

## **Your Guise 1171**

### Chapter 1171

Pearl stomped on the man's chest and wrapped her leg around him.

The man cried out in pain. "Please, miss, I didn't mean to do this. Our leader made us do it. Let me go, it hurts. Please, stop."

"Be quiet!"

The man's face twisted in pain, but he stopped yelling.

Andrei looked on, worried. He hadn't expected his men to falter so easily. Still, he didn't give up hope and kept looking around.

Suddenly, arrows whizzed by, hitting each of his men.

"Watch out, it's an ambush!" Pearl shouted, and everyone quickly ducked for cover.

Esther was a bit slow to react and saw an arrow heading straight for her. Just then, someone stepped in front of her, taking the arrow hit.

She heard a groan as Finnegan slumped over her. "Oh no, Finnegan!"

The man turned pale as Esther's eyes filled with tears. "Why did you jump in front of it?"

"What would happen if I didn't?" Trying to lighten the mood, Finnegan wiped her tears. "Hey, don't cry. You don't look good when you cry."

Esther didn't think he could still joke at a time like this.

Pearl and Richard looked around and

With noticed someone on the roofet

, then Pearl grabbenet

a

stone and threw it at him.

"Ah!"

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Hit in the eye, the archer lost his balance and fell, landing with a thud. Blood pooled around his head.

"He's... he's gone," Andrei realized.

He'd seen death before, but it had never been someone from his own village. Worried about panic

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spreading, he tried to keep everyone calm "It's just one person. Stay calm."

Pearl scoffed. "You don't even care about your own people."

Feeling his authority slipping, Andrei grew angrier at Pearl. "What right do you have to interfere?"

Noticing Finnegan's serious wound,

Pearl didn't want to delay any

further. "If you don't let us leave now, Mister Andrei, you might lose your position as village chief," she

iel

warned, drawing a knife and holding

it to his neck.

Andrei had never felt such danger before. The cold blade made him sweat. "Let's calm down and talk. What do you want?"

"I made it very clear. Let us go."

"Um..." Andrei hesitated. "But what will I tell my people?"

The knife pressed closer. "I'll bring you along to my grave then!"

Chapter 1172

Andrei shook in fear. "Take it easy, take it easy. Let's talk."

Pearl glanced at him. "You're going to let us go?"

"Let them leave," Andrei told his men.

Although his men listened, they were upset about letting their catch escape, so they just stood there quietly but with clear annoyance.

"What are you all waiting for? Move!" Andrei shouted because he was scared for his life.

The men then moved aside to create a pathway.

"Alright, I've got them to move. You can let me go now," Andrei said, trying to smile but looking worried.

"That's not enough. We need a car."

That request was too much. The village was not rich, and the only car belonged to the village leader. Andrei was not pleased that Pearl wanted to take it.

"We've got just one car here. That's not going to happen."

Pearl raised an eyebrow. "You've only got one life as well."

Facing her threat, Andrei could only let out a sigh. "Fine, I'll lend it to you." He pulled out a set of keys from his pocket and handed them over reluctantly. Once Pearl had the keys, she stepped back, still keeping Andrei close.

They reached the car, and Pearl asked Richard to help Finnegan into the car then Esther got in. She then

kicked the village leader,

fell to

the ground in pain.

Pearl quickly got into the car and sped off.

Once it seemed safe, the villagers gathered their courage. "Are you okay, chief?"

"Bunch of useless idiots. How could you let her treat me like that?" Andrei scolded them, giving each a slap.

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"Should we go after her then?"

"Absolutely!" Andrei took a deep breath, trying to stay calm. "If you don't catch her, you'll regret it."

His men, wanting to redeem themselves, hurried off.

The road ahead was full of hills and hard to drive on because of the twists and turns.

As Pearl drove, she felt like they were getting further away from the village.

"Are we going the right way, Pearl? I don't think this leads to the city." Esther wasn't sure of the direction, but it looked like they were heading toward a mountain, which gave her a bad feeling.

Pearl glanced outside and frowned. "I'm not sure either. I'm just going by memory."

She had made markers while on their way in and was trying to follow those.

Esther carefully suggested, "Maybe we should try a different route. This doesn't feel very safe."

