk-in closet filled with expensive designer clothing, most of which she would probably never wear. For God's sake, even the jeans were designer and expensive. Every item fit perfectly. Simon had checked the soiled clothes in her backpack to get her size. The clothing incident had been the first experience of many that was teaching Kara that Simon never did anything in a small way.

She had really balked when she saw how much money he had deposited into her checking account. How in the hell had the man found out her checking account number? He had just raised his shoulders again and told her to let him know when she needed additional funds and he would take care of it. Additional funds? He had transferred one hundred thousand dollars to her account, a fact that had nearly sent her into heart failure when she had checked her balance. An account that usually sat in the single digits had suddenly become an endless source of cash. How could anyone spend that much money in a few months? Kara had tried to get him to take most of it back. Having that much money in her account was actually a bit daunting and her needs were simple. She already had everything she needed and more, thanks to Santa Simon. Simon had just mumbled a curse and some statement about her being a stubborn woman and ignored her request. She had finally thrown her hands in the air and stomped away, muttering something about inflexible, arrogant men. A quiet chuckle had followed her out of the room and she had forced herself not to look back to see if Simon was smiling.

Actually, she was happy that she could provide him with some amusement, because she couldn't seem to find anything else to do to help him. She felt swamped by guilt most of the time for taking advantage of his generous nature.

He had laundry and cleaning staff who came in once a week, so it left little for Kara to do except cook, and she had plenty of extra time to do that. Baking and cooking were about the only useful things she could do to help, but Simon seemed to think it was some monumental task akin to saving his life, when she fixed a meal. It seemed that Simon didn't cook and existed mostly on sandwiches when he was at home because he had never really wanted to employ a full-time chef. Of course, his personal assistant bought his groceries, a task that Kara had taken over from a grateful Nina. Simon's assistant said that she was tired of seeing Simon live on the micro-wave dinners and the sandwich fixings that he requested every week. The tiny, well-kept woman, probably somewhere in her sixties, had just uttered an emphatic "hallelujah, he'll finally eat" and handed Kara his usual grocery list quite joyfully.

Kara closed her nursing book, her studying complete and stretched out on her back, rolling on the huge king-sized bed in the guest room until she was staring at the ceiling.

She should ask Simon what he wanted for dinner, although she already knew how he would reply.

Anything that I don't have to cook!

He usually spent the morning in his office and the afternoon and evening in his computer lab upstairs. The condo was enormous, and Kara wondered if she would ever find her way around without making a few wrong turns.

Hopping off the bed, she walked through the gorgeous living room, admiring the view from a large picture window. Simon lived in the penthouse, the largest condo in the building, and every twinkling light of Tampa was spread out in front of her in breathtaking splendor. How incredible to have this splendid view every single night. She wished Simon would take a moment to enjoy it. He seemed to be obsessed with a project right now and only came down for a brief time for dinner before returning to his lab.

Kara wondered if he was avoiding her and felt guilty that he might be hiding in his own home. They had never spoken about what had occurred in the kitchen six days ago. They circled around each other politely, making superficial conversation at dinner.

As she turned and mounted the black spiral staircase, she admitted to herself that she actually wanted his company. Working and going to school had kept her busy and her loneliness at bay. Now, she had too much time with nothing to do in the evenings except watch Simon's enormous television or read after she had finished studying. Solitude was all well and good, but it got lonesome night after night. At least when she was working, she had the company of customers and the other employees.

Disgusted with herself, she turned left after she reached the top of the staircase, making her way to Simon's lab. What did she have to complain about? She had every luxury, every convenience. She lived in a home most people only dreamed about and never had to worry about funds. Still, she wanted a little more of Simon's company when she should just be damned glad she had a roof over her head and an endless amount of food to eat.

Stopping outside of the door to his lab, she tapped lightly.

"Come in." The abrupt, distracted reply made her smile. He was definitely consumed with some sort of project.

Usually she just poked her head in, but curious about Simon's lab, she entered and closed the door behind her. Computers were everywhere and Simon had a chair on rollers that slid from one

computer to the other, making it easy due to the plastic that covered the floor under the circle of computers. She padded across the plush carpet until her feet met the smooth plastic and peeked at the computer screens. Gaping, she realized she recognized the picture on the largest screen.

Squinting, she asked quietly. "Hey. Is that Myth World?"

His head popped up and he met her eyes with a surprised look. "Yeah! You know the game?"

"Know it? I'm at expert level," she answered, slightly insulted that he thought she wouldn't be familiar with such a popular game. "Lydia had it and I was hooked after trying it the first time."

