



J. S. SCOTT

*Mine For
Tonight*

THE BILLIONAIRE'S OBSESSION
BOOK ONE

Mine For Tonight: Book One - The Billionaire's Obsession

By J. S. Scott

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Chapter 1

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 madman.

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 who 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 a 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 or 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 as 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 to have 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 farther. *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.

Chapter 2

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 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 nosedive 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 be 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 was 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 couldn't 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 hours 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?”

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