

YOUR GUISE 311

Chapter 311

The caption made a bold claim: This dress is designed by Jane, a famous designer, and this is the only one in the world. Plus, Jane has never sold this dress. That's why Pearl must be wearing a fake item!

Pearl clicked her tongue, wondering why someone had such detailed information about her dress.

Blake, feeling guilty for pushing her to buy the dress, offered, "Pearl, you bought that dress. with me.

Should I clarify the situation on your behalf?"

Pearl shook her head. "Explaining won't help. They might even twist the story further, and it could ruin your reputation as well."

Blake frowned. "Who do you think is behind this?"

"It seems like I'm their target, but their real aim is the Jordan family. They started targeting me the moment they heard about me. Do you think it could be those two young women who were jealous of me?" Pearl analyzed the situation calmly, unwilling to accuse anyone without evidence.

Blake was struck by her insight. "You might be right!"

"I suspect it's them who initiated the rumors, and the Jordans' enemies seized this opportunity to target

us, making the rumor spread like wildfire,” Pearl explained.

“I’ll inform Grandfather and ask him to find the culprits,” Blake decided, his eyes filled with determination.

“That’s not necessary because it’s quite easy to identify the culprits,” Pearl stopped him.

Blake was bewildered. “How?” He couldn’t fathom how Pearl intended to pinpoint the culprits, considering the vast and covert nature of online activities.

Pearl retrieved her laptop from her bag and began typing on it. She managed to hack into Bodgow’s information network with ease.

“What...” Blake watched her in astonishment. He couldn’t comprehend the intricate coding she was manipulating.

Pearl efficiently hacked into the information network, locating detailed personal information behind those accounts that had posted defamatory posts. Reading those IP addresses and personal information, she couldn’t help but express her disappointment, “They’re so lousy. Are these people even trying?”

Staring at her, Blake was at a loss for words. While he didn’t understand the technical aspects, he

grasped the essence of her actions. "You're..." He eventually found his voice, a mixture of awe and curiosity, "...a hacker?"

Pearl grinned. "Be confident in your guess. Yes, I'm a hacker."

Blake was left speechless, struck by her incredible talents. First, she revealed her skill as a wine taster, and now she was demonstrating her hacking prowess. She far surpassed the abilities of most ordinary people and had achieved levels that took others a lifetime to reach. If she weren't his cousin, he believed he would be charmed by her.

Deciding not to disturb her, he resumed scrolling through his social media. He couldn't help but feel increasingly irritated by the growing negative comments about Pearl online, muttering, "Why didn't I find these people so annoying before?"

Pearl continued working on her laptop, her focus on the screen. Frustration began to creep as she couldn't identify the person responsible for spreading the rumors.

"Alright, I guessed correctly. These people recently conducted financial transactions with both the Quinlevans and Shaws. I'm sure they're involved in plotting against me," Pearl concluded.

However, her frustration grew as she continued to search for the culprit. She questioned

in

herself, "But why can't I find the person who's spreading these rumors? Could my instincts be wrong?"

Chapter 312

"No, I'm sure there's a reason why you thought so," Blake assured Pearl, setting aside his phone to

show his unwavering support.

Pearl was taken aback by Blake's sudden change in attitude. "Why are you being so nice all of a

sudden? You're not the type to be this kind to me."

Blake cleared his throat awkwardly. "Well, I've come to appreciate your capabilities, and I'm not just

saying that to flatter you. Anyway, what's your plan? You can't let them think you're a pushover."

Pearl was confident and resolute. "Of course, I'm going to handle this."

"What's your plan?" Blake was curious about her strategy.

Pearl simply replied, "Watch me!"

She found a specific photo on her laptop and posted it online. Within moments, the photo became the

top trending topic with the highest number of views.

People were astounded by the photo.

“Pearl designed it?!”

“So, Pearl is actually Jane. She’s amazing!”

“She’s not just talented, she’s extraordinary!”

“Extraordinary? No, she’s a genius!”

Willow and Tahlia had been reveling in the negative comments about Pearl online, but their expressions turned sour when they saw the news.

