

Billionaire's Accidental Wife by C.ELLICA

Book 2-Chapter 1

Two months ago,

The palatial manor, three hours outside Paris, glittered like a jewel beneath the starlit night sky. Lights glowed from within the sprawling mansion and along the circular drive out front, where half a dozen sleek sports cars were parked on the cobblestones.

From Dave Brown's vantage point on a tree-studded hill five hundred yards away, he watched as a beautiful yellow Ferrari rolled up to the villa and took its place between a dark Veyron and a silver Pagani Huayra. Add in the pair of Lamborghinis, the Maserati, and another Ferrari, and there was well over ten million dollars worth of automotive luxury parked outside the late Alfonso Richmond III Alfonso's mansion. Plus a collection of cars worth twice as much that was hidden in the huge bays of the private garage of the alleged drug-dealing mob.

If nothing else, Alfonso and his criminal associates had impeccable taste in cars.

"Apparently, selling your soul to the devil pays well," he muttered into the wireless mic that linked him to the Brown Hunter's Office's command centre back in London. He has his very own company, which specialises in finding long-lost artefacts and treasure hunting. It was Shawn's idea to start his own company. After all, after their adventure in Thailand, they were given a massive amount of gold to compensate for their good deeds, and Shawn, being a billionaire, gave it all to him, which was still unknown to his sister. It had been a year since their wedding, and now his sister was five months pregnant. Dave smiled as he remembered their conversation last night with his niece, Mathea.

"Do you see what I'm seeing here, mate?"

"Visual recognised, Dave."

Tyler, his comrade, had a deep gravel voice that was seldom easy to read, and today was no exception. Not that Dave expected the intimidating IT specialist to appreciate Alfonso and his associates' fleet of good British machines.

And it didn't really matter.

The automobiles, the mansion, and everyone inside would be reduced to ash and flaming rubble in a matter of minutes.

It's a shame about the autos. "Status," Tyler said through the earpiece as Dave huddled down to view the approaching fireworks.

“The packages have arrived, and the last party guest has just arrived. We’re ready to go.” “Did you get the receipt? We don’t work for free, remember?” “Right here in my pocket,” he responded, pointing to the flash disc Tyler had mentioned. Dave had been inside Alfonso’s villa on a covert single mission to d*****d crucial computer data, then take out the target, twenty minutes before arriving at his observation post on the hill. According to new information gathered by the Hunter’s London headquarters, Hermano,

now the leader, was the European distributor of a dangerous drug that turned otherwise law abiding people into crime-obsessed murderers. This new drug, known as ‘gold coin’ on the street, was supposed to be much more potent than its predecessor which had killed countless young men and homeless people when it first struck the streets ten years earlier. Criminal outbreaks were on the rise again across Europe, owing to Alfonso and his associates with the terror mob, causing worry among an already uneasy society. The authorities had made it clear that they wanted the problem addressed at its source as soon as possible.

Dave was delighted to be chosen for the clandestine mission. It had been a pleasant surprise to find that Alfonso’s second in command, Hermano, had scheduled a private meeting for tonight. So, instead of looking for new lost artefacts, he helped the government with a secret mission, since his company had the best and most up-to-date covert technology for the job.

To that goal, four explosive devices capable of levelling an entire city block had been placed near Alfonso’s villa. All Dave had to do was set them off with a remote detonator, and Alfonso’s Russian associate would lose yet another crucial ally. The authorities were not going to stop until the entire organisation was demolished, and the cabal at its helm was identified and destroyed.

Dave glanced into the mansion with his field glasses. Although his vision was excellent, the lenses allowed him to focus on the lit window of Alfonso’s associate and his men assembled in the great salon. They greeted one another with a lot of laughter and back-patting, a lot of ingratiating grins and kowtowing from their underlings to the dark-haired, hawk-nosed Hermano. The gold coin merchant and his cronies had undoubtedly been handsomely compensated for their role in the recent rise in attacks. Dave couldn’t wait to deliver them all to their final destination tonight. “Light it up at your ready,” Tyler advised. Dave smiled behind his binoculars. “With pleasure.”

Glancing away from the meeting taking place inside the mansion, he reached to retrieve the remote detonator. Usually, he didn’t care about seeing a target die, but it was hard not to feel a little bit of satisfaction tonight when he crashed Hermano’s little party.

He brought the field glasses back up to his face-just in time to see that a woman had entered the room. The petite blonde wore a flashy golden dress that clung to her slender body like liquid silk. The neckline plunged low in front, the slit in the skirt slicing high up her leg, baring a lot of creamy thigh with each gliding step she took toward Hermano.

