

## Untitled by Scott Springer

Numbers. Rows and columns of numbers, numbers . . . numbers. Migraine inducing digits in currency format. Aaron leaned forward in his desk chair and rested his chin in the palm of his hand. His fingers pressed into his cheeks and once again his prickly whiskers surprised him. He hated this beard, couldn't get used to it, but that wasn't his problem right now, *was it?* Lights flashed into the dark recesses of his brain. His neck stiffened. Heart palpitating, shortness of breath, skin clammy and cold. He hated computers, offices, desks. He wanted out.

A five year degree in accounting earned to keep his parent's at bay, but not for this. His eyes pulsed. Take a breath, he thought. Just do it slowly.

These low walled partitions gave no privacy. Everyone up and down the rows could see his distress, except none would dare look away from their computers. He could pass out and lay there for how long? He hated this job, was glad it wasn't for real, but this *temporary* assignment had already grown into a nagging nine-to-five like living for the weekend. Something had better happen, and quick.

"Are you all right?" Hers was the voice of an angel. Aaron realized he wasn't capable of rationality at the moment, but nonetheless, the voice of an angel. "Are you having a heart attack?"

He tried to work his own speech but found his tongue had stuck to the roof of his mouth.

"I have some water," she said.

Aaron forced several breaths in a row and was looking at his shoes when she waved a bottle below his face. "Drink."

**Editor's Critique:** The opening to this romance is atypical in that the hero is in a weakened state and the story begins with his point of view. It's very easy to identify with this hero, and his vulnerability is endearing. The heroine seems to play that enigmatic savior role. I found myself interested in why the hero is panicking, what has he gone through in his life, and how does he transform throughout the story? At some point, he'll need to show himself as heroic. If I had to revise, I would describe the heroine a bit more, besides her being an angel.

This was an enjoyable first page and I wanted to read more. We hope you have a great experience with SYTYCW and sign up for the contest!