



DREW SINCLAIR

TAMED

ALL NIGHT

BOOK ONE

HIS SECRET DESIRE

Tamed All Night

Book One - His Secret Desire

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Acknowledgements

To all the family, friends and mentors who have made this possible - I hope you all know how truly grateful I really am.

Disclaimer and Warning

This free or very reasonably priced eBook contains sexual content, bad language, scenes of a romantic nature, scenes of a *gratuitously* hot and steamy nature, heart pounding suspense and occasional offbeat humor.

It is also part one of a series and contains a cliffhanger ending.

If any of these elements are not to your taste then please turn back now - no hard feelings, we can still be friends.

Love & Hugs,

Drew.

Prologue

"What's so special about me?" She asked. The look he gave her revealed a flash of near desperation that went through her like a small hurricane. Instantly she felt how naked she already was before this man - only her bathrobe shielded her full nudity from his gaze; no underwear, no lingerie, no nothing. Not even a suntan.

Her total satisfaction tonight had just become his Holy Grail.

Chapter One

Stay low. Stay clean. Leave no trace.

Katy eyed the untouched grande latte sitting next to her. It was probably cold already, but she hadn't come here looking for good coffee - she had better blends at home - she was here to get some work done and the Cool Bean café in the heart of Lovett, Maine was her favorite spot in town to drop in, tune out the world and get down to business.

Today of all days she wanted nothing more than to lose herself in her work. It was the only way she could really forget about who she was and about the problems that had haunted her for years. After all, she hadn't had a blackout now in over four years and every birthday that went by made it seem more likely that she would never experience one again.

She hunched over and busily tapped commands into her 'clean' laptop. She was working on an untraceable, digitally unidentifiable high end machine. It allowed her to snoop without being snooped herself and was one of the key tools of her trade.

She tried to focus but the man conspicuously not looking at her from three tables away required attention. He didn't look like the kind of dork who would wear hi-tech smart glasses and the sleek eye wear he was sporting was no chunky, nerdy Google Glass prototype. Nevertheless, she was sure he was wearing something. It was her business to be sure. Her survival depended on it. The guy had clearly looked directly at her, whispered a command and then his eyes had moved erratically, angling slightly upwards towards the ceiling, indicating a screen effect behind the slim frames perched on his nose.

For the last three days she hadn't been able to shake the feeling that someone was watching her, but every time she thought she had identified someone they melted away. She still couldn't shake it though, and now here was this guy, just sitting, not reading, not talking to anyone, not even checking his phone.

Was this it? After all these years? Had they finally tracked her down?

It wouldn't be the first time they had come close to getting her but they had never made visual contact, not that she was aware of anyway, but if this was it then she wouldn't go down without a fight.

The bedraggled old lady opposite her looked at the male stranger, then back to Katy and smiled. She held up the coffee that Katy had sent over to her table by way of thanks. Katy nodded back. They were good that way in this place. They never asked old Maria to leave, not unless it they desperately needed a spot for a paying customer, and if that was the case then Katy was always happy to oblige by making a purchase on the old lady's behalf and inviting her to her own table.

There but for the grace of God go I.

Katy half glanced over at the man again, trying not to make it obvious that she was so intensely aware of his presence. The last thing she wanted was contact, even if he was just an innocent stranger, and even if it was a stranger who looked like he had just stepped out of the pages of a men's magazine.

Normally G-men weren't so hot and Mafia guys weren't so smooth, at least not the ones she had been involved with.

She so didn't need this right now. A cat and mouse game or another uprooting of her life to stay one step ahead of her pursuers. She needed time to focus if she was going to keep her one woman consultancy from going down the tubes. Even fugitives need to make money and one of her clients, a minor national celebrity, was in trouble. It was all the guy's own fault but the blame was being leveled squarely at her. It didn't matter that the idiot had involved himself in a sex-tape escapade with hookers and crack cocaine, he expected her to take care of all of his 'privacy' issues and the threats of exposure he was receiving would ruin her too if the story came out.

