

## **YOUR GUISE 301**

### Chapter 301

After that, Pearl made her way to the table with the wine glasses.

“Are you going to take the challenge, Miss?”

Pearl nodded. “Let’s get started.”

She proceeded to identify each wine with ease, sipping from each glass. When she reached the final

glass, Pearl took a sip and declared without hesitation, “Billionaire Vodka.”

“I’m sorry, Miss, but you’ve got it wrong on this last one.”

Blake’s eyes were downcast upon hearing that Pearl was wrong.

Smiling, Pearl shook her head. “No, I’m not wrong.”

“Are you doubting my expertise, Miss? I’m an internationally renowned wine taster hired by Mister

Johnson. I can’t be mistaken,” the man replied, somewhat displeased.

Onlookers who were in the know chuckled at the sight of Pearl challenging the authority of the wine

taster

“Look at this country bumpkin questioning the wine taster.”

“What an ungrateful little sh\*t! She’s privileged to be at this event, yet she’s so shameless.”

“Someone should escort her out! She’s ruining the atmosphere.”

Pearl was confused when the man claimed he was internationally renowned. She sized him up and

asked, “How famous are you? Why haven’t I heard of your name before?”

Her questions cast a shadow on the wine taster’s confidence. He replied somberly, “Please don’t

humiliate me out of anger, Miss. Thank you.”

“Why don’t you taste it yourself and confirm if it’s Billionaire Vodka or not?” Pearl suggested calmly.

After taking a sip, the wine taster’s expression changed dramatically.

“Billionaire Vodka, by Leos Verres, is a luxury product. Each bottle contains 5 liters of pure vodka

crafted from premium wheat through 5 distillations, following a traditional method. from a country called

Truyya. It is initially ice-filtered, then filtered through Nordic birch. charcoal, and finally, it passes

through sand made from crushed diamonds and gems. Its opulent packaging features white feathers

and is adorned with 3,000 brilliant diamonds, painstakingly crafted by artisans. That’s why every bottle

of Billionaire Vodka is considered a work of art.”

After her explanation, Pearl regarded the wine taster and smiled nonchalantly. "You can't possibly be unaware of this as a wine taster, can you?"

Blushing, the man stammered, "I... Yes, I do."

However, Pearl had no intention of letting him off the hook and continued her questioning. "Then why did you assert that this wine wasn't Billionaire Vodka?"

Stunned, the wine taster stammered again, "It's because... Mister Johnson told me it was tequila when he brought it over..."

"You didn't even bother to taste it before making a subjective judgment. Honestly, I'm not sure how you landed a job as a wine taster."

"

Pearl's rudeness turned the wine taster's awkwardness into embarrassment. He retorted, "Maybe you just got lucky. And why did you doubt my background? Who do you think you are? You lack professional knowledge, yet you dared to criticize me."

Pearl raised her brows. "I'm a wine taster."

The wine taster laughed. "Stop making a fool of yourself! Don't label yourself a wine taster when your

knowledge is just mediocre. Do you even have a certification? Show it to me!”

Pearl shook her head at his disdainful expression. “I don’t have my certification with me, but I’m certain you’ve heard of Rarity.”

The famous wine taster, Rarity?

“I’m Rarity.”

Chapter 302

“Yes, I’ve heard of her. She’s the youngest famous wine taster, and I can’t hold a candle to her. But you’re saying you’re Rarity? Quit kidding around!” The wine taster burst into hearty laughter, convinced that Pearl was simply boasting.

Pearl maintained her composure and smiled. “Why would I joke about being Rarity?”

“Rarity gained fame at an international wine-tasting event three years ago and earned the moniker

‘God’s Tongue.’ Haven’t you seen that video? Although my appearance has changed somewhat since then, I’m certain you’d still recognize me.” Pearl’s explanation left the wine taster feeling awkward.

The onlookers, now intrigued, quickly went online to search for the video. The footage was crystal

clear, capturing the faces of everyone present, including Rarity, who had been nominated and honored

at the time.

“It’s really Pearl!”

“What an incredible honor to have an internationally renowned wine taster at this event!”

“She’s not a country bumpkin, but Miss Rarity. We should punish those who spread the rumors!”

“The Jordan family’s granddaughter is Rarity? They must be so proud!”

The comments seemed endless.

