

Billionaire's Accidental Wife

Chapter 40

The morning air was crisp but thankfully not too cold as Shawn held her tightly and helped her get herself dressed. There was no breeze, the morning was very calm and still. They were now walking down an old path near the one Catherine had taken earlier near an available empty park. The path forks off in one direction that takes them onto the park and into a rose garden. The other part of the route goes up a small hill where they can look out over a lake. The morning sun was shining brightly from the cloudless sky.

Shawn veers to the path that goes up the little hill. She could almost see the reflection of the sun on the lake. He took her hand as they reached the top. The view was breathtaking. There was a group of geese slowly gliding across the water, causing small ripples.

Shawn put her arm around his waist as they both looked out at the serene calmness before them. They had been joking and laughing all along the path, but the beauty of the sight before them made talking impossible. Catherine found it hard to believe that such a wondrous area could be found just a few yards from the hustle and chaos of a city.

Catherine saw a bench nearby and gestured to Shawn, and they walked hand in hand to it. The stone bench still held a small amount of heat from the day. He put his arm around her and she snuggled against him. It felt so wonderful to be held by him, Catherine thought. They rarely get a chance to enjoy being alone, between office duty, work, and life in general. This time was so special on many levels.

He kissed the top of her head and pulled her closer. She looked up into his eyes and felt an almost magnetic pull towards him. Shawn leaned down and kissed her so softly it felt like a whisper. She slightly shifted and deepened the kiss. His strong arms lifted her and she straddled his lap. Their kisses continued, deep and long.

An hour later, they were now in her bedroom, freshly out of the warm shower after a quick f**k at the lake, which made Catherine so embarrassed when they both shivered from the cold.

"You... OK, now? Warm enough?" Shawn asked as he massaged her shoulder and kissed her gently on the neck. That earned her a little moan that made Shawn smirk as she combed her hair in front of the oak vanity mirror.

"Yes... Warm enough now... stop doing that?"

"Good. Doing what?"

"It tickles..." she moaned.

"Um-but you shouldn't be going there again alone in the lake, Catherine," Shawn chided her softly after a small kiss.

"I know, I was just curious."

"Then tell me next time, I'll be glad to accompany you there. OK?"

Catherine sighed. Shawn's being too attentive and gentle towards her makes her feel giddy. She was not used to it. After all, she wasn't expecting much from Shawn; he seemed to not discuss their no-strings-attached relationship at all. It's not that she couldn't wait for him to tell her about his feelings, but she was disappointed, and her dismay was as clear as the day, just like the early sun from the massive windows.

Wanting to tease her, Shawn pulled down the front of his fresh cotton shirt, uncovering smooth, soft skin over a hard, chiseled chest. He removed the white garment from his body and threw it away on the floor. Afternoon light filtered inside through the gauzy yellow curtains that rippled across the windows, wrapping his skin in a soft glow.

She just sat there watching the reflection in the mirror. She was mesmerized by his extraordinary perfection. Shawn turned her around and lifted his hand to her, his fingertips a soft murmur as he outlined the delicate spot on her neck. He circled tightly around her, his caress dipping between her shoulder blades to follow the curvature of her spine. Then he walked her into the bed while never leaving his lips on her neck. While his fingers closed on the strap of her underwear top, she hesitated. He gazed at her and gave her a look of approval. A weak gasp broke Catherine's lips as the bundle of soft material fell to her feet.

Shawn gazed at her with an unknown longing in his eyes that she didn't understand or try to decipher, his gaze drinking her in from tip to tip. His deep ocean eyes lit up with lush passion, engulfing Catherine with the ferocity of a starving man. "Lovely. Wonderful... you are the perfect wife." His words of passion kissed his lips like a lover's desire.

Her room smells of roses and lilac bouquets. The yellow curtains around the bed were bubbling in the breeze, though the window was closed. It was mysterious and magical at the same time, just like how magically her clothing disappeared from her body, now scattered on the carpeted floor.

"You smell better than those bouquets of flowers, my sweet," Shawn told her as if answering the questions on her mind.

Catherine moaned. How could he be so sweet towards her?

“Um- I love them.” She told him and feigned an irritable voice as he removed his lips from her throat. His magical hands had caressed and kissed her skin. It glided down her arms, cresting her smooth, delicate b****s. “What are you doing to me, Shawn?” she gasped, his magical touch igniting the fire in her blood, and right now she no longer cared about how naked she was; all she wanted was him. Now!

“For you, I will do anything to make you happy. I hope you know about it, sweetheart.”

Warmth poured down her bareback like a stream of light, prompting a symphony of sensations and desires she never knew she had in her. “Shawn.” Her voice ladled softer.

He surrounded Catherine’s body with his warmth, and she didn’t even try to protest it. She spread open the entrances of her desire, inviting him in as he laid her down in the soft bed.

“Shawn, I want you now,” Catherine mumbled, her breath short and stammering. The passion was almost too warm for the icy weather outside. They heard the laughter and the music in the banquet hall, but the two didn’t care. Maybe Chelsea and Jane arrived, but

they could wait

“Passionately impatient... I love it.” Shawn teased as he kissed her with all his might. Catherine’s head rolled back and she closed her eyes to relish the feeling. She ran her fingers through his hair and pulled him tighter to her b****s. He shifted his attention to the other nipple and she felt herself getting wet. Her hips started to rub him. He pinched and tugged on one nipple while sucking on the other. “Oh, Shawn!”

While a desperate throb built between her legs, he kissed her curves and covered her with his warm lips, causing excitement to ripple down her hips and down her thighs. She wanted more. She wanted him now. She needed him...

She bit her lip, holding back a whine... Shawn, stop teasing, will you?”

Shawn whispered, his voice rough with affection and l**t. “I’m taking my time, sweetheart, but don’t ever hold back anything from me,” he whispered. Catherine met his regard and saw her passion reflected in his eyes. A powerful, fierce desperation took hold of her. Catherine grabbed him, her fingernails digging deep into his back. “I want you. I want you now.”

A ruthless, seductive growl thundered deep in his throat, a pledge of murky and vicious passion. His hands locked around her hips, he heaved her roughly against him, and her soft b****s crashed against the hard wall of his chest as they both moaned.

Shawn met her eyes for a moment, and he declared remarkably, "Are you willing to spend your life with me, Catherine?" Then his mouth closed over hers and he didn't wait for her to respond, ravaging the inside with such a heathen, desirous demand that it left her breathless.

"Yes..." She replied with a sweet moan. His mouth dipped to her neck as his warm tongue graced her skin, teasing her throbbing veins between kisses. Every flick of his tongue, every nibble of his teeth, fueled her passion, nourishing her and making her hungrier all at once. Then her lips found his neck. Too impatient to tease, her lips tasted his sweet, lustful skin. His groan spilled into his mouth like sweet nectar of honey. They kissed deeply, their longing fueled by emotion and desire, their relief at seeing each other every day. Catherine gave all of herself and took all of him in return. The mating passion was screaming at them, asking them to acknowledge each other, asking them to engulf each other.