Willow’s smile stiffened. “Who the hell is Pearl? How could she be Jane?”

“Well, it’s confirmed that she’s Jane. Damn it! I thought we could humiliate her for wearing fake clothes to prevent her from crossing us again, but I didn’t expect...” Tahlia was seething with anger because she hadn’t anticipated that Pearl would have a trump card up her sleeve.

If Pearl was indeed Jane, then the authenticity of her clothing was no longer in question. No one would doubt her claims anymore.

Naturally, Willow couldn’t accept this turn of events. When she saw that Tahlia was equally disgruntled,

a devious idea crossed her mind. "I have a better idea, Tahlia."

Intrigued, Tahlia asked, "What is it?"

Willow leaned closer and revealed her scheme to Tahlia, who responded with a wicked grin. "Let's do it your way then."

Pearl relaxed when she saw public opinion shifting in her favor. She took out her phone to play a mobile game called Kings.

Blake, surprised to see Pearl playing the game, asked, "You play this game too? How's your skill?"

Pearl chuckled. "I'm a seasoned player of Kings who always loses. I have a streak of losses, and I'm pretty much clueless about it." She added with a mischievous grin, "Oh, and I've sworn off in-game relationships, but the king is welcome to try."

Blake burst into laughter. "You're something else."

Pearl rolled her eyes at him and selected her heroine. "I was kidding. I'm actually quite good at the game."

Blake looked at her with a mix of disbelief and admiration. "Really? My brother would really like you

then.”

Curious, Pearl muttered, “Oh?”

“Yes, you’ve heard of Felix, right? He’s a huge esports enthusiast and always ranks at the top. He’s unmatched,” Blake explained.

Pearl completed an impressive kill in the game and turned to Blake. “Top of what list?”

“The Kings’ Tournament! Haven’t you ever played that before?”

Pearl realized that she had been abroad when Kings was first launched. She remembered becoming the champion when she had ample time to dedicate to the game. However, she had taken a break from playing it for several years, and when she did pick it up again, it was just for fun, not competitive gaming.

“I’ll give it a try,” she said with renewed interest.

Chapter 313

Pearl quickly won the game with a score of twelve to zero. As she searched the leaderboard she was left momentarily stunned.

[Mad Felix]

What the hell was that?

“I’ll take you to meet Felix when we have some free time. He’s always at the club, training and practicing, and he comes and goes like a shadow. Meeting him might be a bit hard,” Blake explained.

“Sure,” Pearl replied, adding Felix’s contact and sending him a message, [You, the champion of the leaderboard?]

As expected, Felix quickly added her and responded with a request for a one-on-one match.

Pearl readily accepted. After a brief discussion, they decided to have a one-on-one match using the hero Charlotte, known for its focus on skill and speed in gestures.

Pearl initiated the game with a swift Starlight attack, catching Felix off guard. Her unique attack style and strategy set her apart, dealing more damage than usual.

True to form, Pearl won the game with a score of one to zero.

Pearl messaged him, [Do we stop here?]

[No!]

With a sigh, Pearl agreed to another round. This time, she chose the character Elizabeth, while Felix

went with Bernadette. On paper, it seemed impossible for Pearl to win due to the disadvantages of their character matchup.

However, Pearl had a golden costume for her character in the second round. While her attacks were less potent than Felix's, she employed clever movements, took advantage of loopholes, and used bushes to evade many attacks. She even triggered chain explosions passively, ultimately defeating him.

Felix's character lay defeated, and a message appeared on the screen.

[You're f*cking awesome!]

Pearl made her character stand on the spot and imitate Felix's character. She also wrote something on the screen. [I triggered the chain explosions passively, but you became even worse after the attack.]

Felix didn't find the joke amusing. [Who the hell are you?] He wondered why a grown-up man had such a feminine name like the one Pearl used: Pearlbelle.

Pearl's response was simple. [Your cousin.]

(What?)

Pearl was at a loss for words.

After a while, Felix finally made the connection. Staring at the name on his phone, he couldn't believe it

was Pearl, the cousin he had never met since her return.

Suddenly, he logged off the game.

