

## **YOUR GUISE 291**

### Chapter 291

Finally, the butler flashed Pearl a smile. "Let's set off today. I guess we'll get there in half a day."

Pearl shook her head. "I need to return to the Waldorfs for something. Can you give me two hours?"

The butler nodded, afraid that Pearl might change her mind if he pressed too hard. "Sure."

Back at the Waldorf Residence, Pearl found Richard waiting for her in the living room. He appeared rather displeased.

"How did it go? Did they try to intimidate you?" he asked.

Smiling and shaking her head, Pearl looked at Richard's worried face. "No, not at all. I'm Pearl, and no one can bully me. But I do need to visit the Jordans now."

"Must you go?" Richard had a gut feeling that the Jordans might not be pleasant, and he worried about Pearl facing hardships there.

Sighing, Pearl replied, "Well, I can't really refuse since they're quite insistent. It's better to go. and avoid any further trouble. Don't worry. I don't think they'll harm me, considering I'm Master Jordan's granddaughter."

But Richard was determined to protect Pearl. "If you don't want to go, then don't. I'll protect you."

"It's okay. Besides, I'll be back soon. Just manage the company well and wait for my return."

At first, Richard wanted to go with her, but the thought of Waldorf Enterprises held him back. "If that's

the case, be careful. Let me know if anything happens, and I'll rush over immediately.

Pearl nodded, bid farewell to Dustan, and got into the Jordan family's car to leave.

Growing up in a small town in Enswood, she had gone abroad as an adult before returning to

Enswood. She never expected her first visit to Bodgow to be under such circumstances.

Bodgow, as the capital city, was less corrupt and extravagant than Enswood, which was an economic

city, but it was more luxurious and advanced.

The Jordan Residence, situated in the heart of Bodgow, exuded an extraordinary status. When Pearl

laid eyes on the grand estate, she was shocked beyond words.

Her stunned expression earned a derisive comment from Blake. "What a bumpkin you are!"

Raising her brows, Pearl retorted, "You think I can't afford a place like this?"

Blake snorted. "Even if you're rich, you're still an ignorant upstart."

Pearl struggled to contain her irritation but eventually failed. She glanced at the nearby garden and,

when he wasn't paying attention, playfully kicked him into a flowerbed.

It wasn't a forceful or painful kick, but the sight of the noble heir of Bodgow being kicked into a flowerbed was quite comical.

Consequently, Blake fell onto the dirt, crushing the blooming flowers. It was rather hilarious.

It took Blake a while to regain his composure as he lay amidst the flowers, humiliated by being kicked by a seemingly delicate woman. After removing a flower from his head, he slowly rose to his feet, glaring fiercely at Pearl, who was uncontrollably laughing.

"Pearl Leighton!" He gnashed his teeth and was about to get off the flowerbed to teach Pearl a lesson, but out of nowhere, a rock struck his leg, causing it to give way, and he tumbled back into the flowerbed.

With a dull thud, he crushed the flowers again.

"Blake!" A loud scream came from the distance.

The familiar voice sent a shiver down Blake's spine as he recalled his current state. He realized he was in deep trouble, having suffered a huge humiliation.

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The newcomer appeared to be a guy of the same age as Blake. He had a tall and slender frame, fair skin, a clear but somewhat childlike gaze, and light brown hair. His friendly smile made him quite approachable.

Seeing his face, Pearl immediately connected him to his identity. If she wasn't mistaken, this might be Glenn Palmer, another well-known figure in Bodgow, and Blake's best friend.

The Palmers had a significant presence in politics and held a position of influence and power in Bodgow. However, Glenn didn't appear as lively and youthful as one might expect-he seemed somewhat serious.

At first glance, Glenn noticed Blake in the flowerbed, and the funny sight prompted him to tease his friend. "Oh, Mister Blake. Have you taken up a liking for flowers?"

Blake managed to get to his feet, though not without some discomfort. Suppressing his aching hips, he sounded angry. "Why did you do that, Pearl?" Initially, he wanted to question why she had kicked him, but with Glenn present, he felt too embarrassed to admit it.