His blood burned through her body like a wildfire, absorbing her from the inside out. Tearing apart and rejuvenating, simmering down and building up, every draw of his mouth sent a shock wave of happiness crashing and flooding through her. A soft, desperate moan parted Catherine's lips. "Shawn..."

He tugged the soft satin nightmare off her hips and her underwear along with them.

"If I'd known that you in my bed could be this much entertainment, I'd have f****d you sooner.... Didn't wait for two f*****g years..." she mumbled. He smirked.

He chuckled. "I'll remind you of your words the next time we have each together."

"But I want you every day, Shawn, and I won't accept no for an answer."

"Careful little one or your wish will be granted."

"I don't think that would be appro-"

His sweet tongue crashed over her, tasting her all over again, drowning her in aching pleasure. Desperate for more, Shawn slid his inner desire onto her as she moaned, projecting his longing onto her, waiting for the warmth of acceptance.

Shawn froze.

Catherine paused, cautiously meeting his eyes. Had she broken some unspoken rule?
"Is everything okay, Shawn? all right, something's wrong?"

"This isn't... you know... the baby?" He asked as she held her breath. "No, of course not... Maybe in the final months... I think this isn't allowed anymore... I think?"

She looked up at him and saw that he was now as naked as she was. His large, sculpted, overwhelming self loomed over her, those gorgeous arms wide, daring her to say something. The sight of them made her feel so small. "Good."

He pulled her roughly, flinging her over. As her hands and knees hit the soft mattress, his hand traced her inner thighs, spreading them. A single finger dipped inside of her, tracing, teasing. Heat surged between her legs, absorbing her in a whirlwind of intense sexual hunger. A second finger slipped in. A third.

'Oh f**k, more.' She arched her back and tilted her hips back, opening herself up to him. His hand stroked harder, faster, drenching her in heated, passionate elation.

Then, unexpectedly, he pulled away. "No..." she growled, making a fuss. A desperate whimper gasped her objection as he thrust hard into her.

"Sweetheart..., give me everything," he whispered, his breath burning against her neck."

Share everything with me, feel me as I feel you." She cried out as he took her harder, obtaining her body and soul. Elation blended between her legs, ripening, surging. She shook, steadied on the ridge of release as she reached her peak.

"Please," I moaned, "Oh, f**k, Shawn, please, harder. I want more of you."

His restraint shattered, discharging the b*****l force that prowled beneath his predator armor. She ground herself against him, meeting his rough spasms with frantic enthusiasm. Her legs were throbbing, a blinding, searing heat was pulsing through her, building and twisting back on itself. She dug her fingers into the sheets, shivering as her body contracted, exploding in a wave of pure ecstasy all over again.

"Goodness me, you are amazing," Catherine cried out, the aftershocks cradling her. Yes, she shared her feelings, her passions, her emotions-she opened up everything to him, bared herself. It was just her, unfiltered and unshielded. He'd seen her without her clothes, but he'd never truly seen her exposed, stripped of everything. She showed him every mystery, every dark corner of her psyche and essence, giving him all that she had and him to her. That was the power of her love. There was nothing better than this, nothing more intimate and powerful.

Shawn's lips brushed down her neck in soft butterfly kisses. She shivered recklessly. She didn't want him to be soft and gentle; she wanted him to divulge the restraints of politeness and take her hard and rough.

He leaned down and kissed her forehead gently. Sensual, delightful impatience surged inside of her as his hands gently parted her thighs. He grasped her hips and thrust once into her-then he pulled back, his muscles hard and tight as he loomed over her, his eyes alight with pleasure.

“More, please,” she groaned, her fingernails digging into his back in vicious, heated despair. She arched her back, tilting her hips to let him know she wanted more of him.

“Stop teasing me, Shawn.”

He slammed her back down on the mattress. His hands locked around her wrists, pinning her to the bed. He sank deeper into her, each action aggressive and hard. She cried out, swept up in a mist of delight that overwhelmed her with everything but his wonderful, sweet assault.

The bed shook and complained under them. Hunger, raw and uncontrolled, burned in his eyes. He was so close, and she wanted to see him lose that last shred of restraint, for that ultimate fiber to snap.

Overwhelmed, heathen passion rocking her body, she moved with him, synchronizing to his tempo. Shawn’s shoulders locked up, his muscles tensing as he gripped her tightly,

pulling her up to meet him. His whole body trembled, and he moaned deeply into her wet lips, kissing her with fierce fervor. Like a cyclone of force and lightning, ecstasy wrecked through her again and again, devouring her. A whimper escaped her lips as she felt herself getting close to climaxing. He wrapped his arm around her waist and thrust his hips in time with hers. They started to climax together, and he swallowed her cries of joy with his lips. He kissed her deeply until she gained control. As she slowly opened her eyes, she saw him smile.

She laughed again. Then she closed her eyes and fell asleep in his arms. The banquet could wait.

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Billionaire’s Accidental Wife

Chapter 41 Eddie sipped a white, creamy coffee while sitting in the breakfast corner of the mansion kitchen, looking out the window at the faraway view of the lake. In that land of virescent beauty lay a disc of the brightest blue and gray. Like a mirror on the wall, it was oval and flat, its surface forever guarded against the cold winds and the lush hills around it. At the edge, the land met and carried right on as a perfect reflection.

Sipping the coffee, he sighed. He’d learned about the drink while visiting Mexico one summer. It was almost identical to a latte except that it was made with coffee instead of espresso. It had more milk than a café con leche, so the taste was less bitter. There was a paused look of fulfillment on his face as he sipped the warm, toasty flavor. That was something he felt the Europeans had gotten right. They always made time for coffee or tea, particularly in the afternoons. Most Americans viewed it more as an energy drink, something to be gulped and disposed of.

However, Eddie had a lot to do today, but no matter how busy his afternoon might look, there was always time for good coffee. Today they will be hosting a little banquet for Catherine's guests, per Shawn's suggestion to entertain his pregnant wife. These and other fanciful thoughts played through his head as he finished up the last bit of java in his cup. He looked at the empty container with a small amount of dismay, expecting there to be a little more.

Eddie stood and walked into the massive, modernized kitchen, nodding at the chef and the rest of the staff as he straightened his black vest as he walked. The black-tie had to be perfect since the rest of his outfit was fairly formal. Standing by the little bistro table, he gazed for a moment at the figure in the mirror. He didn't think he looked old, not yet, though. After all, he was only thirty-nine. But inside, he felt much too exhausted for someone his age. There were only a few lines underneath his dark hazel eyes, probably from the years of being on the farm, in sunny, hot places back in Mexico. The sun always made him squint. It was rare that he found gray hair in the tussle of dark coloring on his head. Eddie smiled at his vanity and grabbed his keys off the table.

