

Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Chapter 110 Warning Rated SPG+18 Catherine knew this was a “get the husband to f**k her until she was too weak to even lift a finger” f**k and not a “Slow and savour it” f**k, so she tried to hurry him. “Shawn, move.” Catherine put her heart into it, pumping her hips enthusiastically. It only took two or three minutes, and Shawn was c****g with a nice, wet finish. At that point, exhaustion claimed him, and with barely enough time to slide off, blackness overcame him and he fell into a sound sleep.

If they had been in a much bigger bed he was sure he could have slept seven hours, but unfortunately, the bed was too small and uncomfortable for two people to sleep on for long, and Shawn woke up after about an hour. He saw immediately that Catherine was awake but not moving for fear of waking him.

“I’m sorry I fell asleep, sweetheart,” Shawn mumbled with a small smile that almost melted her heart, “but that sure seemed to work well.”

“I’m glad you got a little nap,” Catherine added, “I wonder if you could reach the tissues for me, please? Near the lampshade. Your juice is running out of me and getting my shirt wet.”

“After what you’ve just done, it will be my pleasure,” Shawn replied, and sat up and reached for the tissues. Grabbing a couple, he turned and said, “In fact, it would be my pleasure to help clean you up, wife!”

She smirked, and by bending her knee and swinging her leg over his head, she gave him full access to her haven that made him immediately hard. “You surely know how to wake a man, wife.”

His left hand slipped under her and placed the tissues over the wet spot. He looked down and could see her folds wide open just inches away from his face, so he lowered his mouth and gave her c**t a big, wet kiss with a tongue that made her moan.

“Shawn! F**k! What are... Oh, oh yeah! “That’s it!” came from her, and he knew this was a welcome action. With one hand still under her, he placed the other hand on the inside of her thigh and started licking in earnest. And he licked it. He licked up both the entrance and her nub like there was no tomorrow and plunged his tongue deep into her haven.

He continued slurping at her with long strokes as he moaned and his name echoed in the small room. Not that they could not afford a much bigger one, but they were supposed to be on a covert mission and dwelling in a VIP suite at his hotel would surely call for someone who was after them.

With more licked, Catherine’s hips started rocking, slow and smooth at first, but picking up speed. While his tongue was busy, he slid his right hand up and down her thigh, then

around the outside and up to her breast. Shawn turned his other hand over so the palm was up and the thumb was at the opening of her folds. It was his name, from his lips, that kept him going. His thumb slid into her smoothly to the first knuckle, then slipped in and out as she rocked her hips. "Shawn, hell, that is amazing. Oh, don't stop," she moaned again and again while his tongue lapped on both sides of her lips and her nub. She jerked up, his thumb slipped out of her and was replaced by his tongue, which he plunged as deep into her as he could go, which made her groan. His thumb, meanwhile, was now right over her c**t, which was lubricated

Chanzo

from the juices that had run out of her. He started moving his thumb in tight circles, not pressing in but gently rubbing. That made Catherine grumble his name relentlessly. This was the final straw, and Catherine started moaning softly, "Shawn, Ooohh." She spread her legs wider apart until her thighs pointed straight up and her feet rested on his shoulders. Suddenly, her legs snapped closed around his head as she arched her back and let out a low, panting "oh yes", "oh yes", "oh yesss," and climaxed on his tongue. An extra portion of their mixed juices seeped out of her slit, and she held my head in a vice-like grip with her thighs until he had to pull back because he couldn't breathe

"Oh my goodness, Shawn, t-that was wonderful. I s-swear I'm going to have your tongue enshrined in the Sexual Excellence Hall of Fame!" She looked down at me with a dreamy smile.

"I've been doing that since the second day I knew you, wife as if you don't remember." He started moving up and said, "Now I will make love to you again."

"Shawn, I don't think, I can't-"

"You're so beautiful, sweetheart," he said, his breath catching in his lungs. He unbuttoned his shirt with one hand, reaching out with the other to cup her breast, his thumb sliding over her nipple, watching her reaction. "I want you so bad."

She leaned into him for another kiss. She couldn't get enough, wouldn't get enough. She ached from missing him. His arms slid around her, and he simply lifted her, kissing her the entire time, even as he laid her on the bed. His face rubbed erotically against her sensitive skin. When he raised his head, she felt even more aroused than before. He sank down beside her.

Catherine couldn't take her gaze off of him, afraid that if she did, he might disappear; but when he shed the blanket, she got down on her knees and ran her hands over him. "My turn."

His hand slid over her bare bottom, shaping the naked cheek lovingly as he brought his mouth down to the hollow of her shoulder. She went still, the breath leaving her lungs in a rush. She slid her arms around his neck and pressed close. God, she loved him so

much that going back to their normal life would be painful. How she wished he loved her as she loved him-tears burning behind her eyelids even while her body was soft and aching with need.

He lifted her hips. "Put your legs around me, wife."

She was almost afraid to-she wanted to have him deep inside, yet she didn't want anything to interfere with this time, this moment when the love was so overwhelming she could barely breathe.

He whispered sweet nothings and bit gently at her earlobe, her neck, and kissed her upturned mouth again. "Sweetheart..." This time there was that edge of command to his voice, and it brought a rush of damp heat, a small thrill in her stomach.

She raised her legs obediently and sank into his thick length, impaling her body, forcing his way through the tight velvet folds, stretching her impossibly. She was slick with liquid heat and the sensation of pleasure washing over her, but love was also there in abundance. She felt surrounded by her deep commitment and emotion for this man. She felt lifted by it, but most of all-complete. She felt his ragged gasp, the heat and raw honesty in his whisper of love.

Then he whispered something that made her halt. "I'm sorry. What did you say?" Catherine trembled in anticipation. Did she hear him wrong?

"I love you," Shawn whispered as he looked at her with fear in his eyes, knowing full well he had said something so unknown even to his own ears. The three words meant everything." Oh, Shawn..." Catherine went to his lips and kissed him with all her heart out."

"Did you hear what I said?" He asked and caressed her face.

She nodded her head. The action made them both moan, knowing that he was still buried deep inside her.

"I love you too, Shawn... I- love you for a very long time now, Oh God," she whispered as tears ran down her face and kissed him with the same passion as she grinned slowly. That made them both groan.

He stopped her, "You do?"

"Yes, Shawn..."

Her answer made him smile. He did not even know what to say. He was speechless. He knew the truth when he heard it. She tightened her arms around him, holding him closer, wanting to share the same skin, wanting to crawl inside the shelter of his body and have them be as close as they could be to each other.

“I love you, Catherine, more than anything,” he answered, meaning it, knowing she heard it in the same way he did.

Around them, their love swirled and merged like the notes of their song. Nothing frightened her any longer. Shawn was part of her—the best part—and he felt the same way about her.

Then he turned him around. His lovemaking started gentle, so incredibly tender she felt tears run down her face. Each stroke was slow and easy as his hands shaped and memorised her body. She felt as if he was worshipping her, the sweet pleasure washing through he waves. As his hips maintained that same gentle rocking, the tension began to rise and build, until she couldn't think, until she was desperate for him to pick up the pace. She tried to force it, writhing and moving her own hips, but no amount of squirming or eventual pleading could change his tempo.

The heat became an inferno; around them, she heard the notes of their song catch fire as passion sizzled and burned through her veins. That slow burn grew hotter and brighter, threatening to consume her. She threw her head back, absorbing the magic of their love.

Tongues of fire began to lick along with her b****s, her belly, deep inside where that relentless stroke of velvet-encased steel continued to drag oversensitive nerves until she heard her own cry and her body clenched and spasmed and began to coil tighter and tighter. Each stroke was precise, driving deep, a hard, thick piston that only tightened the stranglehold her body had him in. When it came, her o****m rushed, overtook, and consumed them both, throwing them into an explosive series of waves, roaring through their bodies, taking Catherine with him, her feminine sheath-like hot silk gripping him hard, forcing him to submit and surrender.

She cried out his name and dropped her head onto his shoulder as she collapsed, kissing his neck, her arms holding him tight.

“I am in love with you,” Shawn said, he meant what he said with every beat of his heart, every stroke of his body. He remembered her fears of his wanting only s*x from her, and he wanted to lay them to rest forever.

“And I love you too, Shawn.” He felt her lips curve against his neck and knew she was smiling. He laid her back, careful of her smaller body as he blanketed her, holding her close to him, unable to break away yet. He wanted to feel the beat of her heart, hear her soft breath, feel the silk of her hair and the satin of her skin against his. She was soft, all-woman; she was everything. His everything.

Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Scotland

A small group of afternoon visitors sat busy on Alfonso Richmond III's mansion's porch. They discussed finances, the market, and the many properties they had purchased or sold in recent months.

The majority of the attendees sipped on rare bourbon, top-shelf vodka, and well-aged whiskey, rather than hot dogs and beer. Smoke from a few cigars rippled around, swirling up and out into the evening air.

Alfonso stood near the outdoor bar, enjoying a glass of fine Irish whiskey. It wasn't the most costly drink, but it was his favourite by far. Smooth and toasty, it was his go-to beverage.

