

## Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

### Chapter 60

#### Scotland

"F\*\*k... Anthony must have hidden it somewhere else," the old man, Alfonso Richmond III, muttered after he ended the call from his daughter, Chelsea. He scratched his chin slowly, staring out at the rest of the men in the room with fiery eyes. He told his daughter that he was in the Philippines, but the truth was he was in Scotland.

Somehow, he knew their conversation was bugged and someone was monitoring his activities. He sighed, thinking about how he ended up marrying Chelsea's mother. She was half Chinese, a student back then, and already three months pregnant with Chelsea when he met her, and it was maybe love that asked her to marry him, even though she was already pregnant. And yes, he loved her daughter just the same, just like how he loved his wife, his beliefs, and his religion... One may say that he was delusional and insane... He was still dead-hearted with his wife and thought he had made too many mistakes in the past years.

He couldn't take them back. Still, he cared so much about his family that he wanted to give them everything. Or maybe he was trying to convince himself about it because he loved himself more.

He'd sent out a team to find the key to Richmond's wealth. Those gold, billions of dollars, diamonds, and the Golden Buddha were in Anthony's keeping since their careers in treasure hunting over in Asia. Yet Anthony Richmond became greedy.

His own cousin, the old man, was smart enough to hand it to anyone but to his grandson, who had no idea that wealth existed, but after a long day of taking apart everything in Shawn Richmond's home and trying to persuade Dave Brown, they still came up empty-handed.

Alfonso's men had looked everywhere, even tearing up sections of flooring they thought sounded hollow and could be a secret hiding place from Dave's apartment, and even ransacked Shawn's vacation house here in Ireland.

They'd broken vases-some of them probably valuable-and shattered picture frames. Drawers were removed and tossed aside. Every piece of furniture was ripped apart. And still, they found nothing.

Zeus, his second in command, and his men stood around the long boardroom table, staring at their boss with shame. And to add matters worse, Javier, the b\*\*\*\*\*d had not reported back about his assignment.

Alfonso sat in a chair made from fark leather and trimmed with golden-colored rivets. He blinked slowly as he stared down at the table. His brain worked hard to figure out where the key could have been placed on the map of the treasure. “Any deposit boxes? Storage facilities he used?” Zeus shook his head. “No. He was not a man of simple means. Everything he owned was scattered in his many houses.”

“How about Anthony’s vacation house?” Alfonso asked.

“Nothing.”

“F\*\*k! He was a retired treasure hunter, and you say nothing in there was of importance?” Alfonso raged. “Surely he had hidden somewhere, and how about his bank accounts? Deposit boxes?”

“Accounts, yes, but his finances were meager at best. And there were no safety deposit boxes in any of the accounts. The old man deals with credit cards only. Our men checked that thoroughly.” Alfonso put a hand to his mouth and grazed the knuckle on the index finger with his teeth.

“S\*\*t, this is not possible. There has to be something we aren’t seeing. Anything on Shawn?”

“We have a man watching him. He was still here in Scotland with his wife, but they were ambushed in the airport, so they ended up running for their lives in the outskirts of the southern part.”

“Ambushed?”

“Yes, I believed it was the b\*\*\*\*\*d Javier.”

“S\*\*t! The jerk is stupid, Shawn Richmond must be alive at any cost. I believe Anthony will make sure of that. I knew him. He loves to play games. If Shawn was dead, then it would be the

end of that treasure as well.”

Zeus and his man nodded. “Anything else? How about the butler? He was the most trusted man in Shawn.” Alfonso continued as he began to pace. Something was missing in this problem, something he had not anticipated.

“So far, nothing suspicious. He’s been going to work, as usual, as butler staff at the mansion. He did receive three visitors yesterday, though.” | This was new information, and Alfonso’s curiosity was spiked. “Friends?”

“One is your daughter, Chelsea. And the second is by two well-known archaeologists. Who runs an exclusive agency in London that assists in facilitating the discovery and transportation of unusual and rare antiques to Anthony Richmond’s private museum.

From what we learn, the other men worked at the same museum as curators, but there is no data on them before that, which is unusual. In my experience, that usually means Russian government work of some kind.”

Alfonso slammed his fist on the table. His voice was like an erupting volcano. “Then why didn’t you mention this to me earlier? Those men are there to find the key. Shawn was doing his job. I believe he didn’t know exactly where the keys were. All the more reason to stay away from him just yet. We need to get the key before his men can. Get over there, and find out what the butler is using them for. How about my daughter?”

“She just wanted help from Shawn. She didn’t mention anything. She left when Shawn was not around,” Zeus replied. He stood up and left the room, followed by five other massive men, leaving four bodyguards sitting to the right and left of Alfonso. “You two, wait outside,” he ordered

Both males nodded and walked away, vanishing from view. The final person to leave shut the door behind him, leaving Alfonso alone in the room with his thoughts.

“What were you up to, Anthony?” he wondered to himself. He fixed his gaze on a piece of paper with rune characters written on it. The lines didn’t make sense to him, it was fruitless to even read them, even though he’d never been adept at reading riddles. He tried many times. It was nonsense, and because of its simplicity, this one bothered him. He despised things he

couldn’t figure out or comprehend. It enraged him and drove him insane, which is why he delegated such responsibilities to others.

What bothered him now was that Shawn had enlisted the assistance of other experts. Maybe the key was not in his hands either. If one was a history specialist, the key had to be the reason they were there in London. He stood up and walked out the side door, carrying the paper with him. He rubbed his temples to relieve stress. Alfonso made a sharp left turn down a lengthy corridor and stalked through three closed paper doors until he found the one he was looking for. He pulled the door open and entered his luxuriously decorated study.

He stepped around behind the hefty white desk, opened the main drawer, and took out a tiny pill bottle. His fingers quickly removed the cap, and he poured three pills into an open palm. He popped them into his mouth, then grabbed a nearby bottle of water, unscrewed the cover, drank it, and swallowed. None of his subordinates dared to question his painkiller use. They should have known better. He was a patient man, but he was not willing to explain.

When he felt the onset of too much stress, the pills were a high-octane version of something stronger, yet it relaxed him. He was afflicted by headaches, which he'd had since boyhood. Though they were not as rich as his other friend, they were middle class and the medicines helped to prevent them. Alfonso found the painkillers when he was sixteen years old. His stepfather had returned home intoxicated from work one night, as he had many other nights. This night, though, was different. He'd lost his contract and figured it would be a good idea to drown his sorrows with a few extra drinks. Alfonso had become accustomed to the thrashings.