Pearl shrugged, watching Blake's indignation with satisfaction. "What's the matter? Didn't you speak

rudely first?"

Fiercely, Blake glared at Pearl but couldn't act violently toward her with Glenn around. He had no choice but to set aside his annoyance.

"Okay, stop arguing with a woman. By the way, I came to ask you about something," Glenn said.

Blake redirected his attention to Glenn. "What is it?"

"We're having a wine-tasting party in a few days. Would you like to join us? I heard there's an interesting activity--"

Blake declined without hesitation. "No, I'll pass. Sounds boring."

Glenn didn't push further and chuckled at Blake's reluctance. "I heard that the grand gift for this activity is the antique wine glass you've always wanted. Are you sure you want to pass on it?"

Despite his quick temper, Blake had a passion for collecting and had been assembling a set of wine glasses, with one particular piece missing. Surprisingly, that missing wine glass was in the possession of the organizer of the wine-tasting party.

"I'll think about it."

Meanwhile, Pearl had lost interest in their conversation. She inquired, "Where is Master Jordan?"

Glenn had noticed Pearl some time ago, the young and charming woman with long wavy hair and an exquisite presence. He couldn't recall when Blake had gotten acquainted with such an elegant and beautiful woman.

"Who might this be, Mister Blake? Are you hiding a beautiful lady from the world and now introducing her to your family?"

Blake frowned. "That's not the case. She's the cousin I mentioned the other day, who was separated from our family for many years. She's here to be reunited with us." Enlightened, Glenn remarked, "Ah, the legendary Miss Pearl. What an honor."

For some reason, Pearl found herself repelled by Glenn's words. "Hello, Mister Glenn."

Delighted, Glenn replied, "You recognized me even before I introduced myself. Am I that famous?"

Pearl, known for her sharp tongue, quipped, "Well, the word on the street is that you spend the most time with Mister Blake. You two are inseparable, and you have a very close' relationship' with each other."

The latter part of Pearl's description sounded somewhat peculiar because it didn't quite fit to describe a friendship as a 'relationship.'

Nevertheless, Glenn found Pearl's wit and sharp tongue rather endearing. He burst into laughter and said, "Your cousin is pretty interesting, Blake."

For some inexplicable reason, Blake felt smug rather than disgusted when Glenn referred to Pearl as his cousin.

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Blake couldn't help but wonder if their blood ties were influencing him.

"Okay, that's enough." Blake raised his chin at Glenn. "I'll take her to Grandfather first, and I'll be back soon. Just wait for me by the pond at the back."

Glenn nodded and left right away.

Once Glenn had left, Blake directed another stern gaze at Pearl. "Come on, let's go. Don't say too much in front of Grandfather."

Pearl scoffed, unimpressed. "No need to boss me around. I know what I'm doing."

"Whatever." Blake couldn't be bothered to engage in further conversation with her and led her directly

to the main hall.

Inside the main hall, a crowd had gathered, intrigued by the presence of Pearl, whom they had never met before. They had heard about her exceptional talents and were eager to meet her.

Pearl entered the hall confidently. Upon seeing her delicate face, the assembled guests were initially dazzled.

However, their thoughts soon took a different turn as they began to harbor ulterior motives. They realized that even Beah, once considered the most beautiful woman in Bodgow, couldn't be compared with Pearl.

Moreover, Pearl's confident and bold demeanor left a positive impression on them. This contrasted sharply with the reports they had heard, describing Pearl as an awkward country girl from a small town.

Clearly, Pearl's actual demeanor did not align with the previous rumors.

But Pearl paid little heed to the other guests, her attention focused on an elderly man in his sixties seated at the head of the room. He was gazing at her with watery eyes.

Pearl surmised that this man must be Ezra Jordan, the patriarch of the Jordan family and her



grandfather.

Despite Ezra's visible emotional turmoil at the sight of Pearl's striking resemblance to Beah, he managed to control his emotions. "You must be Pearl."

Pearl nodded politely. "Yes, Master Jordan. Nice to meet you." Her connection to the Jordans didn't evoke strong feelings within her, as she had never interacted with them before. Moreover, Ezra's distant demeanor made her feel uneasy.