He'd been talking with his coworkers and friends about many issues, but something was bothering him. In fact, he'd probably had a few too many, and the one in his hand wasn't going down easily. He hadn't heard from Javier in a few hours, and the anxiety was driving him insane. Not that he was not already insane; some fears and worries were his enemies, but he'd been looking for something to assist him to find the road to the Buddha, which Anthony had been fascinated with, for ten years. He had almost given up hope after a decade of disappointment and frustration.

Then, out of the ashes, a seemingly random opportunity arose, and Anthony resumed his hunt. His archaeologist located the path leading to the real chambers, but the b*****d had anticipated his move and he played games with him again, yet fate was not done with him yet, Anthony's cancer looked to have grown quicker than he had expected, so he ended up doing the most idiotic thing, engaging his grandson. Shawn Richmond, and sure, it was his idea to hire Elizabeth Grunt.

He'd met with the man several weeks before and discussed a financial proposal so he could have it, and Dave Brown's circumstances had hardly been accommodating. He was just an opportunity he had gathered. Whether it was foolish pride or haughty defiance, he had been unwilling to part with his goal, and so he decided that he might as well use him. He deliberately gave him internet access so he could contact his sister without him knowing that his email had been hacked and everything that went through his email had not been secured, and that was the reason he knew Shawn's Richmond's move and Javier was on lead for the quest.

The man had made a second offer, an astounding amount of money even for someone with the means of wealth that Brown possessed, and still, the proposal was denied. So he left his office empty-handed and angry. He had worked too hard and spent too much time and capital to be denied by some insolent artist who happened to know about the Buddha. Fate? Maybe not, if all he knew was Anthony's ploy.

Indeed, the Brown probably did not even realize the entire story behind the golden chamber and meeting Anthony and his grandson, the Brown had been the sacrifice of

this all. The p**n of the b*****d's game, there were only a few people on the planet that knew Anthony and what the old man was truly interested in. After all, they shared the same goal. Anthony was not interested in protecting the Buddha, his goal was to be like the Buddha, to be a god. And yet here he was. Did Alfonso's friends and family call him foolish? Insane? Neh! It was Anthony. The b*****d was crazier than him. Anthony was a fool because he told him about his goal. The

Buddha's gold itself was but a small portion of the true reward that waited at the end. Immortality! Anthony was too late to cure himself, but he? Alfonso Richmond III would be the first modern god of all.

Most of his guests didn't even notice him slip away when the cell phone in his smoking jacket began to ring.

"Hello?"

"Javier is out of control, sir. He is leaving a blood trail in his wake, and I fear his recklessness is drawing too much attention. I recommend you let us intervene." The voice of the woman on the other end was concise and direct. Elizabeth, his last card would then clean up Javier's mess.

The old man twisted his head around in both directions to make certain no one was listening." Where is he now?"

"On the way to the real chamber, sir, headed north, Brown was still with him and the Thai police were in his wake as we speak. I'm not sure where they are going, though."

He pondered the situation. Javier had become sloppy. Then again, he knew this would happen. He would never invest so much without doing his research first. The moron had served his purpose thus far. "Continue following them. Watch the situation closely. If it gets out of hand, you know what to do, and how about Shawn?"

"Exactly where you wanted to be, sir."

"Good."

"Sir, I highly advise..."

"I know what you advise," he cut her off, "but they are up to something." Follow them and see what it is."

He paused for a moment before adding, "Are the other players still in the game?"

"Yes, sir, including the Thai assassins."

“Good. Let them continue as well. They may still be useful after all if Javier becomes more of a nuisance.”

“Anything else, sir?”

“No. But Elizabeth, make no mistake, or you know what’s in your wake,” Alfonso added.

“Yes, sir.”

“Keep me updated.”

“Of course.”

He hung up the phone and placed it back in his jacket. For a few moments, he stood near a stone pedestal holding a bronze urn. Everything was going swimmingly, nearly exactly as planned. A new visitor entered the neighbouring room through the side door, and he thought it was time to resume his socialising. He finished his wine with a large drink and returned to the gathering. For the moment, the pawns had to play the game by themselves.

Bangkok, Thailand

The Russian was seated in the back with the irate prisoner.

“He didn’t do anything!” Dave continued his rant. “Javier, how could you murder an elderly man?!” He was about to extend an arm toward Javier when he felt a thud against the side of his face. For a few moments, the world spun as a result of the punch, and his jaw throbbed as he curled up in the seat’s corner.

“Your concern is heartfelt, Dave. Do not believe you are in any way safe at this moment. Keep in mind what I’ll do if you don’t cooperate.”

Dave received the message despite the ringing in his ears. Chelsea may still be in danger, something he, sadly, continued to overlook in this entire circumstance. But at least now he knew Catherine and Shawn were on his trail. I

When Javier waved him away, the Russian reached over and was going to knock him back into a more attentive condition. “That’s all I’ve got.”

He slowly nodded his head. “Good. What I’m looking for now is guidance on where we should move next. Hmm?”

Dave sat up straight, his attention fixated on the officer, his speech hushed. “How am I to know?” “You murdered the man who could have known.”

“How far?”

“Probably seven hours at best.” Javier seemed to be contemplating how long it would be. “You are certain?” “As certain as I can be. I didn’t really get a lot of time to investigate back there, what with all the shooting and using me as a human shield and all.” “What is this place?” He ignored Dave’s sarcasm.

“I think Wat Phra Kaew,”

“The Temple of the Emerald Buddha?” “How did you know this?” Javier asked, “Well, this is my guess, but the thing is, Lek-Mraphi’s residence looks exactly like it. Good guess? Not to mention the many weird dots. I think the real chamber is somewhere there.”

“That makes sense,” Javier scoffed. “Actually, I’m a bit angry that I didn’t think of it sooner.” He laughed, “Actually, I’m a little annoyed that I didn’t think of it sooner.” It appears to be self-evident today.”

“Why is that?” Dave asked.

“Because I know about it. Wat Phra Kaew is regarded as the most sacred Buddhist temple in Thailand. The complex consists of several buildings within the precincts of the Grand Palace in the historical centre of Bangkok. It houses the statue of the Emerald Buddha, which is venerated as the country’s palladium...” He paused for a moment and released an exhausted sigh. “You’ll see when we get there, and besides many important state and royal ceremonies are held within the temple each year, presided by the king in person and attended by government officials. This makes the temple the nation’s preeminent place of worship and a national shrine for the monarchy and the state. Throughout the years, each king has donated sacred and valuable objects to the temple, making it a treasury as well. It was the perfect place

to hide it in plain sight.” Then, Dave laid his head back against the headrest of the seat to relax the pain coming from his jaw. Javier, driving the rented car, watched Dave out of the corner of the rear-view mirror, wary of his every movement.

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Chapter 112 The next day, Shawn and Catherine rented another pickup to go back Lek-Mraphi’s ancestral residence. .

His phone only rang twice on the other end before Shawn heard, “Mr. Richmond, I need a good explanation for all this! I found your butler with a dead friend in one of the nearby hospitals.”

Shawn smirked, “I take it you’re in Poland, Detective Rodrigues?”

VIC

“Yes, sir, we’re at many tourist destinations. It’s a b****y mess over here. We found an unidentified corpse at the base of the stage in the sanctuary, a Russian. You wouldn’t happen to know anything about that, would you?”

“Detective, the Russian corpse shot at me first,” Shawn replied plainly. “How is the friend of my butler?” “The corpse will be transferred to London tomorrow morning, and Eddie is going now to London. Care to tell me what exactly happened there?”

“That’s good to hear. It’s a long story. I guess they shot him to slow us down. They were gone once we got to the parking lot, but I know you know that already, yes?” Rodrigues’s voice took on a quieter tone; “Yes, look, sir, there are a lot of people that still want to ask you some questions. The Poland’s authority is here now. I’m way out of my backyard at this point. I have no jurisdiction at all.” “So, do you still think I am the one going around killing people?” “No. I know you’re innocent. We saw the security tapes. But you still need to turn yourself in. There’s a dead man here that you killed, and with your help, we might be able to find the others and bring this to an end.”

“Sorry, Detective, I just can’t do that. We don’t have much time. Javier and his other gang are on their way to much more problems on my end.”

“What makes you think that, sir?”

“Kinda difficult to explain at this point. I really don’t think you will understand.” “Mr. Richmond. Listen to me. These guys are obviously dangerous. Let me help you...” “If you want to help, find out who is behind this,” he responded with clenched teeth. “I’m working on it. Javier is quite difficult to catch. He had connections everywhere, and the dead man was unknown.”

Shawn considered this last bit of information. He’d run into men like this before; assassins, hitmen, contract killers. They come by many names. Sometimes they were sloppy. Usually, they were very good. He was unsure into which category Javier’s men fell. So far, the guy’s only mistake had been ignoring the presence of the security cameras in the museum. Maybe Javier had not even thought that such a small place would have measures like that in place. Either way, his cousin was lethal. But something was making him impatient. Someone was behind Javier, a fact Shawn might be able to use to his advantage. Or so he hoped.

And then there was the other component of this mysterious man’s existence who was cleaning

the wake of Javier, and that meant that someone else was pulling the strings. This was somewhat more disconcerting. Usually, even if the contractor was taken out, the guy behind it all simply disappeared, leaving the trail cold. One thing is certain, though: Javier was no mastermind.

