

Your Guise 1161

Chapter 1161

Esther turned to Finnegan, her eyes full of hope, waiting for him to share his plan.

But Finnegan just snorted. "Don't poke your nose into it. All you need to know is that you'll be saved." Then, he walked away back to his study, not wanting to talk more.

Esther watched him go, feeling something wasn't right. She couldn't figure out why he suddenly became angry.

He was just as weird as he was back when they were younger.

* Pearl and Richard drove along and found lots of strange things blocking the road.

Richard thought it over and said, "I think the people from the nearby village put these here to prevent people from coming and going easily." Since it was dark, they didn't dare drive fast. They moved slowly, worried they might run into something dangerous.

But inside, Pearl was getting more and more anxious. "I think they've taken Esther to the village. Something bad might happen if we take too long to get there." Richard looked serious. "If that's the case, Esther might already..." "I believe in her," Pearl said, taking a deep breath to calm herself. "She'll try to protect herself." Richard remained silent but feared the worst.

After three or four more hours, they finally reached a small village hidden deep in the mountains, following a rough mountain road.

Pearl and Richard parked the car in a forest outside the village to keep it hidden. They covered it up to avoid drawing attention.

There were only a few villagers with farming tools since it was still early.

Luckily Pearl and Richard were quick and managed to stay swney sight. Content belongs to Śwof "It's too troublesto look for her by checking each house," Pearl said, feeling overwhelmed by the similar looking houses. "If we search this way, we don't know what might happen to her by the twe find her." Content belongs to Św"Why don't we split up? Maybe we can get sclues." Pearl observed the nearby buildings and found them familiar. "I feel like I've seen this place before." Richard gave her a serious look. "Have you been here before?" Pearl shook her head. "No, never. But these houses look familiar. Wait, I remember now. Have you read a called Village Wildness?" It was unlikely Richard had read a story about a college girl being kidnapped to a mountain village, but to her surprise, he nodded. "Yes, I have." "You read that?" Richard slowly explained, "A friend of mine wrote it and askedto give it a read. So, I did." "Do you still remember the plot?" Looking around, Richard got what she was hinting at. He glanced at the foggy sky and started, "The village had low houses with odd-et kid-like writing on red brick walls, like secret codes. There was a long road leading into the village lined with low poplar trees..." He stopped there.

And sure enough, there were poplar trees on both sides of the road.

Chapter 1162

"Art is born from real life. I think this story might be based on real events," Pearl said as she gently touched the poplar trees beside the road, seeming to confirm her thoughts. "Your friend must have been here." Richard looked doubtful. "It's been a long tsince I last talked to him. I'll try reaching out." He pulled out his phone, but unfortunately, the area had a poor signal. They moved closer to a signal tower and finally connected to the internet.

Richard found the number he hadn't called in a long tand dialed it. After a short wait, someone answered.

"Hey, Rick. What can I do for you?" The voice on the other end was calm and steady.

Richard frowned. "I'm curious about where you found the inspiration for your book, Village Wilderness." "Why are you asking about this now?" The person on the phone sounded surprised, caught off guard.

"A friend of mine was kidnapped and taken to a place in the mountains. It looks just like the place you described in your book." The person on the line then becvary serious.

"Is your friend named Esther?" Richard was stunned. "You know?" "Where are you now?" Richard looked around and described their location.

The person's voice turned solemn. "You're in that village now, aren't you?" Realizing the implication, Richard asked, "Are you here too?" "I'll be there to meet you in ten minutes." True to their word, ten minutes later, a cloud of dust heralded someone's A handsfigure stepped out of it. SW Pearl squinted at the newcomer but remained silent.

"It's been a long while, Finn," Richard greeted with a smile.

Finnegan, however, had a blank expression. He nodded, glanced Pearl, , and then his gaze settled on swno Noticing his look, Richard introduced her. "This is Pearl, my wife." "I know her," Finnegan responded, puzzling Richard.

"We met at a conference for writers." Writers? Richard scrutinized Pearl, who quickly looked away.

"I got bored and wrote something on a whim," she said.

Finnegan's expression softened into a smim? Even though you the first since their 9.

"On the top prize?" Pearl gave an embarrassed smile and then fell silent.

Richard, accustomed to his wife's surprises, turned back to Finnegan. "What are you doing here?" "I'm the village secretary." * Privacy

Chapter 1163

Pearl sighed inwardly at the sight of Finnegan's simple clothes. Despite his plain look, his elegant nature shone through.