Ezra, though disappointed, immediately composed himself. "Master Jordan? You should call me 'Grandfather,' Pearl. Please come closer so I can have a better look at you. You've grown into such a lovely young lady." He gestured for Pearl to approach, but the latter remained where she was.

"What's the matter?"

Suppressing her unease, Pearl explained, "I'm not used to getting close to people I'm not familiar with, and we've just met."

Ezra nodded in understanding. "I can appreciate your feelings, considering our twenty-year separation. However, Pearl, you can have anything you desire here. Just name it, and I'll have the

butler arrange it for you.” He seemed intent on convincing her to stay.

Shaking her head, Pearl explained, “I came here because Mister Allan invited me, but I don’t wish to become one of the Jordans. I hope you can let me go.” Her frankness left everyone in the room stunned.

Ezra’s smile stiffened. “What did you say?”

Pearl gritted her teeth and reiterated firmly, “I don’t want to be a Jordan, and I hope you can let me go.”

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“Let you go? Pearl, you’re my granddaughter. Do you think I’d have the heart to let you live out there?”

Pearl wasn’t sure if he had the heart for it, but she found this old man rather extreme and not very pleasant. “I don’t need the Jordans to protect me. I’m fine on my own,” she retorted.

Ezra scoffed. “You don’t need our protection? Then whose protection do you need? The Waldorfs? I

heard from the butler that you’re engaged to a Waldorf boy. Of all the men out there, you had to choose

a Waldorf. Is he good enough for you?”

Pearl had managed to keep her annoyance in check until now, but hearing this, her expression.

darkened. Ezra was clearly trying to assert his authority by pretending to be concerned.

“Who I’m engaged to is my business. It’s the twenty-first century. Are we still supposed to have arranged marriages?” Pearl’s tone grew fiercer with each word, shocking everyone present. Besides Blake, she seemed to be the only one willing to challenge Ezra.

“Very well, I’ll set that aside for now. Just promise me that you’ll stay here for the time being.”

Confine her? Pearl had expected this outcome, so she replied with a pained expression, “No, I have other things to attend to, so I can’t stay here.”

Ezra wouldn’t tolerate anyone questioning his decisions. “Pearl, if you comply, that Waldorf boy will be safe.” His tone was calm, but the threat was clear. He was threatening her with Richard again.

Pearl was well aware of the Jordan family’s influence, which extended to both the police and the criminal underworld. No one would dare challenge the old man’s power.

She stared at him, then nodded.

Ezra’s satisfaction was evident as he chuckled, praising Pearl for her understanding.

Blake, on the other hand, began to feel impatient. “If there’s nothing else, can we leave now? Is there a need for such a fuss to welcome this woman back?”

As the old man's favorite grandson, Blake was used to getting his way. Seeing his attitude, Ezra stopped interrogating Pearl and rolled his eyes at Blake. "She's your cousin, and we're family. How could you say that about her?"

Blake scoffed. "What family? She doesn't even want to be part of our family." Even though it was harsh, it was a sentiment shared by many.

Not wanting to argue with Blake any longer, Ezra cleared his throat. "Very well, you may leave now.

Blake, since your cousin is not familiar with this place, show her around so she can get acquainted."

Blake's eye twitched. "Why me?"

"Because you're around the same age, so it'll be easier for you to communicate."

Ezra had a point. There weren't many members of the Jordans from their generation. The eldest son had Felix and Laura, the second son had Blake, and Ezra's only daughter had Pearl. There were only four of them from their generation.

Pearl was the sole child of his daughter, which explains why Ezra was reluctant to let her go. Blake was annoyed but didn't argue further. He reluctantly accepted the task.

"Alright, you must be tired. Blake, I've arranged for Cloud Chamber to be cleaned up. Take Pearl there

so she can rest.”

Blake nodded and looked at Pearl, who seemed lost in thought, and coldly said, “Let’s go.”

Pearl was relieved and followed him. After taking a few steps, she suddenly said, “Thank you.”

Blake raised his brows. “For what?”

“You said that to get me out of there, right?”

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Knowing that she didn’t want to hear the old man pretend to care, he had said it to help her leave the situation.

