

Loving Simone

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For Mom.

I think about you every day, and cry for you every night.

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Blessings,

Jessica Tilles

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Loving Simone

Chapter 1

“Who is this? Why are you answering Jackson’s phone?”

Simone gently placed the handset back into its cradle. Sighing, she closed her eyes and idly ran her fingers along its wide base. She loved those old phones. They reminded her of her grandmother’s house with the large antique furniture covered with doilies and lace. The telephone table with the neat little phone book and the wide old-fashioned circular rotary phone. Unable to find one likened to her grandmother’s, the push button version was the closest she could come. Glancing at her nails, maybe if she pilfered aside another twenty dollars from this week’s pay, she could get a manicure. Maybe.

“Who was that?”

Not bothering to look up, the even-toned deep voice scraped her nerves like fingernails across a chalkboard. She slightly cringed. Gazing at her index finger, as it twirled around the long coiled cord attached to the telephone, was easier than focusing on him, on them, on reality. What she really needed was a manicure.

“Simone, who was on the phone?” The tone of his voice was tight, impatient.

Bastard. Suddenly, she looked at Jackson, inadvertently causing him to jump back a smidgeon. Unhurried and eyeing him suspiciously, she moved closer to her favorite chair positioned catty-cornered in the family room. “Who do you think it was?”

“If I knew, I wouldn’t have asked.” Straightening his posture, Jackson was trying to cover now, his voice changing slightly, holding a lighter ring to it. He was worried she was having suspicions. Maybe she knew.

Hell yeah, I know. I just haven’t gone there yet. Reclining in the chair, she noted the slight change in his voice as she sized him up. *You’re such a damn fool.*

Marrying a more attractive man would have been much easier. Someone who did not need to overcompensate for his lack of self-confidence. Her husband looked all right, but growing up he was the nerd, the little boy the girls befriended but never dated.

“Jackson, just be honest.” *For once,* “Who were you expecting me to talk to?”

“As usual, you’ve got to make a big deal out of nothing.” He walked past her and into the kitchen where he opened the stainless steel refrigerator next to the counter desk.

Simone’s eyes returned to her shabby fingernails. Then she stared at the Prada shoes he sported. She taught him how to dress. Pampered him. Upgraded him was the new term. Now he looked like a million bucks, even on a Saturday. He wore success like an uncomfortable vest, though wanting to make sure everyone spotted it. However, she admitted, the days of the nerd were long gone. Women were searching for a payday and Jackson looked like walking gold. No one fell for the prettiest brother anymore after he crossed into his thirties. With his plain face handsomely

trimmed in the finest eyewear, he walked with the swagger of the most arrogant of men. Of course, arrogance attracted women like flies to shit.

Simone watched the brown Prada tap the floor as he surveyed his eating choices. She imagined she could hear his brain calculating what he could eat without adding too many calories or disrupting the perfectly flat torso he perfected over the last two years.

I hate him. Sighing again, she shifted in the chair. Not true. If she hated him, she could leave him, get up and walk out of the door. Her family would help her, they told her so. Well, her mother did. Her father only grunted, which showed a little extra effort. Normally, what she did was of no concern to him.

Truthfully, she adored Jackson. She loved him with every fiber of her being. He revealed so much about his past and his pain. They were best friends before his success. If she supported him, helped him to be all the greatness she saw in him, he would love her as much. She was wrong. He grew to believe he was great, blessed and entitled. He was viewing her differently, as if she were lucky to be with him and to have caught on to his coattails as he soared to success.

If I could only bring myself to hate him, then I could do something. Anything was better than apathy, the pathetic state she was in now.

Crossing her leg over her knee, she folded her arms across her chest. “She asked me how long we had been together.” She made it a point not to pout, refusing to show any emotion. *He’s not worth it.*

The tapping foot stopped.

With satisfaction, Simone smiled and imagined the expression on his face hidden from view by the refrigerator door. She wanted to laugh outright. *Jackass*.

“Who?”

Rolling her eyes with a slight smirk, Simone pulled herself up from her comfortable chair and walked over to the island counter in the middle of the kitchen. From the vegetable bowl, she grabbed an avocado and a butcher’s knife. The sharpest one. “I don’t know her name. Why don’t you fill in the blank?” She was calm, cool, collected. She’d been through this before.