With no family on his own, Eddie was alone. He had been fairly poor back in Mexico, and when they died unexpectedly from a fire accident, he had inherited everything, yet being alone, he ventured to London instead and was employed by Richmond. For a short time, he'd moped around after his parents' death, trying to find his life's direction. The idea had come to him one night while sitting alone at a bar. He needed to get away from the farm and find a life where he wouldn't die from overwork in the soil. He began to wonder what it might be like if he started a business, but then brought his new to the business world, he failed and was just lucky to find Shawn to rescue him from being homeless. He took a deep

breath and suppressed the tear that was trying to sneak out of his right eye. It had been more than a few decades since his parents died in the accident, but from time to time, memories crept into his mind.

Reaching over a chair, he grabbed his mobile phone from the table and headed for the door that led into the garage. He needed to oversee the banquet later. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed through the dining room window that there was a car sitting in the faraway driveway. Curious, he stopped and walked toward the glass to see what the vehicle was doing there. It wasn't one that he recognized. It was not the food delivery either, or the garden folks. "

The vehicle was an enormous black SUV, larger than most he'd seen. He wondered how anyone could drive such a large automobile and still afford the gas prices. It was unusual, though. No one was inside.

He frowned in confusion and stepped back toward the front door toward the massive gate of the property, passing the garden, half-expecting to find the driver of the vehicle about to ring the doorbell. Unexpectedly, an arm wrapped around his neck from behind and squeezed tight.

From the shadows of the gate wall, a tall, bald man appeared, wearing a dark English-style trench coat. "Good noon, old man." The voice sounded Scottish.

"Who are." Eddie began to answer back, but the arm around his neck pulled tighter, cutting off the air he needed to inhale and talk.

"Eddie... You must be the butler, yes? It will all be explained to you later. For now, you must come with us."

"No!"

"Yes, you are. You do not have any choice but death." The man from the side grumbled and opened the door of the massive SUV.

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The bald man nodded, and again the arm squeezed harder. Lights and panorama began stirring together in a blur. He felt a small p***k of pain in his arm as a needle injected something into his bloodstream. A warm, painful feeling eased up his arm; it was only a few seconds before Eddie was unconscious.

Due to the odd noon hour that he went out into the gate, no one noticed the three men carrying Eddie's limp body out to the truck and stuffing it in the back of the black SUV.

An hour later, inside the coffee shop, Elizabeth Grunt smiled at the butler, "So, Eddie, how does it affect your relationship with Shawn if I were to employ you as my men?"

"B***h, you..." "Stop!" She grumbled and slapped Eddie's hands,".. of course, you do not have a choice,

either you'll be my man inside the mansion, or I will kill you. But anyway, it must be difficult to make anything last with your employer's interests, right? Or maybe you prefer death? Choose, Eddie! Choose!"

She looked at Eddie with a genuinely curious glance, even though the tone of her statement had been lathered in sarcasm. Her head was cocked to the side; a mischievous shimmer in her eyes. The sounds of coffee grinders and cappuccino machines rumbling loudly in the background afforded no uncomfortable silence.

Eddie sat, somewhat uncomfortably, across from the bald man. He thought that betraying Shawn was not a good idea, but he knew that this insane woman would kill him anytime she wanted. However, what made him confused was why here in the coffee shop and not somewhere like he was used to seeing in the movie, an abandoned building, too quiet, creepy and with an overhead light swinging from left to right while his abductor tortures him to death. So he scratched his messy hair for a moment while

considering her statement. The noises and the people bustling about, enjoying their afternoon java, did nothing to ease his mind.

Elizabeth wanted him to do something for her. She wanted him to report to her regarding some of Shawn's internal company deals, contracts, accounts and spying on the whereabouts of his employer. After ordering two lattes, the two men sat down behind them in a couple of large cushioned chairs in the corner of the coffee shop, preferring their meeting to remain at least a little private.

Eddie had been reluctant to reply to questions regarding his employment. He didn't feel like it was something glamorous the b***h wanted or needed to know about. There had been a few dramatic incidents, but nothing he felt the need to reveal to her. "Also, Eddie, I need you to do something about Shawn's wife. I don't want the b***h to deliver the baby. So either you poisoned her or my men kidnapped, raped, and murdered her. You choose."

"I am not going to kill someone!"

"Oh, Eddie, my boy. Of course, you will... or there will be no tomorrow for you." Elizabeth scoffed and smirked at him as she sipped her coffee. "I will give you two days to choose. Ring me!"

For a moment, Eddie stared at the wall-sized window, lost in thought. Downtown London, oddly, was not busy today with pedestrians and commuters. Only a few shops were open and almost all of the patrons wore facemasks, while a few hurriedly headed to work or other appointments. Across the street, a young woman in a red-colored dress stood staring at a storefront window, unaware of the afternoon commotion.

Eddie sipped his drink, drawing out the seconds before replying. "Well, if you really want her gone from Shawn's life, I prefer not to do it while she is pregnant. I am no killer," he replied, with a sad distant look.

"Stupid, you didn't get the point, Eddie. I don't want the b***h to give Shawn an heir. I want that baby's gone immediately."

"Really? Why?" His eyes squinted in skepticism, "Why now? I thought you *were* over him already."

"Eddie, my boy... because I want Shawn for myself. I want his money and everything. Isn't it that obvious?"

"And why is that? I thought you already had everything? Fame? Wealth?"

Eddie asked and sipped his tea. "I thought you loved him and you're already over him," he mumbled. Elizabeth and Shawn had been lovers, and often the woman acted like she

already owned the mansion, yet their relationship didn't last long and Shawn had disregarded her like what he used to do to his many women. Although Eddie witnessed their over-the-top breakup, the screaming, the yelling, the crying, and even though Shawn gave Elizabeth a diamond necklace, and a massive check to shut her up, he thought the woman had stopped, but lately, he knew she had been bothering Shawn again and now planning on killing his employer's life? How insane could this woman be?

"Oh, of course, I am not over him. The diamond and cheque weren't enough." Elizabeth answered with a smirk and added, "...because in my line of work, a little money is not a good thing. I'm hardly ever home now because I work hard. I want more of it. Eddie and the b***h had it without breaking a f*****g sweat."

"So you're jealous?" He asked with a lifted eyebrow.

A slight snort came out of her nose to accompany the grin. "I guess I am... She took what is mine, Eddie. And I will do everything to get it back. Shawn is mine." She set the cup on a small end table that was positioned between the two sofa chairs.

He returned the smirk with one of his own. "Fair enough. But why me?" Eddie asked.

"Because Shawn would never suspect you. He trusted you."

"Um," Eddie said, nodding his head. "I want a share."