Pearl maintained a composed expression as she turned to the wine taster, revealing her face.” See for yourself. Is it me? Although that wine event is famous, most people wouldn’t pay much attention to it since it’s unrelated to their daily lives, much like how many folks don’t know that Will-Aleks is now the King of Grouce.”

With that, she regarded the wine taster curiously. “Is something wrong? Aren’t you an internationally renowned wine taster? How could you be unaware of this?”

Humiliated, the wine taster had exaggerated his identity out of insecurity, as he was merely a moderately famous wine taster. Indeed, he had heard rumors about Rarity’s fame but had never

personally encountered her.

“I apologize, Miss Rarity. It’s my mistake, and I shouldn’t have doubted your judgment.” Though he had been arrogant, he corrected his error and humbled himself before someone of higher standing.

Pearl forgave him and advised, “Next time, please taste the wine before passing judgment. As a wine taster, it’s essential to develop a refined palate.”

Being a man in his late thirties, it was a first for him to receive such a lesson from a twenty- year-old woman. Although he found it somewhat hard to accept, he did so gracefully.

“I apologize, ladies and gentlemen. Miss Rarity is the winner of this wine-tasting competition! “He retrieved the wine glass from the table and handed it to Pearl. “Congratulations, Miss Rarity. You’ve earned this glass.”

Pearl accepted the glass with a gracious smile. “Thank you.”

Following this incident, Pearl sensed a shift in everyone’s attitude towards her, particularly the man who had previously dismissed her as a country bumpkin. Now, he was eager to approach her and offer flattering conversation.

But Pearl glared at him and walked straight to Blake. Tossing him the glass, she remarked, “ Here you

go. It's the glass you wanted. Just remember, you owe me one."

Blake had yet to recover from his shock, and Glenn appeared equally stunned.

"So, you're Rarity. Well, it seems we can't judge a book by its cover." Glenn smiled and teased

Pearl.

Looking into Glenn's eyes, Pearl smiled brightly. "Can't a pretty girl be a wine taster?"

Glenn was moved, unable to resist her smile. "Yes, you're quite pretty." He even wondered why Richard got so lucky.

Chapter 303

Pearl was about to label Glenn a playboy when someone screamed nearby.

"Look! What's that above us?!"

Startled, Pearl immediately looked up and spotted a drone carrying a large bucket of lard. In the blink of an eye, it plummeted to the ground.

Squinting her eyes, Pearl grabbed Blake and pulled him aside. Glenn, thanks to his agility, managed to evade the impending disaster as well.

Unfortunately, many others were not as fortunate, unable to escape the falling lard. They sl\*pped and

tumbled to the ground, crying out in pain.

Pearl looked at Blake and asked, "Are you okay?"

"I'm okay, but you..." Blake's eyes narrowed suddenly as he yanked Pearl into his arms. A searing, agonizing sensation swept over him.

Sulfuric acid?

Pearl grimaced as she felt the burning pain on her arm, where the acid had made contact. Suppressing her own agony, she glanced up and spotted a figure turning away, holding a bucket of sulfuric acid.

But she couldn't afford to chase after the assailant at the moment. Supporting Blake, she realized that his back had been burned while shielding her from the acid.

"Glenn, call 911 now!"

Understanding the gravity of the situation, Glenn's brows furrowed. "No, it'll take too long. I'll rush him to the hospital!"

Pearl nodded, allowing Glenn to help her get Blake into the car. They sped off to the hospital, where Blake was quickly taken into surgery.



Anxiety gripped Glenn at the sight of Pearl's bleeding arm. "I'll get a doctor to tend to your wound."

Pearl nodded. "Okay."

While having her wound treated, Pearl read the news. As expected, the public was buzzing about the accident, with three hot topics trending on the Internet.

[The Jordan family's granddaughter was rumored to be a country bumpkin but turns out to be Rarity, a renowned wine taster.]

[Vicious lard attack at wine-tasting party leaves many injured.]

[Sulfuric acid attack on Mr. Blake. The Jordans are furious.]

Pearl's arm throbbed with pain, aggravated by the nurse's trembling hands. The nurse seemed to be new and unskilled.

Glenn took over the medical supplies from the nurse and flashed a reassuring smile at Pearl. Let me handle this."

Pearl eyed him skeptically, but to her surprise, Glenn's touch was much gentler than the nurse's. Soon, the pain gave way to a soothing, cool sensation.

Mixed emotions swirled within Pearl as she looked at Glenn's serious expression, realizing he was

different from what she had initially imagined.