“You’re so full of yourself. I don’t have the time to help you. Have you forgotten that you kicked me into the flowerbed?” Blake’s anger flared up at the mention of that incident. His face, which had returned to a neutral expression, darkened once more.

“Thank you anyway.” Pearl looked at his handsome side profile. She couldn’t help but think he was actually a decent person.

He didn’t act uppity and was rather friendly. “I understand why you wouldn’t want to stay here.”

Pearl was taken aback by his sudden comment. "What?"

Realizing he had said too much, Blake quickly reverted to his annoyed look and coldly responded,

"Never mind."

Pearl's room wasn't far away. They just had to walk around five minutes to get there.

Blake stopped at the door. "Go in. If you need help, call me, but it'd be best if you didn't need any."  
With

that, he turned and left.

Pearl clicked her tongue and watched him walk away before entering the room.

The place was spacious, with an artsy ambiance. The furnishings were antique, and Pearl found it

somewhat amusing. It probably explained why Ezra was so old-fashioned.

Just then, her phone rang, and Pearl saw Richard's name on the screen.

"How's it going over there? Did anyone bully you?"

Richard sounded calm but Pearl could tell he cared a lot. She replied, "Don't worry. No one would dare

bully me. They're... quite nice."

To reassure him, Pearl decided to tell a white lie. But she was terrible at it, and Richard sensed

something was wrong.

“Oh? Are you sure?”

Pearl chuckled. “Don’t read too much into it. I said I’m fine, so I will be. When have I ever lied. to you?”

Richard quickly changed the topic. “When are you coming back?”

“Um... soon. Master Jordan might have missed me a bit, so I want to stay here for a while.”

Richard pieced things together from that. Pearl was probably being held there and not allowed to return.

“Do you want to come back? I’ll come get you if you want.” Richard’s voice was unusually gentle. He

didn’t care about the Jordans. He wouldn’t let anyone who dared cross Pearl off the hook

Pearl hesitated, then vigorously shook her head, realizing that Richard couldn’t see her. She said, “No,

it’s okay. I’m just spending some time here. I’m not being held against my will.

Please don’t come to get me.” She would find a way to get out of there.

Richard didn’t want to push her, seeing how determined she was. They chatted for a bit before hanging up.

Pearl pondered deeply while holding her still-warm phone. She couldn't stay there for too long, or Richard would undoubtedly come to her rescue, and that was beyond her control. Suddenly, she remembered Blake, and a sly smile formed at the corners of her lips.

## Chapter 296

The next day, Ezra asked Blake to accompany Pearl on a shopping trip to the biggest mall for clothes and jewelry. Blake didn't feel like it at first, but Izia tempted him with the promise of a higher allowance, so Blake reluctantly agreed.

Ezra smiled and handed a card to Pearl. "You're a Jordan now, and you'll be treated equally including your allowance. Take this card and spend it on anything you want. If you run out of money, feel free to let me know."

The black card had golden prints, and Pearl noticed it was the same type as hers !! was a privilege that not even people of high status could easily obtain

Although Ezra was a snake, he wasn't a miser

Pearl wanted to say no, but considering the facade the old man was maintaining, she accepted the card. She decided to indulge in a bit of retail therapy with his money



After arriving at the mall, Pearl walked around while Blake trailed behind her with his hands in his pocket, looking very annoyed.

After half a day, Pearl hadn't found anything she liked and had refrained from making any purchases.

"Blake, if you're tired, you can take a break. I'll call you when I'm done" Pearl grinned, observing how he was dragging his feet. "But your stamina is terrible"

"Who has terrible stamina?" Blake was about to agree to rest, but after hearing that comment, he changed his mind. "Let's keep walking. We're not leaving until nighttime"

Pearl was amused at his annoyance, so she turned and continued her exploration

She came across a shop where a particular outfit caught her eye. It was a knee length black dress that accentuated her flawless waistline. The bottom of the dress was adorned with a floral design, and its cut-out sleeves and collar added a touch of flirtiness.

The staff noticed Pearl's interest and approached her with a friendly smile. "You have excellent taste, ma'am. This dress is our best seller, and there are only three in the world. This is the last one. It complements your figure beautifully. Would you like to try it on?"