However, she didn't forget why she was there. "Ugh... Where's Esther?"

Finnegan looked back the way he came. "At my house. Let's go."

Then, he added, "This village has some rough folks, but you're alone and dressed like that. Aren't you afraid of being robbed?" Pearl and Richard looked down at their clothes. Finnegan had a point. Their attire could attract thieves if they weren't careful.

But they had no time to waste. They hurried to Finnegan's house before more people came out.

At the house, they found Esther asleep. It made sense; she had been stressed all night.

Finnegan poured water for them and sat down nearby. "Are you guys here to rescue her?"

Richard nodded. "Yeah, she's our friend."

"She's been safe here. No one has hurt her," Finnegan assured them.

Pearl felt grateful to hear this.

"But..." Finnegan seemed hesitant. "Could you guys stay for a while and help us out?"

He was implying a bigger problem.

Pearl agreed without hesitation. "You've been kind to Esther. We'll do what we can to help."

Finnegan looked worried. "It might be tough, and we don't have all the details. It could get dangerous."

Pearl smiled, confident. "Richard and I can handle a fight."

"Not you guys."

Pearl was shocked. "Who is it?"

It couldn't be...

"Esther."

Pearl frowned. "I'm sorry, but I can't say yes. Esther can't defend herself, that's why she was kidnapped. We can't put her in danger, but I can help in other ways."

Finnegan looked sad. "I know. But I went to school with her. I can't put her at risk. But... she's perfect for this because she's famous."

It seemed Finnegan was sincere, so Pearl decided to hear him out.

"I became the secretary here to take down this human trafficking ring. The village is in on it, even the police. It's tough to beat."

Pearl had anticipated that, nodding. "And?"

"A cop is pretending to be a kidnapped college student to help me. We plan to catch the criminals. But then Esther got kidnapped too."

Finnegan sighed and looked at them

seriously. "Here's my idea. If at

famous person like Esther goes missing, I'll get a lot of attention. We can use that to bring more people to help us. We'll tell everyone where this village is to get more support. Then, we might arrest them all."

Pearl understood but saw a big problem. "But what if the bad guys go after Esther for revenge?"

If Esther's situation messes up the

bad guys plans, they might try to

harm Ker to stop anyone from messing with their human trafficking business.

It was clear they were dealing with very dangerous people.

Chapter 1164

Finnegan was in a tough spot. He knew he couldn't take any chances with Esther's safety, so he decided to hold off on making any decisions for now. Esther woke up while they were talking. She got out of bed, walked out of the room, and saw her friends. She started crying. "Why did you guys come?" She knew Pearl would track her down quickly, but she didn't expect it to be so soon.

"We're here to take you back home," Pearl said, gently messing up Esther's hair. "Did anyone here give you a hard time?"

"No, Finnegan's been really nice to me," Esther replied with a shy smile. "But are we leaving now?"

Pearl was about to say yes, but then she remembered what Finnegan had said and suddenly didn't know what to say. Seeing Pearl hesitate, Esther asked, "Is something wrong?"

Pearl looked uneasy. "Finnegan said... he needs your help with something. It might be risky, so we're still thinking it over."

Esther was stunned. She had assumed it was something serious but said lightly, "That's fine. There's a chance nothing bad will happen to me."

Esther was so easygoing about it, which made Pearl feel bad because she knew Esther was just being kind.

"You're too nice for your own good," Pearl said.

"It's okay. I might be sold to some old b*stard if it weren't for Finnegan," Esther responded, showing her gratitude. Pearl, seeing how determined Esther was, agreed to go along with the plan.

Pearl and Richard decided to stay with Esther at Finnegan's large house to make sure she was safe.

They even spread the news faster to support their plan.

Before long, almost everyone in Enswood learned that Esther had been kidnapped and sold to a remote village.

Initially, people thought it was just a

wild story to get attention. But when

Esther didn't show up or say anything for a while, everyone started to worry. It turned out she really had been kidnapped! S

Her fans were upset and started organizing a rescue mission. Surprisingly, someone figured out where she was being held.

But Pearl had actually leaked that information on purpose.

However, it was a remote village, and charging in recklessly could be dangerous. So, the women stayed behind while the men went to rescue Esther.

The online buzz about the rescue

was overwhelming. Pearl couldn't believe how many people were willing to help. In just three days, twenty thousand people showed up.