Suddenly, the door swung open, and Richard entered the room. His expression went from fatigue from his flight to cold determination as he observed Glenn tending to Pearl's wound.

When Pearl saw Richard, she panicked and withdrew her hand immediately. "What are you doing here, Richard?"

She wasn't concerned about Richard witnessing anything improper, but rather, she feared he might come up with unwelcome ideas upon learning that she couldn't return to his house.

"I read from the news that you got hurt and rushed here on a two-hour flight," Richard. replied, his voice

tinged with worry.

"I'm okay, see..." Pearl stood up and turned around, concealing her arm behind her back to show

Richard she was fine.

However, Richard was unmoved. He kept his head lowered, his gaze fixed on Pearl's hidden hand.

Chapter 304

Pearl panicked because of Richard's silence. "I'm really—"

“Why are you explaining, Pearl? You don’t have to explain yourself!” Glenn felt sorry for Pearl, who seemed distressed by her failed attempt to clarify the situation. He became hostile toward Richard. “Did you come all the way here to interrogate your girlfriend, Mister Richard?”

Richard was worried about Pearl, but his coldness grew because of how protective Glenn was of Pearl.

“I’m talking to my girlfriend. Stop butting in!”

Glenn set aside the medical supplies and positioned himself in front of Pearl, determined to advocate for her. “I didn’t want to intrude, but don’t you think any man would prioritize their girlfriend in such a situation? The person who shielded Pearl from the sulfuric acid is already in the surgery room. Yet, as her boyfriend, you didn’t do anything. Instead, you’re interrogating her here! What kind of man does that?”

“It’s none of your business!” Richard inched closer while exuding a horrible aura, but he stopped in his tracks when he heard that. His eyes gleamed with grief while watching Pearl, who was partially hidden by Glenn’s imposing presence.

Pearl attempted to call out to Richard but experienced a sudden, excruciating pain in her arm. She gasped and doubled over, breaking into a cold sweat due to the intensity of the pain.

Seeing her agony, Glenn immediately asked, "Should I fetch a doctor for you?"

Pearl couldn't speak through the pain. She bowed her head, shaking it to indicate she didn't need immediate medical attention. As the acute pain gradually subsided, she looked up but found Richard had disappeared, and the door was slightly ajar.

"Why did he leave..." she mumbled

Pearl stood up but Glenn abruptly stopped her. "You shouldn't go after someone like him. He didn't even show concern for your injury."

"You got me wrong. I'm not going after him..." Taking a deep breath, Pearl's heart skipped a beat at the thought of how Blake had shielded her.

She vividly remembered the gruesome and frightening wound on his back. "I'm wondering how Blake is doing now."

Glenn shifted his gaze to the illuminated signboard indicating the surgery room nearby. His expression grew somber. "He's still in surgery. His injury is quite serious, and it may take a while to heal."

"Don't worry. It's going to be okay." Pearl patted Glenn's shoulders.

Misinterpreting her intent, Glenn smiled, "It's alright. I understand that his injury can't be treated quickly,

but at least, it's on his back. If it were on his face, he'd probably be devastated.

"I'm not joking." Pearl looked at Glenn seriously.

"Really?" Glenn was taken aback, as he had never heard such an absurd idea from Pearl before.

Surprised, he asked, "Can you really restore his skin?"

Chuckling, Pearl answered, "Of course. Have you ever heard about Simon?"

"Simon Freeman, the doctor who works miracles?"

Pearl's lips twitched as she listened to Glenn's admiration for Simon. "You're overestimating him, but

yes, he is my mentor. Now, do you believe me?"

Glenn's eyes instantly lit up. "Oh, you're Simon's protege. Can you do me a favor then?"

"What kind of favor? Tell me, and I'll think about it." Pearl touched her chin curiously, trying to figure out

what he wanted.

"Well... I have a childhood friend who's suffering from an unusual ailment. She prefers to stay in

darkness and is terrified of light. Could you examine her?"

Pearl frowned. "Photophobia?"

"Probably. She's sought treatment at numerous hospitals to no avail. Can you help her? She's a genuinely kind person, but she's had a bad experience, and her mother passed away when she was young..." Glenn sighed deeply, moved by his friend's plight.

Chapter 305

Pearl couldn't help but playfully tease Glenn because of his concern for his childhood friend. "Do you have a crush on her?"

