

YOUR GUISE 191

Chapter 191

On the third day, it was Hugo's turn to visit. Pearl didn't want to entertain his constant requests to be with him, so she feigned sleep every time he entered the room, avoiding conversation.

The following day, Hanzel, despite having a busy schedule, cleared his day just to come see her.

He couldn't help but ask when he saw her lying in bed, "Why did you suddenly get a fever?"

"Maybe I'm just too stressed with work, or because I caught a cold, but I'll be alright soon," Pearl said,

noticing the worry in

his

eyes and trying to reassure him.

Hanzel frowned. "Why would you be in the hospital for so long if it's just a fever? What did the doctor say?"

"The doctor said I've been under too much stress. In addition to the fever, I have low blood pressure, which is putting extra strain on my b*dy. That's why I have to stay here for a few days."

Pearl didn't want to be there for that long either because it was a waste of time. At the same time, she

was so bored she didn't

know what to do there.

However, the doctor insisted on her staying and wouldn't discharge her for at least a week.

Hanzel sighed. "Alright then. The doctor knows best. You should rest."

But then a mischievous glint appeared in his eyes. "How are you feeling now?"

Pearl answered honestly, "I think I'm alright now. I don't feel anything bad."

Hanzel smiled slyly. "Well, how about we go for a walk? Christmas is approaching, and the streets will be crowded at night."

Pearl wanted to turn him down, but images of Richard standing up for Sophia flashed in her mind, annoying her.

"Sure," Pearl quickly agreed.

They tidied up the room, and Hanzel had a pair of large sunglasses to conceal his identity. Since Pearl had become quite well-known, she also wore a mask and shades.

Pearl felt much better after being cooped up in the hospital for nearly a week

Hanzel took her out for dinner first. They savored kebabs and beer by the roadside, and it was so

relaxing.

Pearl was surprised. "I didn't know you like this."

Hanzel responded with a bright smile, "What, celebrities aren't allowed to enjoy street food?"

"Of course not. I was worried your fans might see you here and overwhelm the stalls," Pearl said,

bursting into laughter at the thought.

Hanzel gazed at her smiling face, and his heart skipped a beat. "I usually come here alone, but I'm glad

you're here with me this time."

Pearl raised her brows curiously. "No one wants to join the celebrity for some kebabs?"

"Would you come with me again?" Hanzel asked sincerely.

Pearl didn't hear him at first, so she looked up. However, from the corner of her eye, she noticed two

people standing on the side of the street. She couldn't tell who they were.

The woman was standing in front of the man with her head bowed, and her shoulders appeared to be

trembling. In the next moment, the woman collapsed into the man's arms, but the man pushed her

away.

Pearl immediately recognized them-Richard and Sophia

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Pearl's eyes narrowed. Has Sophia taken up that special space in his heart? They looked intimate.

Was this how Richard showed his desire to be with her?

His affection was too cheap.

A mix of emotions overwhelmed Pearl's heart, leaving a bitter taste in her mouth.

Hazel followed her gaze toward Richard, who was standing there with Sophia, and asked, "Who's the girl next to Rick?"

"An employee," Pearl replied in a flat tone and looked away.

Hazel grinned. "They look more than just employer and employee."

"Whatever." Pearl was no longer in the mood for dinner.

Hazel secretly felt pleased seeing how intimate Richard appeared with another girl. As long as

Richard gave up on Pearl, he might have a chance.

Hazel suggested, "I'll take you to see some Christmas lights later. You can write your wishes on the decorations, and they say

your wishes will come true. A lot of people are doing it...

Pearl suddenly stood up and said in a low voice, "Let's go back"

Hanzel was shocked. "But we haven't seen the Christmas lights yet."

"I don't want to do that anymore. I'm feeling a bit tired and want to rest," Pearl said, looking drained and

in a foul mood.

Hanzel couldn't help but ask, "Pea, have you fallen for my brother?" He hoped it was just a crush, as

that would mean he had a

better chance.

Pearl denied it. "No."