Pearl was shocked when she saw his character suddenly go dark on the screen. She wondered if he

was frightened by the sudden revelation. Or perhaps his confidence had been shattered by the defeat,

leading him to an emotional breakdown.

It all seemed absurd. Pearl glanced at Blake and, after a long pause, asked, "Is your brother

emotionally fragile?"

The door to the ward swung open before Blake could respond.

Pearl quickly scanned for a name that matched the man who had entered, and she realized it

was Felix. He bore some resemblance to Blake but lacked his cousin's delicate fierceness,

Felix's round, cheerful eyes and dimples gave him a youthful appearance.

Pearl had never imagined that Felix would appear even younger than Blake.

Chapter 314

Felix came to a halt in front of Pearl and asked with a serious tone, "You're Pearl. Ah, no, you're

Pearlbelle, aren't you?"

"Yeah."

Blake, who had been silently observing, nodded, still somewhat bewildered.

"No way! You actually came all the way here." Pearl burst into laughter. Felix was indeed an esports enthusiast, coming and going like a shadow.

"You're really good at the game. Can I invite you to join my club? We'll give you the best treatment."

Felix's eyes shone with eagerness.

Pearl suddenly felt that Felix not only looked young but also had a straightforward personality. However, she shook her head and declined his offer. "I'm sorry, but I'm not really interested in that. I'm just playing the game for fun."

'Alright then. Can you at least join us for a match with the other team in two days?' Felix was surprised that she wasn't interested after defeating the leaderboard champion.

After a moment of consideration, Pearl turned him down again. "I'm sorry, but I really don't want to join the match." Suddenly, she regretted fighting against Felix one-on-one because she felt trapped in

Felix's insistence.

"But..." Felix struggled to find the right words and looked on the verge of tears due to his

anxiety.

"Okay, you have my word." Pearl felt a pang of guilt when she saw how pitiful Felix looked. He seemed

to want to invite her to join his team but didn't know how to express it, and his eyes welled up in the

end.

In the end, she agreed because he was her cousin, and she couldn't help but think that he didn't seem

very smart...

"Great. I'll pick you up at home then." Felix became instantly excited and checked his phone, realizing

he had other commitments. "I have to go now since I have something else to do today. I need to go

back to train the new kids."

After that, he left decisively.

Blake was in a daze the whole time Felix was here, even though Felix hadn't said a word to him. "It's

unbelievable. He's going home just for you. If Grandfather finds out, he'll have a lot of respect for you."

Pearl twitched her lips. "Please don't exaggerate."

“No, it’s true. He only comes home briefly during the New Year these years, and I didn’t expect him to break his own rule for you.”

Pearl didn’t pay much attention to that-her focus was on the upcoming match. She needed to practice with her new character to avoid embarrassing herself.

After chatting with Blake for a bit, Pearl left the ward. She decided not to ask Ezra for help, especially after their recent disagreement when she tried to request herbs to treat Blake.

She contemplated going to the black market to acquire the herbs she needed. However, as she reached the hospital’s entrance, she spotted Richard’s car by the road. At the same time, he gazed at her with a passionate expression.

“What are you doing here?”

Chapter 315

Richard waved at Pearl. “I came because I missed you.”

Pearl, being skeptical, questioned his timing. She got into the car and stared at him intently as if she were trying to decipher something. “But why did you come right on time and wait for me at the door?”

Richard decided to be honest. “Okay, you got me. I caught a cold and came here to get some

medicine.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Pearl frowned, feeling like she had failed as his girlfriend.

Although Richard was truthful, he sounded somewhat hurt. “It’s because you’re taking care of someone

else, and I didn’t want to trouble you.” His underlying message was that he was jealous.

Hearing his bitter words, Pearl playfully walked over and pinched his cheek. “Okay, stop overthinking.

That’s my cousin. How could you be jealous of him? You’re acting like a child, Richard.” She couldn’t

help but wonder how the cold and emotionless president could turn into such a coquettish and clingy

man.

“Yeah, I’m jealous. How are you going to console me?” Richard subconsciously licked his lips. and

gazed at Pearl with amorous eyes, acting seductively.