"No, absolutely not. I'm just genuinely worried about her, like a sister," Glenn quickly denied, without a hint of hesitation. For some reason, he wanted to ensure there were no misunderstandings.

Pearl's smile faded, and she turned serious. "Alright, I'll give it a shot. Just take me to her when the time comes."

"Sure."

After Glenn carefully tended to Pearl's wound, he put away the medical supplies. A nurse approached them and informed them that Blake had been transferred to an ICU ward, and the Jordan family had

hurried there.

Pearl inexplicably felt her heart race because she knew the Jordans might hold her responsible, given that Blake was their favorite.

Sensing her anxiety, Glenn patted her on the shoulder. "Don't worry, I'll speak up for you."

They went to Blake's ward, but as they reached the door, a middle-aged woman rushed over and slapped Pearl. The sharp sound of the slap reverberated in the quiet hospital corridor.

Although Pearl could have evaded the blow, she chose to endure it, knowing that Blake was still unconscious inside.

It was understandable that Emma Jordan was angry. After all, her son ended up that way for saving Pearl. Any mother would feel the same when they saw such a tragedy happen.

Pointing at Pearl, Emma scolded angrily, "Why did my son end up like this? You're a jinx, Pearl!"

Pearl kept her head low and whispered, "I'm sorry," her face bearing a visible red mark from the slap.

This was the first time she had bowed her head and silently endured such harsh words.

"Madam Emma, it wasn't Pearl's fault. Blake voluntarily protected her from the attack," Glenn hurriedly

explained to Emma, feeling sympathy for Pearl's plight.

Emma sneered in response. "Hmph! If she hadn't provoked others, Blake wouldn't have had to suffer like this. In short, she's a troublemaker!"

Pearl lifted her head and sneered back. "Aunt Emma, I admit my mistakes and I'm willing to heal him. But that doesn't give you the right to humiliate me."

"How dare you talk back to me! Tell me how you plan to heal his wounds. You're just boasting!"

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Emma was naturally skeptical of Pearl's ability to heal Blake and considered it an excuse to evade responsibility.

"I'll bear the same pain as Blake if I fail, Aunt Emma."

Both Emma and Glenn were stunned by Pearl's words. They wondered why she would make such a stupid statement.

"Don't say such nonsense, Pearl. This isn't something to take lightly," Glenn attempted to intervene, but

Pearl silenced him with a gaze.

"It's a promise."



Pearl's unwavering confidence left Emma in disbelief. "Fine, I'll give you a month. If you fail, we'll

proceed as discussed," she stated, giving Pearl a stern and threatening look.

Chapter 306

Pearl was in stunned surprise. "A month?"

"Hmph! I doubt you can do it. If Blake doesn't show signs of improvement in that time, how can you

claim to cure him?" Emma scoffed, her skepticism evident.

"A month is too long, and by then, his injuries will be almost healed. Just give me two weeks," Pearl

explained calmly.

Emma had planned to expose Pearl's incompetence, but she found herself gaping in surprise. Two

weeks? Are you kidding me? Are you sure you won't run away?"

"If I wanted to run, I would have done so when he got hurt," Pearl retorted, displeased with how Emma

treated her.

"I'm sure a young woman like you doesn't know how to cure people. While you're exceptional, don't

bite off more than you could chew. We should negotiate with a qualified doctor," Ezra chimed in, also

doubting Pearl's abilities. "I've already contacted a top-notch doctor, and he'll come to treat Blake once

we're finished with the negotiation."

"What doctor?" Pearl wondered if the doctor was as good as her. She had yet to show her skills.

Ezra deliberately revealed Simon's full name, assuming that Pearl might not know of him. " His name is

Simon Freeman."

It was Simon again.

Calmly, Pearl said, "It's been seven months since Simon's out to save people. I'm sure he'll never come

here to save Blake." Simon wouldn't come unless Pearl specifically requested his help.

"I'll bring him here no matter the cost," Ezra declared, showing his willingness to spare no expense for

the sake of his beloved grandson.

Amused, Pearl suggested, "Why don't you call him and ask if he's willing to come or not?"

Her eagerness pushed Ezra to call Simon and put it on speaker mode to avoid being embarrassed in

front of so many people.

"Hello, is it Mister Simon?" Ezra sounded extremely polite.

'Alas, you promised not to withdraw a move. What are you doing, Simon?' Simon's place sounded a

little noisy as if he was arguing with someone.