Chapter 1173

Based on Andrei's personality, he and his folks had set up traps, expecting to catch the group. Many would be lying in wait for them.

Pearl was about to speak, but Finnegan, struggling to stay conscious, weakly interjected, "Don't go a different route."

"Why not?" Esther was confused.

"Even if there might be ambushes along the way, other paths could be just as dangerous. Plus, we're not sure if they actually lead out of here."

"That's a good point."

Richard's expression changed. "I don't think it's that simple."

"Why do you say that?"

"Have you seen anyone chasing us?"

Esther shook her head. "No."

"It means they have something bigger for us."

They had no idea what the stupid villagers might do, but they felt danger looming.

To avoid any traps, Pearl slowed down the car for a better look. Suddenly, she hit the brakes hard, causing everyone to jerk forward.

"Why did we stop?"

"Look over there."

Right after Pearl's warning, a voice called

ig, "Enough running. my warnings, so now out

I'm

done being nice."

MS

Andrei, who was cowering a while ago, stood there with his gang,

armed with axes, hammers, and.net

other tools. They blocked their path, looking menacing.

Esther looked terrified. "How did they catch up? We were in a car!"

Finnegan explained calmly, "They know the area better than us, so they took shortcuts."

"What do we do now? Get out and let them catch us?"

Pearl gripped the steering wheel. "No, we've come too far to give up now."

"Finnegan needs emergency treatment, or he might not make it," Esther pointed out, worried about Finnegan.

"But they outnumber us. We can't win against them."

Esther was devastated, never imagining she'd end up in such a situation.

Just as Pearl was about to leave the car, Esther protested, "What are you doing, Pearl? There are too many of them."

"I have a plan," Pearl reassured her with a smile.

Richard joined Pearl outside the car to back her up. Both of them faced the hostile group, standing firm.

"You managed to catch up all the way here." Pearl calmly crossed her arms, unfazed.

Seeing Pearl so composed infuriated

Andrei.

With his men backing him, Andrei felt bold. "Let's see if you're still so arrogant when I get my hands on you."

Chapter 1174

"You seem pretty sure of yourself, Mister Andrei. We'll see who's going to be in trouble."

Pearl glanced sideways, and suddenly, about twelve strong-looking men in black appeared. "Grab them," she commanded.

The men rushed toward Andrei at her command.

Andrei, caught off guard by Pearl's backup, turned pale. "Where did these guys come from?"

"I left a trail on purpose. They've been tracking us for a few days, and now they've found us," Pearl said with a smirk. "Now it's your turn to face the music." Aside from looking much stronger, the men outnumbered Andrei's group, causing Andrei to plead, "This is all a big misunderstanding. I just came here to see you off." Esther burst out laughing.

"You're a terrible liar." Pearl raised her brows. "If you were really just seeing me off, you'd act like it."



Frantically, Andrei pulled out some hundred-dollar bills. "Will this cover it? It's all I have." Although it hurt him to part with the money, he thought it was worth it to save his skin.

Pearl instructed her men to take the money and then tossed it to the ground. "Who do you think you're trying to bribe? Money isn't what I want."

Andrei's heart ached to see his money thrown away like that.

Pearl then pointed at the mountains. "I want you to free all the people you've abducted."

Andrei felt trapped. "But they've

already been given to others. If we take them back, the villagers will be furious!" He shrugged, acting as though his hands were tied.

"If you can't do this, you shouldn't be the chief."

One of the men threatened Andrei with a knife.

"Okay, okay, I'll do it," Andrei said, hanging his head in defeat.

"Good. Esther, take Finnegan to the hospital, and I'll go with Richard to free the captives," Pearl decided.

"Got it," Esther replied, though she looked worried. "Just be careful."

After Esther left with Finnegan, Pearl and Richard headed back with Andrei in tow.

Along the way, Andrei kept looking around nervously, as if he was waiting for something to happen.

Pearl, sensing he was up to something, told Richard to keep an eye on him.

Many women had been forced to

stay with the villagers. Those who

were

want to leave, so Pearl offered them money.

nder or had children didn't

However, some villagers refused to let their women go, arguing they had paid for them.

"You can take her away over my

dead body," one man declared, lying down in protest. Knowing he was no match for Pearl's men, he resorted to this passive resistance,

"If you say so." Pearl took out a knife and threw it to the ground.