“How?” Pearl was equally moved.

Richard pulled her into his arms and whispered in her ear, “Kiss me.”

Pearl turned beet red because of his warm breath and the amorous atmosphere. She shook her head a

little, but when she saw Richard’s eyes, she couldn’t say no.

Richard kept on seducing her. "Kiss me, okay?"

Pearl gritted her teeth and raised her head to k*ss his face. Her abashed look was very attractive.

Richard drew her closer, about to lean in for a k*ss when suddenly someone tapped on the car window.

Startled, Pearl immediately pulled away from Richard, her face still flushed.

Richard lowered the car window and glared at the security guard outside, his demeanor icy because the security guard had disrupted their moment.

Initially, the security guard wanted to remind them that parking was not allowed, but he swallowed his words under Richard's intimidating stare. "Uh, you can't park here..."

"I'm sorry. We'll go now." Pearl nodded apologetically.

Richard averted his gaze and stepped on the gas pedal to drive away. Pearl turned to look at him, laughing uncontrollably.

"Why are you laughing?" Richard was baffled.

Pearl couldn't hold back her laughter as she continued, "Your expression... Hahaha! No wonder he was taken aback. He probably thought he had ruined our romantic moment."

"Romantic moment? Do you want to continue it?" Richard glanced at her through the rear-

view mirror, where the bright k*ss mark on his cheek was quite conspicuous. Pearl suddenly stopped

laughing and gazed at Richard with a shy expression.

“Okay, I’ll stop teasing you. Where are you headed? Are you going home?” he asked.

“No, I’m going to the black market,” Pearl replied, shaking her head, uncertain of how he would react.

As expected, Richard’s expression became stern. “What are you going to do there?”

“I need some herbs for Blake’s injury, so I’m going to the auction at the black market,” Pearl explained

honestly, looking at Richard.

Chapter 316

“I’ll go object.

with you,

“Richard unexpectedly offered, despite Pearl’s expectations that he would

She was

“No!” Pearl immediately shot him down. “You have a cold so you should rest.” worried about Richard.

Someone who was sick shouldn’t be running around. What would they do if something happened to

him?

However, Richard, understanding her worry, smiled gently and reassured her. "Don't worry, I'm fine."

Pearl couldn't help but worry when she noticed that his face was flushed, and he appeared to have a fever. "But..." She hesitated, clearly anxious about his condition. "You don't look well at all. I think it might be more than just a cold. You seem to have a fever."

Richard, determined to accompany her, reassured her once more, "Don't worry, I'll tell you if I'm not feeling well." He then stepped on the accelerator.

The black market was located in the suburbs and not frequently visited, making it difficult to find. Pearl was well-versed in hacking and had knowledge of various black markets in different cities. Once they arrived, everyone was essentially a stranger, which put her at ease.

Pearl, holding Richard's hand as they walked around, searched for the medication. She eventually stopped in front of an old man. "I'd like to buy this medication from you. Please name your price,"

The old man, dressed in layers of clothing despite the warmth of the black market, didn't respond immediately. Instead, he asked, "What are you treating?"

Pearl didn't see a reason to lie. "A burn."

The man paused and squinted. "This is for treating inflammation. Why would you use it for burns?"

Pearl proudly replied, "My mentor taught me that it's very effective for burns." The old man. wouldn't know who her mentor was. It was fine to tell him that.

"You're Simon Freeman's student?"

"You... know Simon?" Pearl was surprised that the man could deduce she was Simon's student based solely on her interest in the medication.

Did he know her mentor? Did they share some past connection?

They didn't just know each other because the old man could immediately tell. "I don't only know him, I wish I could strangle him."

Pearl was shocked. "Why?"

The man was angry and didn't say anything. Instead, then took the medication away. "Not for sale."

Pearl couldn't help but ask, "Why are you suddenly refusing to sell it, sir?"

"Because I can. Now, go away, you're disrupting my business." The man tried to chase her away impatiently.

"Sir, I've searched the entire black market, and you're the only one selling this medication. Could you

please tell me what happened? I really need it," Pearl pleaded anxiously, her tone sincere.