He changed lanes, glancing back in the rear-view mirror to make sure no one was following. A grey pick-up truck passed in the far right lane and continued further and further ahead. "Mr. Richmond, are you there?" Rodrigues's voice snapped him back to the moment.

"I don't think Javier is the one calling the shots."

"No?" The detective sounded surprised. "Sure, about that?"

"Yes. The way that this whole thing has been going down makes me think he's just the manager of the team. Someone else more powerful is behind him and willing to kill just to

find the Buddha and its treasure."

"But not the owner?"

"Right."

"So who is?"

Shawn could tell the cop's voice was being kept a little low. He imagined an entire crime scene investigation going on in the background. Timon must have surely been huddled in a corner of the chamber somewhere, so no one else could hear the conversation.

"I'm not sure. There are only a few people in the world who even know about the real tale of the real resting place of Buddha. Until this whole thing started, I didn't really know much. And most of what I knew about it came from our recent travels."

"You said a few people. Who else would fit into that category?" "I don't know. I've been wracking my brain trying to figure that out, but no one comes to mind. All I know is that they thought Dave knew everything about it, aside from me, and never did any presentations about the Buddha's story. My grandfather is a wi many enemies from his previous profession. It was something that he and I talked about in private. He was also very secretive about his research on it. I can tell you this, though: my old man put his life into that Buddha's tale. He wants to find the lost chambers more than

anything else. It completely absorbed him." Shawn sighed as he knew better now that his grandfather was not on a quest to find the chamber but to keep it safe and away from prying eyes.

"Not one person comes to mind that he may have been in contact with?" The detective asked.

For a moment, Shawn looked out the window of the truck, watching the fiery colours of the forest blur by. "I have one in mind, but my uncle Alfonso is... quite... an enthusiast

of some treasure hunting adventures. He was, after all, the protege of my grandfather. Now that I think of it, I don't think I ever saw him at his funeral after that either. Heard about him?"

"Oh, yes, He was quite a man. The elite loved him and his Armani suits. He was an older gentleman who walked with a fancy looking cane and was dressed in a pin-striped Armani three-piece. I'm not sure why it was, but he had a scowl on his face, as if someone had just stolen his last piece of candy?"

"Ha, now that I think about it, you are quite right. One time, I found Grandpa sitting at his desk with his hands crossed. I guess he was thinking pretty hard about whatever he and Alfonso had discussed. But he never told me what they talked about." The detective silently contemplated the scenario and the few details they had. Shawn decided to go on. "All I know is that I have a chance to stop these guys, and that is exactly what I intend to do."

Resignation came from the other end. "I guess there's no changing your mind, Shawn. You know that I could call the police down where you're headed." The detective added.

"Come on, Detective, you know very well I'm miles away from Poland or Scotland, right?" "I realize that, Mr. Richmond. But you know as well as I do if you get other authorities involved we may never get my brother-in-law back."

Rodrigues contemplated the problem. "Ok, sir. I will give you a little more time, twenty-four hours. But that's it. After that, I want your full cooperation with this. You hear me?" "Sure. Copy that.."

"Good. Just don't get yourself killed Mr, Richmond." "We'll see." The line went dead.

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Chapter 113

London

Elizabeth Grunt thought that with her only potential problems out of the way, she should be able to proceed with relative ease. Her men, who were trailing Shawn and his b***h of a wife, told her that this time there would be no more warning threats but a real thing. Elizabeth looked over at the old man in a grey, pinstriped suit. Eddie nodded. His very thin, almost bald silver hair was combed over to one side on top of a narrow face and a long, h*****d nose. He's tired, greenish eyes were sunken back into his face.

She had found it difficult to convince Eddie to betray his employer, but she knew his weaknesses. She used her body to get the old man to agree with her. After all, she knew that he wanted her above all else just because she looked like someone from his

younger days. And, of course, it was no biggy; he was too willing to share the information he had gathered from Shawn's little group, and now Elizabeth was grinning her heart out. It was time to let the mighty Richmond kneel on his knees.

A dark-skinned man dressed in a form-fitting pair of Levi's jeans and a tight polo shirt stood off to the side. His blonde hair was pulled back into a tight ponytail. He watched the discussion intently with deep brown eyes. His face was strong and narrow.

The men were sitting in an old but elegant study room. Elizabeth had procured the apartment before flying to Thailand a week ago. She'd had his best assets, Eddie and his former colleague, following Shawn Richmond, who was also following Javier Longbottom for several days. Thanks to the tenacious work of Eddie, Elizabeth had known everything Richmond was planning to do, and just when to strike.

Elizabeth had maintained remote supervision of operations during their search for the golden Buddha and its treasures. They have been to Scotland, Poland, and now Thailand. Eddie's old age had led to a desire to not be burdened with the rigours of chasing down the buried treasure. So, his men had been in charge of the hands-on details.

The game had changed, though. Initially, it was supposed to be Javier, but the man had changed loyalty and directly contacted Alfonso instead of her, so now, they were too in the game to achieve the treasures. Javier had made the first move, kidnapping Dave Brown and forcing him to lead the way to the first chase. But Shawn Richmond had interfered. She didn't anticipate his involvement in the Buddha's quest, and maybe Alfonso was right, there was more to Sir Anthony's grand plan than his usual treasure hunting obsession.

She thought maybe betraying Javier was not a good thing, but the man was getting too emotionally involved with their prisoner, Catherine, so left with no choice, she ended up doing what she was good at, bypassing Javier's plans and goals, and now she knew the man would hesitate to kill her if given a chance.

Elizabeth's crew had taken a different approach in the search for the real chamber first-hand, but they were fruitless. Even her experts and historians weren't as good as Dave in deciphering something from the fake chambers in Poland, and knowing that everything was going into pieces, she knew they were near. Elizabeth had been forced to wait and follow since Dave and Richmond and his group possessed the clue to the real chamber's location. She'd lost some of her best-hired guns during the fiasco. A necessary sacrifice.

She stood and walked slowly over to one of the nearby windows and looked out. The late afternoon sun was pouring in through the glass, and she squinted against the light. She wore a pair of light pink office suits and trousers and a lightweight, cream-coloured expensive coat. The weather had been beautiful since he'd arrived. She hoped it was a

sign of things to come. "When will your man be here?" The gangly man in the jeans spoke with a Thai accent.

Elizabeth turned around. "Soon," she answered. She had brought the assassin in as part of the operation two weeks before heading to Thailand.

The Thai was one of the top assassins, and his comrade was one of the best historians of Thailand and researchers on the planet when it came to ancient Thai history and languages. Elizabeth wished the man could have been brought on sooner, but he had been experiencing some personal troubles. Once contacted, the man eagerly accepted the offer. Elizabeth wondered how much less the man would have taken, but the deal was done and Eddie was in the lead.

According to rumours, the assassin and his historian had fallen on hard times. He'd been a monk in his younger days, and the historian was a former professor of archaeology at some prestigious university in Europe for several years. The institution had a highly respected program, one that the historian had disgraced when he had been caught in his office with his pants down with one of his younger female students.

Following his dismissal from the university, the historian spent much of his time gambling and drinking, a combination that had led to the man's lowly end, in debt up to his eyeballs and desperate for anything. The historian may have been a degenerate, but he was a ruthless researcher, and his desperation provided the perfect motivation for Elizabeth.

The door at the end of the room opened and a younger man with thick, blue hair appeared. He wore a colourful gangster leather jacket and dark emo pants. The man looked over at Elizabeth, exchanging a brief stare before shifting his gaze to Eddie, the assassin, and the historian.

Elizabeth looked over at him expectantly. "Boy, did you get it?" he asked. The emo guy nodded and held up a velvet he took from Shawn when the billionaire was on the road unconscious from the car blast in front of his hotel. Then he went to the airport and flew in on the awaiting private jet of Alfonso. "Yes, ma'am. I got it."

"Good job," She smiled and motioned for the boy to hand her the velvet box that contained the ring.

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Chapter 114

Nothing smelled sweeter than the rain in Bangkok. Catherine loved to look outside and just watch it fall, taking in the cool air, and soft scent just like how she remembered London and their family's little country home. It was the perfect place to be on days like this. Before, she didn't care much for the company since their parents passed away,

leaving her and Dave to figure out this crazy world all by themselves. An hour after their trip, Catherine couldn't help herself but ask. "Are you sure telling that detective where we're up to was a good idea?" She cast her husband a sceptical look in the mirror while he was busy blurring his eyeballs from the Bangkok early morning traffic. "I mean, why wouldn't he just set up a roadblock and bring us in?"

"I don't think he'll do that, wife."

Hearing him call her his wife many times now, Catherine couldn't help but smile. When he talked to her and looked at her, there was none of the bossy and demanding Catherine had used to. "Well, why did you tell him where we were going, then?" Shawn smiled, "Because, dear, we might need some help when this thing goes down." "Well, I don't like it." She cast a glance at the busy street and remained somewhat silent for the last few minutes. Isn't there someone you can call on this? I mean, someone who can help

"My former colleague and maybe Eddie's men, but I'm not sure what they would do at this point. If Polish authorities were already involved, then this could escalate so quickly. As per Grandpa's instruction, we need to keep a very low profile. I'm afraid we might be on our own in this one." Catherine nodded in agreement. "On our own again, huh?" Catherine echoed. "... fear for Dave, Shawn, I saw him yesterday almost wanting to faint from that Russian's grasp. What if they kill him too?"