Eventually, the villagers found out that the beautiful college student they had taken was actually a famous star.

Chapter 1165

On top of that, the famous star's fans wanted to go to their small village because they were angry.

And so, the people in the village started saying that Esther was bad luck.

One day, a lot of them went to see Finnegan early in the morning. They found him and said, "Mister Finnegan, who is this woman you brought here? Why has she brought so much trouble to our village?"
"Yeah, we should get rid of her. If not, those fans wouldn't stop saying we've kidnapped their idol."

"We're just farmers. What can we do if they come?"

"We must get rid of Esther!"

"Get rid of Esther!"

Everyone started shouting. Finnegan, instead of rushing to respond, calmly looked at everyone and asked, "Who told you Esther is a famous person?"

"Miss Reina and her gang," one farmer replied.

"And how do they know?"

The farmer looked uncomfortable for a moment. "They know because they often go to big cities, bring women back, and sell them to us as wives."

"So, you're saying they're the ones who bring women here to sell?"

The villagers didn't realize Finnegan was trying to sound them out and just nodded.

"Yeah, that's what they do."

Finnegan chuckled. "And do you think that's okay?"

The villagers stopped talking. After a bit, one bravely said, "We know it's wrong and illegal. But we're poor, can't find wives, and nobody wants to marry us because we don't have much education."

Many men in the village believed

having sons was very important, so there were more men than women. Since it was hard to find women, they sometimes went to other places to buy women to marry and have sons.

But these women often didn't want to stay. They tried to run away and were treated badly if they were caught trying to escape.

Those men felt that the women would become obedient once they were beaten up.

One big, tough-looking man picked

his ear and asked impatiently, "Mister Finnegan, what does this have to do with the problem? We bought a woman named Esther by mistake, and she has lots of

fans.

Shouldn't we focus on getting rid of her?"

The village was small, with just a few hundred homes and a few thousand people. But Esther had tens of thousands of fans. The villagers were scared of what might happen if all these fans came to their village wanting revenge.

"I'm telling you this as a lesson," Finnegan said. "You took Esther, and she has lots of fans. What if one day you take someone even more famous and important?" Someone muttered, "It's fine as long as they don't find out."

Chapter 1166

"Can you guarantee no one will find out? This time, they found out." Finnegan wanted to teach that man a hard lesson, but that man just dusted off his clothes and stood up.

He knew this man, Zayn Russell. Zayn was mean and violent, and he was known as someone you shouldn't mess with in the town. Also, he dropped out of school when he was in third grade and had been involved in illegal stuff in the village.

Hardly anyone stood up to him because he was strong.

Zayn smirked. "Mister Finnegan, maybe you should be asking yourself why?"

"What do you mean?" Finnegan narrowed his eyes at Zayn.

Zayn cleared his throat and turned to everyone. "Folks, think about it. We've done this many times before and never had trouble. So, why now?"

"Why?"

Those villagers were confused and couldn't figure it out.

"It's because someone snitched on us, and it's very likely our dear Mister Finnegan." Suddenly, Zayn turned around and pointed at Finnegan. "Why did he choose Esther out of everyone? Because he knows her. She's the spy he brought in!"

A spy...

Now the villagers got it. "So, you're saying Finnegan knew who Esther was. It wasn't by chance Esther ended up here. He did it to trap us!"

"Exactly. If I'm guessing right, that's the truth. And he probably told others that Esther was here."

Zayn turned again, his eyes icy. "Mister

Finnegan, why don't you get

explain? How did Esther get here? And how did outsiders find out?"

As Finnegan saw the farmers

the fiercer, he tried to calm

them down. "I had nothing to do with it didn't tell anyone

here."

"That's hard to believe! We'll only trust you if you can show real proof you didn't tell!"

Finnegan was stuck. He couldn't prove his innocence.

He knew that Zayn had always disliked him. But he couldn't think of a good response right away.

When the villagers noticed

Finnegan's silence, they thought met

was guilty. So, they started accusing

him.

"Mister Finnegan, we thought highly of you. We always respected you. But you betrayed us!"

"You let us down. We didn't think you'd side with outsiders!"

"Let's catch him and make him talk!"

"Yes, let's find out the truth!"

Although Finnegan had always been calm, he frowned at this. "Are you going against me?"

Chapter 1167

Zayn laughed. "You're not from here, so this isn't about fighting back. We just want to get rid of an outsider!"