She loved the game and always got some time in whenever she could on Lydia's computer, even if it was late at night. It was her one indulgence. She couldn't resist letting the computer take her to a whole new world when she played the game, challenging her to find out its secrets and battle mythological figures.

Simon's lips started to curl and kept going until he was wearing a shit-eating grin that made her heart skip a beat. It was the first honest, completely brilliant smile that she had ever seen from Simon. He rolled his chair over to the computer screen with the familiar figures as he answered, "It's my game. This is Myth World II."

"Oh, my God. Let me see." She pushed in front of him in her excitement. She hadn't seen the original game in a week, and here was the newest addition. Right here in the home she lived in. "Is it done? Can I play it? I really miss that little bit of escapism."

"I just have the demo. It's not on the market yet. You can try it if you like," Simon answered in an indulgent and boyish voice. He went through the controls and stood, allowing her to plop her rear in the available chair and focus on the new game.

It was similar, yet completely different, and Kara worried her bottom lip as she tried to figure out all of the intricate details of the game. "You made it harder," she accused in a laughing voice.

"Was the original version easy?" He asked her with a smile in his voice.

"No. But it wasn't this hard," she answered, her eyes concentrating on the busy screen.

"It was. You just aren't used to this one yet." His eyes scanning her face he asked, "What do you like about the game?"

"The strategy, the challenge of figuring out secrets, the make-believe world. It's like being catapulted into another dimension for a short time." She tipped her eyes to his as she got completely destroyed on screen. "You are a genius, Simon," she told him with complete honesty. "I never realized that this was a Hudson game."

Kara could almost swear he was blushing as he turned his head, replying diffidently, "It's just computer stuff. Nothing exciting"

She pulled her hands from the desk and folded them neatly on her lap as she told him emphatically, "It's incredibly creative, Simon. It takes more than programming to come up with something like this."

"I'll put them on your laptop," he told her quietly.

"Oh, Lord, no. I'd never get my studying done." Her eyes laughed up into his, her tone playful.

"I think you can control yourself," he returned, sounding disappointed.

"Absolutely not. I have no control when it comes to Myth World. Do you have other games that

you've designed?"

"Of course, dozens of them."

"Would you mind putting them on the PC in the den?" She asked hesitantly.

"You can come up here. Play on the usage computer." He pointed to a large computer and chair in the corner. "All of my games are on it. Actually, just about any game you can think of is on there."

She put her hand to her heart in mock astonishment. "Oh, horrors! You actually have other people's games on that computer?"

He moved closer to her, towering over her with a mischievous grin. "Sometimes I find it necessary to...check out the competition."

"And are they good?" She looked up at him, loving this boyish side of Simon.

"Nah...but I have to keep up with what's selling," he told her, his tone impertinent.

God, the man was so hot when he was joking around. Oh shit, he was always hot. She could smell his masculine scent with a hint of sandalwood. It was a warm, rich aroma that made her squirm and her body tingle. "If you don't mind, I'll take you up on that offer. I'm used to being busy and I'm not up on all the recent television shows. I get a little lonely sometimes. This place is so big." Why had she admitted that? "Just don't be upset when I don't get dinner ready on time. I get lost in your games," she told him in a mock warning voice, an attempt at levity.

He came down on one knee, his eyes level with hers. "Are you lonely here, Kara?" His tone sounded concerned, dumbfounded, as his dark eyes met hers. "You don't like it here?"

"No. Oh, no. Simon, it's lovely here. How could I not be happy?" She sighed, trying to explain. "I'm just so used to not having much time to think, much time to myself. It takes getting used to after the crazy pace I had before."

"Suicidal, you mean," he said, his tone edgy. "That lifestyle was draining you dry, Kara."

"I know. And I'm grateful. Really, I am. This is just different." She assured him, not wanting him to think she was ungrateful. Shit...she'd be on the streets if not for his generosity, but still..." I'll be happier up here with you."

"You want my company?" He searched her face, sounding baffled.

"Of course. But I know you're busy. And I thought maybe you were avoiding me after...well, after..."

"After I told you that I wanted to fuck you?" he asked bluntly, his eyes holding hers prisoner.

"Yes," she breathed softly, startled by his brusque statement, but glad that it was out in the open. It had been simmering, making her anxious.

"I wasn't avoiding you, Kara. I want to see you, be with you, whether you want to fuck me or not," he stated, his voice adamant.

"You do?" she asked with hint of wonder. Why?

"I get lonely sometimes, too. I enjoy your company."

She took a deep breath, willing her racing heart to slow.

I want you to fuck me. I want you to take me a hundred different ways and then do it again.