He'd developed numbness to the agony. Deep down, he was certain that his headaches were the result of being smacked in the head so frequently as a child. He could, however, take a punch at the age of sixteen. Throwing one, on the other hand, requires more guts. He knew that if he did that, things would get out of hand. And Alfonso had to be ready if that was going to happen. Since he was thirteen, he'd been surreptitiously practicing local taekwondo and boxing after school.

His instructor was the only person who had ever taken pity on him and who had ever been good to him. And he was the only person who ever taught Alfonso how to be disciplined. When his father returned home that night in a drunken frenzy, he began punching Alfonso's mama harder than normal.

Alfonso stood in the corner like a statue, watching. His father began by hitting her across the face several times. Then he switched to fists and began punching her harder and harder. She shouted and begged for him to stop, but he wouldn't. He kept groaning something about how bad his life was because of her and their cretinous youngster in the corner. He shifted his attention to Alfonso when she was practically unconscious, her face bloated, wounded, and beaten.

He marched across the room with his hand up, cursing and swearing the day Alfonso was born. The young man's teeth were clenched. A voice in his head stated, "I'm going to kill you, father." It is now over. Alfonso sniffled and twitched his nose as he stood in his study.

The memory wasn't one of melancholy. It did not e\*\*\*t a mourning banner over his heart. It was his crowning achievement. He walked over to the bar in the corner, grabbed a glass, and poured himself a quick round of vintage wine. He reflected on that fateful day after the warm drink burnt through his throat. His father had reacted clumsily and badly. It was the first time Alfonso had fought back, the first time he had avoided a strike. He did it with ease, darting to the side and gripping his father's forearm with more force than the elder man could have

imagined

Alfonso yanked on his father's arm and thudded him into the nearest wall. The force of the

icture frame loose from its frame, sending it plummeting to the floor. His father's shocked expression transformed into something considerably stranger.

He almost seemed relieved that Alfonso had defended himself, like a hunter relieved to have finally met his equal with a forest quarry. He made a charge. It was a rash attack. Alfonso snuck a fast jab into his father's nose. He fired another, his knuckles only halting when they were two inches past the target, at his full arms' reach.

His father's head shook back and forth with each blow, as if it were on a spring

Alfonso then pushed him back till he concluded the round of ten jabs with a kick to the abdomen so many times he lost count. As a result of the kick, his father was knocked unconscious and later died from a head injury. Also, no one could accuse him of murdering his father. The old man deserved it, and since then he has become someone who earned his living from scratch when he and his mother fled from the authorities and went to Scotland. Later, in his endeavor, he met his cousin Anthony and they started their own treasure hunting business.

## **Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA**

### Chapter 61

Shawn roused from a deep sleep as the form next to him shifted under the arm that enfolded her. They found his old vacation cottage near the highway, fifteen miles away from the inn, and they stopped and waited for the blizzard to pass. It had been years since he had visited this isolated place. He bought this five years ago when he and his grandfather had their first-ever deer hunting trip, and since then, the cabin was empty and only visited by the caretaker once a month.

Short but smooth hair that smelt like vanilla strawberry, which he knew was dark golden blonde, brushed his chin. Catherine was nuzzled tightly against his bare chest, with her arms wrapped against her bare b\*\*\*\*s. Her face pressed into the crook of his shoulder and neck while the wooden chimney still gave them warmth. This particular cabin reminded him of their first journey in the mountains, and he smiled at the memory.

In the darkness, Shawn shifted his hand from her slim waist to the curve of her firm b\*\*t. As he did so, his fingers graced the lace material of the thong panties she wore and cupped one of her supple gluts. She moaned softly and then giggled in her sleep. "Shawn, stop doing that. It tickles me." Smiling to himself, he wondered if she was having a dream reliving the day they had experienced. After all, he couldn't get himself away from her for even a few minutes, and

even in the blizzard, they ended up having wild but intimate s\*x in the car.

As he lay in the darkness, enjoying the feel of his accidental wife next to him, he thought back over the previous day, which had been interesting, to say the least, but he knew

he needed to call Eddie soon and ask for an update about the two expert helping hands that were deciphering his grandfather's diary, which was full of runic and nonsense symbols, notes, maps, and something like from the Indiana Jones movie. He smiled at the thought. Certainly,

it again to play with him. After all, he taught him well enough how to look for something that was deemed impossible, and somehow, even on his deathbed, the old man was nonetheless able to entertain him with his games and play. Then suddenly, the small crocodile-shaped lampshade in the corner went dark. "Holy s\*\*t! The power must be out," he thought as he opened his eyes while Catherine groaned under her breath. Rolling onto his back and using the palms of his hands to rub his eyes and scratch the little stubble on his face, he saw it was lighter than when his alarm clock commonly sounded for this time of year. Looking at the nightstand, Shawn saw that his clock radio was completely stagnant, with no time showing. He also noted that it was colder than it generally was. The heater would've normally kicked in by this time.

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Yawning, he then thought out loud as he threw the covers off, "Looks like we lost power, during the night."

"Hmmm, why is it too dark, Shawn?" Catherine muttered as she yawned. Still dark, yeah?" Her short, messy bangs hung seductively above her eyebrows. Loose strands of hair framed the creamy skin on her cheeks, chin, and forehead. Lush pink lips were firmly pressed together underneath a gently sloping nose. Her white, shirt gave the impression she intended to go busy herself at some point-or at least to look professional.

"Yes, probably the blizzards were too strong. It always happens. Go back to sleep, sweetheart." "Um-OK"

"Thank God, I have the mobile flashlight.

"I'll check the generator. I hope the old thing still works," he muttered, as he swung his legs over the edge of the bed as he got out of bed, stretched, and padded into the master bathroom. On his way, he pulled back the privacy blind on the window that overlooked his backyard, and he muttered, "D\*\*n!"

He saw that there was a great amount of snow on the ground and that huge fluffy flakes were continuing to fall in a downpour. He went into the bathroom, did his morning business, took a quick shower, looked for his shaver, and then dressed for the day in a pair of old jeans and a white fluffy jacket. He yanked a pair of socks from the dresser and strode down the five-step stairs. He would need to go to the garage to flip the switch for the emergency generator to start before he could enjoy his morning coffee and prepare for breakfast. Before he did so, he cleared the dusty green curtain of the wooden cove window in the living room and the glass doors to his deck to let additional

light in. Beyond the ceiling, he saw that at least five inches had already piled up. All he could say at the sight was to repeat the exclamation, "D\*\*n, this could take time!" And he just hoped the cabinet still had an emergency can of goods for a time like this.