"Dave is a strong man, wife, he knew what he was doing and, if I'm not mistaken, all we needed to do was go back to Lek-Mraphi's house and maybe we can find some clue that he left

there,"

"I hope you are right, Shawn. I can lose him. He is my only family." "Sweetheart, you have me. You are never alone," Shawn looked at her intently, his hand slowly getting closer. Then she felt his hand on her thigh. He ran it up her leg. "Road, Shawn... road! Look at the road." She smirked. This man was seriously crazy. She smiled, thinking how her life had been bleak and the chances of it improving were zero. Until Shawn entered her life. She looked down at her side and then up at her water bottle. She took a couple of quick swigs of the water and then put it back in the cupholder.

"So, tell me something, Shawn. How did you figure that Lek-Mraphi's ancestral home was the next place we needed to go?" "The thought had crossed my mind before. It seemed like the only logical spot." "So what does this have to do with the real chambers?" she asked, as it piqued her curiosity and set her on a new barrage of questions. "Well, there is something in there it was almost identical to the many temples in the area. I think I've seen it before, I just can't think of the name yet. We might need to look again. Maybe whoever renovated his home was just trying to help keep the mystery hidden." "Makes sense," she added. I'd never actually considered that before. And the ring?" Shawn smiled. "Glad you remembered. We will find the exact location

soon. We need to follow the trail somehow and wait for Dave to contact us.” “Good, well, the ring-um-still with you right?” “Yes, it’s here in my-“Shawn halted when he couldn’t find the box in his pocket and said, “F**k!” He widened his eyes and pulled over to the side of the busy road, causing commuters to blare their horns in their wake. “What?!”

“S**t, it’s not here,” Shawn grumbled under his breath. He was suddenly nervous, yet he breathed in all over again, trying to clear his mind and think about when he had felt it in his pocket. “I think I lost it when I was unconscious after the car blast. S**t!”

“Oh hell, what now? Who took it?” “Maybe some pickpockets. Dammit!” “Should we go to the police and report it missing?” “No, we can’t risk it. We might as well call Eddie about it. For now, let’s go to Lek-Mraphi’s home.” He pushed the accelerator again and sighed. Shawn said, “Relax, we will get it soon. Shall we contact someone who knows about the pickpocket market here in Bangkok? Maybe some underground organisation or... you know something related to it?”

“That is not possible. Things here weren’t like in the movie where a lost ring would pop up in a jewellery shop that is owned by the Chinese. Don’t worry, I will call someone later who might have an idea about such a thing. Maybe the CCTV at the hotel can lead us to it, but for now, let’s focus on Dave. We need to know where they are going next.” “Would you consider my suggestion?” “Yes, wife.” He rolled his eyes at her and chuckled.

She smiled. “So, you think the Mraphi’s home will lead us to the chamber?”

“More than that. I think the government or some local keepers watched over it.”

She cast a questioning look at him. “It’s the only thing that could make sense.” He added.

“So what happens now, if we don’t have the key?” “I don’t know.” “Hm- if we happen to find the real chamber, it might have you know... some locked? Right?” “Yes.”

“We are doomed, Shawn.” “I know.” He sighed and settled back, figuring it would take him about half an hour to a full hour to arrive. He returned to his daydreams of what he would say to her when he proposed to her again when she walked in the door and saw him waiting for her. Her long smooth short hair flowing down her back, those soft loving eyes gazing into his eyes, and that sweet British lass voice that could melt the heart of Michelangelo’s sculpture. Just imagining her sent his heart racing. He sighed deeply, knowing that soon he’d be proposing to her, and this time it’d be real, and he’d no longer have to imagine.

Billionaire’s Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Chapter 115 When they arrived at Lek-Mraphi's ancestral homes, the couple walked in the vast parking lot, holding hands like some ordinary tourist lovers on their honeymoon. Each wore a simple white and red-heart printed shirt and a pair of shoes, as they noticed how the business at the temple was on its usual day, like what happened days earlier never happened. The two each take a quarter of the room to search for any sign of the clues left by Dave.

On the western side of the temple, there were colourful blossoms and symbols painted on the walls in different places. Some weren't paintings at all but carvings engraved into the wall, floor, and stone underneath cutout recesses where small statues of Buddhas sat waiting to be worshipped. A vast altar space for monks' worship sat just on each side, which correlated with fire, air, earth, water, and wisdom. Shawn turned on his phone light to get a little extra help and began scanning every inch of the place. The room's floor was mostly flat, save for a few spots where huge slabs of rock had fallen at some point in the past. It was an unnerving thought to consider that it could have happened at any time.

There were a few other tourists inside, while the rest stayed outside to take pictures, all doing the same thing, more or less. But he and Catherine were happily inspecting the carvings and the wall paintings like eager patrons, and enjoying the experience of ancient architecture in the pillars and headers within the temple.

Two younger visitors were taking selfies with their phones the moment they went into a vast underground chamber which opened once a week. The bright flash sent a streak of blinding light throughout the semi-darkened area for a moment before it plunged back into the relative dimness, broken only by the sun's rays shining through the gaps in the roof. Shawn kept sliding to his left, as did his companions. They closely inspected the surface of the boulders from floor to ceiling, but as they kept moving, he realised there was probably nothing here that even closely resembled the real chamber they were looking for. If it was nearly identical to the chambers they had examined in Leba, Poland, they should have seen something by now, a hint as to where the thing was.

In Leba, there'd been strange runic symbols with strange coloured pigments written all over the walls and an odd indentation that told them that it was something gibberish, yet when put together, that image resembles a ring. Here, though, Catherine and the others discovered nothing that would further their quest.

She reached the point where Shawn had begun a few minutes earlier. She stopped and turned around, looking back at him and gesturing with her hands in the air. He shrugged. "Found something, yet?"

Shawn finished his section last and spun around. "Nothing. You?"

"Nothing that piques my interest so far..." Shawn sighed. "Well, I found some stairs over in that corner, but it doesn't look like they go anywhere."

Shawn was approached by a young woman, possibly in her early twenties. She was dressed casually in faded jeans, sneakers, and a dark emo T-shirt. Her bright green and purple hair was frizzy and knotted around her ears and grazed her shoulders. She had a cheerful expression on her face, the kind that young people typically wore since the world hadn't yet snatched all their hopes. Shawn's jaded side dubbed it naiveté, albeit that may have been a little harsh.

"Oh, it goes somewhere. There's another chamber up to at the top of the steps, darling." The girl answered the question in a cheery voice that sounded both aloof and informative at the same time.

"Which chamber?" Shawn inquired. He became instantly solemn once more.

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"Yeah," she answered, her Chinese American accent obvious. "There are more steps in that rear corner over there. You climb those and exit through another door. It takes you into a small prayer area or something. I had no idea what it was. But I'm not a religious person." "So, why are you here?" Shawn inquired, clearly intrigued.

She shook her head and grinned. "I'm not sure. I enjoy travelling, and some of my friends wanted to see this location. Believe me, it is f*****g boring as hell... but well, it's good for a goofy selfy. I'm always up for an adventure."

"Ah. I see." Shawn nodded.

"Anyway, you guys seem like you're looking for something. Maybe it's in that room. What are you looking for, anyway?"

Shawn's pupils constricted. "um- just a ...well a wedding ring," he decided, hoping that telling the truth would make her give up and leave him alone. Not that he didn't value the knowledge. He had no notion that another room existed. "Thank you for your assistance," he swiftly added.

He passed the girl as she stared into the space where he'd been standing just a moment before. Her eyes suggested she was trying to process what he'd just said and whether or not he was playing with her.

She had turned around by the time she realised he was joking and spotted him ascending the steps to the secret room.

as

"Be cautious, this place is creepy enough for someone like me," she advised then smirked. "Those are slick."

T

“Thank you,” Shawn said without turning around and motioned Catherine to go to the other side.

He vanished through the dark entrance at the top of the short stairway, and Catherine cast a glimpse around the corner as she gestured to stay on the eastern side.

Going in he shone his light ahead, instantly understanding that this new location lacked its own natural light source. Shawn had to lean down slightly to get through the doorway's small arch. His boots slid a little on the smooth surface of stone beneath his feet, confirming what the girl had said back in the main hall about it being slippery. He wasn't sure why, given that

the location was largely dry and hot, with low relative humidity. Shawn kept going, pressing his hand against the granite wall to his left and leaning into it with his elbow.

The hallway from the stairs was only about ten feet long before opening into another long corridor. He whirled in a circle, his light blazing on the walls as he looked into the snuffed rock. The space was a cylinder, similar to the shrines in the valley below and others he'd seen in other nations. This soared to a height of nearly twenty feet above the ground. Shawn scanned the entire chamber, rotating in circles several times until he'd examined every inch of the environment around him. “What the hell is this place?”

He was astonished to find the walls empty, with no carvings or paintings like the ones he'd seen downstairs in the other chamber. If this was a temple, it was a simple one with a simplistic design. Then, as his gaze fell lower, he recognised what it was. Shawn noticed the floor indentation. There was no question about what it could be.