The breath left her body as her eyes roamed over him. Just thinking about that large, solid, dominant body over her, in her, made her fidget in her chair. Her fingers itched to touch the face so close to her own, to stroke the sexy, rough jaw with the sensual five o'clock shadow that made his scars nearly invisible. Strangely, those small scars added to his sex appeal, making him more masculine, more irresistible.

No, Kara. Don't think about it. Dinner. You came to ask him about dinner. Simon Hudson is way out of your league.

"I-I actually came to ask you what you wanted for dinner." Her voice was unsteady and she was practically stumbling over her words. Simon's close proximity was getting to her, making her want much more than just his company. She scooted her chair back and stood, nervously wiping her sweaty palms on her jeans.

It didn't help. Simon towered over her as he rose to his feet. "I'll help you. I'm done here for now."

Kara gulped, wondering if the massive kitchen was big enough for both them. She wanted to be near him, but not so close that the longing that she felt overwhelmed her. "Okay. Let's go see what we can round up." Her strides were long and quick as she lead the way to the kitchen, happy that she would have Simon's company, but not quite sure how to deal with her treacherous body and it's reaction to him.

Total surrender.

What exactly had he meant by that...and did she really want to find out?

## Chapter 6

Simon knew he was slowly, silently becoming completely unglued. His mind was wandering to places it shouldn't go, and he'd had to work extra hours the last several days just because he couldn't think of anything except the fact that Kara was here, in his home, driving him closer and closer to insanity.

If I don't fuck her soon, I'm going to become unhinged.

Glad he was following behind her so that she couldn't see his obvious erection, he watched her hips sway in a pair of ass-hugging jeans as he followed her to the kitchen. Her fresh, alluring scent wafted from her body and he breathed it in like a man deprived of oxygen, hungry for her fragrance. He smelled her everywhere, even his bedroom. Her aroma seemed to cling to every portion of his house, reminding him of her presence. Like he could forget it?

What was it about her that fascinated him so much? It wasn't as if she tried to make herself irresistible. She wore very little make-up and he had yet to see her in anything except jeans – minus the heart-stopping night that she had appeared in that tight mini and sweater - but he was completely enthralled.

“Why don't you have a boyfriend?” he asked curiously. “Wouldn't it have been easier to go to school if you had a man in your life?”

They had reached the kitchen and Kara was pulling lettuce, peppers and other vegetables from the refrigerator. “Do you want to help cut the vegetables for a salad? I'll put in some steaks.” She pulled meat from the refrigerator before adding, “Why would I want a boyfriend when I'm going to school?” Giving him a perplexed look, she pulled out a cutting board and handed him a knife from the block.

“Someone to help. Wouldn't it be easier?” He replied as he washed the vegetables and started cutting awkwardly. Cooking was not one of his best skills.

He almost sliced through his finger as she burst out laughing before answering, “In my experience, boyfriends aren't exactly helpful.”

She was amused, but Simon could hear a touch of hurt in her voice. “Bad experience?”

“Yes.”

“What happened?”

She put the steaks in the broiler and bumped him out of the way. She opened the refrigerator and pulled out a beer. Twisting the top off, she handed it to him and shooed him away to the island sitting area. “I'll cut. You're likely to amputate a digit or two.”

Simon frowned as he took a seat and watched her profile as she sliced and diced like a professional. “So, what happened?”

She sighed. “I dated Chris for five years. I thought we would end up married. Unfortunately, I came home from work early one day and caught him in bed with the person I thought was my best friend.”

Was the guy totally insane? He had Kara in his bed every night and he wanted someone else? “He was an idiot.”

“It wasn't meant to be. I'm actually thankful that I wasn't married to him.”

“It still hurt you.”

She shrugged. “It was a long time ago.”

“Bastard.” Simon couldn’t help himself. He wanted to hurt the asshole.

“What about you?” She glanced toward him as she scraped sliced green peppers into the salad bowl.

“What about me?”

“Girlfriend? I feel like I might be cramping your style. Me living here, I mean.” She didn’t look at him as she started on the tomatoes.

He shrugged. “I’ve never had one.”

She stopped slicing and gaped at him with a look of astonishment. “Seriously?”

Simon didn’t include the one woman who had changed his life forever, at the age of sixteen. He hadn’t spoken her name or talked about her in years. Not to anyone.

“Nope. I’m not exactly a social kind of guy. Sam is the compulsive dater. He’s got the looks for it,” he replied dryly, taking a swig of his beer.

She mumbled something that Simon didn’t quite catch.

“What was that?” he asked, wondering why her face was turning beet red.

“I said that you’re better looking.”

Simon almost dropped his beer, barely catching it before it fell into his lap. “Have you seen Sam?”