"No?" Hanzel challenged, "If you haven't, why do you care so much? You should just admit it."

It might be love, but so what? Richard didn't love her back. He was merely infatuated, and once that

infatuation faded, he would return to his old self and perhaps fall for someone else.

Pearl said with a cold expression, "It doesn't matter. Don't ask me that question again."

Hanzel was about to say something more when Pearl turned and walked away.

The next day, it was Mobius's turn to take care of Pearl. He had always been hot-tempered, but after Pearl helped him, his attitude toward her had changed drastically.

Mobius smiled. "Do you want an apple? I can peel it for you."

Pearl shook her head. "No. Also, I don't need anyone here to take care of me. You should go back to school and leave me."

Mobius understood she said that out of concern for him, so he replied, "I promised to look after you, so I won't leave until the day is up."

Pearl was about to say something when a knock on the door interrupted her. She looked toward the door and saw Sophia, dressed in a white outfit, looking pure and demure, with a smile on her face.

"I've come to visit you, Pearl."

Pearl nodded. "Well, you've done that. Can you leave now?"

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The obvious rejection didn't make her back down. Instead, she took a few steps forward.

Sophia raised her chin, looking smug. "Pearl, I came to tell you something."

Pearl couldn't help but scoff because she already knew what Sophia was about to say. "What? Did you

get a promotion?”

Sophia appeared pleased and smiled at Pearl. “I’m sorry to say this. Mister Richard asked me to take over as the new design director. I really appreciate your guidance and support until now, so I came to thank you.”

Pearl had expected this news, but hearing it still hurt her heart.

“Who’s this, Pea?” Mobius, looking at this woman whose smile made him uncomfortable, couldn’t help but frown.

Pearl smiled. “This is your brother’s protege, the company’s new design director.”

Mobius had already developed a liking for Pearl, and when he saw someone come to flaunt her success to her, he couldn’t hold back. “Tsk, my brother has terrible taste. Why is his design director dressed like a teenager? People might think he has some kink”

Sophia’s expression turned awkward, and anger coursed through her, but she restrained herself

because this was Richard’s brother. “This is just the way I dress. Why do you have to attack me...”

Mobius sneered. “Save your act. There’s no need to pretend here. My brother enjoys seeing you cry, but I don’t buy it. Go cry to him.”

Unable to bear the humiliation, Sophia abruptly fled from the room, tears streaming down her face.

“I thought Sean had the sharpest tongue among your family, but you’re definitely a close contender,”

Pearl remarked, feeling much better after the incident and immediately liking Mobius more.

This young man was very level-headed and good at dealing with snakes.

Mobius scoffed. “I just can’t stand people who pretend to be weak.”

“Anyway, thank you for what you did.” Pearl sounded very sincere.

Mobius smiled. “Don’t mention it. My brother likes you, so I have to protect you.”

Pearl hesitated before saying, “He doesn’t really like me.”

Mobius rolled his eyes. “Pea, can’t you see it, or are you just pretending to be clueless? My brother treats you exceptionally well. How could he not care about you? He even said he wanted to marry you.

It was the first time I heard him say that about anyone. If that doesn’t prove it, I don’t know what would.”

Mobius’s words knocked some sense into Pearl.

“Alright, it’s getting late. I’ll head home now. Think about it, Pea.” He stood up and said goodbye.

After Mobius left, Pearl took some time to collect her thoughts. When sleepiness finally overcame her, she slowly closed her eyes and drifted into a deep slumber.

In her dream, she could hear voices near her ears.

“Hurry up, she’s about to wake up. Be quiet!”

“I really wonder who this beautiful woman has offended. Why would someone try to kidnap her and quietly kill her? Tsk tsk, what a waste.”

“What a waste? There’s no time to feel bad. The client promised to pay us 1 million dollars. With that money, you can have any woman you want. Let’s get on with it. Tie her up!”

“Fine, let’s get this over with. Her skin is so smooth. Let me touch her...”

Pearl felt herself being lifted and was about to open her eyes to see who was talking.