The farmers didn't really get it. All they knew was that Finnegan had been fooling them for ages. They felt they should grab and interrogate him.

The ones standing up front were itching to move.

"Mister Finnegan, there's no use fighting it. You're not going to escape." Zayn whistled and looked toward the house. "I've heard Esther is a looker. How about you hand her over for a bit of fun?"

Next to Zayn, a man slowly raised his hand. "I've seen that lady. She's as beautiful as they come. She's so fair and frail, a real delicate one."

The idea of being with such a beautiful woman was new to them. Finnegan realized things were turning ugly when he saw their greedy looks. Then, out of nowhere, someone from inside the house opened the door and pulled Finnegan inside, quick as a flash.

The villagers were left gaping. When Finnegan disappeared, they started shouting.

"Where did he go? Did he run away?"

"I saw someone pull him inside. Esther's gotta be in there!"

Zayn took charge. He played with a piece of grass, daydreaming about having his way with Esther and being determined to sleep with her. "Alright, everyone, cool it. They can't escape if they're in the house. Let's think of how to get them out."

Someone yelled, "This house is made of wood. Let's set it on fire!"

But Zayn was still fixated on Esther. The idea of setting the place on fire made him scowl. "Hold up. If we kill him, what will we say if the

ov

authorities come asking?"

Then, another voice chimed in, "The house is wooden. Let's break it down with tools."

Zayn nodded and clapped the man on the back. "Good thinking. Let's grab something to break the door down."

So, the farmers went off to fetch their tools. It was easy to get the farmers together. Before long, they returned with shovels and axes in hand. "Let's smash it!" Zayn instructed, and they started hitting the house hard.

Inside, Pearl and the others couldn't believe their ears and frowned.

"Have they lost their minds? What are they after? Are they crazy? They're breaking the law. Don't they know that?" Esther panicked and screamed. She couldn't believe such foolish people existed.

"Right, they don't know any better. And nobody's taught them it's wrong." Finnegan sighed deeply, feeling trapped.

He'd only been there half a year, but it was his first time witnessing them trying to kidnap and sell young women.

At first, those human traffickers kept

their distance because he was new. But as time went on, he saw what was happening and felt completely powerless.

Chapter 1168

Finnegan went to Reina, the human trafficker, because his comrade was among the kidnapped women. Then, he ended up buying all three women to save them. Richard finally understood Finnegan's earnest intention. "It's okay. I understand. You can't fix this big problem by yourself."

Suddenly, there was a loud banging on the door, which sounded terrifying.

"They're trying to break in. What do we do?" Esther had never been so scared in her life.

Pearl gently patted Esther's back to comfort her, then asked Richard, "How many people are outside?"

"Not too many. Around twenty to thirty."

Pearl thought for a moment. "Why don't we go outside and deal with them?"

Richard shook his head, thinking it was a good idea. "I don't think that's a good plan. Even if we deal with this group, more will just come later." Pearl had another idea. "Wait, I have something that might work."

She showed them a bottle of medicine. "My mentor gave me this. It's supposed to make people fall asleep for a little while, but I haven't tried it yet." Richard's eyes lit up. "That's brilliant. Finnegan, do you have anything we can spray it with?"

Finnegan found a sprayer that was used for mosquitoes, emptied and cleaned it, then brought it over. "This is all I've got, but it should work."

Pearl mixed the medicine with water

to make

it. It

liquid. "I'll go out and

uld knock them out in a

a minute." about

Pearl was ready to go, but someone grabbed her hand.

"No, it's too risky. Let me do it." Naturally, Richard was worried about her going alone.

But Pearl was confident. "I'm good at defending myself. And did you forget I'm a karate champion?"

Richard never doubted her fighting

skills; he was just worried about her safety. The bad guys outside were dangerous, and if they hurt Pearl, he would feel terrible and might even wipe the village off the map.

While they were arguing, Finnegan stepped in and grabbed the sprayer.

"They're here for me. If I go outer.

they let down their guard. I should be the one to go."

He prepared himself and shouted, "Stop!"

When the people outside heard Finnegan, they stopped.

Zayn yelled back, "Mister Finnegan, come out and bring Esther. We won't touch your house if you do."

Esther trembled when she heard that. It seemed they were after her.

Finnegan tried to calm her down. "Don't worry. I won't let them take you."

"But what if you get hurt?" Esther's lips paled, and her voice shook. Finnegan found it amusing. "Are you worried about me?"