Walking to the front door, he grabbed his sleepers and then returned to the kitchen to put on his socks and footwear. By this time, his feet were beginning to get cold. 'F\*\*k! The floor of the garage is going to be like a slab of ice," and then grumbled out loud with a grim smile. No sense in his feet freezing any more than they already have. He knew he needed to kindle the fireplace for more wood as he stepped into the living room and labored for three minutes cleaning up the mess. Before heading to the garage, he walked over to the fireplace and flipped the switch on the gas log, glad it had gas. He thought back over the years to the several winter storms with his grandfather that he had to endure in this cabin without the help of Eddie or any of their maids. It was an adventure of a lifetime.

He grabbed a flashlight from the shelf in the pantry and, on walking out to the darkened garage, he recalled how he and the old man had bought this home when he had retired from his treasure hunting business and focused on his private museum instead, as they both decided to purchase several cottage upgrades. Instead of going with electric heat, they had chosen gas and kept the old house plan, but added some modern conveniences.

Over the years, Shawn had remodeled several things in the cottage, and after the first couple of winters when they lost power, they bought an emergency diesel generator. It was big enough to power the whole cottage, and it did provide juice for all the appliances in the kitchen and an outlet under the awning on the deck. He had an abundance of flashlights and candles that could provide light if the outage lasted into the night, but until then, daylight could provide the light necessary to move around the house. Maneuvering around the small sports utility vehicle parked in his garage's center stall, he went to the circuit breaker panel, flipped the necessary switches, and finally pushed the activation button on the genny, which was outside. He walked a short distance to the right and checked the tank. Smiling at the reassurance, it was nearly full and he had three spares. 'Won't have to go out today, thankfully', he thought.

Walking back inside the house, he saw that the clock on the stove was flashing, which told him there was power once again. He went to the counter and turned on his coffee maker and then checked his phone for Eddie's messages as he went about his morning ritual of preparing breakfast for him and Catherine while drinking a couple of cups of freshly brewed black coffee. He pondered, just sitting by the fire waiting for the boiled eggs to c\*\*k and the sausages and bacon to a crisp in his air fryer. As he cleaned up the dishes and the kitchen, it dawned on him

that he had become a true creature of habit.

Looking out the kitchen window as he finished the dishes, he remembered how much the old man loved winter and seeing the snow. "You would love this one, boy," he said out loud and brushed a few tears from his eyes. He missed him terribly.

Soon after he was diagnosed with the terrible disease and as his condition continued to spiral downward, Shawn made sure that the old man was taken care of. He personally helped to make his remaining days as comfortable as possible.

He decided to have one more cup of coffee. After Keurig brewed it, he carried the cup into his living room at the front of the house. He wanted to draw on the front of the house. He grabbed a coaster and set the cup on the coffee table and went to his office next to the family room to grab his phone and call someone from Russia. A moment later, someone answered. "What took you so long?" Shawn grumbled and sipped his coffee.

"Sorry, boss, I was in the bathroom." Eddie, his butler, answered.

"Any news?"

"Well, about that, the two-person team you hired was helpful; they were in a realm both men were comfortable with: solving riddles. The only problem was, they didn't have any context for the one they were staring at in the diary." Eddie explained "What do you mean by that, Eddie?"

His butler read it out loud, keeping his eyes locked on the computer monitor, too afraid to make contact with the pretty woman across from him. "Sir, the first puzzle from your old man's page is, I quote, 'Situation on the boundary of those whose property is more precious than your friend. Go and surge to find the path. Follow your heart.' Eddie shook his head as he continued, "That, sir, is a puzzle I don't understand. Your grandfather outshines himself with this nonsense."

"S\*\*t! I don't even know what the hell it was supposed to mean." Shawn sighed. "I'm not sure, what it was," he said in perfect English. Shawn sat up straight and looked across at the window.

"Sir, I don't mean to be callous to your circumstances, but this was solved yesterday when the two guys were doing their jobs differently. They did it."

"But?" Shawn asked.

Eddies nodded even though Shawn couldn't see him. "Well... Um-they said it didn't make sense at all, no maps, no directions." Shawn remembered how the old man sent the diary the day before he died. Then his reverie was halted when Eddie spoke again, "Sir, it also says that whoever solves this riddle will discover the path to the key."



Eddie finally found his guts, probably on the floor. Even so, when he spoke, his voice trembled, and he stuttered. "So why the riddle? Sir? The old man could actually give you the key, right? if he wanted you to find this key that would lead to a map or whatever, why didn't he just tell you where it was?"

"Pray tell me, Eddie." Shawn sighed in frustration.

"Well, sir, I'm not entirely sure. Sir Anthony had a funny way of doing things."

Shawn nodded as if to agree. After all, he knew him by heart. "Agree, I know that. When I was a

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little boy, he used to give me riddles and puzzles. At the end of his quests, there would always be a treat or a toy. Sometimes I enjoyed them. Other times, they frustrate me. I think he liked them more than I did. It was his way of interacting with me. Now I wish I'd put more time into his games. Perhaps figuring out this one wouldn't be so difficult."

From behind, Catherine mumbled, "Maybe I can help? Sir Anthony loved to give puzzles when he was in the hospital, and I was the only one able to answer it." She smiled and went to Shawn's side, kissed him on the lips, took the coffee from his hand, and drank it like a pro." Ah, why did you put sugar in it?" "Well, that's my coffee, remember?" He kissed her back, then stood up and walked over to the living room window while Catherine stretched out her tired muscles.

He peered out at the sprawling, snow-capped mountain. "Well, you can help me later." He told Catherine with a knowing wink that made her roll her eyes as he told Eddie on the phone to send him the message and keep him posted for any updates and bid him goodbye. I'd say he was probably also protecting you...and the location of the key itself. If Anthony believed that you, your email, or anything else could be compromised, he'd have to put the location of the map into a riddle that only a savvy person could figure out. Let me see the puzzle." Catherine nodded, following her husband's chain of thought. "That also means he doesn't believe that I'll be safe with it," Shawn added. "That too, um-maybe he was worried that you wouldn't be smart enough to decipher the riddle for yourself." She teased and ran away. "Oh, really now?" He raised his brow and ran after his wife.

## **Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA**

Chapter 62 An hour later, the couple were done with their heartfelt breakfast and were enjoying their second cup of coffee on the balcony.