Those people realized she was awake, so they rushed to grab a chloroform-soaked cloth and placed it over her face.

She immediately slumped back, succumbing to a deep sleep once more.

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Richard, who had come to visit Pearl, found the bed empty. When he touched it, it was still a bit warm.

Richard found it weird because Pearl wasn't supposed to be discharged yet. Why wasn't she in her room? Could she have taken a walk outside?

Frowning, he waited for half an hour, but there was still no sign of her. His stomach churned with unease, and a sense of foreboding came over him.

He quickly dialed Hugo's number, informing him of the situation and requesting that he review the surveillance footage to

find out where she went.

Hugo's heart dropped when he heard Pearl was missing. If something happened to her, all his plans would go down the drain.

Hugo checked the surveillance footage and noticed some suspicious activities. A few people were seen dragging a large piece of luggage, glancing around nervously before hastily leaving the premises.

Could it be...

He took screenshots of the footage and sent them to Richard. "I've reviewed three hours of footage, and these two people appear the most suspicious. It seems they placed Pearl inside the luggage and took her out that way."

Richard stared at the oversized bag, his heart heavy with dread. "How long ago was this?"

"About an hour. I don't believe they left too long ago, but the camera footage didn't capture their faces clearly. You might need to search for a while," Hugo explained, though his concern was more about Pearl's value to him than her safety.

However, seeing what happened in the footage, Pearl was in grave danger so he had to find a different way to achieve his goals.

Richard examined the images of the two suspects and immediately contacted the police. He also sent the information to his assistant, instructing them to gather more details about the men.

The police promptly identified the culprits and shared their information.

Coincidentally, both men had recently been released from prison and were willing to resort to anything to make some money, leading them to abduct Pearl. They were Louis Maplewood and Wilhem Sachs, both from the city's rough neighborhoods.

Richard sent someone to speak to the suspects' parents and find out how to get in touch with them. He dialed a number, and when it went unanswered, he tried the other one.

Finally, a voice on the other end casually answered, "Who's this?"

Louis sat in the passenger seat of the van, nonchalantly picking his teeth after enjoying a rotisserie chicken. He didn't suspect anything when he saw the incoming call.

"Where are you?"

Louis looked around and rolled his eyes. "It's some random place on the outskirts. How am I supposed to tell you where?"

Suddenly sensing something wasn't right, he questioned, "Who is this?"

There was only silence on the other end, and that's when Louis realized he had made a mistake. He quickly ended the call.

"Damn, this guy's definitely trying to track down the woman. I almost told him where we are," Louis muttered.

Wilhem, the more composed of the two, smiled and reassured his partner, "It's fine. Even if they could teleport, they wouldn't know our location. Worst case scenario, we'll just go elsewhere."

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Louis smiled and nodded, then turned to look at Pearl, who was still unconscious.

“The chloroform is really strong. She’s still knocked out. Do you know who she is? Why wasn’t I aware

there’s such a hottie in

town?”

Wilhem smirked. “We just got out of prison three days ago. How would we know?”

“This chick is smoking hot. Do you think we should.... have some fun with her before we do the job?”

Louis’s excitement was obvious as he imagined what he wanted to do with her.

“Cut it out. Look at how pathetic you are.”

“But...”

Their voices were loud, and the rough ride on the road jolted Pearl awake. The surroundings and the

tape over her mouth immediately made her realize she was being abducted.

However, these two criminals were either inexperienced or overly confident. They hadn’t tied her up,

nor had they taken any of her belongings.

Pearl dared not make a sound. She watched as they chatted, realizing that they wouldn’t notice her

subtle movements. So, discreetly sent a text message behind her back.

she

Without being able to see the screen, she relied on her instincts to send her location, unaware of the recipient's identity. After sending that out, she put her phone away and pretended to be asleep again.

She had initially thought of fighting back but ultimately decided against it, considering her weakened state due to the fever.

When they reached their destination, Pearl pretended to wake up and looked at them with a confused expression. "Who..."