She breezed out to the dining room to put the salad on the table, calling out behind her. “Sure. You have pictures of him and Helen everywhere.”

His jaw dropped and he waited until she came back to check the steaks before replying roughly, “Then you know that’s not true.”

“In my opinion, it is,” she told him stubbornly. “Just don’t get a fat head over it.”

Simon grinned. Only Kara could throw out a compliment and then immediately deflate him. Still, he couldn’t believe she actually found him attractive. “What about my scars? Sam is a movie-star-handsome blond with green eyes. Women seem to love that.” Women loved Sam...and Sam loved women. All of them! He charmed women of all ages. Too bad that he couldn’t seem to keep that adoration after they started dating him.

“I guess I prefer my men tall, dark and grouchy,” she told him lightly as she pulled the steaks from the oven.

He grabbed a potholder, his grin broadening as he took the sizzling steaks from her, dropping one on each of the two plates that she had set out. He watched her from hooded eyes, trying to figure out if she was actually flirting with him. He didn’t have a clue. Maybe she was just being nice. After all, she didn’t know Sam and she was living in his house. Still, her comment warmed him, made him feel special. No one had ever considered him handsome when compared to Sam, except possibly his mother. The women who had sex with him did so for financial gain. A mutual agreement that had suited him just fine...with those women!

Kara was an altogether different story. Instinctively, Simon knew an arrangement with Kara that was similar to his previous ones would destroy him.



As they settled at the dining room table, Simon suddenly remembered what he had managed to obtain for her earlier. "I have something for you."

He nearly laughed as she frowned at him, shaking her head as she said, "Simon, I'm not taking one more thing. You've done enough. Way too much"

He didn't think he had done nearly enough, but he replied, "You'll take this."

"No...I won't."

God, he loved that stubborn look on her face. He tipped the dining room chair back and reached into the front pocket of his jeans. He held out his hand, but Kara was still shaking her head tenaciously, so he dropped the object on the table.

"Oh, my God," Kara breathed softly, her voice filled with awe and delight. She reached for the ring with trembling fingers, sliding it on her finger slowly. "My mother's ring. I didn't think I would ever see it again. How did you find it?"

"Pawn shop," he replied, glad that he had made some of his employees troll all of the area stores for the ring. "I knew it was the one thing that you were sad to lose."

"It's not expensive, but it means a great deal to me. It's the only thing I have left that belonged to my mom," she choked, her voice wobbling with emotion.

Simon would never tell her that her roommate only got a few dollars for the piece of jewelry on her finger. It was an inexpensive ring shaped like a butterfly with a tiny amethyst chip in the center, but Simon had seen Kara's sorrow over losing it.

"I'm glad we could find it."

Simon never saw her coming. She flew from her chair, her delicious ass landing in his lap and her arms flung around his neck. His arms tightened around her waist to keep her from sliding as she peppered him with kisses. On his face, on his hair, everywhere that she could reach. He could feel the excitement radiating from her body, joy oozing from every pore. "Thank you, Simon. You're the most wonderful man on earth."

Oh, Christ! As much as he loved her enthusiasm and treasured her happiness, if she didn't stop bouncing that luscious rear end against him, he was going to come in his pants. Her ample breasts were rubbing against his chest and her scent was making him want to devour her. Every delightful inch of her. "I think I deserve a real kiss. I told you that you would accept it," he mentioned softly, his voice sultry.

She threaded her fingers through his hair and their eyes collided as she tipped his head back. Simon heart stuttered as he saw the hungry, passionate glow of her gaze.

Her lids lowered slowly as her mouth descended to his. Simon closed his eyes and moved one hand up to the back of her head, sighing as his fingers sifted through her silky mass of dark hair. She tasted like woman and need, and he responded with an uncontrolled desire that nearly pushed him over the edge. Her tongue teased his between little nibbles on his lips and it made him want more, need more. Putting pressure to the back of her head, he crushed her mouth to his, wanting to plunder and explore every inch of the sweet cavern. The hand on her waist slid to her ass, bringing her almost fully against him, making him groan into her mouth as their tongues dueled and tasted.

She was so responsive, so eager, that Simon lost himself to her in that moment, not caring if he was ever found. Kara. Kara. Her name pounded against his brain as he tried to consume her, own her.

Feral possessiveness drove him as his marauding tongue swept into her mouth, over and over, sliding sensuously against hers.

She pulled her mouth away, panting as she buried her face in his neck. Simon could feel her hot breath against his ear as she delivered small licks and nips down the side of his neck.