This...f**k...was no temple on the higher level. It was a graveyard. “F**k! I thought this is Lek-Mraphi's home?” He grumbled under her breath.

He took a cautious step forward, his head rotating side to side to ensure he didn't miss anything that could collapse and harm him or cause him to trip and walked into the centre of the room, where a large narrow groove had been cut into the floor. It was caked in mud, hardened over time but dry and unaffected by the elements. Who could have been placed in this location? To receive such an award, they must have been someone of great importance. Having to carry the body up the mountain would have been a difficult and exhausting task.

Then there was the custom. Shawn was well-versed in history and other cultures, but was he incorrect in thinking that most Thais graves were cremations? Or was that only for specific social classes?

That last idea made him wonder if he was really staring at a tomb or if something else was buried near his feet.

He looked behind him, but there was no trace of the others. Perhaps they were preoccupied in the main room. The temple had become too gloomy for his comfort. Except for the pale white beam flashing from his phone, the blackness appeared to swallow him whole. Shawn knelt on one knee and pressed a finger into the ground. He discovered it to be flexible and scraped out a tiny trench. He peered back over his shoulder once more, this time worrying that some local authority would be there behind him, ready to imprison him for violating an ancient historical monument.

“Woah! this is way way older than those in Leba.”

He cupped his palm and scraped away more dirt with the bridge of it. This second layer was more difficult to move, but he was still able to do it, resulting in a larger trench.

Shawn stood up again, satisfied he could work with this, and set down his gear bag. He unzipped the secondary pouch and fished out his hunting knife. The grey handle contrasted with the black coating over the steel blade within the sheath, but he did not intend to dull his knife in the dirt. The sheath would work just fine.

Billionaire’s Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Chapter 116 “Shawn?” Catherine’s shouts echoed through the burial ground. “Where the hell are you?”

“In here...” Shawn responded, “be careful...the floors are slippery.” Two minutes later, Catherine appeared at the entrance with a small light from the tablet PC in her hand. “What on earth is this place?”

“Come, let’s see what’s down here.” He knelt down in the centre of the rectangular indentation and started scraping away at the surface, working faster now that he had at least a minimal tool for the job. He added and motioned to his wife to see what he was pointing at.”

This looks like Ban Chiang. I’ve been there before with my grandfather.”

“What is that?”

“Ban Chiang, the... well, it was considered the most important prehistoric settlement so far discovered in Southeast Asia. It marks an important stage in human cultural, social, and technological evolution.” “Really? You mean, a burial ground?” 1 “Yes. The site presents the earliest evidence of farming in the region and of the manufacture and use of metals. This is the exact replica... Oh my God...”

“I don’t understand,” Catherine dropped to her knees and inspected the ground. “It has since been extensively excavated and its remains studied by Thai and international scholars. Since 1966, the dating of the site has been adjusted and refined over time in line with advances in the understanding and techniques of radiometric dating. This

research has revealed that the site dates from 1,495 BC.” “Woah! Really? and this place was its replica?” “I think so.”

“Why hide it?” “That is a question I can answer.” “Shawn, aren’t we trespassing? What if the temple keeper found us?” “I don’t think so. The thing is... I’m not sure, but I think someone wanted us to find this area.”

“Really?” “Yes, wife, now be a dear and help me look for something.” “Something what?” “Anything,” Shawn responded by looking at the ceiling, then back at the dirt. It was much easier than using his hands, and the dirt moved readily under the hard edge of the sheath. He was glad he’d not worn his expensive shoes, which would have likely been too weird for this particularly odd job. “Let’s dig,” Shawn murmured after five minutes of surveying the place.

“With what?”

“Anything, look for something that can help us.” “OK, you are the boss,” Catherine smirked.

“Oh, really now?” He raised his eyebrows. “Why do I feel like you are just mocking me this time, just because I said the big word last night?”

“Shawn, seriously? Can you just tell me you love me without getting all your ego up a notch?” She raised her own and pouted at her husband.

“Fine, I do love you dearly. Satisfied?”

“Yes.” She smirked, and they both giggled after a quick kiss on the lips.

“Do you want some alone time here?” “Shawn?” “Are you nuts? In a burial ground?”

“So?”

“Jesus, no, Shawn!” Her eyes widened in horror. “I’m just kidding, wife.” He beamed with humour as he started working in the dirt.

Shawn kept digging, occasionally wiping his forehead with the back of his hand as the temperature in the room seemed to increase the harder he worked. He knew that wasn’t the case. It was his temperature that was climbing, but he was fine with that. Five minutes into the job, he hit something solid in the centre of the little pit and froze.

“Shawn, what the hell is that?”

“I don’t know.”

“Please tell me we didn’t hit a mummy.”

"I doubt it." He glanced back over his shoulder, now more concerned that the guards hadn't come up to join them, or at least to see what they were doing.

"Help me with this," He sighed and looked back into the hole he'd made. The edge of something was poking out through the surface. Was it a bone, a piece of a skeleton buried here long ago? Or was it something else? His thoughts were a hundred miles away when they started pulling the lever. "This is so heavy," Catherine complained.

Shawn swallowed and decided to dig a little more. He dug faster with renewed vigour, scraping away the layers of dirt until he saw more clearly what his scabbard had initially struck

Catherine held her light closer to the object; the yellow glint from it sparkled in the darkness. There was no mistaking it. "Shawn is that f*****g gold?"

There was gold buried here, but why?

"I don't know." He brushed aside more of it and took in the entire object. It was propped in the folded hands of a small Buddha sculpture. Shawn couldn't see the rest of the figure, but the hands were large with long, thick fingers cradling the golden oval object with palms turned up.

Shawn leaned in close and dared to touch the object, pinching one of the petals between his thumb and forefinger. He pulled gently, worried that even the slightest disturbance would break the delicate-looking object.

"Hell, is that... Is that a ring?"

"I'm not sure... but it looks like it."

He put the phone in his mouth and clamped down on it with his teeth to keep the light on the golden oval object that resembled a ring from the velvet box that was sent to Ben by Anthony before the old man died. Then he used his free hand to steady the base of it as he pulled it away from the sarcophagus.

"Be careful," Catherine warned.

2

Once the object was free, Shawn took the phone out of his mouth, thankful the thing had come away so easily since his jaw was quickly starting to hurt. He held the device in one hand again and inspected the surface of the oval object covered in dust as he started cleaning it with the edge of his shirt. "F**k! Shawn, that is a ring, the same ring." He nodded. "Wife, are you thinking what I'm thinking?" "Yes," she said, nodding: "Jesus, that... that is the original ring?" "Bingo!" He grumbled under his breath. The ring was delicately crafted, with elegant curves and intricately carved details, and had to be as

pure as anything produced in modern refineries, topped with a gleaming diamond. In the centre of the ring, a smaller rune was inscribed on the yellow surface. "This is not a symbol."

"Really?" Catherine asked while inspecting the ring in Shawn's hands, "I think that is a sort of key, right? ... it has an edge that is so detailed like what an ordinary key had..." "That is what I thought as well. Definitely a key... not an ordinary key though." Shawn didn't know much about the ancient keys or that sort of thing. Anthony had studied it when they were digging together back in his teenage years, but even his grasp of it was sketchy.

Shawn stood up and spun around. "We need to go now,"

"How about this mess?"

"Don't worry about it, I guess someone wanted us to find this one. I'm going to wire a million to this site to compensate for the trouble. Despite hearing nothing strange, he sensed someone was coming. He'd been trained to recognise when he was being followed and when a threat was approaching. It had been ingrained in him, and now his senses were warning him that something was horribly wrong. They'd been apart for far too long, far too long for his liking. Normally, Shawn would not be concerned. He was used to being alone in a variety of scenarios. He desired, though, that one of the visitors would emerge from the chamber's doorway just now.

"Something is wrong." He whispered.

Surely, one of them would have been curious enough to see what he was up to. The fact that no

one had come up only served to heighten the growing concern in his mind. Then he considered what he was holding in his hands and decided it was probably best if other visitors didn't see it.

11

"Shawn, what are you thinking?" Catherine uttered when Shawn gave her the ring and settled it on her finger. "Sweetheart, this might be the wrong time, but... Will you marry me?" Catherine raised her brows. Not again. She thought to herself. "Shawn, stop playing games. We are already married, twice. Remember?" "Wife, this time, it's for real." She rolled her eyes and bit her lips from the emotions that were too much to handle; happiness and something she called, 'unbelievable.' "Yes... yes, but this place is freaking me out, so can we go now and talk about this silly proposal later?"

"Unbelievable... Mrs. Richmond, I'm proposing to you now." He pouted. "I know, but this is a burial ground, you gave me a ring from that dirt," she pointed at the mess, then her mouth curved into a smile. "Yes, I'm complaining. Can we go now?" "Now, I'm suddenly disappointed."

“Come on, Mr. Richmond, stop being childish and let’s get the hell out of her.” She said, and kissed him on the lips, “Yes, I’ll marry you.” He beamed. “Good, now let’s go.”