"Oh, our little hottie is awake. I was worried the bumpy road might have knocked you out," Louis said with a perverted grin, attempting to touch her face. "I wonder what you did at your young age to have someone want to kidnap you. Such a shame."

Pearl noticed that the two men had no idea who she was, which boosted her confidence.

Their guards were down because they didn't recognize her, seeing her as merely a girl who had incurred the wrath of someone with money. If they had known her true identity, they wouldn't have easily agreed to take this job.

"Who sent you?" Pearl inched backward, pretending to be weak.

“I’m not just going to spill the beans like that. But then again... why not? You’ll be dead tonight, so it doesn’t matter,” Louis said, enticed by her beauty and carelessly letting out more information. “Have you ever heard of the Flores family? One of the wealthiest in the city. Miss Abby sent us. I don’t know what you did that made her want to kill you.”

“Well, what’s stopping you?”

“We’re going to, but Miss Abby wants to kill you herself. She’s going to be here soon, so we’re still waiting.” Louis seemed to be amazed at how ruthless Abby was.

Pearl’s heart turned cold upon hearing this. Not only did Abby harbor a strong enough grudge against her to want her dead, but she also intended to carry out the act herself.

Wilhem, seemingly the smarter of the two, smacked Louis on the shoulder and admonished, “Alright, stop revealing anything else to her. Our client wants this kept under wraps.”

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“Tsk! Why are you such a coward? She’s just an ordinary woman and can’t do anything. You’re worrying too much.” Louis clicked his tongue a few times and cast a sidelong glance at Wilhem

As they stood guard in the abandoned garage, they engaged in idle chatter while waiting for Abby, all

the while Pearl remained silent. However, Abby still hasn't shown up, and this worried them.

"Is she okay? What's taking her so long?"

"Nonsense! Just behave yourself."

They started to curse under their breath, worried that they'd have kidnapped Pearl in vain if Abby had suddenly changed her mind, and they'd end up empty-handed.

Suddenly, a rhythmic knock echoed on the door, three long knocks followed by two short ones-clearly their predetermined

code. Beaming, they eagerly opened the door.

Abby, disguised with glasses and a mask, quickly entered the room. After a quick scan of her surroundings, she snickered when she found Pearl lying awkwardly on the floor.

"Oh, Pearl. I didn't expect you'd end up like this one day."

Pearl, unruffled, couldn't help but chuckle at Abby's disheveled appearance. "It's only been a few days.

Why do you look ten years older, Miss Abby? You're quite audacious to kidnap me. Aren't you worried that Richard might hate you?"

"Hate me? I couldn't care less about Richard's thoughts now, Pearl. I've come to realize that he doesn't

love me. He'd rather love you than me. But it's difficult for me to accept because I fell for him long

before you did, and I love him more. Why does he love you?" Abby's demeanor seemed unhinged.

"You're out of your mind, Abby." Pearl couldn't be bothered to argue with Abby, but she must say

something to stall for time

and wait for rescue.

"You're the one who's gone mad, not me," Abby retorted, drawing nearer to Pearl and slightly bending

over. Then, her expression changed as she noticed that Pearl's limbs weren't bound. "What's this?

Why haven't you tied her up? You can't let her run away."

Louis, frightened by the sudden shift in Abby's attitude, stammered, "I didn't tie her up because she's

just a young woman and doesn't seem very threatening..."

A sinister and malicious glint entered Abby's eyes. "Tie her up now, or she might attempt something.

She's very cunning."

And so, Wilhem found an abandoned length of rope in the garage, casually wiped it clean on his b*dy,

and proceeded to bind

Pearl.

After that, Abby slapped Pearl's face. "Doesn't it feel awful to be kidnapped, Pearl? What do you want now? Do you want to kneel and beg me to spare your life?"

"It's not too late to stop this, Abby."

Abby slapped Pearl again, this time with greater force. "Don't f*cking meddle in my affairs! I wouldn't be in this situation if it weren't for you. I'm not afraid of death, and I want to take you down with me!"