She looked down to her laptop and began shutting down connections. She had been snooping the backgrounds of the individuals with copies of her client's tape, coming up with dirt on them and examining all of their potential digital weaknesses, but maybe it was time to leave and see if this guy made a move to follow her.

"Excuse me."

Katy's heart jumped when she saw the tall stranger with the glasses standing next to her. She had been so focused on making a clean digital exit from her investigation that she had never seen him move.

She wondered if she should jump and run, but that had never been her style. She had smarter ways of evading identification and capture.

She stared up at the man and although he had looked good from across the café, the full on impression of him standing over her was something else entirely; it hit her like a wall sized breaker on Waikiki beach. Dark hair, Mediterranean looks, lips that cried out to be kissed and a sharp suit made complete with cufflinks, tie pin and waistcoat. This guy's good looks and dress sense were to die for. Most folks in Lovett, Maine dressed down because they were all so rich they didn't need to work anymore. This guy wasn't one of them and he had gotten the drop on her.

"Excuse me?" He repeated as though she might not speak English.

"What is it?" She said, watching him closely.

"I don't know your name." His voice was calm, deep and supremely self-assured.

Katy extended her hand. It was possible after all, that he was a business prospect. New clients occasionally approached her in this way, wishing to avoid any obvious connection even to the person who they would expect to take care of all of their digital privacy issues. If he was Mafia she would be dead by now and if he were government he wouldn't be wearing the designer suit with all of the expensive accessories. This had to be business.

"Katy Maldon." She said. "Privacy Specialist."

He took her hand and all of a sudden she felt so tiny by comparison. He was warm, strong, all encompassing and a thrill ran through her taking her completely by surprise. Men were not high up on her to do list, especially not with her business about to go down the tubes and her obsessive attention to keeping a low profile.

"Privacy Specialist." He considered the words as though he had never heard the term before. Katy began to relax; her intuition for people and for business were giving her the right signals. This man clearly liked to be enigmatic and to keep his motivations to himself. His thoughts would have been unreadable to anyone else but Katy was pretty sure she knew what he was thinking about; he

wanted privacy and he would be willing to pay whatever it took to find the highest quality service available.

Hands down, that was her.

"That's right." She said. "I'm the best there is. If you need to keep a low profile in a world of high surveillance, then I can help you. Provided your business is legitimate. I don't take on clients involved in any criminal activity."

"I'm sure you don't." He said. "May I sit down?"

"Please do."

He pulled up a chair, sat back and rested one cuff-linked wrist onto the table.

"If you're the best there is then could you explain to me why it is that I've never heard of you?"

"First, you need to lose the technology." Katy nodded to his eyewear.

"Excuse me?" He was genuinely surprised.

"You heard me and you know exactly what and why."

He smiled at her assertiveness and for a second the cool, distant business man was gone and someone else entirely shone through. It was too short though, too brief to tell much about who this man really was.

He put the slim glasses down on the table and fixed his gaze onto Katy. The effect was startling. His eyes were a piercing blue despite his otherwise dark looks and they watched her with such focus that she almost wished he had kept the glasses on. Her heart began to beat a little faster. This guy was taking her totally off guard. Maybe she was wrong, maybe this wasn't about business all.

"Happy now?" He said.

"I'll be happier when I know your name."

He waited a moment, as though giving his name away were more than he wanted to do.

"I'm new in town." He said. "I just bought the Beechwood Cove place down on the seafront."

Rich. Rich as hell. If this was true then he wasn't just any ordinary business man, this guy was either a huge crime boss of some kind, a child of vast inherited wealth or an immensely successful individual. By her Katy's best guess he could hardly be more than thirty years of age so that meant it was more likely one of the first two options.

"Are you going to tell me your name?" She said.

"Frankly Ms. Maldon, I'm not sure I should. To be honest, you've made me feel somewhat nervous today."

"Well I can't imagine why. All I'm doing is drinking coffee."