Chapter 1175

"Need a hand with that, or are you gonna do it yourself?"

The man was just making empty threats and wasn't really thinking of dying. "I was... I was just kidding," he quickly said, standing up from the ground.

Pearl spotted a young girl standing behind him and gestured for her to come closer. "Come here," she said softly.

The girl wiped her tears and hurried over.

Gathering around a dozen scared faces, Pearl reassured them, "Don't be scared. I'm here to help you leave this place."

Among them were teenagers and women in their prime, all looking terrified yet hopeful at the prospect of escape, only to become doubtful again. "Is it really possible for us to leave?" Pearl responded with confidence, "Absolutely. I promised to help, and I will."

A young woman, voice low and filled with worry, shared her fears. "But after we leave, people might look down on us and judge us."

Her story was a sad one, taken away while she was on a trip, even though she was an outstanding college student. She felt her life was over.

Pearl offered comforting words, "Who cares what they think? Live your life well, that's what matters."

Then, seeing the bruises on a girl's skin, Pearl's heart ached. She encouraged her, "Looks like you're still in school. Focus on your studies, and you'll be okay."

Richard walked over, gently placing his hands on her shoulders. "Let's get going."

Pearl nodded. She had organized for extra cars from her men so

everyone could leave together.

That's how she led them out of their grim situation, down the mountain.

After that, Pearl told the men to send them wherever they wanted, and then return to Evil Spirits. After ensuring the group was sent safely to their desired locations, she and Richard headed to the hospital.

Finnegan wasn't badly hurt, so he was

Woowed to leave after his

I was tended to. Esther.net

his side. . to

SWOO

by

"Does James know?" Pearl asked.

Esther nodded. "I called him earlier, and he'll be here soon."

Hearing the name, Finnegan smiled. "Your boyfriend?"

Esther beamed. "Yes, we've been together for a year."

Finnegan looked down at the clean sheets, pondering. "That's good."

"By the way, Finnegan. It's been so many years. Are you still single?" Esther teased him.

"No. I've never dated."

Esther was surprised. "Never dated? Really?"

"Yes, I've been focused on my career and didn't think about dating."

Pearl couldn't help but chuckle.

Chapter 1176

Esther turned around, looking curious. "Why are you laughing, Pearl?"

"Somebody's not telling the truth."

Esther immediately knew who Pearl meant, even without much thought. She glanced at Finnegan. "You lied?"

Finnegan blushed. "Yes."

"So, why weren't you dating then?"

"Because..." Finnegan started, but his words were cut off by someone arriving at the door.

Esther's focus shifted to the newcomer, leaving Finnegan mid-sentence. "You're here, James!" She rushed over and hugged him tightly.

James wrapped his arms around her, visibly relaxing. "Promise me you won't go to risky places by yourself anymore, okay?"

"Fine, fine. It's not like the bathroom is risky," Esther whispered under her breath, but James caught her words and lightly pinched her nose. "What did you say?"

"I said I understand, I won't do it again," Esther responded, her voice soft and patient.

Pearl couldn't resist teasing them, "Do you mind? There are others here, you know."

Realizing she might have been too affectionate, Esther sheepishly stepped back from James.

Finnegan smiled. "You two seem to have a great relationship."

James, who had noticed Finnegan's interest in Esther from the moment he entered, decided to assert his presence, especially after seeing a hint of sorrow in Finnegan's gaze. He was both proud and a bit anxious to see another man attracted to Esther.

"Absolutely," James responded, his chest puffed out in pride.

Noticing that James and Finnegan were strangers, Esther introduced them. James, this is Finnegan Fox, an old friend from middle school. I wouldn't be here without his help."

James's attitude softened, knowing Finnegan had played a part in Esther's safety, though he remained wary of his intentions.

"Thanks for saving my Esther. If there's anything I can do for you, just ask," James offered.

Finnegan didn't need anything, but he couldn't help but chuckle. "Well, if you're offering, I do fancy something."

His gaze wandered the room before

settling let mal

Esther. "How about

have your girlfriend? I five

her

quite charming."

Chapter 1177

James didn't expect Finnegan's honesty, which made him go from looking calm to upset and a bit annoyed. "This isn't something you can joke about, Mister Finnegan." Finnegan wasn't scared, though. "If you think it's a joke, why are you so worried?"