She wondered whether he was going to play it cool. The first time his dirt was revealed, he begged and groveled. Then again, she screamed and yelled, cried and sobbed, yelled some more and threw things. She was so pathetic. She remembered how he grabbed her, hugged her, and sobbed out his guilt. The woman was so persistent. He was so distracted. He made the mistake. Simone thought about the weeks and months afterwards with him catering to her every need, doing everything in his power to make her happy.

That was the first time. Now, she trusted him about as far as she could physically throw his ass. Even when he was being faithful, her interest in him was dying, fading and distorting into some sad vague distant creature she no longer recognized or liked.

“I love you, Simone.”

“Ha! You are really going for the laughs today, buddy.” Swiftly, she sliced the avocado in half, slicing through the pit. *Damn!* She should not use a knife so sharp. Not right now. Not when her anger was so deep, she hardly felt it.

“You know that I love you. You know that these females lie on me.”

Females? Cringing, she never understood why men referred to women as females. As far as she was concerned, it ranked number two after bitch. With her head lowered, her eyes rolled up to her brow. She was losing it. Nevertheless, she was determined to keep her cool. She wanted to make him sweat.

“These females? Are you listening to yourself? Should a married man even have an opportunity to use words like ‘these females’? You should be out of the game, *playa*.”

“I am—”

“But,” she interjected with a hint of venom, the tensing of her jaw displaying her deep frustration. “Yet again, another female is on my phone, trying to figure out why I am answering *her* man’s phone.”

“Think about that, Simone. If I was cheating, why would I give her this number?”

“So you could say, ‘if I was cheating, why would I give her this number?’”

They stared at each other for what seemed like hours. She was close to his throat. One swift swipe and she could end it. The pain. The heartache. The damn phone calls.

Biting her lip to stifle an agitated grin, she shook her head disgustingly. “You are a lying, cheating, backstabbing, whoring, conniving, simpleton bastard.” Simone turned on her heels, grasping tightly to the butcher knife, praying God would give her the strength to walk away rather than slicing his throat. Holding the handle too high, the sharp edge scraped against her

skin. “Fuck!” she screamed as the knife fell to the linoleum floor, missing her exposed foot by mere inches.

Jackson rushed around the counter. Kindness was an emotion he only displayed when busted. “Let me see.”

“Back away from me, you...” She quickly turned her head. Her hand hurt too much to think of another adjective.

“Let me see, damn it,” he snapped between clinched teeth as he grabbed her hand, unnecessarily pulling her close. Like one would do a child, he pulled her arm over the sink, turned on the cold water and lifted the removable faucet to spray lightly on the cut. “Keep your hand there.” Rushing around to the cabinet, he reached for the medicine kit. “I didn’t cheat. I let her get too close. I told her I was married, tried to get her to go away. She’s been tripping.”

“She’s been tripping?”

Back at her side, he opened the medicine kit, retrieved the bandage and frantically tore at the wrapping. “Yes.” He wrapped the bandage around the gash beneath her thumb. “She’s been tripping. I didn’t do anything. You can’t blame me for dirt I didn’t even do.”

“Yes, I can. The world knows I’m married. They don’t get surprised by that revelation after months of wining, dining and sexing.”

“I didn’t wine her. I didn’t dine her. I damn sure didn’t sex her. I work with her. She already knew I was married. I had to put my foot down, stop all the flirting and bullshit. She went too far.”

“That means she wanted more than getting on her knees and sucking your dick, huh? She figured it was time for some carpet munching effort from your end. Isn’t that right?”

Jackson flinched, staring at her eyes that seethed with anger. He hated when she spoke vulgar and her tongue revealed her street side. The side she patched up and covered in college.

“Simone, I didn’t cheat on you. I promise. I shut her down. You know how women get. You know how vindictive they can be. She’s pissed that you have a man and she doesn’t. She’s pissed that I rejected her. She’s trying to break up what we have because she doesn’t have it.”

Whatever. Whether it was true or not, Simone had no intentions of leaving. Not over a phone call and a threat, no matter who the bitch was. She was sick of thinking about it and feeling sorry for herself.

He moved closer to her and drew her into his arms. “I’m sorry you had to hear that. I will handle it.”

There was one thing Simone never doubted. When hell broke loose in his house, Jackson tightened up ship quick. She knew this woman would never again make contact with her. However, she was doubtful if the woman would still have her job come Monday morning. It was the power Jackson possessed and the dominion he carried.

“I will handle it, sweetheart,” he whispered, his mouth on her eyelid. He kissed her forehead lightly, then her neck.