Pearl didn't seem particularly interested, merely gazing at the dress as if it held some familiarity.

The staff continued, "This dress is really exquisite. Why don't you give it a try?" Then, she noticed

Blake standing behind them, and her eyes gleamed mischievously "You can ask your boyfriend. You'd look great in this dress."

Pearl raised her brows. "He's not my boyfriend."

Blake rolled his eyes. "There's no way I'd be interested in a woman like her."

The staff stood there awkwardly, unsure how to react.

Suddenly, a high-pitched and overly sweet voice emanated from behind. It was so sugary it became grating. "I like this dress. Let me try it on."

Pearl turned to see a woman decked out in designer clothes from head to toe, but she still exuded a cheap aura. She took a step back.

The woman assumed Pearl recognized her and raised her head haughtily, like a peacock displaying its plumage. "Be clever about this. There's no point trying to buy something I'm interested in."

Pearl was ready to leave, but when she heard that, she turned around and confronted the woman.

“What did you say?”

The woman scowled and spoke rudely, “What? I like this dress. Do I need your approval to buy it?”

“Are you a spoiled brat? Why do you talk like your brain’s dried up?”

The woman didn’t immediately comprehend the remark about her brain being dried up. After a moment,

she realized it was an insinuation that she lacked intelligence, and her anger flared. “What did you say?

I’m Willow Quinlevan. Who do you think you are, talking to me like that?”

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This was the first time anyone had insulted Willow directly, and it rattled her to the point where she was tempted to slap Pearl. She raised her hand, ready to strike, but Pearl quickly caught her wrist.

Willow found herself immobilized, glaring at Pearl as she released her grip. “How dare you block me! I’ll have my dad kick you and your entire family out of Bodgow!”

“Oh, it’s amazing that you could kick a Jordan out of Bodgow. That’s terrifying.” Suddenly, Blake, who had been quietly observing, stood up and approached Pearl with a smile that masked his cold tone.

“Shall I call your dad and ask if they’re ready to kick the Jordans out?”

While Blake rarely initiated confrontations, those who managed to anger him seldom escaped

unscathed.

Willow was stunned. 'Blake is here?' She had threatened to evict Pearl's family, the Jordans. If she had known Pearl was a member of the Jordan family, even the bravest lion wouldn't dare utter such words!

Realization dawned on Willow. "She's a Jordan?" She was familiar with most of the Jordans, and this woman didn't look familiar. Her audacity stemmed from the belief that this woman wasn't part of the Bodgow elite.

"My cousin, Pearl. My aunt's daughter. Do you have a problem with that?"

Willow shook her head. "No, none at all. This dress would look good on Miss Pearl Jordan. You should have it."

Hearing Willow refer to her as a Jordan, Pearl gently corrected her, "My last name is Leighton.

"Miss Pearl Leighton, I'm sorry for not recognizing you. Please accept my apologies." No matter how spoiled Willow was, she was smart enough to know the power of the Jordans. Now, cornered, she had no choice but to beg for forgiveness. If this brought trouble to her family, her life as she knew it would come to an end.

Pearl didn't intend to bear a grudge, but Blake had different plans. "You want to make us, don't you?"

His tone was calculating. "You should pay for this dress."

up to

Pearl found amusement in watching him play the role of an unscrupulous businessman.

Willow had initially thought her apology would be enough, but when she heard Blake's demand, her

heart ached. She had seen this dress before and knew it cost 680 thousand dollars, equivalent to five

months' worth of her allowance. She had saved diligently and even convinced her father to provide

extra funds to finally accumulate enough.

Now, she felt as if her heart were bleeding as she had to part with it.

"Why? You don't want to?" Blake sighed, seeing her hesitation. "Perhaps I should call your father to ask

about what exactly you meant when you said those."

Willow grew anxious. "I'll pay, I'll pay. Don't call him!" She took out a card from her purse and handed it

to the staff.

Once the transaction was completed, the staff returned the card to Willow. "Miss Willow,

there's 7 dollars and 5 cents left in Pearl burst out laughing.

your card.”