Esther saw that the mood was turning bad, so she tried to calm things down. "Okay, okay. It's just a joke. Let's not fight over it, okay?"

James was mad at Finnegan and wanted to get back at him, but he decided to let it go because there were other people around. "Fine," he said, trying to hide his anger. Pearl nudged Esther. "You've been taking care of Finnegan for a while. James has spent a lot of time searching for you. Do you want to go home with him and rest?" Finnegan's fingers tensed up when he heard the word 'rest'.

"Sure." Esther quickly understood and left with James.

After they left, the mood lightened. Richard started a conversation with his old friend Finnegan.

"How did you end up being a secretary at the village?"

Richard remembered they had grown up together. Finnegan went abroad to study, worked at a publishing house when he got back, and then, for some reason, became a village secretary.

Finagle smiled. "Our publishing

house had a series of novels neede

a backdrop, so laske andet

dad to help me get the secretary

job."

Richard was amused. "So your dad just sent you over?"

"No, he didn't want to at first. But I convinced him. He said I have to come back after two years."

Richard looked worried about Finnegan's injuries. "Won't your dad be upset if you came back wounded?"

"I can't tell him I'm injured, or I might

lose my chance to work at the publishing house." Finnegan knew his father was tough but cared a lot. If he found out he was hurt, he'd want to avenge him and might even make him quit and close down the publishing house.

"I'll keep your secret. Just say you didn't like it there and you're traveling instead."

Finnegan trusted Richard to keep his word and playfully punched him. "Thanks."

"Don't mention it. What's next for you? Will you go back to the publishing house?"

Finnegan nodded. "I will, but I've promised my dad I'd get engaged to whoever they choose after two years."

"Engaged?" Richard was surprised. "You've always loved your freedom. Why agree to marry someone you don't know?"

Finnegan had always had the most

freedom, and Richard envied I that

We couldn't believe he'd a let



## Chapter 1178

"Yes, I've always turned down the idea of marriage because my heart belongs to someone else. But now I see she's happy, I think it's time for me to move on," Finnegan shared his feelings. Richard picked up on who he was talking about. "You mean Esther?"

"Since you've figured it out, I'm relieved you won't make fun of me. I've been secretly admiring her for ten years."

Finnegan said those words calmly, but could anyone really understand the rollercoaster of emotions he experienced over those ten years, quietly admiring her from a distance?

And now, seeing her with someone else, how could he not feel heartbroken?

Richard stayed silent for a while, then chose to keep quiet because he knew he couldn't suggest his friend try to take someone else's fiancée. Esther was with James now, and nothing could change that, not even Mobius. So, what could Finnegan do?

Finnegan smiled a little and shook his head. "I'm ready to accept this."

After ten years of silently caring for her, his heart had no room for anyone else. In that case, he thought it might be best to let his parents choose someone for him, someone who could also help with his career. That seemed like the best solution for now.

Richard decided not to say anything, understanding Finnegan had his own way of dealing with things.

The room became quiet.

Then Pearl, who had been listening to their

conversation, suddenly "Finnegan, do you

Joked

book, 'Chasing Light' ment

Of course, Finnegan was all too familiar with it, so he nodded. "What about it?"

"On the first page, you wrote, 'I

my hand.

reached for the light, but it burnedet swcontent

I let it go and became

myself, just like you did.'" belongs to NovelDrama.Org

Finnegan was impressed by her memory. "Yes, and?"

light

"Was Esther the light you were talking about?" Pearl questioned. Finnegan didn't expect his secret to come out, and he blushed.

"You knew you couldn't be with her, so you chose to let go, but you never stopped striving. You decided to become fight yourself, just as she was to you," Pearl interpreted his words and smiled at him. "Am understanding that correctly?"

Finnegan laughed. "I wouldn't expect less from you, Pea. You're absolutely right."

Richard frowned when Finnegan called her Pea. "Pea?"

Finnegan realized his slip-up and quickly explained, "That's her pen name. We all call her Pea."

Richard then understood what Finnegan meant when they were saving Esther from the village. Pearl was really a writer.