What the f**k?

Dave hadn't realised there was a female in the mansion. Not that he felt much sympathy for

anyone who was associated with a thug like Hermano. And not that it should stop him from pushing the button on the detonator. But still...

His thumb froze, hovering over the trigger.

"Unidentified female on the premises," he murmured into his mic. "Stand by, base."

"Standing by," Tyler said. Then he made a low, appreciative noise that might as well have

been a wolf-whistle, coming from the eternally inscrutable warrior.

Yeah, the girl was hot. Dave barely contained his own primal growl at the sight of all those slender curves poured into a column of golden silk. He'd long avoided blondes – for personal reasons of his own—but everything male in him responded to the sight of this one like a flame to gasoline.

He stared through the lenses, watching as every head in the room turned to look at her as she approached Hermano. As soon as she was close enough, the muscled arm snaked out to h**k her around the waist, pulling her roughly against him as his buddies grinned and chuckled.

More than one of the mob gathered in the room wore an expression of unabashed l**t as their boss crudely cupped the young woman's breast in front of them all. Still, the woman's face was covered with a delicate golden mask. A jab of disgust spiked through Dave's blood at Hermano's manhandling of the woman. "There was no mention of a female in the intel," Tyler said. "No, there wasn't." Dave's reply was clipped, irritation combined with this unwanted element of surprise. "The report specifically stated that Hermano is single and hates women. He is gay, so who the f**k is she?" "Collateral damage," Tyler replied evenly. "Pop the charges and get the hell out of there." Dave nodded, knowing that this was sound advice. But his thumb didn't move on the detonator. Something was starting to bother him about the woman the longer he stared at her... Something that gnawed at the perimeter of his memory. "I need a closer look." Without waiting for confirmation from his comrade, he set the detonator down in the soft grass and then tightened the focus on his binoculars. Not on Hermano or his men, but on her. The gorgeous blonde, whose heart-shaped face and pixie features seemed strangely, distantly familiar somehow, but sadly, the woman's face was not clear as she removed her mask and smiled at Hermano.

Which was impossible, considering this female was clearly Hermano's plaything. Then she turned around, to exactly where it was very clear on Dave's binoculars.

F**k!

The face that teased at the frayed edges of Dave's mind and his heart-had no place here. Not with criminals and killers like the ones assembled inside the villa that was wired to blow on his command.

Holy s**t. It couldn't be her. Tyler's voice sounded in his ear. "You got problems over there?"

Dave couldn't answer that. Not when his veins were filling with adrenaline and a sick feeling of apprehension was starting to take up space behind his sternum.

He brought the woman in closer, his eyes burning from the intensity of his unblinking stare. She was still caught within the cage of Hermano's thick arm, smiling indulgently as the leader showed her off like some kind of prize to his leering friends. Showing her off as if the b****d owned her.

F**k Don't let that be her.

"Status," Tyler demanded now. "What's going on?"

"I'm not sure. I think the woman is..." He drew in a breath, hoping like hell he was wrong. "Christ, it's Chelsea."

"What? Your ex?"

"Sort of, you can call it like that." After all, they had never talked or seen each other again since Shawn and Catherine's wedding.

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Chapter 2 Inside Alfonso's mansion, Chelsea held her composure until she had reached her private quarters on the mansion's second floor. Once inside, she leaned against the closed door and let her revulsion leak out of her in a shudder. At least she was getting better at the charade.

She doesn't have any choice but to play this game if she wants to know about the sudden death of her step-dad. Yes, the man was not perfect, but he raised her enough to know that he didn't just die for some unknown reason.

There was a time when she might have had to bite back a scream because the revulsion of Hermano touching her was too much. It had been a year since the old man's death, but still, she was at a loss of what really happened to him in Thailand, and she knew Hermano was the one to blame.

Her skin, however, crawled everywhere Hermano touched her. His strong fingers were still on her body, on her breast. His harsh smack to her backside wounded her dignity as much as it did her a*s. She despised being paraded in front of his cronies as his personal show pony, made to look and act as if she belonged to a gang of lunatics. To be fair, he did, in many ways, own her. Her existence. Her liberty. Hermano possessed everything, regardless of how much she disliked him. He may have had her body as well if she hadn't persuaded him that taking that part of her would cost him the one thing he couldn't afford to lose. So far, the threat had kept her out of his reach, but she knew he'd been tempted to put her to the test. She simply hoped that if he tried, she wouldn't kill him. Because no matter how brilliant she pretended to be in dealing with Hermano, he always had one last, horrible card to play.