Simon asked loudly, “Yes, speaking. May I know why you’re calling?”

Ezra felt somewhat awkward but maintained his politeness. “I’m Ezra Jordan. I would like to extend an invitation for you to treat my grandson. Could you spare the time?”

“No, I’m busy, and I’m currently abroad. I’m afraid I can’t treat your son,” Simon promptly declined.

“Just name your price. I’m willing to pay any amount,” Ezra persisted.

“It’s not about the money... Knight! I have more than I can spend, and I don’t particularly care for wealth. While it’s impressive that you managed to get my number, I’ve retired from the profession for a while now and have no desire to return to it.”

Simon made his stance clear, leaving Ezra with a disgruntled expression. As he was about to end the call, Pearl leaned closer and spoke up, “You’re playing chess again, Simon.”

Stupefied, Simon grinned and responded cheerfully, “Oh, it’s Pearl. What happened? What are you doing there?”

After declining Ezra’s request, Simon suddenly seemed quite friendly and familiar with Pearl. This left everyone except Glenn astonished and bewildered.

“That’s not important. Can you come and help treat my cousin? They doubt my abilities.” Pearl

shrugged helplessly.

“How dare they doubt you? You’re my protege, and you’re incredibly clever. I felt like I was. taking

advantage of you when you treated others and mentioned my name... Wait. Your

cousin? Are you a Jordan?”

Naturally, Simon was well aware of the Jordan family’s reputation in Bodgow.

Chapter 307

“I’ll tell you about this later. Are you free?”

But Simon refused, “No, I’m not. Yes, I’m just a tool at your disposal, but you can treat your cousin, and

I trust you. Okay, I’m going to hang up because I’m playing chess with Charles... What?! How could

you withdraw a move?”

After that, Simon quickly ended the call, seemingly eager to return to his game of chess.

Ezra gaped, repeating Pearl’s name while watching her with an incredulous expression, while Emma,

who had just placed a bet with Pearl, was now feeling awkward.

Pearl turned out to be Simon’s disciple. Besides, Simon, who was hard to meet, was at Pearl’s

disposal. It made people wonder how amazing Pearl truly was.

“Can I treat Blake now, Master Jordan?” Pearl ignored everything else because the only thought in her mind now was to cure Blake.

“It looks like the young are really greater... Okay, I’ll leave him to you.” Ezra sighed in helpless admiration and asked, “How did you come to know Simon, and are you truly his disciple?”

“I accidentally bumped into him when I was studying abroad.” Pearl merely gave a brief explanation and said, “It’s best if you guys don’t visit Blake for the time being. You can observe him from a distance through the glass window, but please avoid direct contact to prevent any risk of infection, as his wounds are quite vulnerable right now.”

“Where should we go now?” Emma was baffled.

Pearl answered quickly, “Go home and wait for me to cure him before you come over.”

Glancing at Blake in the ward, Ezra nodded reluctantly. “Okay, let’s all go home.”

The Jordan family marched home, but Glenn stayed and sat beside Pearl.

“Why aren’t you going home?” Pearl turned and smiled at Glenn.

Glenn was stunned by her smile. "It's because I want to be with... Blake." He nearly blurted out that he wanted to be with her, but he held himself back and lied.

"Alright, looks like I've misunderstood you."

Pearl's comment puzzled Glenn. "What do you mean?"

"In the past, I didn't have a favorable impression of you. I thought you seemed gentle but cunning. I

never expected you to be so caring toward your friend," Pearl explained, noticing that Glenn had

blushed at her words. She continued, "You blush quite easily too, and it happened because of a simple compliment."

Glenn didn't know why he blushed, but Pearl's smile seemed to have that effect on him.

Pearl teased, "Don't grin at me like that. You'll make me think you have a crush on me."

Subconsciously, Glenn blurted out, "Yeah, I have a crush on you."

Pearl fell silent, taken aback by his unexpected response to her joke.

Glenn quickly realized his mistake and smiled. "Why aren't you saying anything? I was just

kidding. Besides, I couldn't fall for you since I have a crush on someone else."

"Oh, thank goodness." Pearl sighed. Just then, she noticed Blake's fingers twitch slightly in the ward, a

sign that he might be waking up.

## Chapter 308

“Blake will wake up soon. Let’s go in and see him.” Pearl was worried that Blake might be traumatized

when he learned about the condition of his back after waking up.

They changed into sterile clothing and entered the ward.