Chapter 1179

"If that's the case, did you manage to do it?" Pearl asked, looking at him with serious eyes. She didn't want to bring up uncomfortable topics, but she had to know. "If you didn't, it's because you still had hope for Esther. But seeing her with someone else, you couldn't let her go, could you?"

Finnegan lowered his head. "You're right."

He wanted to move on, but deep down, he hadn't really let go of Esther. When he saw her happy with someone else, he gave up. Instead of dealing with his feelings, he decided to marry someone he didn't love.

He hadn't truly moved on.

"Finnegan, you know what you should have done," Pearl said gently.

Finnegan seemed to have lost all his energy and just laid down. "I know. I'll think about it," he said quietly.

Ten years of admiration were destroyed in a few seconds, and seeing his struggle, Pearl didn't want to push him. He needed time to think, and she respected that.

After staying a little longer, Pearl left with Richard.

Esther got home and immediately posted on social media to let her fans know she was safe after being rescued. She hoped this would ease their worries.

However, her fans were skeptical. They thought the post was just a statement by the company and started spreading rumors.

Esther tried to clear things up with a video-she was safe now, so their plan to confront the village should be put aside. But the rumors only grew, and comments flooded in. [We were so worried about you, Este!]

[I can't live on if something happened to you.]

[You're probably the first person to be saved from there. You're very lucky!]

Some doubted her story, suggesting she might have been hurt or worse.

[People who are kidnapped would usually be sold to single old men there. Was she... you know...]

[Yeah, she looks so skinny in the video. I'm sure she was tortured.]

[My goddess, my pure goddess, now tarnished!]

[What is all this bullsh\*t? Who says everyone sold there would be tortured?]

[Haha, tell me why wouldn't she be

(-Inet

sold to the locals after she was kidnapped? Do you know how trafficking works? Do some research.]

Vernet

Esther felt overwhelmed by the 1 negative comments

rumored to set the record

She

straight, but it seemed

She really felt upset.

James looked through all the comments and then gently patted Esther's shoulder, trying to comfort her. "Don't worry, I'll take care of the bad press."

Esther bit her lip. "No, we need to make sure people stop spreading rumors. Otherwise, this is going to haunt me forever."

She knew that if they didn't clear things up now, the rumors and gossip would follow her around endlessly.

Chapter 1180

"Calm down. Let's talk to Pearl about this," James said. Esther worked for Pearl, so if anything bad happened to Esther, it would also affect Pearl.

"Yes, I think she must know by now," Esther responded, dialing Pearl's number anxiously.

However, Pearl wasn't worried at all. In fact, she was quite happy.

"Why are you fretting? This could be a golden opportunity for even more fame!"

Esther was stunned. "But I'm losing fans, although it's not too terrible."

Her fans were divided. Some stood by her, believing in her innocence, while others were doubtful. A few had stopped following her and even turned into haters.

"That doesn't matter. The ones who left don't matter. You've only lost a handful of followers, and it's alright. You'll gain new ones."

Hearing this made Esther feel better. "Do you have a plan then?"

Pearl was confident. "Someone set you up. We'll stay quiet for now and figure out who it was."

"You always know what to do!"

After hanging up, Esther felt a huge weight lift off her shoulders.

James was a little jealous seeing Esther's admiration for Pearl. "It's always about Pearl with you. Makes me wonder what I'm here for as your boyfriend."

Esther burst out laughing, finding the usually reserved James acting all wounded. "Are you jealous of Pearl?"

James grabbed her by her waist and

pulled

of

into his arms. "I'm jealous

Seven that friend from

school you haven't seen in years."

Esther was caught off guard by the mention of Finnegan. "But he and I aren't even close."

"You might not be, but I can tell he's got a soft spot for you."

Esther pinched his cheek, amused by his

fosis. "We've only t

recently. How could he have

You're thinking a

James didn't look convinced. "Am I wrong in my thinking, or was his joke too subtle for me?"

Esther remembered Finnegan's 'joke' and cringed. That did sound a bit too forward. "It's probably just a joke between old friends."

James, now visibly upset, questioned, "I thought you said you two weren't close?"

Stumped, Esther could only assure him, "If it bothers you, I'll cut off contact with him."

James knew Esther wasn't to blame but felt calmer by her promise. "I'm not going to give you away."

Esther found his serious take on a joke quite amusing.