Chapter 1169

Esther couldn't believe Finnegan was actually smiling. She was upset. "What do you mean? We've been friends since we were kids. I'm obviously worried about you. How can you just smile when things are so dangerous?"

Finnegan looked sad for a moment and looked away, muttering, "So, it's because we're just friends."

Then, he raised his head and seemed to shake off the sadness. "Well, there's not much we can do right now. But I might be able to make things better if I go out now. And hey, make sure to lock the door behind me."

With that, Finnegan left the house.

Pearl and the others noticed the arguing had stopped quickly.

Then, there was a knock at the door.

Esther rushed to open it and saw Finnegan standing there with a grin.

She nearly failed to hold her tears back. "You scared me."

Finnegan softly touched her hair. "Don't worry. I'm not that weak."

Pearl and Richard were initially concerned, but seeing Finnegan handle the situation so calmly made them think he might be a lot better at fighting than they thought-maybe even as good as Pearl. Esther, on the other hand, thought Finnegan had narrowly escaped death and was waiting for him, worried sick.

"I took care of the troublemakers outside. But we should expect more people to show up. We need to leave soon," Finnegan said.

Initially, he wanted to talk things through with the villagers, but he quickly realized they were beyond reasoning.

Pearl agreed with Finnegan and suggested they start getting ready to leave.

But then, Esther realized someone was missing. "We're one person short. Where's the other girl?"

She remembered the third woman, the shy one who hadn't been seen much lately, especially that morning.

Amelia

early thiked uneasy. "She went out

to stop

morning, around six. I tried

O her, but she insisted sheet

fine and asked to be left alo

be

"Should we just leave her behind?" Esther couldn't bear the thought of abandoning the woman. But given the danger they were in, staying might mean they wouldn't be able to leave at all.

Pearl, seeing Esther's concern, offered, "Why don't you guys leave first? I'll go look for her."

"No way we're leaving you behind," Richard said, refusing Pearl's suggestion.

Suddenly, they heard some noise

outside. The missing woman was there, pointing at Esther and saying, "It's them. They told others about Esther!"

Chapter 1170

Amelia was closer to that woman. When she saw what the woman did, she frowned and asked loudly, "Roxy, do you have any idea what you're doing?"

"Yes, I do. And I know what you all are up to."

Roxy Wright turned around and smiled at a man behind her. "Uncle Andrei, you guys guessed right. This woman is an undercover cop!"

Uncle?

Amelia and the others were still confused when Esther, feeling a bit shocked, asked, "He's your uncle?"

"You didn't see that coming, did you? I'm from this village too." Roxy looked proud as she fixed her hair. "Good thing my uncle is clever. He figured out one of you was a cop. So, he had me act like I was a college student who got kidnapped to blend in. If not, we never would've caught on that there was a cop here."

Roxy was quite exhausted from pretending there. If her uncle hadn't promised to help her marry Finnegan after all this, she wouldn't have agreed to such a tough job.

She still could feel the slap she received when she was chosen for this.

"Alright, I've spilled the beans. And don't even think about escaping. It won't work."

The man behind Roxy, with a smile that quickly turned mean, said, "Yeah, just stay put. We'll take these two lovely ladies as our wives. As for the cop..."

His expression darkened. "We'll kill her in the mountains!"

Amelia went pale and started to shake behind the others. Being a rookie, she had no clue how to handle this situation.

"Mister Andrei, maybe we can discuss this?" Finnegan asked.

Meanwhile, Pearl took a moment to look around. The village chief was here, so it was no wonder there were so many people around.

"We have nothing to discuss. Since you were sent by the higher ups, we won't harm you. Well, how about

thrry my niece, and we a

forget all this."

Hearing this, Roxie lowered her head shyly.

"But you have to let us handle the cop," Andrei added.

"What if I refuse?"

"You don't have a say in that," Andrei said, laughing, and his men held their weapons tighter.

Then, a couple of his men charged to show their strength.

Pearl and Richard were ready. As the

two

knocked

their knives away and sent them to the ground with punches.

The skinny and weak villagers stood no chance.

Seeing his men losing, Andrei yelled, "Attack them! I want to see how tough they are!"

His men, seeing their friends on the ground, were scared but still ran forward because there were many of them.

But just a

w steps in, they were

daway before they could

get close. A bunch of them efkest

on the ground, wincing.

"Is that all you've got?"

up