Seeing Blake’s furrowed brows and sweaty forehead, Pearl felt a deep sense of sorrow. It was

unexpected that he would be in such pain even while in a coma.

Pearl moved closer and saw that his fingers were trembling rhythmically, so she reached out and gently

held his hand.

Miraculously, Blake slowly opened his eyes in the next moment. Despite the thick layer of padding

beneath him, he still sweated and grimaced in pain when he shifted slightly.

“Are you okay, Blake?” Pearl’s heart ached as she witnessed his distress.

“I’m okay, Pearl. I won’t die,” Blake assured her, showing his determination. He knew the extent of

damage the sulfuric acid had caused to his back, but he would make the same choice to protect Pearl if

given another chance.

“Don’t worry. I will help cure your back, and I guarantee that it’ll look how it used to be.” While cheering

Blake up, Pearl set a target for herself.

Despite the pain, Blake’s pride remained intact. “I don’t need that. A little back injury is nothing for a man like me.”

“Alright, don’t worry. I’ll not only heal you but also make sure that the culprit faces consequences,”

Pearl declared with a fierce glint in her eyes, her thoughts turning to the person who had fled with the bucket of sulfuric acid. It would be very easy to screen the suspects because she had just gotten there and yet to offend anyone.

“You should start by looking into Willow. We’ve recently had a falling out, and she’s probably harboring resentment,” Blake suggested calmly, despite the pain in his back.

Pearl narrowed her eyes and couldn’t help but smirk at the thought of Willow’s timid demeanor. “I doubt

Willow would be so audacious, but the Quinlevans might be a more likely culprit.” The Quinlevans were known for their boldness if the accusation held true.



Unconcerned, Blake tried to comfort her. "Don't take it to heart because our family will look into it. After

all, Grandfather will do something since I'm seriously hurt." It was clear that Blake's confidence

stemmed from being the young heir of the Jordans, who had the means to seek justice when wronged.

"The Jordan family and I are different. I'll find the culprit and ensure you get justice," Pearl vowed resolutely.

After chatting a bit, Blake grew tired and asked them to leave, as he needed rest.

Pearl intended to return to the Jordan family estate to request some herbs from Ezra. Their vast resources should make obtaining the necessary items relatively straightforward.

"Are you going home? Let me give you a ride," Glenn offered as he followed Pearl.

But Pearl shook her head. "It's okay. I have other things to take care of. Just focus on what you need to do."

"Alright." Glenn didn't press the matter, knowing his place. He nodded and left.

As Pearl exited the hospital corridor, she suddenly saw a familiar figure.

"Richard... what are you doing here?"

“I didn’t mean to intrude earlier. I was genuinely concerned about your injury.” Richard stood outside

the hospital, cigarette in hand, with a few smoked down to the filter. The ground around him was littered

with ashes.

Chapter 309

As a result, Pearl’s pent-up emotions finally surfaced. “Richard, I’m really okay. It’s true...” She didn’t

expect to say such affected words, but she couldn’t explain why his passionate gaze was making her

teary-eyed.

She remembered reading somewhere on the internet that being loved could bring tears to one’s eyes.

Richard’s heart skipped a beat, and he cursed himself for losing his temper earlier. “I know. I’m sorry.”

Taking a deep breath, Pearl opened her arms, and Richard understood, stepping forward to embrace

her carefully, being mindful of her injured arm.

Richard’s comforting warmth filled Pearl with a sense of security and contentment.

“Be honest with me, Pearl. Is Master Jordan keeping you under house arrest?” Richard could see

through Pearl’s lie at a glance, but he wanted to hear the truth from her.

Pearl sniffed and responded with a lighthearted tone, “No, it’s not that. He just hopes I’ll stay in Bodgow

and doesn't want me to go back to Enswood."

Richard's voice turned frosty. "Why didn't you tell me the truth, huh?"

Pearl smiled, attempting to justify her actions. "I didn't want you to worry... If you knew, you would've come and helped me, but I didn't want you to get caught up in this mess."

"Pearl, you're not alone anymore, and you're my girlfriend. I should be there for you, no matter what."

Richard gently caressed her face, feeling deep sympathy for her.

"Okay, I'll tell you everything from now on." Pearl was moved, hugging Richard even tighter. She had always faced her challenges alone and never wanted to burden others. It was the first time someone had offered to share her burdens.