She rolled her eyes, and whispered, “... childish...” “I heard that wife.” He gave her a lopsided grin and then cursed himself for leaving the door open in the first chamber. He looked back at the floor where he’d discovered the grave and the small Buddha, glanced down at the object, and then decided to see what was going on back at the entrance. There were no sounds of scurrying around, a struggle, nothing that would have immediately concerned him. However, the lack of anyone talking at all also caused him to worry. Shawn hurried back over to the entrance and poked his head through. A few lights were dancing on the floor and walls below, though all he could see was their deformed circles moving back and forth. That was a good sign. The teenagers probably left or were probably just being reverent in an ancient place of worship

Billionaire’s Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Chapter 117

London

Elizabeth leaned on the railing, palms against the weld surface, fingers curled around the arched metal. She looked out the window at the enormous city below, a satisfied expression on her face, as she watched the ring on her finger. She had been anticipating this moment for months, and it had finally arrived. It was time to totally own the world, and maybe Alfonso could go to hell and she’d be smiling with no worry in the world, because the b****d deserved to suffer in there anyway. Eddie was standing next to her, arms crossed and a foot away from the glass that stretched the length of the wall and provided tourists with a 360-degree view of the city from the observation deck.

A dozen feet beyond them, three men in suits stood on the stairs leading to another platform. Her secret lover was one of them, studying the admissions and departures with hawk-like eyes and looking for hostility in Eddie. After all, the old man did not know about her engagement with the younger guy. Not that he blamed her. Who in their right mind would f**k an old man with no ulterior motives?

The other two, on the other hand, were selected by her, the taller one she knew she could rely on, and siblings who had served with her on a half-dozen missions throughout the world. They’d been there in the middle of it, doing things that would give gentler warriors nightmares and send them sliding into insanity. But not her lovers, and not these smaller ones. They’d become demons, which was exactly what she needed by her side when things got serious.

Elizabeth saw the distant building as well as the automobiles zipping by on the streets far below as they went about their business. People on their way to or from work,

running errands, or simply having a laugh. They had no clue what was happening to them. She couldn't help but feel that she was on the verge of something spectacular, history about to be made that the civilised world had only heard about in legend.

Millions of people were set to die, and they were all going to perish without knowing a bit. She wanted to laugh but couldn't, not yet anyway. Sure, there were some innocents among the ants scurrying around the pavements. But that was how life was. Sometimes innocent people are killed. And, if it was for a good cause, did their deaths become meaningless or in vain? She didn't think so. Thailand was a major polluter of the sea, air, and land. Every day, massive amounts of waste are heaped up in gigantic landfills or dumped into bodies of water.

There was no way of knowing how many species of land and aquatic animals have perished as a result of this single city's callous disregard for the environment, How many folks, like her parents, have lost their jobs as a result of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico? She realised it wasn't a modest sum. It was not just Thailand or Europe or the USA or China, but all over the world. It was all the same. Fishing villages around the shore had withered over time. Some of the fish survived but were too toxic to eat, forcing the fishermen to travel further in search of an uncontaminated catch. This resulted in decreased earnings for them and a lower quality of life for individuals who were already struggling to make ends meet.

But their agony would soon be gone. Elizabeth would take care of it. Millions of people were going to be pushed into a vortex of chaos they could never have imagined.

Her only disappointment was that she couldn't conquer the continent in a single blow. Her men had calculated that the bomb's effective pulse range was only about a thousand yards. After that, the wavelength at which it detonated decreased and no longer had the same effect. Thailand would suffer first, followed by the rest of the world. A few others might notice something unusual in their heads, like a synapse misfiring or something, but they are unlikely to succumb to the insanity that possessed those closest to the weaponry.

Was it too much? Or was it not enough to damage such an ancient land? She shook her head. Time will tell, she thought. It didn't make a difference. All she had to do was strike the match. Following that, tens of thousands of people in this densely crowded area would go insane, all obeying the same repeating order in their brains telling them to kill one another, and she needed the ingredients for mass devastation inside the Buddha's statue for it to happen.

Perhaps millions of people will not perish just yet. Perhaps only a hundred thousand or two or two, but that was a start, right? And just as everything was beginning to calm down, she'd hit her next target. She'd already decided on it, but she hadn't told Eddie or the rest of her team.

They were aware of Thailand, but she couldn't tell them that her next stop was London, followed by several Asian countries. She desired that it be a surprise. Why? She had no idea. Call it her naughty side. Maybe it was the excitement she liked. After all, she was an actress and she was fake and would change the world. She would be a hero. Yes, she desired nothing more than to be the centre of attention. How could you have assumed she was the brains of this huge scheme if she was only utilising Alfonso or Javier? If only Shawn Richmond was so easy to convince, but there wasn't time to add salt to the wound. He'd pay eventually. She enjoyed the notion of forcing him to fall to his knees and beg for mercy. The cretin would have to pay.

She liked to keep secrets and build suspense, even if it was just for her pleasure. "Quite the view, isn't it?" Elizabeth said, abruptly and kissed the old man's hands for a show which made Eddie smile.

Eddie gazed out at the city; the mega skyscrapers, the giant apartment buildings; the businesses, the waterways cutting through sections of the city filled with boats that teetered back and forth, the lush green mountains that hugged the city in their embrace, wrapping around them like a blanket of forest.

"Yes, sweetie," Eddie acknowledged, "it certainly is something. It's a shame it'll be burned tomorrow in Thailand. I'm guessing Shawn Richmond is one of them." Elizabeth snorted mockingly. "There is no shame in it. Cities like Bangkok are testaments to both human ingenuity and their total disrespect for what they do to the earth when they construct it." The old butler gave a nod. Eddie cared about his former employee and his wife, but it had been a long time since someone had cared for him, and Elizabeth made it happen. Yes, he deceived Shawn, but it was all worth it because, after this assignment, he and Elizabeth would marry and spend their honeymoon in the Bahamas, or whatever she called it. Call him naive but he had hoped.

People would die eventually, yet Eddie didn't believe in humanity as much as Elizabeth did, but he did believe in her. Her implicit motive, the underlying reason for her supporting him, was far darker; he'd seen what humans were capable of at every level. He'd been molested as a child in practically every way imaginable. For a long time, it had soured Eddie against women. And it made him despise the frailty of women who enabled it, such as her mother but Elizabeth was different, she was strong and capable of doing something no one could.

There were times when Eddie's father sat in the corner sobbing while his mother beat his dad. And Eddie even knew his mother could hear it when his uncle came over and wanted to spend some alone time with the little boy. Eddie had been a broken toy for a long time, a damaged young man who winced whenever a man or woman brushed toward him in the school hall.

Moreover, everything shifted one tragic day when he'd had enough. He was heading home in his senior year of high school when he noticed a peculiar noise coming from beneath the rugby stadium's bleachers.

Someone was fighting, it sounded like. One of the voices was a girl's, with the definite sound of a man commanding her to quiet up. He deviated from the walkway and discovered one of the high school boys on top of one of the cheerleaders. She was repeatedly telling him to stop. Eddie faced his childhood nightmares that day, witnessing his weak father, angry mother, and terrible uncle all at once. A few feet away, he'd observed a piece of dirty rod leaned up against one of the upper deck supports. His thoughts had shifted from the impending sexual harassment to the lump of metal. He set down his backpack and took up the rebar. He made his way over to the two on the ground. At that moment, practically all of the girl's clothes had been pulled off. The boy was yanking on her panties and had already yanked his own pants down.

He noticed Eddie approaching out of the corner of his eye and warned him to get away, to leave them alone, and that it was none of his business. In a moment that changed him forever, he ignored him, stepped forward, and swung the rod as hard as he could. The dense metal rod struck him in the head. The boy fell over onto his side. His body started twitching. His eyes rolled back into his head, and then he went still.

The girl screamed as she saw the boy stop moving. Her eyes darted back and forth to Eddie and then to the boy. Eddie had said, "Shut the f**k up, girl. Thank me later. Get your belongings and leave now." He screamed, adrenaline scorching like lava in his veins.

"Hell, who are you?... F**k! You...you killed him," the girl exclaimed, clearly stunned by what occurred. Eddie was not convinced. He hadn't intended to kill the youngster. As he lay still on the stony surface, he understood it was becoming a genuine possibility. "You murdered him! Hell... Oh, God!" The girl was now yelling. "Why did you murder him?"

Eddie turned to face her, disbelievingly staring into her eyes. Was this moron furious because a rapist was murdered? "Jesus, woman! How dare you? He was attempting to rape you," he'd claimed.

"I had feelings for him. I love him. He is my boyfriend."

Eddie couldn't believe the girl's response. It sickened him, made him think of his father, so weak and cowardly. What was it about these women who allowed men to do whatever they

wanted to them or the other way around? How f**k up it was? Anger bubbled up inside of him. It was a rage greater than he'd ever felt toward his mother, maybe even toward his uncle. Women like this were just as much of a problem in Eddie's mind. His father never tried to stop what happened, never had the courage. Eddie had no intention of letting this weakling allow that to happen to another child someday. He looked into this girl's future and saw it as plain as day. He'd be just like his dad. Stupid and weak. The rod swung continuously until the girl was still as well. Eddie didn't realize what had occurred until he glanced at his unclean hands, which were covered with rust and black metal debris. He looked at one body, then the other, before dropping the rod and

fleeing. He'd spent days and weeks pondering if the cops would ever charge him with the killings, but they never did. They termed it a "crime of passion," but the jealous suspect was never located. After a few years, the case went cold. There were no witnesses, no one to testify against Eddie. He soon recognised that, other than the fear of being caught, he felt no regret or emotion about the killings. Oddly, he felt... satisfied. Happy about it. He had saved someone else's life to suffer for the likes of his mother. Weak and evil.