Elizabeth smirked, "That's my boy. You are smart, Eddie."

"I want 20 percent," he added.

"No! 10 is good."

"15"

"No, 10 percent or death."

"Fine." Eddie sighed. "So, Elizabeth, how about you tell me the details of your plans? What exactly was it? I've heard some pretty interesting bits and pieces from your man, who

thought I was truly unconscious?"

Again, she put on a half-embarrassed appearance. "I'm sure most of what you might have heard was somewhat exaggerated. It was a pretty good plan."

Something in her eyes told him that she wasn't telling the truth. "Seriously, I want to know what I'm getting into Elizabeth. This is a life we are talking about here. Because I

seem to remember hearing something about billions of dollars and the old man's life and a Richmond doctor."

She smiled, "You are indeed smart, Eddie."

He was a terrible bluffer, and she knew it. His uncomfortable wriggling probably didn't help. "Well, the thing is, their doctor was mine now and under my command, and trust me, the old man would be gone soonest. I'm not sure what you heard, but I don't think any of that matters."

"Of course," he added cynically. But why don't you just tell me what your plan is?"

He leaned in closer toward her. The fragrance of her curly hair smelled like vanilla combined with a slightly sweet perfume. With the way her head was tilted, the richly brown curls flooded off of her shoulder. She was a sight to die for. There must have been a school for professional women to attend just to get their hair done like that. Eddie tried to keep his feelings of attraction from getting the better of him by taking another gulp of coffee.

"That is for sure. I will not tell you yet. I don't know what you think you heard from my men, but I assure you, it wasn't really that fascinating, except for killing the Richmond heir.

"Are you trying to tell me that there wasn't a plan with any of your men and that Catherine would not be taken captive for days by their leader?" He took a long breath of air.

Elizabeth scoffed as she continued squirming in her chair. "Again, Eddie, I'd rather not tell you yet the specifics of some of my plans. Who knows if you would rather betray me?"

He could see there was no getting her to talk, even though she was clearly leaving something out. He knew this was not just her plan. And she wasn't the one planning this all. Someone was behind her, and she was just a p**n.

Changing the subject, Elizabeth asked, "Well Eddie, I believe I am not going to wait for two more days to get the answer from you. Clearly, you are a smart guy who knew where to turn. But anyway, is it true that you were in some kind of special assassin operations group back in Mexico after you went to college?"

Again, his face turned red and he could not seem to get situated in his seat. Elizabeth was good. I'm afraid that I can't tell you that, Ms. Grunt." He thought, how on

"Thank you for your time, Eddie. You can go now. I will contact you soon. You know what will happen if you betray me, right?" He nodded and stood with her. He extended his hand politely. Not agreeing, but not disagreeing either, she completely

headed for the door. The three men behind them Eddie fell right into line behind her, then quickly extended his arm to open the door for her. She shot him a flirty glance, not about to thank him for the seemingly long-lost courtesy.

Defiant, they stepped quickly to their black SUV's door. "You will hear from me soon, Eddie.

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Chapter 42

Scotland

The final rays of the afternoon sun spilled through a massive arched window onto the dark oak floor, An old man with gray hair and wrinkles on his face looked out at the green scenery. His mind was preoccupied, engrossed with a mission that few knew about. An antique phone on a massive oak desk rang in the manner of phones decades ago. The old person sitting in the darkness of his study reached over to answer, awoken from his musings.

"Have you started yet? Boy?" His tone was forceful and forthright.

"Yes, sir, everything is as you requested, sir." The person on the other end of the call spoke in thick English.

"And you are certain that the butler will lead you to him without any problem?"

"One hundred percent sure."

"And the wife?"

"She will not be a problem."

"Is she dead?"

"No. Not yet, sir. But she does not have access to the wealth nor the hidden information about Richmond's gold bars and Diamonds."

"Why is she still alive? We can't risk an heir and the old man, Anthony, must be eliminated soon. Then next Shawn, after he'll sign everything, is that understood?" Irritation laced the old man's words.

“Do not worry, sir. The homing device is working on all Richmond vehicles. I will know every move he makes. He is predictable, if nothing else. But he has better security now so we are careful not to attract attention.”

“Javier, I am not concerned. I barely know exactly what this Shawn Richmond is capable of. You are the professional in these matters, so I expect you to know exactly what I am talking about. We are moving forward with the plan that you proposed, but if at any moment I feel like things are getting out of control, I will not hesitate to pull you out.” The warning created silence on the other end for a moment before the shadowed figure proceeded. “Keep me informed of any further advancements. And boy?”

“Yes sir?”

“Dispose of the wife soon. She can serve no purpose for us but a hindrance.”

“Of course, sir.”

The dark figure in the high leather-backed chair gently repositioned the receiver on the phone base and returned to staring out the huge study window.

Soon, he'd be the wealthiest man in London. The old man sat comfortably in the courtyard of his opulent mansion. He would have everything that his ancestors lost. He would take back what's rightfully his. And Anthony, his brother, would be dead soon..

A while later, a pot of fresh tea and a slice of vanilla were given to him by an attendant. He thanked the young woman as she exited through the massive oak double doors through which he had entered. The old man leaned back and inhaled the aroma after pouring the dark liquid into a gray teacup and adding a dash of sugar.

At midnight, it had been several hours since he had heard from Javier, and that was unsettling. Since the advent of this undertaking, his men had been in communication with him every day to provide progress updates. Possibly, he had chosen the wrong man for the job.

A light breeze moved across the mansion gardens. Dozens of colorful butterflies fluttered from one small bush to another, enjoying the little moon, settling down on another. The sound of a cricket whizzing around a blossom nearby signaled the full onset of spring.

Setting the small cup down on the wooden table, the old man took a look at his expensive watch, infuriated. He wondered what was taking Javier so long?

Right on cue, the mobile phone in his suit cavity rang to life. Sitting up a little straighter, though no one was looking at him, he answered the phone. “What the hell took you so long, Javier? I do not like being kept waiting, boy.”

“Sorry for the inconvenience, sir. I have been...” he hesitated, “busy.”

“It’s quite alright, my boy but it’s just that,” the old man wasn’t sure if Javier on the other end of the telephone could tell his boss wasn’t as collected as previous employers. “It’s just that we need this done swiftly and quietly, and it makes me a little anxious when you don’t check-in.”

“With all due respect, sir, I am quite well compensated for what I do. There are many individuals all over the world who would gladly pay for my services, and they would have the respect to expect that task to be completed without my having to check in every day.” His tone had gotten a little angry. “You hired me to handle this, and I will. Am I making myself clear?”

The younger man’s bluntness struck him as both raw and rather intimidating. Indeed, he had a reputation for not being easily disturbed. Still, due respect must be shown. “How come the wife is still alive?”

On the other end of the line, there was a brief pause. “How do you know this?”

“Because, Javier, I haven’t heard anything else. I have not heard otherwise from the news.”