Leaning her head back and laughing, Abby didn't dream of surviving after kidnapping Pearl.

Pearl's lips started to bleed from the slap. But she chose to remain silent to avoid further enraging the unstable woman before her.

With her hands behind her back, she discreetly used the ring on her hand to cut the rope.

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"Aren't you feeling rather proud and superior, Pearl? Why are you pretending to be weak now? How disgusting!" Abby grabbed a handful of Pearl's hair and yanked her forcefully. "Listen closely. This is what you deserve. A person like you should rot in hell!"

The pain was so intense that Pearl almost shed tears. "Abby, you..."

"Enough! Every time you say my name, it makes me want to kill you even more." Abby took a sharp dagger from her pocket and waved it menacingly in front of Pearl. "I've coated this blade with poison, and just a single cut can kill you. Do you want to

Abby's words were abruptly cut off as someone forcefully kicked open the door.

Startled, Abby turned her gaze toward the intruder, confusion filling her face as she didn't expect to see Hanzel standing there.

"It's you, Abby!"

Hanzel, having received Pearl's distress signal, postponed the shoot and rushed to the scene. He had arrived quickly but was taken aback to find that it was the obedient-looking Abby who had kidnapped Pearl.

"What's wrong? Are you very surprised to see me?" Abby was now too impatient to keep up the pretense. Indifferently and impatiently, she admitted, "It's how I was supposed to be."

Hanzel glanced around and found two menacing-looking men in the distance. They looked like they knew some martial arts. Furthermore, Abby was armed with a dagger. Charging recklessly could get

Pearl hurt, so he hesitated to make a move.

Pearl, seeing that it was Hanzel, experienced an inexplicable sense of disappointment for some reason. Her worry for him

urged her to say, "Just go, Hanzel. Don't stay here. It's dangerous."

"Is there anything more dangerous than you being kidnapped, Pearl?" Hanzel looked at Pearl and asked seriously.

"That's enough. I don't have time to listen to you discuss which is more dangerous." Squatting down,

Abby held the dagger close to Pearl's face and played with it. "I'm curious to see what's so enchanting about your pretty face that it could seduce so many men. What will you do if your face is ruined?"

The dagger neared Pearl's face, its chilling gleam threatening.

Suddenly, Abby raised the dagger, ready to stab Pearl.

Hanzel acted swiftly, rushing forward and kicking Abby's back. The unexpected impact sent Abby stumbling forward uncontrollably.

Abby's sudden fall gave Pearl a chance to stand up and shake off the rope, having secretly cut it

earlier.

“Our boss is hurt. Hurry! Don’t let that woman escape!”

Louis and Wilhem panicked as they realized Pearl was about to make a run for it. They moved to intercept her.

But Hanzel knew nothing about martial arts, and Pearl was still weak. They couldn’t defeat the gangsters at all.

Seeing Pearl’s frailty, Hanzel took the blows for her, shielding her with his own b*dy. But the two men didn’t go easy on Hanzel and gave him a barrage of blows that left him reeling and on the verge of losing consciousness.

Lying atop Pearl, Hanzel struggled to speak between labored breaths. “Be careful, Pearl... Watch out...

Don’t let them bully

you...”

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Bitterness overwhelmed Pearl as she didn’t expect Hanzel to go to such lengths.

She had always considered Hanzel as more of a fanboy, lacking the kind of romantic affection that a

man might feel for a woman. But now, she wasn't so sure anymore, given his current actions.

"Come on, Hanzel. Get up and go. I'll be fine on my own."

Shaking his head, Hanzel endured the repeated painful punches on his back, the pain causing blood to trickle from his lips.

"I'll never leave you alone here. I want to be with you, and I won't abandon you..."

Abby crawled back to her feet, gritting her teeth in hatred because of Hanzel protecting Pearl. "How dare you kick me, Hanzel! You're well aware of the situation between Pearl and Richard, yet you still cling to her. Disgusting!"