"This won't help with burns," the old man said with a pained expression.

"What do you mean?" Pearl was confused because Simon had told her that the medication was effective for treating burns.

"It can... temporarily heal burns, but look at my hand." The man rolled up his sleeve and showed her a scar on his hand. "Look, Simon gave me this scar twenty years ago. This medication did initially improve it, but when it relapsed, the wound became worse than before.

Pearl examined the patchy burn marks on the man's arm, which had aged poorly, looking shocked.

"This wound isn't from a burn," Richard, who had remained silent, suddenly interjected, attracting the attention of both Pearl and the old man.

Chapter 317

"What do you mean by that?" The old man sounded annoyed. "Are you saying I did this to myself?"

"Of course not." Richard gently touched his scar, and his eyes looked cold. "This scar looks more like the result of poisoning, and the scar rotted away instead of a burn."

The man sounded even more stern. "Did Simon poison me?"

“That’s impossible,” Richard answered honestly. “Mr. Simon led an almost flawless life and was known for his honesty. If he failed to treat you, it would damage his reputation. People in the medical field care a great deal about their reputation, so he wouldn’t shoot his own foot like that.”

“So what are you trying to say?”

Richard met his gaze and calmly posed a question, “Do you have any enemies? This poison isn’t found in Bodgow but is common in Carajan.’

The man thought about it, and a familiar face came to mind. ‘Carajan... It must be that person.’

“Thanks for telling me. I had assumed it was a poorly treated burn, but it seems it was poison! “The old man then retrieved the medicine from behind him and offered it to Pearl. “I’ll give this to you for free.”

Pearl hadn’t anticipated stumbling upon an old case and even helping solve it. Nevertheless, she couldn’t just accept the medicine without compensation.

“I’d like to pay you the market price for it because I don’t want to save money on something like this,”

Pearl said, pulling out a card from her bag and handing it to the man. “There’s around 141 thousand dollars on this card. If there’s any leftover, consider it an apology, as this all started because of my

mentor.”

“Although I don’t need the money, Simon... has a great student!” The old man chuckled happily. “I

might even introduce my son to you if you didn’t have a boyfriend.”

As soon as he made that comment, Pearl could sense the atmosphere around her turn icy. ‘Oh no, he’s

angry.’

“Thank you, but there’s no need for that.”

“Well, if you ever break up, feel free to come and see me. I’ll keep my son available for you.”

Pearl just smiled as she put the medicine into her bag.

When Richard saw her expression, he couldn’t control himself and gave her a k*ss as a punishment.

“What was that?” Pearl jumped back, her hand covering her face in surprise.

Richard scoffed. “You’re attracting too much attention.”

Pearl approached him with small steps, playfully bumping her shoulder into his. “I didn’t start

1. Besides, shouldn’t you be proud that your girlfriend is likable?”

Richard appeared more relaxed after her remark.

“By the way, I have a question,” Pearl brought up the scar on the old man’s arm, her curiosity piqued.

Richard looked away. "What is it?"

"How did you know the scar was caused by poison?"

Richard was silent for a while, then said, "Because I was poisoned when I was a kid." It wasn't

a good part of his life and he chose to suppress it, but the memories came flooding back. Pearl

frowned. "Who did it?"

Chapter 318

Richard gently touched the scar on his arm and then smiled. "I don't know."

'Alright, is there anything else that you need?' Richard didn't want to talk about the past anymore, so

he changed the subject.

Pearl touched her chin in thought. "We need a five-hundred-year-old ginkgo, but that's only available

during the auction. We need to wait till nighttime."

Richard looked around. "Are you hungry? Let's grab something to eat.

II

The black market was like a small business street selling all kinds of food and toys, except the prices

were alarming.

Pearl checked the menu and was taken aback by the prices, particularly when she saw that a bowl of ramen cost twenty dollars. "They could have just robbed us for the money, but now I have to decide what to eat and at what price."

She didn't blink when she had to pay 141 thousand dollars for medicine, but she was now calling twenty dollars for a meal a robbery.