Perhaps this old man wasn’t that stupid after all. “I’ve changed my plan, sir. After all, the wife might be beneficial to us in the meantime... we need her, Shawn cares about her, and

so I have changed my plan... We need a p**n to lure him.”

“I’m glad you discussed this with me,” the old man fought his hostility, then mumbled, “but f**k it, Javier, I want it done as soon as possible! Is that understood?” after a brief moment of thought. The old man added. “Hell... No way! This is why I hired you, Javier. You think on your feet because of your reputation, I know you are the perfect man for the job but f**k sake make it quick.”

“Yes, sir!”

“Good, but better that I do not know what you are going to do with Shawn. But b****y hell, just let me know when you have the information I need and the keys to the wealth of Richmond.”

“Yes sir... Thank you, sir. That is all I ask. The gold and the diamonds will be in your custody soon, I assure you.” Javier sneered.

The line went dead and the old man slid the phone back into his pocket. He hesitated briefly, looking up at the distant peak that shadowed the mansion, deep in thought. “It better be,” he muttered finally and took a bite of his dessert.

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Back in London, Javier Longbottom set his phone down in the center console of the black SUV. Its engine whirred quietly as its driver maneuvered through the back freeways to his pub.

He turned to the three men that had tried to ambush Shawn at his car earlier while going to the usual grocery with his butler. As per Elizabeth, Shawn's wife had been craving weird food and told Shawn to buy it himself. However, the hired gun had been unsuccessful, and now Javier clenched his jaw from the stupidity of his men. They didn't even anticipate that Shawn's SUV was bulletproof.

"It wasn't my fault, Javier. I had no idea his car was bulletproof and his driver would react so fast," John could feel his boss's eyes glaring at him, and his reply to the stare sounded like an elementary school child after being caught throwing food in the diner.

"I f*****g warned you to be careful, but you didn't listen. How stupid can you get? Of course, he had a bulletproof car. D**n it!"

"Boss, I said I was sorry. It won't happen again, boss!" John grumbled, glancing over, at the driver as his two comrades on his left side bowed their heads, afraid to look at their boss.

Javier yelled, "Fool! Now that he knows that someone is after him after the pathetic ambush, Shawn must have thought to add more security."

"Well, that's true, boss, but we will have him next time... For now, it was a good thing, right? Maybe he is afraid now... Will he consider it a warning?"

"Stupid!" Javier screamed again. "He will be cautious now."

Before Javier's men even realized what was happening, there was a puff of smoke accompanied by the cough of a silencer. At first, the hole in the two men's heads just looked like a black dot. Seconds later, dark red fluid began seeping from the wound as the head toppled over against the window, lifeless. Empty eyes stared at the ceiling. Javier's driver pulled the car over next to a massive building on Oxford Street. "F**k! Who the hell... move the body, John! Now!"

John hurried quickly to slip the body out of the car and onto the pavement. Only a second passed before they were drifting down the freeway again. Glancing over at a small splotch of blood on the back passenger seat, John only thought that he was pleased he'd gotten the leather package. It would be easier to clean than fabric.

Javier wiped off the stain with a handkerchief; “B****y hell! Who the hell was after us, now?” He screamed, satisfied that it was gone, he completely threw the fabric out the window and told the driver to drive quickly, as the latter proceeded down the street headed to their underground shelter. “Move fast!”

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Billionaire’s Accidental Wife

Chapter 43

Still, on the edge of his seat, Shawn asked Eddie to drive past. The ambush earlier was a surprise and he was thankful that he listened to his grandfather and purchased a bulletproof SUV for his everyday use. It was late morning now, and still, he hadn’t bought Catherine’s exotic jackfruits. “We have to go now, Eddie.”

“How about the wife’s craving, sir?”

“I will find a way. But if what you say is true, Elizabeth could be the one behind this.”

“It was obvious, sir. The b***h wanted you, and she is insane. I was just exploiting her, and I think now she knew that I was never on her side, or not.”

“Thanks, Eddie, I know I can count on you. But I want you to work with her. I want more of her plan. I think you know what I mean. Right?” Shawn asked. Grateful for his butler’s loyalty. Earlier that morning, Eddie told him everything about Elizabeth’s plans, and he was grateful to have him.

“Yes sir,” Eddie replied as he reached up and clicked the remote to the front gate of the mansion a few seconds before they pulled in.

An hour later, Shawn was now driving another SUV to go to his private rest house with Catherine on his side, trying not to be infuriated. “Shawn? What’s the rush? And two sets of luggage? Where are we going?”

“To my vacation house,” he explained as he looked around. Three other SUVs were on their backs and two were on their fronts. From the empty street, it was difficult to see what lay beyond the huge brick wall and the spruce trees behind it, which was kind of the point of the wall. Shawn swung the car into the driveway and passed the garden as the gate opened completely. Once the cars passed through, it began closing again.

“Shawn, why so much security?” Catherine asked, turning her head and furrowing her brow-mouthed, she shook her head, “It’s for our safety, Catherine.”

“Why?”

"I will tell you later, OK?" he replied and followed the convoy. She'd not said anything since leaving for her early lunch at the garden. Yes, she was shocked when a rattled Shawn came back without her jackfruits and ordered her to pack up. And by the look of it, Shawn was not happy and on edge. He kept asking her how she felt and if she had received any unknown calls. Of course, it was getting on her nerves, but by the look of her husband, she should wait. She assumed her entire life had been spent far away from things like what most rich people do. Maybe a sudden vacation on their private island? Who knows?

Five hours later, Catherine saw a vast collection of trees, shrubs, and flowers decorating the whole estate. They were on his farm. Huge magnolias dotted the large yard with their dark, waxy leaves, massive oak trees. Azaleas surrounded the manned gatehouse, along with a few of those long grassy plants popular on golf courses and suburban neighborhoods. Poplars, Bradford pears, and even some coniferous spruce fences stood in

rows in the tremendous clearing. More hardwoods lined the driveway on both sides.

"Wow! Shawn, are those maples?" Catherine broke the silence and the amazement in which she had been at the wonderful landscaping.

"Good eye," Shawn responded, glad to see she wasn't sleeping anymore. Her silence earlier was unnerving and he hated her. He was used to her being chatty. "Eddie and I planted alternating assortments so when the fall colors peaked, there would be a more contrasting display of color. There is silver, chalk, sugar, and my personal favorite, the crimson king maples. See the one on the left side of the little lake? The colors have started to change, but

it will be another week or two before they really look amazing."

"They're beautiful." Catherine continued to look around as the cars sped up the driveway.

"I'm kind of a plant lover."

"I think it's incredible," she mumbled with a squinting glance. Even though she was talking, her voice was still different. Her mind was possibly still asking him.