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“Your life seems quite tough,” Pearl teased Willow, and the latter’s expression soured. However, with Blake present, Willow restrained herself, fearing that her behavior might attract attention from eligible bachelors in Bodgow.

“Miss Pearl, if there’s nothing else, can I... can I leave?” Willow asked, sensing that the situation had come to an end.

Pearl thought there was no point continuing this, so she nodded and let her leave.

Blake decided not to press the matter further since Pearl wasn’t upset. “Fine, you can go. Remember to walk the other way the next time you see my cousin.”

Though Willow gritted her teeth so hard it seemed her gums might bleed, she suppressed her anger.

She forced a smile, nodded, and then left.

After she had left, Pearl couldn’t help but laugh.

“She spent all her money, and yet you’re so happy. Have you no compassion?” Blake couldn’t resist taunting her.

Pearl didn't mind, responding as she scrutinized him from head to toe, "You did a great job too. You

were the one who suggested taking all her money, Mister Unethical Businessman

Blake rolled his eyes. "I did this for you. Were you just going to let her walk all over you and leave?"

Pearl froze, then smiled and said, "So, are you showing concern for me now?"

"Who? If you weren't a Jordan, I wouldn't be protecting you," Blake asserted stubbornly.

Deciding not to engage in further banter, Pearl changed the topic, saying, "I got a dress without even spending any money. Let's head home."

However, Blake seemed to remember something. "Don't you want to get more? Grandpa wanted you to be able to fit into this social circle, so you can't go home just yet. I'm taking you to a wine tasting."

"No, I'm not interested."

"I helped you earlier, so you owe me one. Are you trying to get out of it?" Blake challenged.

Pearl glared at him. "That's not how you get people to repay you."

"I need a plus one. Let's go," Blake insisted. "And why did you come out without any makeup on?" He

had to admit that even without makeup, Pearl outshone countless women.

“Is there a powder room around here?”

The staff immediately replied, “Miss Pearl, we have a powder room and a changing room. You can change into that dress you just purchased, and you’ll be the belle of the ball at the wine tasting.” The staff had a silver tongue and was quite shrewd.

Pearl smiled and nodded. “Thank you.”

She proceeded to the powder room for makeup while Blake waited outside. During his idle time, he decided to open his social media app, only to be met with a barrage of pointless discussions.

“Blakey!” A cheerful voice called from behind.

Startled, Blake turned around to find a fair woman standing before him.

“Blakey, what are you doing here?”

Blake didn’t immediately recognize her but found her face vaguely familiar. “You are?”

Tahila Shaw stood there awkwardly. “I’m Tahlia Shaw, Blakey. Don’t you remember me? We met at the bar...”

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Blake remembered, but his memory was still fuzzy. He simply nodded and replied, "I remember. Can I help you?" He didn't intend to be overly friendly with someone he didn't really know.

"I... "Tahlia thought she looked quite good and was known as a beauty in Bodgow, but why did it mean nothing to Blake?

"I need to leave soon. Please enjoy your time here, Miss Tahlia." Blake thought Pearl should almost be ready.

Tahlia clenched her jaw, psyched herself up, and asked, "I'd like you to be my plus one for tonight's wine tasting. Would you like to come with me?"

If it weren't for her best friend Willow's text, she wouldn't have known Blake was at the mall. She didn't care about Willow being bullied-she wanted to become Blake's girlfriend.

"I'm sorry, I already have a plus one."

Tahlia froze. Who managed to get to him before she did? She couldn't recall anyone else ever getting Blake to agree to be their plus one, or it would have been a topic of conversation in their group chat.

Before Tahlia could inquire further, Pearl emerged from the powder room. Her dress accentuated her curves, and her hair and makeup made her stand out in the crowd.

Tahlia was mesmerized by Pearl's appearance. She had never seen such a beautiful woman in Bodgow.

"This is my plus one. I'm sorry," Blake announced proudly, pleased with how stunning Pearl looked.

"Blakey, don't let this woman fool you. She's dressed so provocatively. How could she be a good woman..." Tahlia began to voice her disapproval. She seethed with jealousy, unable to fathom the presence of such a stunning woman in Bodgow.