Pearl decided to order a bowl of ramen, but as she handed the menu back, she saw someone familiar.

'Isn't that... Hugo?'

But wasn't Hugo in Enswood? What was he doing here?

She couldn't let him find out that Richard was there, so Pearl quickly came up with a plan. She retrieved two pairs of sunglasses from her bag, put one on herself, and handed the other to Richard.

"Hugo is here. Put these on."

Richard quickly donned the sunglasses and lowered his voice. "What's he doing here?" He had indeed noticed Hugo, but he wasn't entirely certain. Now it seems to be confirmed.

"Why else? Probably for the auction. Do you think Hugo is here for the ginkgo too?" Pearl began to

worry.

“It’s fine, we have enough money.” Richard was confident about that.

“It’s not just about the money. If Hugo does anything, it could be hard for us to get the ginkgo.

”

Pearl thought about it and came up with a brilliant plan.

During the auction, Pearl scanned the room and spotted Hugo seated not far from them, engrossed in something. His subtle smile made her worry.

The initial auction items didn’t pique Pearl’s interest, but Richard was enthusiastic and purchased a few pieces of jewelry for her.

Luckily, Richard had a cold that day, which altered his voice. Hugo couldn’t recognize him due to the different vocal tone.

Soon, the time came for the most important item-the ginkgo.

Pearl’s heart raced with excitement when she laid eyes on the ginkgo encased in a glass insulation box.

“Five-hundred-year-old ginkgo. Starting price- 1 million dollars.”

Hugo made a bid, and Richard followed suit, adding a mere dollar to each subsequent bid. It was as

though he were deliberately toying with Hugo.

Hugo took notice of this peculiar bidder and glanced around the room.

Pearl lowered her head, and Richard, wearing the sunglasses, remained incognito in the dimly lit

venue. Hugo couldn't make out their identities.

Hugo scrutinized them for a moment, then looked away.

The bidding continued. Initially, there were other bidders, but as the price climbed, they

dropped out, leaving only Richard and Hugo in the running.

Hugo seemed to be losing patience, announcing loudly, "I'll pay 150 million dollars."

Chapter 319

The bid of 150 million was way beyond the ginkgo's actual value. Pearl patted Richard on the shoulder.

"Alright, stop bidding.

Richard, however, paid no attention to her and raised his plate. "300 million dollars."

"Alright, anyone higher than 300 million?"

Hugo thought about it and ultimately decided to give up.

“300 million once, 300 million twice, sold! Congratulations on winning the bid, sir.”

Pearl couldn't help but roll her eyes at him. “You're throwing money around. If I had known it would cost

this much, I would have asked Master Jordan for the money.”

Richard affectionately patted her head. “It's fine, I have the money.”

“Who doesn't? But you should know when to spend it,” Pearl muttered, sounding a bit reluctant. Such a big spender. She was beginning to think she was unlucky to have married him. So unlucky!

Pearl's mood shifted to surprise when Richard suddenly turned to her and said, “I'll give you all my money so you can keep an eye on it.”

“Deal.” Despite her previous grumbling, Pearl couldn't help but be pleased that he had won the ginkgo for her.

As they were leaving, a group of people blocked their path.

“Richard, it's quite a surprise to see you here. Didn't you use to say that things at the black market are filthy and you would rather die than come here?”

Hugo regarded Richard with a smug expression, finding it ironic that Richard, who typically acted

superior, was now at the black market. 'Arrogant. That's going to change soon!'

"Why are you blocking me?" Richard seemed irritated, and his intimidating expression sent shivers down the spines of those around him.

Everyone around could only watch and didn't dare do anything to him.

"Although it's not ideal to corner you like this..." Hugo's smile took on a menacing tone. "Hand over the ginkgo."

Pearl clutched the ginkgo more tightly to her chest and calmly retorted, "Why? You couldn't get it during the auction, so now you want to rob us?"

Hugo glanced at her with a smirk "Pearl, if you agree to be with me, I'll give it to you."

"What? Hugo, Richard bought this. Don't you have a bit of shame?" This was the first time she realized just how shameless some people could be.