"Shawn, what's the sudden rush? You better tell me now."||

"Earlier, going to the Asian fruit market, Eddie and I were ambushed by three unknown gunmen."

"What?! Ambush?!"

"Yes!"

"Why the hell didn't you tell me that earlier... Are you OK?" She looked at him discreetly and scanned his body for any secret wounds. "Yes, I'm fine, the car is bulletproof."

"Who could they be?"

"I have my suspicions that it was Elizabeth or my company's rival, but I don't know yet.

That's why we're here."

"Elizabeth?! As in your Ex?"

"Yes!"

"But why? I assumed you know...you guys had parted ways with no... you know... hard feelings?"

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"Wow!"

"Sorry about this mess, but for now we will be safe here."

"Shawn, you've killed men before, haven't you?"

He had anticipated this question and had been pondering what to tell and what not to tell. After all, she was fragile, and he didn't want her to stress over his past. "No, I've never killed before." He replied, for sure, it was a lie. But only out of necessity situations where it was either him or the other guy. He just looked at it like it was something that had to be done. It has always been about survival. Nothing more. "To tell you the truth, Catherine, I don't think about it too much. Elizabeth might be capable of hiring a gunman, but I know she didn't order them to kill me." "How sure are you?" "She wanted me, my money. Maybe she wanted to scare me but never order to kill me. He needs me alive." Shawn added.

"Or me! What if she wanted me dead as well?"

"That too." "Goodness me, this is messed up." She sighed.

"I know."

However, Catherine didn't pursue the topic, though she was curious. She would ask later.

Minutes passed, a beautiful cream-colored bungalow stood at the top of the driveway. The two-story Mediterranean villa with a Spanish-tiled canopy was not vast by any means. It could not have been more than three thousand square feet. She had

expected a large manor to accompany such a palatial garden scene. Rather, the residence before her was certainly nice, but it was reasonable in a way.

“I bought it two years ago,” he started again whenever I needed to be alone. Since I live alone, I didn’t need a big house, but I loved the property here. I spend a lot of my free time out here working.”

“Gardening?”

“Yes, I enjoy the work. There’s something liberating about physical labor.” His response was truthful.

The rest of the SUVs came to a halt, and his security detail surveyed the area for about five minutes before informing Shawn that it was clear.

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appeared to be virtually half the size of the residence. When one of the two wooden modern garage doors opened, Catherine could see there was another car in the spot where they were about to park. Then she realized that the garage had doors on both sides. It was convenient for a person with a lot of cars to park. In her husband’s case, a few cars and many motorcycles. Shawn parked the car, and they stepped out into a small collection of old and new bikes. Her gaze went past the latest white Hummer in front of her to at least five motorcycles of varying types. There were cruisers and sportbikes from different eras; “. Those two are my favorite.” Shawn pointed at the two Harleys as he read the fascination on her face and acknowledged the massive bikes with a nod. An hour later, they enjoyed a meal, talked about their situation, dozens of phone calls later, and their security details were scattered all around the vacation house.

Two days later without any prior problems, Catherine awakened. She smiled with contentment when she felt the warmth of the morning sun on her bare skin. She stood on the back veranda of her secluded lake bungalow and closed her eyes as she luxuriated in the peace and tranquillity of her surroundings. The sun’s warm smile kissed her upturned face, and the cool breath of the sea breeze teased her walnut dark nipples to hardness. As she basked in the morning sun, Catherine listened to the powerful sound of the lake as the rolling tide crashed against the breakwater a short distance away along the shoreline.

As she lay in their bed at night she would listen to the soft lullaby of the waves breaking over the sand when the ripple was right. It was at moments like this, moments when she could move naked and free around the house and garden that Catherine gave thanks for her good fortune. But she knew it would never happen. Shawn’s men were everywhere with their heavy guns. She was bored to death, and even the evening chat with Jane and Chelsea and even Dave didn’t change her boredom especially when Shawn was always on his laptops and phones.

She spent her days idly exploring the surrounding area and took long walks along the shoreline with Boxy, Shawn's golden Labrador. She dabbled in painting, not because of any particular latent skill or talent, but simply because she found she was drawn to do so, and now that she had the financial freedom to indulge herself, she thought – why not? But of course, being pregnant and the only lady in the house, she was so bored and exhausted all the time. Her pregnant belly was visible now and started to have swollen feet.

Her reverie halted from the knock of the kitchen door, "Shawn? Is that you?" "Yes, I'm sorry but I have to go... I will be back soon."

"Where? Why?" Catherine asked as she drank her morning milk.

"Hospital...grandfather is dead." Shawn almost whispered and closed his eyes for a moment while Catherine gasped and covered her mouth in shock. "I- I received a c-call from the...p-private nurse."

"I'm sorry Shawn, but I want to come."

"No! You need to be safe here." Shawn declared as he stepped away from her, it was too difficult, he didn't know how to show grief, he wanted to cry and scream so loud but he couldn't. It was a foreign emotion. When he has ridden the waves of grief he couldn't see clearly, couldn't glimpse that he had someone who cares for him, that he needs to have a strong, strong heart. He only saw that the pain stands as a witness to the loving bond of his grandfather and his passing. He lost the only person who he could count on. Now he was alone again. "Stay here. I will go now! If you need something, call me." Shawn added without even looking at her as he left, Shawn didn't notice the tears that shed Catherine's eyes. The pain and the disappointment, she wanted to be with him. Hold him, be with him, and grief with him. But he was leaving her. Shawn had become distant again for the past two days, he was always busy and seldom talked to her and now he was leaving her, here, all alone with the men she didn't even know.

"Why does it feel like this was a goodbye?" Catherine whispered in the air as she dried the tears that started to roll down her cheeks.

Rate this Chapter

Billionaire's Accidental Wife

Chapter 44 Three days later, Shawn still had not returned, and though he called her at night, the anticipation and the waiting almost suffocated her. She was stressed and anxious.

A minute later, one of the guards offered to bring her milk from the kitchen, which she had prepared earlier, as Catherine uttered her thanks. After her warm milk and vitamins were taken, she went to the veranda and sunbathed and fell asleep.

Unbeknownst to her, a dark figure behind her smiled. Shawn's wife had taken the milk that was mixed with drugs. The man left and waited until she was fully asleep.

Catherine sighed and opened her eyes, then, starting at the broad swell of her hips, she ran her hands over the soft, honey-colored skin of her body. She felt the softness of her belly with the tips of her fingers and then cupped her tight b****s in her hands. She dreamily fingered the stiff points of her nipples and savored the gently insistent heartbeat throb that seemed to connect her puckered teats and her suddenly attentive c*****s. At the very moment she decided to move back into the house, perhaps to surrender to her carnal urges, she suddenly realized that she wasn't alone. There, standing by the small terrace shed, entirely immobile, stood her husband, Shawn Richmond. "Shawn?" Why was he here? Today was his grandfather's funeral, right? "Why are you here?"