"I think you're doing a bit more than that." He said knowingly. "Clayton Hargrave is my name and it's a pleasure to meet you Ms. Maldon. Now would you care to explain to me how you know about that glassware on the table?" He nodded down to his eyewear.

"I don't know anything it Mr. Hargrave, except that I don't like being filmed or photographed or ID'd without my consent. Not that any of it would get you anywhere, but still, there is the principal."

"Do you know how much it cost to develop that prototype? It should be virtually undetectable."

"Well the glasses are undetectable, it's your blinking and staring off into the corner of space and whispering to yourself that gives it away."

He nodded his head as though acknowledging the obvious flaw in design.

"Well nothing has given *you* away." He said. No cell phone signal, no signals from any wearable technology and nothing at all from that no-name laptop you

have there. No references to your image on the internet or in any database that I have access to."

"Is that so strange? Why should I broadcast my identity to the whole world just because I want to do some work in a café? Surely there's nothing strange about that?"

"Everyone broadcasts Ms. Maldon. The only people who don't are either homeless or naked, and even then billions of faces show up instantly via facial recognition cross referencing social media. You aren't homeless I presume and you certainly aren't naked." He paused for a micro-second after the word naked and Katy felt it acutely. She hadn't been naked for anyone in a long, long time. The thought of being naked for this guy... she pushed the thought back down again.

"Now unless that laptop is a chunk of plastic molded to look like a computer you have the quietest and most sophisticated device I've ever seen outside of a military lab. You are a blank space in the digital electromagnetic field Ms. Maldon and that makes me very, very curious about you indeed. In fact, this puts you on my need to know list."

Katy smiled but her palms had become moist with a mixture fear and excitement. It was a confusing cocktail and one she wasn't used to. This guy was coming to close to the bone in more ways than one.

She weighed up her options.

He could be military, he could be NSA or he could be some other government agency and none of that was good. The technology she made use of to protect her clients always skirted the edge of what the government was happy for the public to have access to. She dreaded getting the call from the NSA asking her to hand over files about her clients but it hadn't happened so far but maybe this was it. The big boys of technology could survive that kind of scrutiny but it would ruin her reputation, put an end to her business and most worryingly of all, expose her identity.

She was in enough trouble with her current client as it was.

"What would you like to know?" she said, buying time while weighing up her options again.

"I *need* to know who you are. In fact, let me put it this way, I'm not comfortable with you leaving here until I know exactly how it is you've managed to hide yourself so effectively from my technology."

Her palms were getting wetter and her heart was beating faster. Privacy was Katy's strength but also her weakness. She was an expert in remaining invisible but if someone threatened to get close to her it tended to rattle her nerves. This guy, whoever he was, had spotted her and confronted her more quickly and directly than anyone ever had since she had decided to go off grid and devote herself to entirely to making herself and her clients as invisible to the world as it was possible to be.

Cornered and fearful, her instincts told her to go on the attack.

"I understand that I've made you nervous Mr. Hargrave and clearly there's a reason for that. Would you like to share it with me?"

"Sure." He said sarcastically. "I'd love to share my most closely guarded personal secrets with you out here in the open, in a café, in the middle of the day. I suppose we could just make love to each other right here in front of all these people as well and it would be perfectly normal."

Katy blanched but a spark of fire ran through her at the same time. His brazenness in using the image of their making love out in the open in full view of

the world, caught her by surprise and part of the surprise was how instantly thrilling the idea was. The down side of privacy was not being able to share anything with anyone. Her life had been a closed book for three long years, ever since the death of... she couldn't even bear to think about it.

"I think I need to go now." She said and began gathering her things together.

Clayton watched her quietly but inside he was panicking. This was going horribly wrong. He had no idea who this girl was and the idea was intensely exciting for him. His instinct to control found its most satisfying outlet in people, especially when the person was an attractive woman he badly wanted to fuck. He was driven to find out everything about her that there was to know; mentally, emotionally, physically and most of all sexually. This was for him, the most gratifying experience in the world and it was, outside of his work, his absolute passion.