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Shawn stepped away from the window and crossed his arms. His face scrunched into a frown. "Shawn... you don't have any idea who could be behind us or why they'd want to kill us, right?" Catherine asked after he told her everything about the key and the treasure left by his grandfather. He even let her decipher the cryptic message of the old man, but with no avail to knowing what exactly the old man wanted to tell them. He shook his head. "I know some of my grandad's associates, former fellow hunters, and maybe some old enemies, and, of course, my own family, who wanted nothing but the old man's wealth." "Wow! You have really sick relatives."

"I know!" Shawn thought they were questions the police had already asked him after the death of the old man. Catherine knew that. But she still had to ask. Shawn realized it was part of his process, a systematic procedure of questions and answers that had been ingrained in him during his years working for them discreetly. "At least I and Dave wouldn't be alone during our school days. I wish I had one of them. Sick, selfish relatives are better than none." Catherine pondered. "The fact is that my relatives and I weren't that close. Since we were children, Javier and I were deemed enemies. He was a great bully. I hated him as much as he hated me. But I'm

guessing the only reason he's after me now is because of you..."

"Me?"

"Yes, he likes to take what's mine."

"What?"

"When I was done with Elizabeth, he took her just because he thought I liked the b\*\*\*h and I was in love with her." "And now that I married you, I know he was after you to get to me."

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"Hmmm, do you think so?"

"Yes, and of course, the key. I know he knew about it. That's why he sent his men to haunt us."

"How about Eddie? Was he not sending someone to rescue us?"

"They were on the way, but this blizzard made it impossible. They will be here, maybe after tomorrow. I'm not sure. A snowstorm is a traitor's enemy; it's unpredictable."

"We should wait then, but Shawn, how about your other relatives? You say, Sir Anthony had a step-brother?" Catherine inquired, recalling the old man's remark to her about having a stepbrother who enjoys treasure hunting just like him. They were once best friends, but his step-brother became greedy and wanted the treasure all to himself. So

they hid the one thing that would lead to it. The key. The key that would lead to the map and the map to the treasure.

“Yes, his name is Alfonso... Just like Grandad, he likes treasure hunting, but most of the family stopped associating with him because they thought he was crazy, not to mention he was some

sort of religious zealot with his own beliefs and mobs. I don't know... The man must be insane to believe that Grandad had it all.”

Catherine's eyebrows lowered. “Crazy? Why would they think that?”

Shawn shrugged. “Probably because he was always on some wild treasure hunt, always trying to find the next ancient relic or artefact. It was all he talked about. His search for the golden Buddha pushed them over the edge. He kept mentioning new clues he'd discovered, or how he was so close to finding it. Eventually, everyone grew tired of his tall tales. They figured he was lying. Maybe he wasn't. But I have no idea what this riddle means. I'm a business person, not a historian.”

“Really?” Catherine was intrigued.

“Yes, my old man knew about it too. He had his own research about it, and knew that uncle Alfonso wanted it so much so he started his own quest.”

“What with the Buddha anyway?”

“Well, for starters, the origins of this statue are uncertain. It is made in the Sukhothai Dynasty style of the 13th-14th centuries, though it could have been made after that time. The head of the statue is egg-shaped, which indicates its origin in the Sukhothai period. Given that Sukhothai art had Indian influences, and metal figures of the Buddha made in India used to be taken to various countries, mostly during the Pala period.”

“Really? I thought it came from the Philippines. During the Japanese war.”

“Well get to that... Later, the statue was presumably moved from Sukhothai to Ayutthaya in about 1403. Some scholars believe the statue is mentioned in the somewhat controversial Ram Khamhaeng stele. In lines 23-27 of the first stone slab of the stele, “a gold Buddha image” is mentioned as being located “in the middle of Sukhothai City,” interpreted as being a reference to the Wat Traimit Golden Buddha.”

“The name makes me dizzy,” Catherine grumbled as she drank her coffee and listened intently to Shawn.”

“Yes, I agree. But at some point, the statue was completely plastered over to prevent it from being stolen. The statue was covered with a thick layer of stucco, which was painted and inlaid with bits of coloured glass. It is believed that this plastering-over took

place before the destruction of the Ayutthaya kingdom by Burmese invaders in 1767. The statue remained among the ruins of Ayutthaya without attracting much attention.”

“I think I heard it from my history class before.” “Oh, really?” He teased and raised his brow.

“Shawn, I hate history lessons, so sue me if I don’t remember any of it.” She smirked.

“Alright, let me continue. In 1801, Rama I of Siam, after establishing Bangkok as the new capital city of the Kingdom, and after commissioning the construction of many temples in Bangkok, ordered that various old Buddha images should be brought to Bangkok from the ruined temples around the country.”

“Seriously?”

“Yes, at the time of King Rama III, the statue, still covered with stucco, was installed as the principal Buddha image in the main temple building of Wat Chotanaramin Bangkok.”

“Wait, what is stucco?”

“Stucco or render is a construction material made of aggregates, a binder, and water. Stucco is applied wet and hardens to a very dense solid.”

“So the statue was not made of solid gold?” “I believe so,” Shawn replied. “So what happened next?”

“Well, um-when Wat Chotanaram, located near Chinatown on the site of modern-day Asiatique, fell into disrepair and was closed, the statue was moved to its present location at Wat Traimit in 1935. At the time, Wat Traimit was a pagoda of minor significance, like hundreds of other Buddhist temples that exist in Bangkok. Since the temple didn’t have a building big enough to house the statue, it was kept for 20 years under a simple tin roof. The true identity of this statue has been forgotten for almost 200 years.”

“Then how about the rumours that it was last seen somewhere in the Philippines and under the hands of the former late President Marcos?”

“Well about that, it was just rumours amongst the treasure hunters’ enthusiasts, because, in 1954, a new Viharn building was built at the temple to house the statue. It was moved to its new location on 25 May 1955; there are a variety of accounts of what exactly happened next, but it is clear that during the final attempt to lift the statue from its pedestal, the ropes broke and the statue fell hard on the ground. At that moment, some of the plaster coatings chipped off, allowing the gold surface underneath to be seen. Work was immediately stopped so that an evaluation could be made.”

“Oh, so the solid gold was covered with stucco?”

“Yes, all the plaster was carefully removed and, during the process, photos were taken and are now displayed in the temple for visitors. Pieces of the actual plaster are also on public display. When all the plaster was removed, it was found that the gold statue actually consisted of nine

parts that fit smoothly together. The real Buddha, according to my grandfather, had been transported to many countries and its final resting place somewhere in Europe, and uncle Alfonso believed it had been hidden by grandfather. “So the key that we were looking for is the same key as the golden buddha?”

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“I don’t know, I’m not sure either,” Shawn answered with the same enthusiasm.