Shawn just looked at her like he did not recognize her.

The shock of realization burst across Catherine's senses, and she gasped involuntarily. She realized that she was perfectly framed in the doorway and that Shawn had observed her nudity and intimate caresses while he stood there immobile.

Even in the shock and surprise of the moment, Catherine's mind jumped forward in a surreal moment of lucidity. She was aware of his blue-green pale eyes surveying her intently as if he did not recognize her. "Shawn?" Was she dreaming? Why does it feel like this was just a dream? But was it a reality at the same time? Somehow, she sensed that he meant her no harm, and in fact, the presence of his black leather laptop bag on his

shoulders indicated that she had probably caught him by surprise just as he was leaving and was making his exit when she had framed herself so candidly in the doorway.

It was remarkable how the presence of her husband caused her no trouble at all, even the fact that she was standing on the terrace bare as the day she was born didn't feel like much of an effect on Catherine. Yet, having made no noise during the night, or even giving any sign that she was aware of her. Boxy the Labrador dog gave a belated 'chuff' and jogged over to Shawn with his tail sweeping from side to side in greeting. But why does it feel like Shawn hadn't seen her? Was she dreaming?

Shawn spoke as Boxy sniffed at his legs inquisitively. 'I'm sorry for leaving you Catherine

but I need to be alone for now." he confessed, and Catherine found herself quietly mesmerized by the pale blue of his eyes. His eyes fascinated her so entirely that she thoroughly forgot her nakedness, and she simply gazed back at him quietly. Shawn unconcernedly fluttered the fur on Boxy's head and held Catherine's eye for a moment. "I'm sorry," he recited. 'I will never love you, Catherine: You are only here because of my

heir. I want my child.' He leaned, picked up the laptop bag, and, with Boxy dancing around his heels, made his exit. .

What was that? Why does it hurt? But why was she not crying? Or asking something? And why does it look like she was too dizzy and wanted to puke the milk she had earlier? Why did it feel like her brain wanted her to scream for help and run away so fast?

However, Catherine stood transfixed for long seconds after Shawn had gone. She had found him deeply confusing, not for explanations of his words, but for the way in which she felt drawn to him. Why was he here? She felt as though Shawn was connected to her somehow, as though there was some bond between them. The memory of his blue-green eyes penetrated her, and it was only the feel of Boxy's fluffy fur against her legs that ultimately roused Catherine from her trance. When she returned to the here and now, she realized that she had exposed her completely bare body to him and that she had made no undertaking whatsoever to cover her nakedness. Her face reddened at the memory, and the flush crept down her neck and shoulders as her humiliation worsened.

'Some b****y guard dog you are, boxy,' she scolded the dog playfully and then caressed the top of his furry head.

Then suddenly, Catherine felt a surprising headache, like she had been hit by a huge hummer, her heart beating so fast. It was like something inside her wanted out, her veins warming, something inside her creeping into her every thought, and then she knew her mind wasn't hers anymore. The scene changed. Now she walked along the shore after leaving the terrace. Shawn was just so glorious standing there earlier. She had caught him off guard. Just as she was making what she hoped would be a reasonable morning, he'd arrived on the back veranda with perfect timing. At first, she thought she'd been caught and that he'd noticed she was completely naked as she froze on the spot, but with a sudden outburst, Catherine's eyes peeled open, the lids grating her eyeballs like sandpaper. The darkness didn't dispe...

She blinked more rapidly to rid her mind of the fog and, she hoped, the inability to see, but it was no use. She knew she was awake now and she was no longer on the terrace sleeping, although it was still morning. Something was seriously wrong and she could feel it like a second skin while hearing her heartbeat so fast.

It took another few seconds for her to feel the bag wrapped around her head and neck. In the pervasive haze filling her vision and thoughts, she hadn't noticed it at first.

The next thing she realized was the restricting pain in her wrists and ankles. She was apprehended and she was in pain.

Tied to a chair, she thought. With a bag over her head, it was too dark, too dark and she had a hard time breathing. And she wondered who she pissed.

She had no memory of what transpired or who could have done this, but one thought kept resonating in her mind: she'd kill whoever was responsible. Her child. 'Oh my God.' She : thought about her baby. At that moment, she knew she had been drugged and was hallucinating.

Her muscles strained against her bonds, over and over, until she understood it was an exercise in futility. Whoever had fastened the knots wasn't fooling around. They intended to keep her precisely where she was. Kidnapped? Yes, someone kidnapped her, but who drugged her?

That brought up another question: Where was she anyway?

For the time being, there was no way to know.

A door creaked from somewhere across the void, and she sat up a little straighter.

"I see you're awake," a woman's voice mumbled. Her accent was distinctly English, refined, possibly raised by a distinguished class that had always planned tea time every day of their lives.

Catherine didn't answer. Her only acknowledgment was an intense scowl the woman could not yet see.

"I'm sure you have a thousand questions running through that pretty head of yours. Why are you here? Who brought you? Where is here? Right? Catherine?"

"Who are you?"

"Well, shall I punch you in the belly? Or how should you get rid of your baby?"

"Please no!" Catherine pleaded. "Alright... I suppose you're going to give me some answers?" the woman spat through clenched teeth..

The black sack on her head was unexpectedly yanked away, and she looked up to find herself in a tiny oval-shaped room, enclosed by cinder blocks and a white dirty ceiling and floor. A single fluorescent light gave off the only illumination in the room and enhanced the harsh feeling of filth -and privacy.

"Elizabeth?"

Billionaire's Accidental Wife

“Surprise, Catherine?” Elizabeth asked as she slapped her in the face, making Catherine turn her head sideways and groan in pain. “B***h! Take that.” Another slap, “... you, of all people, took my Shawn away. I am going to enjoy killing you slowly, you know.” Elizabeth sneered and pushed Catherine’s head.

The pain, the concern for her baby – it was all Catherine could think of. The distress takes over a portion of her brain, as if dealing with it was energy-consuming enough without the effort of new thoughts. It stole the part of her and she knew her lips were bleeding, her ears were still ringing from the never-ending slap, and she realized Elizabeth wouldn’t let her live. She wanted her dead, but all she could ever think of was the baby on her tummy... Oh God, no! Please let her leave. A silent prayer was the only thing she could do now. She was at her mercy. But knowing Shawn had abandoned her, the pain was palpable: disappointment and sadness mingled, the kind of pain that burns as if some invisible coating had been placed over her heart.

Another slap.

“P-please... enough, I’m pregnant! Please! Don’t!”

Another slap then a kick, followed by a series of punches, another slap, and more pain after pain. She knew she had blacked out the moment the ringing in her head stopped, and the last thing she remembered was Elizabeth’s never-ending hatred towards her.