The only thing that mirrored a smidgeon of guilt was the girl. Eddie knew he'd been innocent, but that would shift as she grew older. She would have permitted her children to go through the same things Eddie had, which was intolerable. It was heinous. That would be unacceptable to him. The girl deserved to die after all. He smirked at the thought. When his parents died from the fire accident, and year later he went into the military had

sharpened his skills and forged him into a weapon. When he got out of the service and went | into private contracts, he had no idea an opportunity like being an assassin would present

itself. Then, from Shawn Richmond's kindness, he managed to stop and change his view of life. Not until Elizabeth came into his life, yet again, she had changed him into what he was supposed to be in the first place. She made him realise that he was born to cleanse the likes of his mother and uncle, and here she was, the love of his life. Elizabeth Grunt, a world-famous model and actress, was giving him a chance to help punish humanity for their sins. While her justice was for other atrocities, he could enjoy it just as much for his reasons.

Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Chapter 118 Bangkok, Thailand. Wat Phra Kaew, or The Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

Dave asked the local guy how to get to the legendary temple, and the long-haired Thai happily assisted them. "My friend, The Wat, is located on the grounds of the Grand Palace in Bangkok. "The man offered them some local spicy street food, which Dave heartily declined. He continued, "River taxis are the most inexpensive and enjoyable way to get to the Grand Palace and the temple. Unless an important ceremony is being conducted, the temple is generally open to the public. The complex gets busy; arrive early before the tour groups and tropical heat do."

"Thank you for the information," Dave responded, his nose wrinkled at the smell of garbage in the area near the food stand vendors. "Neh, do not worry. Are you sure you don't want my chicken intestines?" Dave and Javier shook their heads as the man added, "OK! But you know, photography is allowed around the grounds of the Grand

Palace, and it is forbidden inside the temple area.” “Thank you,” Dave began to turn around when the guy held his hand and added, “My friend, remove your hat, headphones, and sunglasses.” “Why?” Dave looked surprised. “It’s the law over there; show them respect and also no chewing gum, snacking, or smoking.” The guy turned and waved for them to follow him. “Thanks.” “And be quiet and respectful.” “I think I get what you mean,” “And don’t touch, point at, or turn your back to images of Buddha.” Javier interrupted and gave the man a fake smile. “We got it. Thanks for your help.” Irritation pricked him when the man didn’t stop talking as he drew his lower lip between his teeth. Looking at the gigantic tourist, the local guy shook his head and added some more warning, “My friend, you’ll be much better off just dressing appropriately.” Dave smirked and nodded his head in amusement as the man continued, “Come on, everyone knows that, knees and shoulders must be covered and no clingy, tight, or see-through clothing is allowed. No stretch/yoga pants and no sleeveless tops. No torn clothing or holes in jeans

“No religious themes. No death-related themes.” Dave nodded and pointed out additional information that made the guy smile, “If you have any Buddhist or Hindu tattoos, find a way to cover them.”

The local smiled, “True, that’s very true.” The man continued and ignored Javier, “Remember: Wat Phra Kaew is a sacred place. Give locals a room to enjoy. Don’t get in the way of people who may be there to actually worship.” “Enough!” Javier grumbled with a wave of visible anger that spread through him that made the local man shut his mouth.

Between the majestic peaks of the Bangkok mountains and the plains of the southern area lies the Grand Palace. Despite the name, the Emerald Buddha wasn’t actually made from emerald; it was carved from jade or perhaps jasper. No one knows for sure because the composition has never been analyzed. Archaeologists have not been allowed enough time up close to examine the precious image. Even the Emerald Buddha’s exact origin was unknown. Historical records say the statue surfaced near Chiang Rai in 1434, but its creation dates much older. Records also show that the statue spent over 200 years in Laos. Legends claim the statue to have been in Angkor Wat for a while, and even as far abroad as Sri Lanka. The style and posture (not very prevalent in

Thailand) indicate that the Emerald Buddha may have been carved in Sri Lanka or India, though no one is certain. Regardless, the fortune and prosperity of Thailand are thought to depend upon the Emerald Buddha.

Dave’s mind snapped back from the brief daydream with Chelsea as he and his two captors approached the welcome centre after an hour of enjoying the river taxi. The lengthy drive seemed to take forever, and his legs ached from inactivity.

He signed the visitor's logbook and pointed the way to a picnic area nearby as they plan their next stop. Javier had not said much for the last few minutes. They stopped in front of the building, and the three men got out amid a flurry of tourists. Apparently, their field trip had run a little late. Dave wasn't sure if he would prefer to be in his current situation over having to drive one of the river taxis back with the screaming teenagers on it. "Where to, Brown?" Javier interrupted his thoughts.

Dave glanced around for a second, then pointed to an enormous pile of rocks about sixty feet away. "There, we must start there."

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the temple was that it looked as if someone had been standing on a thirty-foot high scaffold, directing the placement of the stones. Why they had done it was a whole other matter. He heard one of the tourists scoff at how the Emerald Buddha dwarfed the rest. He compared and was surprised at how small the Emerald Buddha statue really was, especially after exploring other temples with massive Buddha statues such as Wat Pho. The Buddha image, seated in a yogic posture (virasana), is only 26 inches (66 centimeters) tall. He scoffed, but the others told him that no matter the size, the Emerald Buddha was considered the most sacred object in Thai culture.

Dave led the way over to a historical information plate that stood a few feet from the platform. An elderly couple had just finished reading the placard; they were slowly making their way back towards the parking lot.

He'd probably read some of those things over the years. According to what the sign said, a sort

of earthen wall had originally surrounded the ancient one. It went on to say that the entire temple representation was raised about 4 feet higher than the rest of the ground around it. Historians could not offer a logical explanation as to why it was there, but a few details were mentioned that Dave thought interesting. His eyes scanned the raised metal words. The Wat Phra Kaew complex was home to a large assortment of interesting artefacts, aside from the Emerald Buddha.

The Healer: The blackened bronze statue on the west side of the temple is of a hermit who was a medicine man. Offerings of flowers and burning joss are given by visitors who are praying for sick loved ones. Of course, he already knew the story. Archaeologists had assumed the sites to be mass graves, but the remains of only one human had been found at both Shiny Elephant as well as the sister site of The Healer—only a few dozen feet away.

"What the hell is that?" Javier asked when Dave explained the significance of the place he pointed out. "Come on... The Shiny Elephants." Javier raised his brow and waited for Dave to explain, which earned him a smirk as he began his lecture. "The elephants' heads are rubbed for good luck—that's why they are so shiny. If you see any kids circling the statues repetitively, they didn't have too much sugar: children walk around the

elephants three times for strength.” Dave forced a smile and rolled his eyes when Javier just stared blankly at him.” The Library: The beautiful library pavilion contains many sacred scriptures, but the original library was destroyed by fire.’

“Why are you telling me this?” Javier now had a concerned look as he had put the phone down before the other line had a chance to finish. There was something wrong with their conversation, but Dave could not think of it. He just hoped that Alfonso and Dave had messed something up.

“We might need this information later, so why not enjoy the trip?” Javier looked at the paper in his hand and wondered if Dave had deceived him. After all, if the chamber was indeed in this area, then it was time for him to call for Alfonso. “Brown, we are not here to enjoy, and you know that.” Javier gritted his teeth as Dave ignored him and continued explaining. “That one is the model of Angkor Wat: In 1860, King Mongkut had aspirations of disassembling Angkor Wat in Cambodia and moving it to Bangkok as a show of power. His plan didn’t go well, so he began construction of the model of Angkor Wat instead. The king died before its completion; his son finished the project.” Dave simpered at the ignorance of his companion as he pretended to look toward the kids still playing in the area.

Javier seemed unimpressed by the information as he looked at Dave with his jaw twitching.

“Murals: The many murals combine to form a long depiction of the Ramakian, the Thai national epic inspired by the Indian epic Ramayana. The story includes the beginning of the world and depictions of Hanuman, the monkey king and general.” Dave added.

“What does this mean?”

“Nothing. I just thought there might be some helpful info here. It’s just the story about how this place was discovered. Maybe we should check out the welcome centre and see if there is anything helpful there.”

Javier only thought for a second before he nodded and fell in behind Dave, who was headed toward the old, colourful wooden building.

Having read about that place a few times, Dave remembered that inside the information centre, artefacts on display were few in number. The three men entered through the single glass door and casually made their way over to a map in the corner of the room. A small group of schoolchildren were filing out of the facility, complaining that they had to go back to school. If they had been able to understand the concept of time, they would have realised that by the time the bus got back, the school would be out for the day.

Javier seemed uncomfortable around the children, and the guard, in particular, looked a bit out of sorts.