Not to mention that he was exceptionally good at it.

Knowing how to read people was one of the reasons he had been so wildly successful in business and it was the main reason he had had his prototype glasses developed. He had no intention of competing with other products in the market; he just wanted the absolute cutting edge best technology for himself. What he had developed and pulled together from other surveillance projects over the years now allowed him to put another person's life at his fingertips with just a glance. Any hint of mystery set him on fire and the mystery of this woman, Ms. Katy Maldon, was complete.

Therefore, she would be fucked by him. That much was sure. And she would be fucked in a way that he would extract from her deepest, darkest, sexiest fantasy. She, like all the other women he had had, would never be the same again afterwards.

But that was future tense. If he let this girl go now he might never see her again, never get to solve her particular mystery, and never get to see her break into a million little pieces as her sexual fantasy was fulfilled to the absolute letter; eyes dotted and tees crossed. Plus, if she was really as good as she said she was and if she were as good at covering her tracks as she was at hiding electronic signals from her personal technology, then this could really be goodbye and Clayton Hargrave only ever did 'goodbye' strictly on his own terms.

"I did learn one very important fact about you through those glasses Ms. Maldon." He said. "But of course, if you aren't interested to know what the weak spot in your 'cloaking' technology is, then all you have to do is walk away right now and it will remain forever a secret. Until of course, the next person comes along who can see right through it and read your life like an open book."

"I've got nothing to hide Mr. Hargrave. If you have something to say to me then I suggest you go right ahead and say it, because I don't have time in my life for games."

"Nothing to hide except that military grade privacy technology you have protecting all of your personal devices. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm guessing the government doesn't know much about your 'business' activities."

Katy sat down again. If this was it, the knock on the door she had feared since she got into the business then she would have no option but to face it head on.

"And what's your connection to the government Mr. Hargrave? Why keep me in suspense? Go ahead and tell me what's on your mind."

"I have no connection to the government but I'm sure they would love to know about that technology you're using. Maybe they'd be interested in your client list as well."

He was hitting her right where it hurt. It couldn't be co-incidence, this bastard knew exactly what he was doing.

"Is this what they call a 'shakedown'? You soften me up with some threats first and then get me to play ball?"

Hargrave watched her and smiled inwardly. The walls surrounding this mystery were coming down even faster than he had anticipated. A beautiful woman obsessed with privacy to the extent of making it her profession. Stripping her down to the bare naked truth would be about the most satisfying thing in the world, his ultimate conquest yet, but it would be, like always, on his terms; he *would* have her, but it would be within an environment that was entirely under his control.

"Go." He said. "You're obviously smart enough to figure out what the flaw in your security is all by yourself. You don't need me and I certainly don't need you."

It was an insult to her professionalism, a challenge to her competence, and it stung her deeply.

"You're bluffing Hargrave. I'll admit you're good with that sexy poker face of yours--" She stopped in mid sentence and watched his lips curl up into the hint of a smile.

"Don't worry Ms. Maldon," he said, "I can assure you that the attraction is mutual."

"I didn't say I was attracted to you, I just said, just said that--"

"You said I was sexy."

Katy threw her head back and sighed. What did it really matter anyway?

"Okay, so I find you attractive, big deal, the important thing is that you're bluffing. Your glasses didn't tell you jack squat because if they had you wouldn't have had to approach me and ask my name, you wouldn't have to ask about my reputation and you certainly wouldn't have to make idle threats about the government being interested in my perfectly ordinary privacy software controls."

"I don't bluff Ms. Maldon. Ever. Now I'm telling you that I know something about you that you can't even imagine, but I need to know more, and one way or the other I intend to find out, but I'm going to give you a choice here."

"Is that so?"

He reached into his jacket and drew out a sleek, embossed business card and pushed it across the table to her.

"I'm taking a chance here by revealing to you exactly who I am." He said.

Katy looked suspiciously at the card, as though the mere accepting of it would change her life irrevocably.