"Let Pearl go, Abby, or my family won't let you off the hook." Hanzel looked up, trying to speak despite his weakened state.

But his weak voice only amused Abby, grinning from ear to ear. "How ridiculous! Do I look like I'm afraid of death? Don't blame me if I do something to you today, Hanzel."

With a nod, Abby signaled to Louis and Wilhem. "You guys did well. Just wait over there. I'll transfer your money after I'm done with them."

Both Louis and Wilhem were the models of humble flattery now. They were over the moon because of her promise of their reward.

“Okay, take your time. We’ll wait over there.”

After turning around and noticing Hanzel stubbornly lying atop Pearl with no intention of letting go, Abby was consumed by sudden rage. She raised her dagger and stabbed Hanzel in the shoulder.

“Ah!” Hanzel cried out in agony as the intense pain coursed through his b*dy, causing him to curl up and eventually lose consciousness.

Pearl’s eyes welled up with tears. “This is Hanzel, Abby. You’re so cruel!”

“What’s the big deal? Anyone who stops me from killing you must die. Get it?” Abby pulled the dagger out of Hanzel’s shoulder and wiped the blood from it with her handkerchief.

“Okay, it’s your turn now. Do you know how long I’ve been waiting for this day? I want to see you dead so badly...”

As Abby raised her hand, a stone struck her wrist. Instinctively, she released her grip, and the dagger clattered to the floor.

“Who’s there?” Abby looked at the door with vigilance, but she saw no one there. When she turned back, she spotted Richard standing in the distance, his expression cold.

“Rick, why are you...” In her desperation, Abby knew that she was doomed, but she still became timid at the sight of Richard.

“Let them go.”

Suddenly, Abby understood that Richard was here only to save Pearl, and it filled her with envy.

Bending over, she picked up the dagger and pressed it against Pearl’s neck. “Why should I? No, I’m not letting them go! I’m taking them down with me!”

“That’s enough, Abby!” Richard had never looked so furious, and it left Abby stunned.

“I’ve told you many times that I was nice to you in the past because we were young, and because you were staying in my house. I was forced to be kind to you, or I couldn’t explain it to your father. I’ve never had feelings for you. You’re just my sister, and I’ve never thought of marrying you.

“Stop pestering me, and we might still be friends. If you kill Pearl, you and your family will suffer terribly.

Do you think you'll be spared after giving everything up? I'll make you suffer so much that you'll wish for death."

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Richard rarely said so much, but fear grabbed his heart at the sight of Abby holding a dagger against Pearl's neck. He was really afraid of losing Pearl forever.

Abby, on the other hand, didn't expect to feel heartbroken when she heard the words she had rehearsed countless times in her heart. Of course, she was aware of that.

She could tell that the only woman Richard loved was Pearl by the way he looked at the latter. Besides, she knew that he only regarded her as his sister. But he was so perfect, like a sculpted masterpiece, that she couldn't help wanting to keep him by her side.

But Pearl had suddenly appeared out of nowhere and ruined Abby's plan. In her panic, Abby had resorted to various schemes to prevent them from becoming a couple.

She couldn't comprehend why all her efforts were futile, and she had ended up in despair, not only ruining her own family but also incurring the wrath of Richard's family. It felt like she had gained nothing

except pain and heartache.

While Abby was lost in her thoughts, Richard seized the opportunity. He wrested the dagger from her grasp and kicked her three meters away.

Abby, upon hitting the ground, began to cough up blood.

“You’re doomed, Abby,” Richard declared. He made a phone call, and within ten seconds, a group of armed forces stormed in. They promptly carried Hanzel out, while Richard helped Pearl to her feet.

Staring at Abby coldly, Richard warned her, “The cops will get here soon. You’d better come up with your statement. There’s no escaping jail this time.”

Richard’s patience with Abby had completely run out, and her wickedness repulsed him.

“Have you never liked me, Rick? Even just a little?” Abby asked with tear-filled eyes, her voice pleading and hopeful.