“Kara, I’m not a saint.” Jesus Christ, he couldn’t take much more of this. His cock was hard enough to pound nails and every instinct was screaming at him to take her.

“I want you, Simon. Desperately.” Her fuck-me-breathless voice saying those particular words made Simon groan, desperate to be inside of her. Still...

“Don’t do this out of gratitude,” he growled.

She pulled back to look at him, her eyes shining with need. “I would never do this out of gratitude. I’m tired of trying to fight this attraction between us, Simon. I want my one night. The one that you offered”

One night. Simon heart was thundering. “Total surrender?”

“I’m not sure what that means...but yes...total surrender. I know you would never hurt me.”

Her trust and faith in him nearly brought him to his knees. She had no idea what lay ahead, but she wanted him enough to agree to his request. He nuzzled her ear as he whispered harshly, “It means that I need control. I want to tie you to my bed, blindfold you and fuck you until neither of us is able to move.”

Simon felt her shiver in his arms, but she answered softly, “Then do it. Take me to bed, Simon.”

Barely able to believe she was in his arms and willing, Simon stood and carried her toward his bedroom, hoping he wasn’t in the middle of the best wet dream he had ever had.

## Chapter 7

Kara trembled as Simon swept her up in his strong, muscular arms and cradled her gently against his powerful body. Had she really just told him to take her to bed and do anything he wanted to her? Yes...she had...and she was shaking with anticipation. What she had told him was true. She was tired of fighting her attraction to him, an attraction that was so much more than a tiny bit of chemistry. Drawn to him as she had never been to another man, the struggle was futile, the outcome inevitable. Her body burned to be taken by him, and only him.

A smart, street-wise woman should probably fight the temptation. But Kara had never been enticed by a man like Simon Hudson. He was an enigma, a mystery that she hadn't yet solved. Gruff abrupt, brilliant...but also considerate, kind, and every now and then she caught a vulnerability that made her want to hold him close and soothe his battered soul. Kara had no doubt that at some point in his life, Simon Hudson had been hurt. Badly! How could she resist the yearning she had for him? She had to have one night with him, one chance to experience true desire. If she didn't grasp this opportunity, Kara knew she would regret it for the rest of her life. It was gut instinct, but she had grown up tough and had learned to go with her intuition.

It had been screaming at her tonight, beating at her to accept Simon's earlier proposition, telling her that she should take the chance to experience a passion and desire unlike anything she had ever experienced before and that might never come along again.

She felt her feet hit the plush carpet in Simon's bedroom as he lowered her slowly to the ground, their bodies sliding together until she found her footing. His expression was volatile, his eyes dark with hunger and desire as his mouth came down on hers. Raw need ripped through her and she tightened her arms around his neck as he plundered her mouth, pulling the clip from her hair and burying his fingers, pulling her mouth tighter against his. One hand came down and gripped her ass tightly, pulling her up and against his hard erection, making her moan into his mouth with her desire for him to be inside of her. She was already wet, ripe for his possession.

Needing some skin to skin contact, she reached for his shirt, desperate to touch his bare skin.

"No," he barked as he ripped his mouth from hers and grasped her wrist.

"I just needed to touch you," she panted, confused by his complete change of attitude.

"I need you naked. This has to go my way, Kara." he told her quietly. "I told you what I wanted. I was completely serious."

His voice was demanding, but Kara could hear a tinge of vulnerability in his statement. Wanting his possession more than she wanted her next breath, she stood back and pulled her t-shirt over her head. Popping open the button of her jeans, she lowered the zipper as she met his eyes with no shyness or hesitation. Shimmying out of the tight designer jeans, she let them drop to the floor, kicking out of them as they stopped at her ankles. She stood, her eyes never leaving his, in a very flimsy black, silk bra and matching thong.

"Holy Christ. You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen," he breathed reverently as he cupped her cheek and let his finger slide slowly over her face and down the side of her neck, until he reached the swell of her breasts, accentuated by the barely-there bra.

"It's the expensive lingerie," she told him softly, her breath hitching as he caressed the tops of her breasts lightly, making her shiver with desire.

“It’s you,” he answered, his fingers reaching for the front clasp of the bra. It gave way easily, spilling her breasts into his waiting hands. “You’re perfection.”

Kara shook her arms and the material dropped to the floor silently. She hissed as his hands roamed over her body, cupping the tender flesh of her breasts, his thumbs teasing her sensitive nipples. His fingers branded, leaving trails of heat wherever he touched.

“Although I love those panties, they need to go,” he insisted in a husky voice, a mere whisper, as his mouth nipped at the lobe of her ear.

They were gone in seconds, her desire to have him inside of her intense, her core screaming for relief.