"Take it." He said. "It's just a business card, not a subpoena."

Everything in her told her to walk away from this. Everything except one tiny voice inside. Privacy had been Katy's holy grail for three long years and she had come to depend upon the bubble of invisibility that she had cloaked herself in, reveled in it even sometimes. The tiny voice inside her could barely be heard above all of the alarm bells going off in her head but it was there, insisting, crying out to heard, wanting to be known, needing to be seen, desperately wanting to be recognized.

She reached out her hand and picked up the card. It read:

Clayton Hargrave

Below the name was a mobile number and email address. Katy breathed a sigh of relief; at least he wasn't government. She had heard of the company but didn't know much about it, from what she remembered it had an excellent reputation and was a pioneer in the field of nano parts for wearable technology. So she had been dead right about the glasses all along and he hadn't been lying about them either.

"So what's the angle Hargrave? Your x-ray specs couldn't profile me, is that such a big problem for you?"

"I've been wearing those glasses for months and you're the first person to see them. To me that's a big deal. You're also the first person in possession of modern technology who's come up a total blank for me and that is a huge problem." He paused. "However, like all problems, there is a solution."

"I'm all ears."

"You come to work for me at Hargrave Robotics."

Katy smiled.

"Thank you Mr. Hargrave, but I'm not looking for a job."

"You haven't heard the conditions yet."

"Okay, if it will keep you happy, what are the conditions?"

"Number one, you come to work for me personally and exclusively. No other clients. My business and I will be your number one and only priority."

"I'm sorry Hargrave but I don't do exclusivity deals."

"Number two, you will take your best year to date and then double the amount to arrive at your total annual salary."

He watched her, waiting for her reaction. She did her best to remain cool. She didn't really know this man, this could be all hot air.

"Triple it and then maybe." She said.

"Done. My last and final condition is that you are totally honest with me, meaning specifically that I need to know everything about you. No question is off limits. If you are to protect my privacy this means you will learn a lot about my personal life, likewise I need to know about yours, intimately and in detail, if we are to trust each other and work together in harmony."

Katy started to laugh, although she wasn't sure exactly why. Her entire body had suffered a kind of contraction at the idea of revealing everything to anyone, particularly to a stranger. More particularly to a stranger who she had had two lightning fast sexual fantasies about since meeting him just minutes ago. At the same time, the idea of learning more about Clayton Hargrave, whoever he really was, knowing him in intimate detail and learning about his personal life, was kind of thrilling to her. If she was crazy enough to accept it, then this would be an assignment like no other she had ever had.

"Why are you laughing?" He asked.

"You have no idea how totally ridiculous what you just asked me is. Like I said, I don't do exclusivity and as for you learning everything there is to know about me? Forget it. You either trust me or you don't, so the answer is no. We can discuss you hiring me on the usual terms, but that's as far as it goes."

Clayton took a breath and then leaned forward onto the table between them.

"That Ms. Maldon, is unfortunately a bigger problem than you spotting my technology or being able to evade it. A much bigger problem. But it's not the problem I'm most concerned about."

A huge part of Katy wanted to just bolt and run. This was unwanted interest at its most intense, but if she just ran wouldn't it only make things worse?

Clayton leaned in even closer towards her. There were only a couple of people in the café now and just one teenage staff member busy cleaning off a counter top.

"Come here." He said to her. Katy didn't like being told what to do. Not usually, but there was something about Clayton that was different. Her heart hadn't stopped racing since he had sat down in front of her. She had no interest in rock stars or celebrities, not unless they were clients, but this man was making her feel like a little girl again looking at her favorite boy band member. It was compelling, intoxicating and incredibly frustrating all at the same time.

She leaned in towards him.

He looked into her eyes with only inches between them and my God was he gorgeous. She could only imagine melting into bed with him, feeling his mouth against hers, his arms surrounding her, and then in an instant he was there, really there; his lips were against hers.