Hugo seemed unperturbed, as if he hadn't heard her comment. "If you refuse, don't blame me for taking it from you."

The atmosphere became tense, and onlookers seemed ready to pounce.

“Hold on!”

A deep voice rang out from behind, and Hugo suddenly felt a sense of foreboding. He signaled to his men to stop and turned to find a group of people approaching.

Hugo squinted. “May I know who you are?”

“I’m Reese Cooper, and I didn’t expect people to be so overbearing in this market,” the newcomer replied with a hint of sarcasm.

Hugo recognized that he had run into an obstacle and moderated his tone. “You’re the boss here. I’m just here to collect a debt.”

Before he could take any action, they had stumbled upon the secret founder of the black. market. Luck seemed to be favoring Pearl and Richard.

Reese’s eyes gleamed with intensity as he offered a sly smile. “A debt, you say? Tell me, are you here to collect a debt from my goddaughter?”

Chapter 320

Goddaughter?!

Hugo exclaimed in disbelief as he pointed at Pearl. “She’s your goddaughter?”

Pearl and Richard were equally surprised. Wasn't this man the one who had sold them the medication?

And now he was claiming to be the owner of the black market, Reese Cooper, and that Pearl was his goddaughter? That was outrageous,

Also, since when did she become his goddaughter?

"What? I can't have a goddaughter?" Reese responded, his eyes widening in anger as he stood his ground.

Hugo attempted to defuse the situation, realizing he might be in trouble. "Of course, you can," he said apologetically, trying to avoid confrontation with Reese. The latter was a powerful man who had a lot of people working for him, so he wasn't going to clash with him.

In that moment, anyone with common sense would recognize that retreating and leaving as soon as possible was the wisest course of action.

Reese's stern expression did not waver. "So, are you suggesting that my goddaughter owes you something? It seems you were prepared to get it one way or another. The rules of the black market only permit trading, so you are overstepping."

In the eyes of everyone present, Reese was a respected figure. Who did Hugo think he was, acting like

a gangster in Reese's territory?

Understanding that he was in hot water, Hugo clenched his jaw and directed an apology towards Pearl.

"I'm sorry, Miss Pearl. I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me."

As Hugo and his men prepared to depart, one of Reese's men blocked their way.

"No need to rush. Let's have a chat. If my goddaughter has made a mistake, I will apologize on her behalf." It was obvious Reese wasn't going to let Hugo off the hook, so he looked at Pearl and smiled.

"Tell me, what's going on?"

Pearl realized Reese was backing her up, so she proceeded to give a detailed account of the situation.

"He gave up the bid during the bidding, but now he's trying to rob us of it. I guess he didn't have enough money so he's trying to take it forcefully."

Hugo turned red with anger, and Reese approached him as a crowd gathered around. Now, everyone knew that Hugo had not been able to afford the item from the auction and was attempting to steal it instead.

Realizing that he was lying, Reese scoffed. "Mister Hugo, is what she said true?"

Hugo didn't want to anger Reese, so he explained in a soft tone to make him look like a gentle person,

"I just... really need the ginkgo, so I wanted to discuss it with Miss Pearl to buy it from her. I really didn't have that much money..."

Hugo never thought Pearl would have such powerful support. He knew his explanation was lame, but

he had to find an excuse. He then turned to Richard and said, "This is my brother, so why would I get

into a conflict with him? I really just wanted to talk to Miss Pearl about it and wasn't planning to take it."

Richard did not come to his rescue, but instead coldly retorted, "You've been cut off from the Waldorf

family so why are you using our name?"

Hugo's expression froze. He had not anticipated that someone as frigid as Richard would challenge his statements.

Nearby socialites from Enswood chimed in, saying, "That's correct. Just last month, Hugo announced

his intention to cut ties with the family, which greatly angered Mister Dustan. He's still in the hospital because of this."

Hugo found himself pushed to the brink, and bystanders began gossiping about him, casting sidelong glances his way.

Meanwhile, Pearl and Richard stood to the side, quietly observing as Hugo was subjected to mockery and ridicule.