Longing and apprehension warred in her mind as she stood in front of Simon completely naked. “Simon, I haven’t been with anyone for a long time.”

“How long?” he growled, his hand cupping her ass possessively.

“Five years. And even then I wasn’t very good in bed. There was only Chris, and I wasn’t enough to satisfy him,” she answered softly, trying not to let the insecurities of the past hammer against her brain.

“Did he fucking tell you that?” He insisted on knowing, his breath hot against her neck.

“Yes. He said that’s why he needed another woman,” she choked out, humiliated. She had believed Chris. Even though he was her first and only, she knew something had been seriously lacking.

“He was a complete idiot, Kara. You’re all the woman any man could want or dream about. Exactly what I need. It was his issue, not yours,” he grunted, placing his hands on both sides of her head and pulling her away from his body until his eyes met hers.

“I want this. I really do. I want you. I’m just a little nervous,” she admitted, her body still singing with arousal. “I don’t want to disappoint you.”

“Listen to me,” he grumbled as his hands fisted in her hair. You could never, ever disappoint me. I want you so badly I’m ready to lose my mind. I have you. I have control. I make the decisions. You have nothing to do except to come, as loud and as long as you want to. You please me just by being here and wanting me. As long as I can make you come, I’ll be ecstatic.”

She sighed, her body relaxing. Simon would make it good. She already knew that. “Then make me come, Simon. Take me to bed.”

Simon picked her up and placed her in the middle of the bed, pulling the bedding down roughly until it lay crumpled at the end of the bed. Her ass was stroked by the black, silk fitted sheet that still remained under her as she scooted up on the bed.

Simon sat on the edge of the bed, his hand reaching for the drawer beside the bed. He yanked four fur-lined handcuffs, complete with attached hardware, from the drawer, followed by a long strip of black silk.

“Complete surrender,” she murmured softly as she leaned back against the silk-covered pillows.

“Yes,” he answered softly, his eyes raking her body hungrily as he reached for her arm to attach the first cuff.

She had no doubt that Simon had done this many times before. He had her secured to the bed, spread-eagled, in less than a minute. She watched him, his eyes ravenous on her body as he went

through the motions.

She was surprised by her own reaction. The more helpless that he made her, as he attached each limb to the bed, the more aroused she became. Being spread out for his pleasure gave her a freedom she had never experienced. No decisions to make, no wondering what would please him. He was the master and all she had to do was wait for her pleasure. There was something so erotic about being bound to his bed that her hips rotated and she moaned softly as she yanked on the cuffs, feeling almost no give, but no pain.

“Are you going to gag me?” She asked curiously, but not afraid.

“Oh, hell no. I want to hear every little cry of pleasure, every sweet little sound that you make as you come for me.”

The heat flowing over her body spiked to boiling at his growling, sexy words. She closed her eyes, so desperate for release that she whimpered softly.

Opening her eyes again, she saw his face, fierce and ravenous, before he blocked her vision with a swatch of black silk, obliterating all of her sight, leaving everything pitch black. A moment of panic seized her, but she felt Simon’s hot breath hit her ear, his tongue tracing the edges as he whispered, “Being sightless will heighten every sensation, Kara. Every touch of my tongue will be sharper, more acute. Everything more arousing”

“I’m aroused enough, Simon. For God’s sake touch me before I die of longing,” she whined waiting in the darkness to feel him.

She heard a low, rumbling chuckle as he left the bed, his clothes rustling as they hit the ground. The bed dipped with his weight as he returned. “You look so incredibly beautiful it’s hard to decide where to start. I’ve imagined this for so long. I can’t believe you’re really here with me. In my bed” His voice was rough, graveled.

Kara was about to open her mouth to tell him to pick any spot, just please start now, when his mouth covered hers. His kiss was voracious and filled with longing. He was naked and she sighed into the embrace as she felt his blazing hot skin against hers. His marauding tongue and mouth claimed her over and over, while a wandering hand stroked her body, teasing her nipples, sliding over her hip, slipping between her bound, spread legs and into her wet folds.

She broke her mouth from his, panting as his fingers slipped into her tender flesh, brushing over her swollen, sensitive clit. “Please, Simon. Oh, God.” She needed him. Her whole body burned and she jerked at her bindings, desperate for more contact.

His lips moved down over her breasts, his tongue stroking and gently biting at one nipple, and then the other. He slid one finger into her channel, and then another, stretching her, opening her, making her wish he would fill her with his cock.

“Jesus, Kara. You’re so wet, so tight,” he murmured hotly against her nipple, his body tense against hers.