This was happening. This was real and the sensation was intoxicating. The daring nature of his public act of stolen intimacy sent a rush of excitement swirling through her. It was more physical contact than she had had with a member of the opposite sex in years.

The pressure of his lips lasted just a moment, just long enough for him to reassure himself that she would not pull away from him, at least not for a moment, and then he was gone again.

"That," he said with complete composure, "is the biggest problem of all."

He stood up, put his glasses back on and smiled.

"Don't look so shocked." He said. "Surely I'm not the first man to lose control of himself in your presence."

Uncharacteristically, Katy had nothing to say.

"I'll be in touch." He said and then walked out of the café, leaving Katy sitting in a daze.

Maria, the little old lady sitting opposite Katy who she regularly sat with and bought coffee for, caught her eye and smiled.

"Sometimes you have to give a little to get a little honey. Don't be like me and hide it all away your whole life. Nobody even knows who the hell I am anymore..." her voice trailed off into a mumble and the smile left the old woman's face.

Chapter Two

Katy set the business card onto the passenger seat beside her and started her drive home. She lived a little outside of town in a small farm house that she had converted into a sanctuary of absolute privacy. It was invisible from the road that led up to it and if you didn't know it was there you would never guess that any one lived there.

She still had an impulse to throw the card away and forget about Clayton Hargrave. In fact, she felt an impulse today to throw everything away and to disappear again, leaving no trace of her existence in the little north eastern town she had called home for nearly a year. The encounter had left her profoundly unsettled. Her business had depended for a long time on a complex interaction of technology and instinct and today threatened to be her first major screw up. She shouldn't have introduced herself as a privacy specialist, that was a major mistake. Over confidence maybe? Or had she been caught off guard by the good-looking stranger?

Then there was the eye-wear. It would have been better if she had just let him record her than to challenge him on it. Facial recognition would bring up nothing about her, she had made sure of that and there wasn't a signal coming off her that could be traced to anything, anywhere. She conducted regular scans to make sure she was clean.

This was what you would call a bad day at the office.

She arrived home and let herself in just as her cell phone went. It would be her celebrity client asking how things were going in shutting down the story of his x-rated, class A indiscretions.

No more celebrities. She swore to herself. Business people were better; more rational and more serious about their privacy. This celebrated idiot was blaming her for his cocaine fuelled episode with hookers, something she had never guaranteed she could protect him against. Her specialty was electronic privacy, not damage control for idiots with self-destructive behavior patterns.

"Maldon." She answered the phone coldly.

"Katy Maldon?" The male voice was too familiar, too frighteningly recent. She had only left the café a bare half hour ago.

"How did you get this number?"

"I got it from Peter Goldstein, he recommended your services very highly."

"Who is this?"

"My name is Dale Hargrave, of Hargrave Robotics."

"What the hell is this crap?"

There was a pause.

"Peter told me you weren't exactly friendly but this is a little too much." The man said.

Katy's mind raced; first she meets Clayton Hargrave in her favorite local java house where he calls her out on her privacy technology but also offers her a high paying job in his company. Then he plants his gorgeous lips on hers in public,

leaving her stunned. Now she gets a call from someone else from Hargrave Robotics trying to contract her services as well?

Too much of a damn co-incidence. This day was crazy enough as it was, she was not going to let it get any worse.

"I'm not taking on new clients at the moment Mr. Hargrave. Thanks for the call."

"Now hold on a minute Maldon, you haven't even heard me out yet."

"This conversation is over."

She ended the call and sat down. This day wasn't getting any easier. She would need to unwind somehow, so she headed to her bedroom and got her running clothes. There was a quiet five mile run she did regularly in the woods behind her home that always helped to get her back on track when she couldn't shake the unease. She put on the sneakers, grabbed her iPod and headed out. She was about a mile into the run when stopped, removed the buds from her ears and did a slow, full three sixty turn, scanning the forest all around her and the trail behind. It was something she had never thought to do before, but today she had the constant gnawing feeling that the pounding music in her ears was masking something else, hiding another noise in her surroundings.