Dave smiled to himself as he stepped closer to a poster-sized aerial photo of the location." Okay, this is us," he said as he pointed at the building in which they were standing, marked by the usual "you are here" dot. His finger then traced the outline of the giant stone lion effigy from where they'd just come a few minutes prior

"This is the temple," he stated. He then moved his hand to another, similar formation opposite to the one he'd just mentioned. "And here is the Grand Palace." He tapped the map and took a step back. Staring at the map, Dave was puzzled by the entire scene. "So where is the chamber hidden?" Javier asked plainly. Dave gave him a "drop dead" look. "Beats me." There's a lot of land between the two formations. "The Elephant is about a kilometre from here, or it could be anywhere." He lied; of course, it was nearby.

The clock on the wall read that the time was 3:38. Right on cue, a nondescript man wearing a light brown button-up shirt announced that the place would be closing soon..

Dave ignored the man, still gazing at the map to find a hint, anything that might show them the way. The screaming voices of the elementary students just outside the windows made thinking difficult. His mind wandered to the ancient people who built those places. The reason behind it was clear to him. A three-dimensional replica of the temple from Lek-Mraphi's home was a clue to the mystery, and this temple was the original one. So maybe it was really here... The Buddha was hidden in plain sight.

Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Chapter 119 Dave was perplexed as he took out the photograph of the dots he had taken from Lek Mraphi's home. His gaze was drawn to its contents. The dots on the back were more distinct, but not entirely. His two captors stood a breath away, calm, but Dave could see the urgency in Javier's eyes. The man had grown exceedingly agitated, even twitchy. It was a trait he'd observed in many treasure hunters and his fellow artist over the years. The more novice treasure hunters searching for infinite wealth could practically taste their thoughts of a life of comfort and luxury as they got closer to their goal. Not that he could blame them, even Catherine doesn't have any idea about his many trips with the hunters during his college days and he knew well enough that Javier was worried. Even this skilled assassin appeared to have got the bug of excitement and anxieties or there was something else bothering him?

However, the man in a uniform shirt had started to close up his counter and was about to announce that the park was closing when Dave had a thought. His eyes locked onto something in the picture. "Sir, excuse me...sir?"

"Can I assist you?" The frumpy man's response seemed forced. He must have been plagued all day by the shrill voices of the youth. His eyes were puffy, and his hair was twisted from running his hands through it in fury. "I realise you're going to close, but I just had a quick question for you," Dave explained, temporarily relieving her frustration. "Where can I find the dots on the wall in this picture?"

He knew well that the ancient keepers of the area had constructed many such chambers, but the ones he was looking at in the picture seemed different than most, with walls covered in dots and runic symbols that were covered in dust.

“Actually, we have that in the underground, but it was just an ordinary basement used for tools and old staff. Nothing in there, maybe a snake.” The man smiled, “but if you look right here in this area,” he pointed to the map at a spot between the two photographs. “It’s the picture of the Buddha. Try turning it upside down.”

Dave nodded.

“These kinds of dots, however, were nonsense, just a few sayings, but look closely. It was more than just dots, it was like dot drawing.” The man added, glad to fill the ignorance of the tourists.

“Oh, that is interesting,” Javier said, with a motion to Dave to keep the conversation going.

“Oh yes, it is. They are remarkably preserved and scientists have dated them too before the time of Lek-Mraphi. The most interesting thing about them is that they are some of the only stone-made drawings in the basement, but they were close to the visitor.”

“Why?”

“Because there is nothing there, just some old things, some replicas and old computers. There isn’t much for tourists to see.”

Interesting, Dave thought. “That is a little bit odd.”

“Yes, and another interesting point of note is that it wasn’t as remarkable. However, the underground itself is ancient.” He looked at his watch, obviously done being courteous.

“I’m sorry to bother you,” Dave could hardly contain his excitement. “But how would we get there?”

The old man gave them an annoyed sigh and then a few quick directions before excusing himself to finish closing up.

Dave nodded his head in the direction of the door, and the two men followed him back outside. The sidewalk area in front of the building was finally void of the noisy children.

“So we are going to the place on the map?” Javier asked as they neared the exit.

“It looks that way. I’d say the place is at least worth taking a look at. It’ll be getting dark in a little while, and that’s pretty much the only guess I’ve got at this point.” Javier looked awkwardly at the prisoner. So far, Dave has been right with every guess. And,

surely, they were getting close. It just seemed too easy. Still, he had no other choice. Going out, Dave saw the six pairs of giant demon guardians flanking all entrances to the

Temple of the Emerald Buddha. They are known as yaksha, or in Thai, simply called yak (giant), and they are Buddhist gods that protect against evil spirits. The yaksha was placed there during the reign of Rama III. Javier rolled his eyes as Dave admired the massive statue. "Did you know?" Dave asked, but was halted when Javier sighed as if he was willing to kill anyone who would give him another historical story about the weird statues that covered the place. Dave ignored him as he continued. "Did you know that the mythical and historical past of the statue highlights an important belief surrounding Buddha images. It is believed that they protected the monarch, their city, or capital. If a king or prince was dethroned or defeated in battle, the Buddha image was taken as a hostage and kept in the capital of the victor in a subordinate position to that of the victor's Buddha image."

"Shut up, Brown, I don't b****y care."

"Huh! Of course, you care, but you have to know that the Emerald Buddha spent hundreds of years journeying back and forth between countries, but it is now the powerful symbol of the Chakri ruling dynasty, and the Thai people believe it brings great fortune and protection to their country."

"Why are you telling me this again?" "Because your little brain needs an upgrade, mate."

If looks could kill, he would definitely be dead in a blink. However, looking at the exit area, Dave realised that the man's directions had been accurate, and it only took about five minutes to get to the location he'd shown them on the map. Arriving at the southern part, Dave was worried about being caught by the locals.

In the passageway. He noticed how the underground path was paved; it was like he had been in mediaeval times, even if the lantern poles were similar in height, around seven feet from what he could tell. But the one in the middle was different in every way. First off, it was several inches higher than the others. "This place is creeping me to the bone." He grumbled under his breath. And he thought how he preferred a more rustic style underground. It was like he was in

a barren stone cave with heavy wooden beams on the ceiling and torches strewn about the walls.

Then, Dave walked slowly from one pike to the next, examining the intricate handiwork of the many carvings in the walls; and yes, the man earlier wasn't lying; even the passage was way older than the modern equivalent they had seen earlier: he stopped at the largest one in the middle and ran his hand over the face of a kind-looking replica of the Buddha.

Then, he stepped over to the other three, his face alight with admiration. "Amazing," he finally broke the silence. "It must have been an extremely painstaking effort to create them, even for just a mere replica." The Russian seemed to be slightly interested. Javier was less intrigued. He stood, arms crossed with a stern demeanour.

Dave stopped at the last sculpture and examined it closely. Some were animal statues of lions, foxes, and the three demons, Krahang, a male ghost that flies in the night. Krasue, a woman's head with her viscera hanging down from the neck. Mae Nak is a female ghost who died in childbirth and can extend her arms. Phi Am, is a spirit that sits on a person's chest during the night. He traced the stonework with his finger, still amazed by what the ancients could do. "What are you looking for, Dave?" Javier's annoying voice interrupted his thoughts. He'd been crouching over slightly, and at the question, had stood back up straight. "I don't know for sure."

Javier motioned for the guard to lower his gaze to the opposite end of the room. Dave finished examining the first pole and proceeded on to the second, closely followed by Javier. They attentively examined the stone's surfaces for several minutes and discovered nothing out of the ordinary. He walked around the stone centrepiece, hoping to locate something. This had to be the spot. Everything they'd found up to that moment had pointed to it.

As he came back around to the front of the chiselled stone, he noticed it. Small and almost invisible at first glance, Dave had not seen it before, even though he'd thought he was looking carefully.

A dark lion statue stared at him, its eyes lifeless and eerie. The animal's face contained amazing detail. Its mouth, in particular, caught his attention because, unlike the other animal carvings, the mouth was open.

He moved his finger up to the opening. "This is it."

"Are you certain?"

"Yeah," Dave replied. "I'm sure. It makes so much sense now. In ancient Thai lore, lions were guardians of the other world. They protected the spirits of ancestors who were already on the other side. It was also believed that sometimes, the lion itself was a long-gone relative who had returned as a guide for a person or people. It seems logical that whoever built these would have put an owl here to protect their greatest secret." Javier stood up straight again. "So, what do we do now?" Dave sighed, thinking for a moment. "There must be some kind of key we have to use here." If my guess is right, whatever the key is, um-it probably fits into this lion's mouth."

"Why do we not simply pick locks?" The guard suggested it in broken English.

"We can't do that."

“Why not?”

“Do you honestly think that the ancient people who put this here would have hidden everything so well and simply closed it up with a padlock? I guess that it is probably rigged with some kind of anti-manipulation device. If we try to mess with it without the correct key, we may lock ourselves out of the chamber forever or something worse.” “So how do we find this key you speak of?” Javier asked as Dave could make it appear out of thin air.

“Are you referring to this key?” From behind, a male voice disrupted the conversation.

The unexpected intrusion caused all three males to turn around immediately. Shawn and Catherine were about fifteen feet away, pistols aimed at the two bad guys.

Shawn grasped something small and white in his left hand, a ring held dangerously in his fingers.