With her sight gone and her limbs bound, all Kara could do was feel, and Simon was playing her body like it was a musical instrument. It was heightening her senses...to an almost unbearable level. “I need you. Please.”

“Soon, sweetheart,” he crooned as that wicked tongue trailed down her abdomen, flicking into her bellybutton, before it finally laved the lips of her pussy, making her cry out and shudder with fierce, aching lust. His fingers sifted through the well-trimmed hair on her mound as that talented

tongue slid along her slick folds, delving deeper and deeper as she released a series of short, incoherent, puling noises.

Her back arched, straining against her bindings, as his firm, insistent mouth circled her needy bud, before finally latching over the nub, clamping it lightly with his teeth. White-hot need hit her like lightning, her body sizzling as he positioned the naked nub for his flicking, relentless tongue.

“Oh, God Simon.” Her voice was hoarse and needy, begging him to let her climax. Every nerve in her body was alive and tingling, her core clenching with longing as the pressure built to an almost unbearable level.

His large hands slid under her ass, bringing her pussy tight against his mouth. The pressure increased on her clit and Kara could feel her climax rip through her, every inch of her body shaking as spasms gripped and released. Over and over. “Yes. Oh, yes.” Her head fell back and she moaned with abandon as her entire body went up in flames. Simon lapped at the juices that flowed from her, murmuring his enjoyment of every drop.

She shuddered, feeling his exquisite, burning, naked flesh against hers as he slid up and over her.

His mouth covered hers and she sighed into his kiss, tasting her own essence on his mouth. Dear God, she had never experienced an orgasm so strong, so intense. She returned the kiss, trying to make Simon understand the significance of what had just happened, of what she had experienced, by pouring every ounce of passion she felt into the embrace.

“That was incredible,” she breathed as she pulled her mouth away. Feeling his hard cock against her thigh, she squirmed, more than ready for him to take her, knowing it would fill more than one empty place inside of her. Primitive and wild, she bucked against him, begging for his untamed possession.

“You taste like fine wine, Kara. I could have stayed there all day,” he mumbled in a ravenous, yearning voice. “You’re so beautiful. So very beautiful.”

“So are you, Simon. Please fuck me,” she groaned, her body pleading for him.

“Tell me that you want me, that you need me,” he demanded, his tone raw and harsh.

She could feel the head of his member nudging against her tight opening.

“Oh, shit. Condom,” Simon groaned painfully.

She lifted her hips, needing him inside of her so badly that she was ready to scream. “I’m on the pill to regulate my periods. I’m covered. I’m clean.”

“I’m clean, too, and this would be my first time without a condom. I won’t last, but I want you this way. Nothing between us,” he warned her, his breath heavy and hot against her neck.

“I don’t care. Come inside of me, Simon. I want you so much. I need you so badly,” she begged with a slight sob, completely out of control.

His hips thrust forward and she was instantly filled. He was big and she hadn’t had a man inside of her for so long. Simon stretched her, forcing her walls to expand and accept him. Her slick, wet flesh gave way, allowing him entrance as his massive member lodged completely inside of her.

“God, sweetheart, you’re so tight,” Simon choked, almost as if he were in pain. “So hot. You feel so damn good, so incredible.”

“Yes,” she panted, completely filled, completely taken by Simon. His big body consumed her,

dominated her as he pulled back and entered her again, rubbing against her g-spot, driving her higher and higher as he increased his pace. His hips pistoned into her, one hand sliding under her ass to pull her up to meet him, making their skin slap together in a satisfying, forceful meeting.

In the dark, Kara absorbed every sensation, every thrust. Simon was making her body sing with pleasure and she grasped the chains on the cuffs, her fingers digging into the metal as she cried out his name. His body slammed into hers and she relished each thrust, every pump of his hips. Their bodies were both slick with sweat and they moved against each other in an erotic slide. A dusting of hair on Simon's chest abraded her nipples as he moved, adding to her arousal, making her moan as she moved her head from side to side, not sure if she could bear the sensation overload.

“Come for me, Kara. Come. I want to watch your pleasure.” His low, seductive voice whispered to her, coaxed her, as his cock filled her again and again. Faster and faster.

When his hand moved between their bodies and boldly stroked her clit, she exploded as ecstasy seized her, seeing brilliant colors flash through the darkness as her body pulsed and her channel spasmed around his cock, milking him.

“Oh, Jesus, Kara,” Simon groaned. “You're so sweet. And so damned hot.” His mouth came down on hers as he entered her one last time, as though he wanted to possess every part of her, spilling himself deep inside of her with a harsh, tortured groan.