“So the ones in the Philippines were fake?”.

“I don’t know. I’m not even sure about the authenticity of my grandfather’s words.” He replied as he walked back and looked out the window through the falling snow and knew that the blizzard was getting worse.

## **Billionaire’s Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA**

### Chapter 63

Watching the snow that accumulated outside the cottage, Catherine spent the next several minutes gathering things, papers, and pens, and brought a small notebook in one hand and a cup of coffee to the living room, “What are you doing, wifey?” Shawn asked, took the cup of coffee from her hands and watched her write something.

After she donned a pair of socks and a winter blanket, he then offered his arm to assist her. Let’s decipher Grandpa’s note from his diary. We are stuck here anyway.”

“I think you’re right,” she said and told Shawn to rekindle the chimney for more wood because the gas had run out earlier. On seeing the fire, she made a dash for it. As she sat akimbo in front of it rubbing her hands, he asked if she would like coffee again and smiled at her contented manner, to which she replied by saying that she loved hers with sugar and cream. While the water was heating, he ran upstairs to get quilts to wrap her in, which she gratefully accepted. While making the hot drinks, he asked, “So shall we start sharing ideas about the message?”.

“Sure! Let me read the message. This is a bit odd, but we can do this if we work hard. ‘situation at the boundary of those whose property is more precious than your friend’s. Go and surge to find the path. Follow your heart.’”

"It's very weird for my grandfather to talk such vague messages," Shawn mused and went to the kitchen. He opened the cabinet below the cooktop and brought out a couple of large skillets and asked, "How does eggs and some bacon sound?" He yelled from the kitchen. "Sure, that's quite nice," she yelled back, "...Shawn, you know what? I think I know exactly what the 'Situation at the boundary' means,"

"Really?"

"Yep. I believe it is about the border between England and Scotland, and I recall the old man telling me about it and how fascinated he was by the story."

"Tale of what?" Ask Shawn clearly fascinated.

"About the Debatable Lands, it is believed to have been the last great territorial division in Britain, from the 13th to the 16th Centuries, the region's clans plundered land and livestock and endless blood was shed. Straddling the border, the Debatable Lands flourished as a sort of anarchic no-man's land, not independent but too dangerous and lawless for either Scotland or England to be able – or want – to take control of."

"And you know this, how?"

"G\*\*\*\*e search, silly! Everything is available on the internet nowadays, so shall I continue or what?" Catherine went to his side and hugged him from behind.

"Go on," Shawn smiled, kissing her forehead.

"Alright, this once troublesome region is laidback,"

"What do you mean?" Shawn smacked her b\*\*t.

"Stop doing that." "Stop what?"

She rolled her eyes and continued, "...well, it's a quiet part of the border where hardy animal breeds are raised and a sense of community reverberates among the long-established towns and villages. This less-visited corner of the UK is also where you can get close to the story of those who called the Debatable Lands home: feuding clans known as the Border Reivers. It's a place where local history and scant ruins linger among wooded valleys, fast-flowing rivers, and open moorland that lend themselves to letting your imagination fill in some of the blanks of its much under-told story."

"Wow, I didn't know that."

"Me neither," Catherine smirked, still looking at Shawn's tablet. "So what are you getting into?" "Stop disturbing me... um-some websites. Wait, here... let me continue," she read it aloud again and sat at the nearby chair, when their coffee was ready, he brought the steaming mug to her by the fire, where she gratefully sipped the sweet, hot beverage as

he made her a hot meal. As he cooked, she continued, "This was highlighted in a remarkable parliamentary decree issued by the governments of both countries in the mid-16th century, some 300 years into the Debatable Lands' story: "All Englishmen and Scottish men are and shall be free to rob, burn, spoil, slay, murder, and destroy, all and every such person and persons, their bodies, property, goods, and livestock... without any redress to be made for same." "What the f\*\*k?" Shawn halted and peeked on her in the living room, "...really?" "Oh yeah, it's here on the b\*\*\*\*y website," Catherine added. "Wow, I didn't know that..." Shawn halted and went to her side with the spatula in hand and kissed her again, "Stop disturbing me, Shawn. Listen, while this decree was made into law, it was more of a legal "out" for England and Scotland. Neither side wanted the responsibility of dealing with the Debatable Lands; and as they could not agree on who owned it or how it was divided, neither could be held responsible for it, either. As Dr Lanna Roundwater, principal curator, Renaissance and Early Modern History, National Museums Scotland, mentioned that. I quote, 'It was not a valuable piece of land, with high ground and poor farming potential, so it was probably seen as not particularly worth fighting for or defending.'"

"Odd,"

"I know, but The Debatable Land: The Lost World Between Scotland and England, it is" probably the oldest national boundary in Europe". But when it was finalised, it seems that it drew a line through lands that were essentially familial, dividing some held territory in two." Catherine read more as she sipped her coffee, "Therefore, the border symbolised state-led authority and the Debatable Lands became the flashpoint of a rebellion of sorts, where powerful families plundered each other in both Scotland and England, and neither government was committed to sorting it out."

"Wait, wait, repeat... Dr Lanna Roundwater?" Shawn halted and peeked on the tablet.

"Yes. Why?"

"That's grandpa's former lover..." "What the... really?" Catherine raised a brow, "Sir Anthony had a lover? Wow, why was I not surprised?"

"Yes, and I believe we are supposed to contact her. Jesus... the old man did it again."

"And where is this Dr Roundwater now?"

"In the famous Gretna Green Blacksmith's Shop, she owns the place." "Where on earth is that?"

"Well-" Shawn smirked and looked her in the eyes, "it was situated at the heart of Gretna Green village, the world-famous, historic home of the anvil wedding, and has been at the centre of runaway love, since the Marriage Act of 1754." "Are you f\*\*\*\*g kidding me? The old man probably thought about this for a long time. He was playing with us."

“Sure he did.”

“So, where are we going there?” “After the storm, maybe the rest of the cryptic message could be answered there, and yes, it’s ironic, we are a runaway couple.” Shawn teased.

By this time, Catherine, who was now standing near the French doors staring out at the snow as it fell, wrapped in a quilt, said, “I never thought to look at the forecast,” shaking her head in disbelief, “we had plenty of time in the inn but-”

“Plenty of time indeed, not when you scream my name several times throughout the whole night,” Shawn grumbled, and that earned him a pillow flight from Catherine. “Shut up! Stop teasing me.”

“Fine, but I’m far from over. Thankfully, we don’t get storms like this each winter,” Shawn went back to the kitchen as he cooked the bacon. He asked for her egg preference as she wandered back into the living room, reentering the kitchen. She complimented him on the layout of his cottage and set his cup of now cool coffee on the counter.