Richard patted her back reassuringly. "Alright, I'll be here for a few days, and once things are settled, we'll go back home together."

"What about the company?" Shocked, Pearl pushed Richard away.

"I've brought Sean back to the company and asked for his help. Plus, I've changed all meetings to video conferences. Don't worry, I'm a prudent man."

Seeing Pearl's slight astonishment, Richard leaned in and k\*ssed her.

The sudden k\*ss caught Pearl off guard, and before she could regain her composure, the passionate k\*ss left her breathless.

After a long moment, Richard let go of her. "Okay, let me drive you home."

Pearl nodded, blushing.

Richard headed to the hotel after dropping Pearl off at her home.

Inside the house, Ezra eagerly welcomed Pearl. "Pearl, how's Blake? Is he awake?"

"Yes, he's awake, and he'll make a full recovery as long as he accepts the treatment," Pearl assured him.

Relieved, Ezra smiled warmly. "Pearl, who drove you home?"

Pearl's heart skipped a beat, and she casually lied, "A friend of mine in Bodgow. I bumped into my friend at the hospital and was offered a ride home."

"A friend? Are you sure it's not Richard who came over from Enswood?" Ezra, being perceptive, guessed correctly. "What's so special about Richard, Pearl? He's just a bit

handsome and wealthy, but there are plenty of people like him. I can find a better match for you, you

know?"

Ezra's words annoyed Pearl. "But he's the only man I love," she replied while frowning. Her

stubbornness changed Ezra's expression. "I forbid you from dating him!"

Chapter 310

"Oh, Pearl. Bodgow is full of rich men, and Richard is really just an ordinary man. I'll introduce

someone better to you. What do you think?"

Ezra genuinely wished for Pearl to find a more suitable match, as he believed that only a man. involved

in at least two of the following fields-the military, politics, or business – had the right to marry into the

Jordan family.

Pearl ignored Ezra and sneered. "You have no right to interfere in my relationship with Richard."

"You're as rebellious as your mother!" Ezra, incensed, felt his blood pressure rise due to Pearl's

defiance.

Stunned, Pearl mocked, "My mother would have been happier without you!"

"I'll say this one last time, do not date Richard, or you will face the consequences!" Ezra warned sternly.

Pearl's defiance only seemed to further enrage him, and he trembled with anger. He couldn't fathom

why the Jordan family's daughters were all so rebellious.

Pearl, undeterred, confronted Ezra, "Master Jordan, you'd better not push me too far, especially while Blake is still under my care. Otherwise, I might reconsider treating him."

'How dare she threaten me with Blake!' Ezra thought, widening his eyes. Pearl's audacity left him flabbergasted. Beah, her mother, had been a more obedient and compliant daughter, never daring to confront him so openly or issue threats.

Pearl, however, was young and fearless, brimming with self-confidence.

"Pearl, let's talk this through..." Ezra, after a moment's pause, adopted a gentler and more conciliatory tone. "I'm not trying to prevent you from dating Richard. I'm doing this for sake. I'm just worried that you

might bump into someone bad."

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"I can judge for myself whether Richard is good for me or not. If you want me to continue treating Blake, you'd better not meddle." With that, Pearl got up and hastily left for her room.

"Pearl!" Ezra called after her with a sigh. "I understand that I can't dissuade you from this. As for

Blake... I hope you can heal him."

But Pearl knew that Ezra was only stalling for time. Despite his words, he would undoubtedly find other ways to thwart her relationship with Richard once Blake was cured. At least for now, she could focus on Blake's recovery without that additional worry.

"Okay, I'll try my best. But please ensure you find the culprit behind the incident," Pearl urged.

At the mention of that, Ezra frowned. "I've investigated, and it appears to be the work of the Quinlevans! It seems their growing influence has made them bold enough to scheme against my granddaughter."

"Their actions towards me don't matter as much as Blake's well-being. What's important is that Blake was injured. I hope you will punish them as a form of apology to Blake." Pearl gave him an indifferent look and left.

The following morning, Pearl visited Blake's ward and found him lying in bed, scrolling through social media.

"Are you checking the news, Pearl?" Blake immediately asked her.

“Why check social media so early in the morning?” Pearl retorted as she turned on her phone and noticed a news article.

[Pearl Wearing Counterfeit Luxury Fashion? Intentional Deception or Financial Strain?]

The headline was accompanied by a photo of her black dress and additional images of her shopping at a fashion store, along with the receipt.