Simone shook her head. *No, not this time.* She needed to break through this, to move away. It was her other downfall, the secret she tried to disguise as love, but really it was sex. Purely the sex. Not that Jackson was the best lover she ever had. Although to the best of his knowledge, he was only her second. Early on, she decided he only needed to know about one other. However, when she felt weak, vulnerable and scared, sex proved to be

the welcoming friend to clear her mind and even the playing field. The weakness caused her pit to tingle, even though she wanted to throw up in disgust and cry at the pain of her bleeding hand. Besides, withholding sex would not really deprive him of anything. That much he proved. Instead, he would cheat on her as well as deny her. At least she should get some sort of enjoyment out of this painful game of chess.

She let him kiss her neck, noticing how gingerly he held her arm as if her hand was a fragile figurine.

“You know I love you.”

Wanting to tell him how his love felt completely irrelevant, she refused to open her mouth, intent on reaching a mental plateau where all of this fell away and her mind focused only on orgasm.

“Do you know?”

She nodded, wishing he would shut up. Closing her eyes, she allowed her mind to linger on the pressure of his tongue as it swirled lightly around the base of her neck, causing hair-raising chills to run rampant throughout her. He moved in a small circle around her as his tongue traced a path to the back of her neck, reaching her signature spot. *Lazy bastard*. Although busted, he went right to the warm spot knowing she would not need foreplay. A mere kiss on that spot would start her sensual flow. She stood still while he lingered over the spot, moving nearer, but holding back until the hairs on the back of her neck stood on end. Her body felt a tense longing for the touch, which would inevitably make her flinch, recoil involuntarily as sparks ran up and down her spine. *Have mercy!*

“Tell me you love me,” he whispered barely.

Her eyes opened. Now he was going too far. How in the hell could she utter those words after being cussed out by a strange woman for being married to *her* lover? Or so the strange woman claimed. She could have been lying. It happened before. Another desperate woman, wanting to replace her. Every woman knew he was a good catch. That she could not deny.

“I love you,” she lied. *Not really, but you’re making it awfully hard to love you right now.*

Jackson’s arm wrapped firmly around her with his palm pressed into the soft spot of her belly. His lips firmly grasped her neck, suctioning the spot and causing her to become weak in the knees. She felt the wetness escape her and the tension disappear. She wanted to reach for the strength of him, feel how hard and long he was for her, but her hand felt too sore. He continued to manipulate the spot, listening to her softly moan. He pulled away, circling slowly around her until he faced her again.

“Do you mean it?”

Nodding, her mind went blank as she tingled with pure pleasure. He placed his finger under her chin and lifted her head until he left her no other recourse, staring into his deceitful eyes.

“Tell me again. Look me in my eyes and tell me again.”

You talk too damn much. It was easier this time. She would say anything to feel him firmly penetrate her, stretching the tightness of her, stroking the spot, igniting vibrations to her core. She would say and do anything, and she knew that he knew it.

“I love you.”

He placed her left hand on the firm bulge protruding through his pants. “Only for you. I only get like this for you.”

As she fumbled with his zipper, Simone watched him easily unbutton her blouse and wrap his hand around the fullness of her breast. His pants fell to the floor, his erection fully extended through the slit in the fitted briefs he wore. With her back against the refrigerator, she never felt her feet leave the floor as her skirt bunched up around her waist. Her mind could only feel the magnitude of his width as he eased his way between the cotton lining of her panties and pressed firmly into her, parting her firm surface, pushing into the most intimate crevice of her. She gasped with delight, her early anger evaporating with each thrust, each deep push, bringing her closer to ecstasy and blocking out all memory of pain. Her head bumped against the refrigerator, as his large hands gripped her hips, balancing her weight between his hands and his center mass she enjoyed so much.

He talked, questioning her with each thrust, wanting her to call out his name. She refused. Tuning him out, her mind was only focused on the ride, giving her body the release she so desperately needed. Then he shouted and jerked awkwardly, almost dropping her for a terrible second, but grasping her frame and jerking again with continued shouting. Her body still pulsed. She was nowhere close to finishing. Her temple throbbed, her heart beating faster as he slowly lowered her legs and pressed firmly against her body, resting his head on her chest.

Shit! Shit! Shit! Frustration swept through her like a sandstorm. Had he even paid attention to her, even noticed she was barely close to finishing, nowhere near her crescendo?

“Damn, baby. You do that to me every time.”

Simone remained silent, nodding her head.