Chuckling he poured it down the drain and rinsed the cup. As he did so, she asked, “Your pipes aren’t going to freeze, are they, and your small hot tub isn’t going to get damaged, is it?”

Tending the eggs, he responded, “I think the hot tub is safe, as the chemicals in the water and the fact that it was hotter should protect it,” and then, after a moment, added, “I think we’ll be okay if the power doesn’t stay off for long or we don’t get a really hard freeze.”

He went on to explain that he would check to see if there were any status updates after he finished with her breakfast.

Smiling sheepishly, Catherine asked, “Any news from Eddie?”

Shaking his head, he said, “Not yet. Anyway, can I charge your tablet?”

“Sure.”

“Where is the outlet?”

He shared that he had power in the living room near the side table for the appliances. Walking to the living room, his tablet received a message that made Catherine raise her eyebrows and question Shawn’s intention yet ignored it and note to ask him about it later.



When the food was ready, he set her plate on the kitchen table and made fresh coffee to go with it. While they ate, Catherine asked him about what he did in his childhood and he shared about his life.

"I saw the sketchbook in the living room," Catherine shared. "You can paint?"

"Yap!"

"I didn't know that."

"Wife, you have many things you didn't know about me yet."

"I know, but Shawn, do we have any news about my brother?" Catherine asked, obviously worried.

"Oh, about that. Don't worry, Eddie's men would rescue him first before coming to us," "How did you know this?" "Well. I have given them the address of Javier mob's locations."

"Are you sure that he was with Javier?"

"Yes."

"So, Dave is safe?" "Yes, don't worry. Javier wouldn't risk killing him, he knew better." "Good. I'm so worried." "Don't be," Shawn assured her, and she wished he was right.

## **Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA**

Chapter 64 Long before they finished their meal, they went to the living room and discussed more of their situation as Catherine marveled at the idea of Shawn knowing how to sketch and paint. He explained that he had become interested in art as a boy scout after earning the Art merit badge. Since his parents' passing, he had taken up recreation as a way of healing. Chuckling Shawn shared that he had become quite good at caricature drawing and had made a small number of admirers, especially the girls he had dated since God knows when. Catherine commented that she would love to see his work and asked if he wouldn't mind drawing her." Hell, it'll give us something to do," as she glimpsed over her shoulder, to imply the snow was still plummeting with wrath outside.

After she finished her research, Shawn grabbed a couple of flashlights from the pantry and set them up in the downstairs bathroom to provide additional lighting. He carried her notebooks, pens, and a bowl of sunflower seeds and peanuts into his mini office, which was adjacent to it, down a short hallway off the living room. Lastly, he went upstairs and brought down a stack of towels and washcloths to stock the bathroom, and with a smile, said it was ready for use.

“Wife, need help? I can surely undress you without a problem.”

“You wish!” “Come, give me a break. I’m too tired... cooking for your breakfast, you know.”

“Draw me first.”

“Promise?”

“Since when did you act like a child?”

“Since I married a childish beauty.”

“Hmmm tease,” Catherine smiled.

“I can do better than that!” Shawn smirked, which earned Catherine a loud laugh. At the door to the bathroom, Catherine smiled and thanked him again for his hospitality. “Just doing my good deed for the day,” and mentioned that he was an Eagle Scout, which really impressed her.

“Since when?”

“Since I married you.”

“Whatever!”

After about twenty minutes, she came out of the bathroom wrapped in a large bath towel. She ducked into the office and closed the door to change. Shawn joked from the sofa in the family room, “You left enough hot water for the dishes, right?”

Issuing a playful laugh, she closed the door to put clothes on, and it struck him how Catherine was so much like him, in personality and mannerisms. They were almost like twins. She came out a few minutes later dressed in a red cardigan turtleneck sweater and form-fitting blue trousers. She carried a pair of walking shoes, socks, along with a hairdryer and brush. As she sat down at the table, he rose from his seat and walked into the kitchen to begin cleaning the

dishes, as she put her socks and shoes on. Afterward, she inquired if she could use the outlet on the island to dry her hair.

While he was cleaning the dishes and she dried and brushed her short blonde hair, she mentioned that she knew he had called Eddie, and asked what he did other than sketching.” Oh, I do lots of things,” he smiled, as he dried the dishes and told her about Eddie’s plan. As he shared, he realized this was the first real conversation he had enjoyed with someone of the opposite s\*x, in quite a while.

After putting the hairdryer and brush back into her bag, she sat on the couch next to the fireplace and, glancing outside, mumbled, "S\*\*t! I don't believe it's still dumping! How can we ever leave?"

Glancing outside, Shawn estimated at least 12 inches of snow had fallen, and at the rate the flakes were coming down, several more could overlay the surface by evening at this rate." Well, if need be," he teased, "There's a guest room upstairs I can lend you while you lie naked in the bed and while I draw you. Naked! Ok? Naked!" "Seriously, Shawn?" "A man could dream, yes? Besides, I have seen enough. I even licked it, tasted it... and you."

"Oh, God! Mr. Richmond, stop being an a\*s." His laugh echoed the whole cottage. Then he went on to say that he had food and supplies for a few days, so they needn't be worried. Catherine rose and walked to the kitchen to make another cup of coffee and sat down

at the table and asked, "How long do you think we'd be snowed-in for?" "Well, the city highway is pretty good at clearing the streets, but going to the south is difficult, " and picking up his phone from the tabletop, he checked Eddie's email and closed it.

"Tomorrow," said an unhappy Catherine.

Giving a chuckle, Shawn sat down next to her after drying his hands and mumbled, "The city is likely out plowing the mains streets and highways now," and expanded that once they had been plowed, they would move to the side streets. Reaching out to give her hand a friendly pat, he added, "We should be able to travel out on time to Gretna Green village."

"Um-are you sure about Dave's safety?"

"Catherine, Eddie's men can handle rescuing him. But for now, um – let's enjoy our moment together here."

The feel of his strong hands against her skin made her smile. Catherine asked if she could see some of his work, and with an uncomfortable smile, he agreed. He went into the living room to obtain the sketchbook, and they sat on the sectional couch in the living room. While she appreciated his work, she asked all the who, what, where, when, and why questions one would expect, as she got to know this man better. She commented on several of the sketches, but on seeing the level of detail he achieved with caricatures and model sketches, she asked, "Would you mind drawing me, now?"