Seeing Pearl on the brink of fainting, Richard picked her up. Abby’s question made him show an aloof expression as he replied, “Never.”

With that, he turned and left without another word.

Meanwhile, Louis and Wilhem trembled in a corner, unable to believe that the people they had beaten up and kidnapped turned out to be members of the Waldorfs.

The Waldorfs were the most prominent aristocratic family in Enswood. Even if Louis and Wilhem had managed to earn a million dollars, they might have faced dire consequences.

Besides, the cops would come soon, and they would be imprisoned again even though they had just gotten their freedom.

When they heard the sirens approaching, they resigned themselves to their fates and closed their eyes.

Abby wiped the blood from her lips and stood up. After glancing around, she found that she had nothing except the two trembling men in the corner.

With a pathetic smile, she stared at the sharp dagger in her hand for a moment. In the next instant, she plunged the dagger into her own heart, blood gushing forth.

Her deepest regret was falling in love with Richard.

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The sight of Pearl in his arms made Richard frown. He broke out in a cold sweat, overwhelmed by a

sense of remorse for what had happened to her.

He rushed her to the hospital and gently placed her on a bed after she had received some basic bandaging.

“Are you okay, Pearl?”

But Pearl’s mind was on Hanzel. The dagger used against him had a sharp, darkened blade, and might have been coated with poison. She feared that Hanzel’s condition might be critical after being stabbed.

“Take me to Hanzel now. Hurry.”

“Why are you so concerned about Hanzel now?” Richard couldn’t understand why Pearl was so insistent on seeing Hanzel when she had just regained consciousness. He wondered if it was because Hanzel had risked his life to save her.

Anxious, Pearl answered, “Something might go wrong with him. Drive me to the hospital now.”

“Don’t worry, Pearl. He’ll be fine. I’ve gotten the best doctor for him. You just need to rest well, and don’t

worry about other stuff.”

Richard’s jealousy flared up as he couldn’t bear to see Pearl showing such concern for Hanzel. On the

other hand, he was genuinely worried about her fragile state and didn't want anything to jeopardize her well-being again.

"Alright, I won't go for now, but please make sure someone is there to keep an eye on Hanzel. And if anything happens, you must inform me immediately," Pearl pleaded with Richard.

"Okay, just rest first," Richard replied, relenting.

Suddenly, Richard thought of something and asked, "Why did Hanzel know about this before me?"

Given that Hanzel had been busy with his film shoots and hadn't visited Pearl in the past couple of days, Richard was puzzled about how Hanzel had managed to arrive on the scene faster than him, even though he had reviewed the surveillance footage.

"

"I secretly texted him and sent him my location because the kidnapers didn't take my phone on the way. That's why he came.

Pearl didn't find anything wrong with it, but Richard found it annoying.

"Why did you text Hanzel first when you got into trouble?" This unfair treatment filled Richard with envy.

Chuckling, Pearl retorted, "Well, I couldn't text you because you're always busy with work Plus, you have to teach the newcomer, right?"

Although it was very sarcastic, Pearl just said it for fun. Besides, she thought she had texted Richard instead.

Knowing that she was acting out of spite because of Sophia, Richard's face was icy. "I told you it's not like that. Sophia is just my subordinate."

"Just your subordinate? Why did you hug her then?" Pearl recalled what she had witnessed by the kebab stall-the moment when Sophia had thrown herself into Richard's arms, and how he hadn't immediately pushed her away. It had left an impression of hesitation and attraction.

"You saw that?" Richard was stupefied, as he hadn't expected that Pearl had witnessed that particular moment.

"What's the matter? I saw you rather enjoy hugging Miss Sophia. But you don't have to explain so much to me because we have nothing to do with each other. It's none of my business even if you fall in love with her."

Although Pearl sounded sarcastic, she was heartbroken while looking at Richard's face. As expected, she couldn't easily believe in men's romantic words. Once the novelty passed, everything would be gone.

Richard was struck speechless, stung by her words.

"Alright, I'll go now." After saying that, Richard tucked her in and left the ward.