He kissed her lips, looking at her with deep puppy dog eyes. His skin was flushed as perspiration formed around the frame of his face.

“Damn, Simone. Don’t you see what we have? How can you doubt this?”

She forced a fake smile, a quiet nod. She had to finish. She had to. The intensity had its own momentum, swirling into its own whirlwind. She needed to feel the release of a big swollen orgasm. The high needed to counter today’s low. *He owes me, damn it!* He almost had her there. She would have to finish on her own. *What else is new?*

Moving rather slowly, Jackson grabbed his pants and pulled them up around his waist, kissed her on the lips and, holding his pants, walked toward the front staircase.

“I’m going to go get washed up. I was supposed to be meeting AJ for golf later.” He stopped and looked at her. “Come get washed with me.”

“No, I’m going to use the bathroom down here. I...” *Have to finish what you started.* “I need a moment.”

He nodded and walked up the stairs.

Simone waited until she heard him reach the top landing. Leaning back against the refrigerator, she slowly slid her left hand under her blouse and caressed her breast. Her body still felt on fire. She moaned, realizing she was unable to use both hands. The thick bandage around her right thumb did not stop the pain. Squeezing her breast, she lightly rubbed her nipple between her fingertips. Jackson would be horrified if he could see her. He had so many ideas about the way a wife should behave, in and out of bed. As long as she was a freak with her husband, he had no

complaints. However, he often commented on tramp wives and whores who pleased themselves without their husbands, selfishly participating in unnatural acts. Well, she was desecrating his blessed kitchen and his house with him in it.

Ignoring the throbbing pain in her hand, she held her breast with her right hand while her left hand slid below her belly button to her sensitive knot, which felt expanded and tight. She caressed it gently, wanting to prolong her release, to extend self-pleasure as long as she could. Part of her hoped Jackson would return downstairs and realize he had not been enough for her. She slid down to the floor, parting her legs wide to avoid a fast orgasm caused by her thighs touching. Her left hand stroked her bloom and her fingers danced lightly on her swollen inner lips while she gingerly licked at her nipples.

Cupping her hand, she slid three fingers deep into the well of her love and her inner muscles contracted instantly. Digging her heels into the floor, she raised her hips slightly as her fingers glided in and out, the palm of her hand massaging her swollen bud.

Imagining Jackson's face if he walked around the counter and spotted her, Simone almost laughed aloud. She continued pushing her fingers deep in the canal of her body, listening to Jackson's footsteps upstairs walking down the narrow hall.

"Babe?" he called from upstairs. She imagined him leaning over the banister.

A soft "Huh?" was all she could manage. Her body seemed excited at the risk she was taking, the new approach to sex. It seemed to be responding on its own.

"I can't find any of my new briefs. The ones I just bought."

“Oh, sweet heavenly...” She inhaled sharply. Her fingers, her hand, her touch felt better than Jackson’s because she knew what pleased her and he never took the time to learn.

“What?”

“Huh?”

“My briefs. Come help me with my briefs.”

She maneuvered her fingers in and out of her vagina. “Oh yes,” she whispered. “Oooh!”

“Baby, do you hear me? What are you doing?”

“Nothing,” she managed.

“That hand still hurting you?”

Simone ignored him. *I have to get a dildo. I have to.*

“Simone? Oh, I get it, you’re mad again, right? I’ll find them myself.”

Lying down on the floor, her left hand massaged her clitoris in smooth even circles. The tremors shook deep inside of her, but she kept rubbing herself until she nearly screamed at the top of her lungs. She caught her breath as the sensation lingered indefinitely until she exhaled, her body jerking and twitching against the floor.

For several minutes, she was unable to move. When she finally could, she found it hard to fathom her actions. *What if Jackson had seen me, had heard me?*

Despite her anger, she could never let him see how sexual she really was. She could not risk letting him know her sexual hunger surpassed his by leaps and bounds, crushing his enormous ego. The true miracle was she never cheated on him rather than her staying with him. She could lose her entire life if he ever found out.

Simone dawdled to the bathroom off the kitchen. Avoiding the mirror at all costs, she used paper towels to wash, dry off and fix her clothes. As she exited the bathroom, Jackson walked past her, heading for the garage.

“I hope your hand feels better, sweetheart. Take some Tylenol and lay down.”

Simone nodded. She would definitely take his advice and, at least, lay down for a while. The momentary joy she felt at deceiving him and pleasing herself behind his back quickly faded, leaving her with a sad, lonely tug of guilt.