Shawn smiled and shifted positions again, once more lying on his back. He did draw her and with clothes on to Shawn's dismay. Soon afterward, Catherine, next to him, muttered in sleep and curled up next to him, as she laid her head on his shoulder, hugged his chest, and entwined her legs with his. Smiling, he reached down with his arm to slide his hand down the

smoothness of her back to her supple bottom.

In the dimly lit living room, he remembered how they spent the morning chatting, him drawing pictures of her and then playing board games. He learned a lot about her life and shared with her his own. All the while, the snow continued to fall outside. As he lay there caressing her back and kneading her firm buttocks, he looked back on how their relationship had revamped from boss-secretary to lover, as he drifted off into a slumber.

In the afternoon, Shawn made soup and sandwiches for them around noon, and she had offered to help clean everything up. As they worked together, she looked up at him and again thanked him for taking her in.

Smiling down at her, he had replied, "That's what a wife and husband do for each other," and she had reached out with a hand and half hugged his waist. The gesture sent a tingle through him. "You are not as bad as the newspaper said." She teased and Shawn had never been happier.

As the light faded, he lit numerous LED candles in the living room and stepped out onto the balcony to ignite his grill. The snow stopped falling as he was doing so. Catherine commented on the frigid air that had been let in and grabbed a quilt to wrap herself in, but she smiled when he conveyed the news that the storm appeared to have passed.

He said that he was going to start preparing their dinner and asked whether they liked steaks and roasted veggies, adding, "I had some filet minions marinating in the fridge,"

She was astounded by the treatment she was receiving, and he asked her again, "You know how to c\*\*k?"

"Of course,"

"When did you..."

"The caretaker must marinate it yesterday before he leaves." He then turned on the oven and the light above the cooktop to ensure that he had enough light to prepare everything.

"Would you like some wine?" She mumbled afterward.

Shawn eagerly accepted the drink and said he'd go retrieve a bottle from his little wine cellar. Catherine was intrigued because she hadn't seen one on their tour, and she was astounded that he had transformed the coat closet under the stairs into a perfectly functional wine room. He chose a bottle with a flashlight and offered it to her. When she saw the label, she exclaimed, "Holy f\*\*k!" and peered at it in the darkness to confirm that it was more than fifty years old.

"I've had many bottles of this vintage and decided this was a great occasion to drink one," she stated as he delicately handed the bottle back to him.

Bringing the bottle into the kitchen, he placed it on the counter and reached into a utensil drawer for a corkscrew. Finally, he took a pair of wine glasses from the cupboard.

"Hopefully, it's not vinegar," he teased sheepishly as the cork softly popped as he unstopped the bottle.

He gave her the corkscrew to sniff, and she claimed it smelled fantastic.

He poured a small amount of the dark crimson liquid into one of the glasses and handed it to her. She both wanted him to fill the glass after taking a sip, which he did with a smile. He

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poured himself a glass and raised it to toast, saying, "Here's to making a baby." "Are you f\*\*\*\*\*g serious?" Catherine asked. and gave him a tap. He only smiled. They sipped wonderful dry red wine while their steaks broiled and the peppers and squash roasted after being dressed with olive oil and pine nuts. The light in the vent fan above the cooktop began to flicker as they sat down to dinner. He excused himself and rose from the table, saving. "It seems like I need to switch tanks on the generator," and with a smile, "I'll be right back," as he walked for the garage.

It just took a few minutes, and they were soon enjoying their supper under the glow of LED candles. They each drank a second and third glass of wine, completely depleting the bottle. He went to get another bottle and opened it for them, and when he returned to the table, Catherine thanked him again for everything he'd done.

She took a sip of her wine in the dim flickering light of the LED lighted meal and laid the glass down, saying, "Shawn, I'd like to do something for you," looking at him with blue eyes that seemed incandescent in the darkness. "While you were out in the garage," she whispered huskily, "I decided to be the dessert for tonight's meal."

He answered happily, "That's great, what do you have in mind," as he lifted his glass for a drink, not completely understanding what was said and thinking she was going to bake dessert for them.

Catherine then remarked, provocatively licking the rim of her glass, "I thought it would be nice to play one more game after we have the kitchen cleaned up." He said with a smile, "Sure thing. What kind of game," He inquired as he took a sip of his wine. "Strip poker," Catherine said with a chuckle, causing him to gulp and spit as he realized what she meant.

“Ah... I adore this game, why now?” he mumbled after wiping his mouth and coughing. “Love this game already,” Catherine added.

## **Billionaire’s Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA**

Chapter 65 As Catherine drank from her glass, she added, “So shall we start or what? If the power doesn’t come back on, it’s going to get really cold.” She added, with a wicked smile, “What better way to warm up than sharing some body heat?”

Shawn nodded his head, smirked back and said, “Hmmm, making babies? I like making babies

“We’re playing games, Shawn, strip games, not making babies!” she rolled her eyes.

“B\*\*\*\*y the same.” He added and handed her the wine.

Catherine nodded and said, “That’s right.” She then reached across the table and clasped his hand. She mumbled that she was grateful that he had come to her rescue, and this was the least she could do in return. “Oh really? Yet, you didn’t go out when you escaped from Javier’s men?”

“Come on, Shawn. I thought you didn’t want to see me. That’s why I went to my brother. He is my family for f\*\*k sake.” “I am your family, Catherine!”

“Can we not talk about it now?”

“Fine, you win...but we will talk about it.”

She nodded and smiled. It’s been a long time since they argued, and long before office things and issues were their main topics of argument. Now, it’s Shawn’s possessiveness and overprotectiveness.

He then said, “I thought we could play down here and have a romantic evening in front of the fire, then go up and crawl into your bed to sleep.” So, what do you think, Shawn? She put her elbows on the table as she leaned forward and asked, “What are we waiting for?”

He looked like he was thinking about what she had said, so he lifted his glass and swallowed the contents in one gulp. Then he said, “That assumes I win,” and then said, “Okay, I’m in.”

Catherine raised her hands in victory and shouted, “Yes!” Then, as if to get serious, she muttered, “I think we’ll need to open another bottle, though.”

As he got up from the table, Catherine said, “Have a good win, husband, because you are going to eat my dust!”

Shawn added."Oh really? Or will I be eating something more that would make you scream? You know what they say about making assumptions. Right?" "Oh God, here we go again." She rolled her eyes.

As he went to get the new bottle of wine, he smiled widely and laughed at the risqué fun. "Yes, I do, and I'm going to eat you... if you win."