And she had no choice but to serve him as long as he held that over her head. She could never get away from him, not even in death. He'd made sure of it.

Chelsea knew better than to wait any longer. While he entertained his boot-licking pals in the big salon, he'd sent her away to retrieve the list of his associates. They were rejoicing over a hefty reward from a shipment of gold coins to the United States and the United Kingdom—a drug that ruined the minds of their own kind, the mob, turning them into blood-addicted monsters with just a small amount. They didn't care if their unexpected gain came at the expense of human and young lives. She had learnt a long time ago that Hermano's hunger knew no limitations. Neither did his rage. That her beauty had helped him amass his growing fortune, and the power that came with it, made Chelsea want to retch. How often had she thought about giving him a false name? False information? How many times had she dreaded that her help would one day prove useless? Not that seducing her enemies was difficult; after all, she was Helen of Troy's beauty rival.

But she hadn't deceived him, not once.

And, thankfully, her information had never been wrong. Either of those failings would come at the cost of innocent lives. Not her own, but the people she cared about most in the world. The only family she has left now

It was those precious lives she held close in her heart as she walked over to the cabinet across the room and retrieved the list Hermano would need downstairs. In reality, she was just biding her time, gathering information and evidence to take the b*****d to his knees soon. She sighed and secretly took a picture from her phone, then left it in the bin for her accomplice, the c**k, to take out later.

She cradled the folder in her palms and drew it out of the cabinet. Her face stared back at her in the reflection in the polished golden mirror — but that wasn't all. Behind her stood the ominous shape of someone else.

Aman

Tall, immense. An intruder dressed entirely in black tactical gear. Chelsea sucked in a startled breath.

Fear streaked through her, but before her shriek could rip up the back of her throat, a broad palm came up to cover her mouth. Oh, God.

The folder was out of her grasp, thudding onto the thick rug. Muscular arms caged her from behind, immobilising her. She stumbled in her high-heeled sandals, helpless against the heat of a very strong, very male body. This wasn't any of the other men gathered in the salon with him either, although there was no question that the male trapping her in his unbreakable hold was Breed. "Don't scream, Chelsea."

He spoke right up against her ear. His growled command was spoken in a deep baritone that caressed her nerves.

He knew her name. How? Who the hell was he? Where had he come from?

She struggled and fought to break free, but he wouldn't let go. He was much too strong, and none of her squirming or resisting was getting her anywhere. All her grunts and cries for help were snuffed out by the hand that was still sealed firmly across her lips.

Trapped, she could only stand there, her breath rushing out of her nose in panicked gusts while terror wrapped around her heart like a vise.

"Be calm. I'm not going to hurt you."

Did he think she was a fool? She didn't believe him for a second, not when she could feel the lethal power radiating off his big body. Whoever this man was, he was beyond dangerous, and she did not doubt that his only business in the villa was death.

She groaned, trying futilely to pull away from him in another burst of desperation. Her heart was speeding, banging against her rib cage as if on the verge of exploding. Even though she was scared, she felt like she was starting to recognise something. She knew it was impossible, this strange feeling that this intruder was no stranger at all. Her

blood was still racing and cold with terror, but beneath the fear was a growing sense of familiarity.

A name skated across her memory, one she had tried for years to ban from her thoughts and her heart.

Dave?

No. It couldn't be him.

The beautiful, golden-haired b****d she had known all those years ago had been a scholar, an artist, not a soldier. He would have no business in a place like this, among thugs like the ones gathered downstairs. Then again, there was a time when she'd have said the same thing about herself. "I'm going to remove my hand from your mouth now," he murmured. As he spoke, his breath skimmed warmly against her cheek and along the side of her neck. She shivered from the feeling and was surprised to realise how much he still meant to her after all these years.¹

Because, yes, she did know that low, velvet voice.

Just as she knew the scent that enveloped her as she stood immobilised in his arms. Heaven helps her, but she had carried the scent of him, the sound of his voice, in a private corner of her heart since she was a teenage girl. "Don't be afraid, Chelsea. I didn't come here to harm you. Nod your head if you understand." She nodded, and his grip on her relaxed. His palm fell away from her lips, leaving a coldness in its wake. Chelsea slowly turned around in his slack hold. "Oh, my God." The words leaked out of her with a disbelieving sigh. "What the hell, Dave?"