Come on Katy, shake it off, let's get going.

She continued her run but didn't put the headphones back in. Something was wrong, she just couldn't put her finger on it and although her heart was racing from the run she couldn't ignore the underlying trace of anxiety adding to the rapid pace of her pulse.

She pressed on, setting a faster pace than usual and eventually saw her house coming up ahead, the last hill before arriving home. She instinctively breathed a sigh of relief thinking of the relative security of being in her house again.

"Oh shit." She stopped dead in her tracks.

There was a sleek car outside her house with no reason in the world for it to be there. Katy Maldon didn't do visitors and nobody ever got lost in the woods out this way.

She looked behind her and considered running back into the woods, but she had just come from there and had been almost overcome by the dread feeling of paranoia.

No. She would wait and watch from where she was. No more bad decisions today.

She began to back away down the hill away from the house.

"Katy." The voice made her freeze. "Ms. Maldon, I'm presuming that's you over there."

It was *him*. *Him again*. Clayton Hargrave had come into view, standing on the edge of her porch, still dressed to run the world in his sharp business attire and looking as relaxed about having stalked her to her home as though he were an old friend she had invited over for coffee every other Wednesday.

"What do you want Hargrave?" She said, advancing up the hill towards him, her instinct for attack kicking into high gear. "And how did you find me? No-one has this address."

Clayton smiled.

"Well that's hardly true, now is it?" He said playfully. "I have it. My team has it and we aren't no-one."

Stay low. Stay clean. Leave no trace. Her mantra, the one she shared with her oldest friend and professional associate Suzy Falstaff, had just been seriously, possibly irreparably violated.

"You're beginning to annoy me Hargrave. I said I wasn't interested in your offer and you weren't invited up here so I think you need to leave my property before I call the police."

"Do the police have this address as well?"

"I can give it to them pretty easily."

"Ms. Maldon, really, I think you're getting the wrong idea here. The fact is that I tried getting your number but obviously you haven't got one listed and as your cell phone signal is masked and there's no fixed line coming into this house then I had to be creative."

"This is bullshit. I'm calling the police."

"There's really no need for that. Besides, something tells me that someone as interested in privacy as you probably doesn't need any extra attention from the authorities." He stopped and waited, calling her bluff. "Why else would you be living out here in the middle of nowhere in a property listed as vacant."

Shit. Katy had to hold on tight not to lose it. The asshole had done his homework and this was getting way too much in a very short amount of time.

"You really are one nosy little son of a gun, aren't you?"

"Ms. Maldon, may I please come inside and sit down? I'm beginning to get the impression that I'm not welcome here, standing out on your porch like this."

Despite the fact that bringing someone inside her home was anathema to her, Katy knew he was right. She definitely did not want cops snooping around and asking questions.

"Okay Hargrave, you can come inside but then I want answers."

She walked up to the house and passed within inches of the tall man on the porch in order to get to her front door. He smelled good, masculine, expensive, understated, damn sexy, but it didn't make her feel any better. If anything it was having the opposite effect.

"You'll have to excuse me." She said. "I've just been running."

He smiled and followed her into the house.

"Can I get you anything?" She asked.

"Wow." He said. "No really, I mean wow. How long have you lived here?"

"That's none of your business."

"The house was built four years ago but never occupied. Don't tell me you've been living here all that time."

He was right about the house but way off on the time frame. He obviously didn't know everything, or was pretending not to.

"What if I have?" She said.

"Well what do you have against pictures for a start?"

She looked around. It was true that she had never hung a single picture on the walls. They had been bare for so long she had forgotten about them.

"I like walls." She said. "Why don't you sit down, I'll get you some coffee."

"Do you have any tea?" He asked, sitting down on a barstool by her kitchen area counter top.

"No. Just coffee. I've got Costa Rican, Colombian, some Java Sumatra--"

"Got any Jamaica Blue Mountain?"

"You don't ask for much do you? That stuff is a little pricy for me. Not that I wouldn't mind tasting it of course."

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