This made both of them laugh out loud as they finished their meal. They then worked together to clean the dishes and the kitchen, while they talked and laughed about things. When they heard a noise from the front of the house, they went to check it out. In the living room, they

looked out the bay window to the front yard and saw that a snowplow was slowly going down the street. "Well, that's a good sign," he said. In the next part of the conversation, he told Catherine that if a plow worked, that meant the county had also cleared the main roads in the area. She then said, "Hopefully, they'll turn on the lights." She then smiled up at him and said, "But not too soon enough for me to win and you to cry for how you lost." Before going upstairs, he had another laugh. It was when he came back to the family room, he saw that she had gathered the LED candles and put them all over the room to help light up the space. An intimate setting. He was amazed at how beautiful she looked in the flickering light, wrapped in the quilt.

Shawn felt excited about what the evening had in store for him. He felt something he hadn't felt in years: desire, passion, happiness, and even contentment.

He opened the new bottle of wine and brought everything into the living room with him. He took a seat next to her on the coffee table. He felt excited and happy to be there, sharing a wonderful moment with his accidental wife. She started taking her shoes and socks off as she said, "To save time, let's take them off." She then said, "That way we can start having fun right away."

He agreed with the idea, so he did the same. The deck was cut after the cards were shuffled and the cards were mixed. He refilled their wine and dealt them the first five cards of the game. Putting his thumbs together, he saw that he had two pairs of fours. When he looked up, he saw that Catherine was very focused on her hand. He removed three cards, and he asked, "What would you like?"

It was Catherine's turn. She flashed an Ace and asked for four cards, then dropped her discards on the quilt in front of her. He gave them their replacements, and when he picked up his saw, he saw that nothing had changed. 'C\*\*p,' he thought. As he looked at his hand, he looked at his wife smirking across from him and saw confidence in her.

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So, "What do you have?" He tried to hide his doubts that he would win the hand. Catherine showed off her hand and said, "I have three of a kind," showing three eights. "Well, s\*\*t," he grumbled as Catherine cheered and said, "Woohoo! Loser!" Let's have the shirt, big boy. I'll get it."

To show off his muscular arms and broad, hairless chest, he unbuttoned his checked flannel shirt. He then threw it on the sofa. Catherine clapped her hands and said, "Oh, Lala! I'm loving this game already!"

He went to the gym four times a week and worked in the yard to stay healthy. He was not embarrassed, so he curled one of his arms, which showed off the tight bundles of muscle just beneath his skin to her squealing delight. He smiled and thought to himself that he needed to lighten up and enjoy the moment, so he did just that. "Like what you see, wife?"

"Oh, yes! Mr. Richmond, sir!" She bit her lower lip and chuckled.

To keep things even, he took a drink of wine and gathered the cards. He then gave her the deck and said that, to be fair, they could both be dealers at the same time. She agreed right away. She took the cards and quickly shuffled them. When he looked at the cards, he saw that he had

three of a kind. She then dealt with them. He didn't want to smile, so he chose two of the things he didn't want to keep. Catherine took three and was clearly unhappy with her replacements. "F\*\*k!"

She muttered with disappointment, "Oh fine. Let's see your hand."

Catherine, who was down, moved a pair of twos. "Come on!"

A full house didn't bother Shawn, who said, "Well. Not bad." The three fives he had before had been joined by a pair of nines.

Catherine said, "F\*\*k! I knew it! Son of a b\*\*\*h," as she crossed her arms in anger under her b\*\*\*\*s. "OK, what do you want?"

Shawn scratched his chin and thought about what he could do. Finally, he said, "OK. Do you remember what we talked about when we talked about how much I love your buttocks? I'll take your pants, too," he smirked. She rolled her eyes, knowing exactly what he meant.

"OK! Big boy!" Catherine bent down and wiggled her hips as she pushed down her jeans, revealing a tiny, lacy pink thong. She then sat down and took each leg out of the clothes. He saw through the lace that her crotch was still clean-shaven, and the desire he felt again rose up inside of him as he watched her undress.



He told Catherine, "You asked to see my guns. The least you can do is show me your tush." This made Catherine laugh and snort. "Seriously, Shawn? Are you this childish?" "Only for you, wifey, only for you!" On her knees and facing away from him, she smiled. "Look over your shoulder and ask if you like what you see." She reached back with her free hand to pat a glut on the back. She moved her hips a little, which caused her bottom to move in a very seductive way. He thought she looked great and said so. "D\*\*n, sweetheart! You are giving me a hard time concentrating!" Her legs were spread out so far that he could see the soft mound of her v\*\*\*a at the top of her legs. Taking a sip from his glass, he said, "A very nice view." She laughed as she sat cross-legged and wrapped herself in the quilt.

During the next three hands, he was taken down to his undershorts, and Catherine lost her sweater. She made him do Chippendale-style strips and asked him to pose like a bodybuilder. He asked her to show off her underwear. Afterwards, she sat in the middle of the room facing him.

Then, again, he was amazed by her. He took a sip from his glass. Catherine's b\*\*\*\*\*s looked strong, but also perky and topped with small pink nipples that looked like little bumps. A piece of her bra that had a lot of gauzy lace made them look even more appealing to him. He felt himself becoming more upright and rigid as he looked at her.

When it was Catherine's turn to be the dealer, she shuffled the decks and dealt the cards, and when she did, she laughed and looked at Shawn and said, "Oh, baby? Is it getting a little hard to concentrate, because of the bulge in your underwear?"

As soon as he looked at the three eights, he laughed nervously and said, "That's great." She took another sip of wine and licked her lips. He peeled off the two that didn't match and dropped them on the floor.

He lost three. Then he picked up his cards, fanned them, laughed, and took another sip of wine. "Oh yeah!"

Somebody who wasn't sure of Catherine looked up at him and said, "Oh, sh\*t," as she raised her brow. She bit her lower lip. She said, "Warily, I say that I'm not going to do this."

Shawn smirked, "Let's see what you have."

She spread out her hand, and grumbled, "I have two pairs. Twos and fours, then." Smiles wide as he shows off his hand: "It looks like the view is going to get better and better." Shawn's three eights had been joined by two aces. "The house is full. Eights beat aces." He said, with a knowing look. "Oh yeah!" Catherine yelled, "Son of a f\*\*\*\*\*g, b\*\*\*h, this isn't fair." "Losing the nerve now, wife?"

"Hell no!"

In a rage, she straightened the bra's lacy straps and pushed them down from her shoulder. Before she could do anything else, she reached behind herself and unhooked the clasp, muttering a second curse. Finally, she took off the lacy bra and threw it on the sofa next to their other clothes. "I guess I need to show you a little something after all."