They both came back to reality slowly. Simon pulled away from her and rolled to her side, his head resting on her shoulder, his arms around her body, squeezing her possessively. Her lips searched, kissing the top of his head as she tried to catch her breath.

Her heart was thundering and she wished she could see Simon right now, his hair mussed, his eyes still smoky with spent passion. She was nearly destroyed by the depths of her feelings. Scared. Exhilarated. Confused. She was a jumbled up mess at the moment, not quite sure how to feel or how to react. Sex had never been so all-consuming for her. What in the hell had happened?

Simon. Simon had happened. And she would never be the same.

She felt his kiss, a light caress to her lips, before he rolled out of bed. She heard the zipper of his jeans close and knew that he was getting dressed. It was only moments before she was free and the blindfold was being removed.

His hair was adorably mussed and his eyes were raking her nude body as though he was ready to have her again. Kara shivered, not only from her nakedness, but from the tortured look she saw in his eyes.

He scooped her up and carried her down the hall to her room. He pulled the covers back and deposited her in the middle of her bed, pulling the covers over her nude form. The room was dark, the only illumination coming from the window and the brightness of the moon, but she could see his frown.

Did he regret what happened? Was he upset that he had just slept with a woman he barely knew? So upset that he wanted to get rid of her, put her back in her own bed and forget their cataclysmic joining had ever happened?

Or perhaps, it had only been life-changing for her.

Leaning forward, he kissed her forehead lightly and whispered in a low husky voice, “Thank you, Kara. I'll never forget tonight.”

Tears choked her, jamming the back of her throat. She couldn't answer, couldn't ask any of the questions she so desperately wanted to ask.

He exited the room, closing the door softly behind him.

Gone. Just like that. He hadn't even wanted to sleep with her.

Kara let go of her tears, letting them slide down her cheeks as she rested her head against the pillow, wondering what had just happened. Having Simon dump her back in her room after the most incredible sexual encounter of her life was like being slapped in the face. With a heavy dose of reality.

He's a billionaire, Kara. Wake up. Did you think he wanted anything more than a casual screw?

She had to remind herself that she was a big girl. She had gone into the encounter with her eyes wide open, knowing it was nothing more than one night.

Then why does this hurt so damn much?

Sliding quietly out of bed, Kara opened one of the drawers of her dresser and slipped into a nightgown before returning to her bed. She drew the covers tightly around her as her body quaked. Simon had been so hot, so warm. Now all she felt was cold and empty.

Pushing aside his rejection and her hurt feelings, Kara tried to reason out the situation. Regardless of what he felt for her, Simon had some issues. The restraints, the blindfold, not wanting her to see him when they had sex. Maybe he liked a little kink - she had certainly discovered that she liked it - but something more was going on in his head.

Something deeper.

Something darker.

He'd never had a girlfriend? That, in itself, was strange. He certainly didn't lack sexual prowess. He was incredibly rich and as handsome as sin. Why had he never had a long term relationship?

Kara rolled to her back, her mind racing. Simon's problems were really none of her business and she doubted if he would appreciate her poking her nose into his life. But she wanted to help him. It wasn't his fault that he couldn't care for her. He'd been nothing but generous and kind. If she could help him, maybe he could fall in love and have a relationship with a woman he could love some day.

Her gut twisted and her chest squeezed tight at the thought, but she tried to ignore it. Simon deserved to be happy. She needed to be a friend and try to get to the bottom of his issues.

You want to be more than his friend, and you know it.

"Shut the hell up," she whispered furiously to the dark room, flopping onto her stomach and pulling a pillow over her head, as though her actions would silence her treacherous thoughts.

It didn't. And it took Kara quite some time to finally fall into a troubled, restless sleep that brought disturbing dreams of a handsome, dark-haired, dark-eyed man with an expression filled with anguish and misery, trying to fight demons that he couldn't truly see. In the dream, Kara was an observer, trying desperately to reach the man in agony, holding her hand out to him, begging him to latch onto her, let her help him. He started to slowly lift one hand, still stabbing at the dark with other, trying to vanquish the clawing, dark shadows that threatened him. Finally, his hand met hers, his grip firm and she tugged with every ounce of strength she had, trying to bring him to her.

In the end, she couldn't. The man yanked her into the darkness and she let out a terrified, blood-



curdling scream as he pulled her to him, taking her into a deep, dark, whirling vortex.

He fell, and she went with him, knowing neither of them would ever escape.

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**~The End Of Mine For Tonight, Book One Of The  
Billionaire's Obsession Trilogy~**



**The Billionaire's Obsession Trilogy Includes:**

# Mine For Tonight – Book 1

# Mine For Now – Book 2

# Mine Forever – Book 3