A day later, Catherine was awakened by the distant noise of a television. Slowly, she breathed in through the dark sack covering her head, though it came as a gasp and unbearable breathing. Pain. It was all resentment. Her ribcage hurts, everything hurts. And she shivered... She felt a warm liquid running through her, and she hoped it wasn’t blood but urine. Her baby, her baby! She knew she should not panic, yet she did, and she fell unconscious again... Then she awakened again, and she didn’t have any idea how much time had passed. Yet’now, in her misery, the knowledge of losing her baby, the pain, it was her enemy. What did she do to deserve this kind of pain, this kind of torture? Where was she? What day was it today? Thirsty? She was so thirsty that her throat felt like it was swollen with a bucket of sand. Yet nothing. It was just darkness and pain. She wished to end this all. She was dehydrated, starving, bleeding, and in pain. She wished to end this all. Yet, the agony made her realize that she needed to survive. Her baby needs her. She breathed in again. But there was only pain and stillness. It was dark, too dark...

Oh God, she lost her baby... Then came another sob.

Just like before, she was the one who chose whether to stay in the darkness when she and

Dave were still kids, playing hide and seek. And Dave trapped her in their mother’s cabinet. It was like this: the darkness was eating her... engulfing her, suffocating her.

Now she was a captive, locked away again in a small, cold cell, probably with a key just out of reach.

Solace should have been hers. Maybe her death was near. Eventually, what she had was always darkness. The restraint prevented her body from touching what would eventually be a better sleeping position. It was unbearable. Losing her baby was more than heartbreaking. She lost the will to even breathe. Her head hangs low, covered in a black sack, her two hands behind her back. Being seated on the stone-cold floor made her wish she died from the wounds. But Elizabeth's men healed her, then tortured her again for a reason she didn't even know.

Hunger and thirst began to overrun her world of anguish. Time passed, meaning nothing to her now. Only the terrible, relentless longing that evolved until it became her entire world. She wanted to save the baby, but she failed.

Heartache, hunger. Nothing else existed for her anymore. Then a voice came, a man... He took the sack to uncover her mouth, but not entirely. "Here is some water. Take this!" A cold glass nudged against her lips as she hungrily savored the water. "Good, that's all you'll ever have." Then he pushed the cover over her head again, and he stepped towards the cell. He locked it and was gone.

And now, Catherine was able to breathe properly. The dark sack wasn't tightly covering her head anymore. Instead, it was a little lost. Maybe the man took pity on her.

However, she was in real pain. But she survived. She dwelled in distress and pain. She stayed in the darkness. The hours turned into days, then into weeks with only a slice of bread, an apple, and a bottle of water a day. Now she was no longer shackled. She was still in the six-foot-sized cell with a small bathroom. If one considers a basin a bathroom and has only one set of clothing, she couldn't be grateful. At least now, they have given her a wooden bed, a single pillow, and a blanket. Yet Catherine could no longer recognize any other way of life, any other presence. There was no faith, no stability, no way out. There was no edge. Only the shadow, the suffering, the awful longing to kill. The hunger. And the pain of losing her baby. Now, she felt nothing. She felt empty. The grief was too tremendous; it consumed her, inside out. Shawn had been forgotten, as he had forgotten her. She doesn't care anymore.

She knew Elizabeth ordered her dead, and probably the b***h thought she was really dead. She didn't know what transpired in their minds, but she was grateful that they didn't kill her.

Time continued to fly, meaning nothing in her finite cell. Only grief and anger.

Her left wrists were manacled to the wall, allowing her only enough movement between the sides of the cell, so that she had little space to maneuver. Her grief was her everything

now. The resentment, the distress, it was all she could ever think of. Her grief comes in waves. On the first day of losing her baby, it was all the waim, liquid blood she could think of, feeling it running through her from deep within. It was all she could ever remember. Then came Elizabeth's laughter, her echoing laughter. Her anger came the next day when her eyes felt dry from crying. She was quiet, never complaining, never screaming, just silently crying in the corner. It was better that way. Her sorrow? They were so strong, she felt so swept away. They come at such random moments, replacing a feeling of normality with those familiar tears. Yet in time, those waves of sadness lessened, and were followed by dark thoughts, anger, revenge, planning, and other things that led to waves of outrage and cold, raw uproar. Those sad or dark things that were said by Elizabeth became her anchor. So, she wanted to ride that wave, ride it in that boat called Revenge. But for now, she has to play smart.

There was no way to salvage her strength and vigor without restoring the massive amount of blood she had lost. The loop was infinite, dreadful, a ghastly process that would last for all eternity. She found, after some time, that she could put herself to sleep. But the return of this gift meant nothing anymore. Catherine knew nothing anymore. So she started doing exercises, slowly gaining her muscles back. Unhurriedly, she was doing an invisible punch, kicking, and more exercising. She remembered her long-lost boxing and judo knowledge from high school. If she wanted retaliation, she needed to be stronger, she thought to herself. Weeks turn into months.

Then one day.

"Mrs. Richmond!" A voice came from the door, unfamiliar. The man speaking to her was tall, probably a few inches over six feet. His frame was huge, covered in tattoos, and extremely imposing, possibly due to the thousand-dollar suit covering his body. His hairline had receded to just beyond the tip of his forehead and appeared to have stopped, leaving a distinct look and shape to his head. His nose was sharp and pointy, matching the snide grin on his lips, and he had a huge scar on his face. "What!?" She muttered with a blank look.

"Oh, Mrs. Richmond, um-know how to talk?" The man grumbled and smirked while banging on the iron cell door, which made her wince.

"Stop that... and know this... the moment you let me go will be the next-to-last second of your life, ugly face."

The man's grin widened narrowly. "I knew you were the right woman for the job, Catherine," he muttered as he pulled up a metal chair from a few feet away from the door and eased into the seat.

A few weeks later, he ordered his man to give her a boxing glove, punching bags, give her more healthy food, decent clothing, and even reasonable shoes, and even a treadmill and a

stationary bike. "I have to say, I've heard so many good things about you."

"I don't care," Catherine grumbled.

"Of course you did. You were once, um- what you called it these days? Oh, never mind but I know that you were once a champion at kickboxing and judo back in high school, right? You were a decent athlete too. So maybe it's not yet too late to train you to where you truly belong."

"What are you talking about? Who are you?" She strained against the cell once more, vainly hoping it would be the time their strength gave way. It wasn't.

The man just sneered. He crossed one leg over the other and folded his hands on his thigh.

"What do you want from me? Is my child's life, not enough?"

"The name is Javier... and come on, I am not the one who tortures you... Save your anger to Elizabeth. But I've heard you're typically direct and to the point, Catherine... I'm sorry, did you say it was all right for me to call you Catherine?"

She scoffed but didn't offer a response.

"I'll take that as a yes. No need for formality. After all, if you decide to play by my rules, you'll have your freedom, a new identity, and a new you. So choose wisely Catherine."

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