"It

may not be a good woman, but at least I'm not trying to steal someone else's plus one. What are you then? A slut?" Pearl retorted sharply. She wasn't one to hold back her words, especially when dealing with unfamiliar people who couldn't offer her any benefits.

Besides, she had Blake on her side now. Although it was morally questionable, she wasn't about to let this woman off easily.

"I've known Blakey for years, and you're just his new arm candy with no status. How dare you speak to me?"

Pearl almost burst out laughing. Why were all the women in Bodgow so domineering but stupid?

“I don’t see Blake defending you. If I’m just an arm candy, then you’re like a stray dog on the roadside, ignored even when you wag your tail around,” Pearl retorted, her words sharp but devoid of profanity.

Tahlia stomped her foot in frustration, unable to clap back. “You just wait. I won’t let you get away with this!” She hurled a threat before turning to Blake with a sorrowful expression. ”

Blakey, look at her. She’s so rude.”

“She’s my cousin. Who are you?” Blake said.

“Cousin?” Tahlia’s face twitched, but she quickly put on a cordial smile. “Oh, you’re cousins. I’m sorry, I thought you were...

Pearl noticed that Tahlia wasn’t done with her pretense, so she scoffed, “Are you going to say you’re sorry, claim it was all a misunderstanding, and then ask for my forgiveness while offering a gift as a sign of apology?”

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Tahlia froze.

“You’re free to chase after Blake if you like him, but don’t involve me in this drama, or... I’ll be much

harsher than Blake ever could," Pearl said with a smile, then turned to Blake and suggested, "Let's go.

Aren't we going to the wine tasting?"

Blake nodded, and they left, leaving Tahlia behind with a flushed face.

The wine tasting took place in the garden behind the villa of a prominent figure from Bodgow, attended by members of the upper class.

Blake was highly regarded and had an excellent reputation in Bodgow, making this his first public appearance with a companion. What made it even more notable was the fact that his companion was both beautiful and well-mannered, and there was an undeniable resemblance between them.

Some of the attendees, who had their sources and information networks, began chatting while discreetly pointing at Pearl.

"I know that woman. She's the estranged granddaughter of the Jordans. She grew up in a small town so she's not very polished."

"Oh, I thought she's from a rich family. She doesn't look out of place here."

"Who knows? She might be putting on an act."

Pearl noticed their conversation and cast a stern gaze in their direction, causing them to fall silent

immediately.

The wine tasting was about to begin, with glasses of wine beautifully arranged on the tables,  
  
shimmering in the light.

The emcee took the stage and addressed the guests, “Anyone who can name all the wine will be given  
  
the grand prize-an antique wine glass.”

The guests exchanged glances and hesitated to participate. The challenge seemed deceptively simple,  
  
but in reality, it was quite difficult. Without water to cleanse their palates between. tastings, those  
  
without a discerning palate would likely struggle with the various flavors.

Ten minutes passed, and no one dared to attempt it.

Most attendees were uninterested in the antique wine glass, and many were hesitant to step forward  
  
and risk embarrassment, so they just silently watched.

Blake was the first to take up the challenge, making it through nine glasses successfully but faltering on  
  
the last one.

Pearl smiled, noting his disappointment. “Do you really want that glass?”

Blake nodded. "Of course. I've been collecting the entire set, and this is the last one. I'd be disappointed if I couldn't complete the collection."

Glenn Palmer, who had been greeting people earlier, approached and noticed Blake's dejected expression. He patted his shoulder reassuringly. "It's alright. I don't think anyone will be able to guess the wine correctly. If no one manages it, we can simply offer a big sum of money to buy it after the event."

Pearl gave him an exasperated look. "Why won't you get it when it's free?"

Glenn wasn't fazed, as he knew that was just how she spoke. He smiled patiently. "It's not easy to guess this wine correctly. It's not something just anyone can obtain for free."

Pearl looked around and then proposed, "What if I can help you get it?"

Blake's eyes widened with hope. "Can you really?"

"Of course, but I have one condition."

Blake understood she wouldn't do it without getting something in return, so he asked, "What is it?"

"I'll tell you later. For now, you owe me one," Pearl replied with a hint of mischief.