

YOUR GUISE 331

Chapter 331

'Why did he have to bring up something that hurts? It's his own fault!' Glenn couldn't help but feel irritated by Blake's comment.

"How does the medicine feel?" Pearl was eager to see the outcome.

"It hurts a little, but it's bearable," Blake replied. He could feel a slight cold sensation on his back, accompanied by some stinging and itching.

"If it hurts, it's working. I added extra medication to reduce inflammation, so the discomfort is a good sign," Pearl explained, a touch of pride in her voice. "In a few days, your wounds will be mostly healed. Just avoid cold showers."

Satisfied with the progress, Pearl gathered her stuff.

When Glenn saw she was leaving, he quickly asked, "Pearl, my friend's medical condition... Do you have time to talk about it?"

"Oh, yes," Pearl remembered. "You mean the person with photophobia?"

"I told her I'd find someone to help her, and she was happily looking forward to it." Glenn was a little shy

about hinting that he hoped Pearl would visit his friend soon.

“Alright, let’s go over now,” Pearl agreed. She stood up, slung her backpack over her shoulder, and flashed a friendly smile. “Rest well, Blake, and try not to break the nurses’ hearts.”

“Pearl!” Blake’s face turned green, but he could only lie in bed, grinding his teeth.

“Bye.”

After Pearl left with Glenn, they arrived at a home on the outskirts of the city with an oriental design.

The living room was adorned with redwood furniture, giving it a heavy and traditional appearance, which made Pearl feel somewhat stifled.

Upon entering the living room, a middle-aged couple welcomed her.

“You must be Miss Pearl, the one Glenn told us about. You really are young and beautiful.” As the man examined Pearl’s face, a dark expression crossed his features.

“Thank you for the compliment, sir. Where is the patient?” Pearl noticed something off about the way he

was looking at her and wanted to leave as soon as possible.

“I’ll take you to her.” The woman led Pearl and Glenn through a hallway and into a garden before

entering a tightly sealed courtyard.

As they stepped inside, Pearl felt the room was too dim, and she frowned.

“I apologize, but Ellis is sensitive to light,” the woman said, noticing Pearl’s discomfort. She smiled apologetically.

Glenn didn’t seem to be affected and acted normally.

The three entered a room at the innermost corner of the courtyard, and Pearl could barely make out a girl curled up in bed. She approached cautiously, her mind racing.

The girl heard the door opening, looked up, saw an unfamiliar face, and quickly curled back up.

“Don’t be afraid, Ellie. This is Pearl, the one I told you about,” Glenn reassured her patiently, then looked at Pearl.

Pearl picked up on Glenn’s cue and smiled. “Hello, Miss Elise. I’m here to give you a check-up. Would that be alright with you?”

Elise shook her head. “I’m fine. There’s no need for that.”

Pearl didn’t mind the initial rejection. Instead, she gently offered some advice. “Sometimes, even a

mental issue can be challenging to deal with. Let me perform a check-up, and then we can decide what's best for you."

She then turned to Jenna and Glenn and asked them to wait outside. "I'll call for you when I need you."

Glenn nodded and left with a concerned Jenna.

Once they were alone, Pearl adjusted her expression and tone. "Miss Elise, you can tell me honestly what you've been going through."

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Elise didn't want to meet Pearl's eyes and curled up, making herself smaller. "I really didn't..."

Pearl noticed the girl's discomfort and continued gently, "This room has a strong scent. Most people wouldn't notice, but I can tell it's from an ointment used to reduce bruising."

The pieces of the puzzle were falling into place for Pearl. She understood that something was amiss here.

'Why would someone who rarely leaves home have bruises?' she thought. She knew the answer was right there, waiting to be revealed.

"Miss Elise, I can be trusted with your secret. I won't tell anyone," Pearl assured her. She moved closer,

sitting on the edge of the bed, and softened her tone. "Ellie, can you trust me?"

Elise's eyes welled up with tears. She was already fragile, but now she looked even more vulnerable.

"Don't cry. Share your story with me, and I'll do my best to help you," Pearl comforted her.

Elise took a deep breath to steady herself and began to speak. "My mom divorced my dad, and a few years later, she married Zachary Zimmer when I was four."

Pearl listened intently, piecing together the story in her mind.

"But after a few years, Zachary revealed his true colors and started abusing me. He would hurt me when my mom wasn't around. My mom loves him so much that she turned a blind eye to it. I had to endure it all and never told Glenn."

Tears streamed down Elise's face. She had kept these emotions locked inside for years, and they were finally pouring out.

"The photophobia..."

"I don't really have that condition. I just didn't want to see anyone. My b*dy was covered in bruises, and I was too ashamed for anyone to see. So, I pretended to be sick and avoided people," Elise explained, her voice filled with pain. Only Glenn, her childhood friend, continued to visit her despite her isolation.

“Why didn’t you fight back?” Pearl didn’t understand. Was she really willing to live the rest of her life being abused?

“I confided in you because your eyes seem both gentle and strong. I felt a connection with you, even though you’re just a lady. Treating my supposed illness would be easy for you, but freeing me from this pain would be much harder.”

Elise knew how deeply her mother loved Zachary, and she didn’t want to shatter her mother’s dreams.

“My mom loves him too much. I don’t want to disappoint her.”

Pearl gently lifted Elise’s shirt to reveal a wound. Her eyes filled with determination as she spoke, “How can a mother not feel devastated when her daughter sacrifices her own well-being for her happiness?

Do you truly believe she sees this as a positive thing?”

Elise tried to form a response, but she couldn’t find the words.

“You should talk to her. Maybe the happiness you’re seeing is nothing more than a facade.”

Seeing Elise’s hesitation, Pearl walked towards the door. She spotted Glenn allu outside and said to

Jenna, “Could you please come in?”

She then turned to Glenn. "You too."

Glenn nodded and walked in.

Pearl didn't waste any time. "Elise isn't sick, Missus Jenna."

"What?" Jenna couldn't believe it.

"You'll understand when you see the wounds on her b*dy," Pearl said, urging Elise to trust her.

Jenna carefully approached and gently lifted Elise's sleeves and pant legs, revealing a

horrifying sight of bruises, cuts, whip marks, and pinch marks.

The severity of Elise's injuries left Jenna in shock, and she started bawling.

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"Your husband, Zachary, had been beating her, so she pretended to be sick, but she just didn't want to meet anyone," Pearl revealed the painful truth.

Jenna immediately hugged Elise, holding her close for the first time in the past six months. She hadn't

realized the extent of her daughter's suffering.

Elise, seeing the guilt on her mother's face, began to cry as well.

Jenna gently caressed Elise's hair, her heart aching. "Thank you, Miss Pearl. I would never have

known how that monster treated Elise if it weren't for you!"

"What do you plan to do now?" Pearl wanted to find a solution.

Jenna ran her fingers over Elise's wounds, her expression turning resolute. "I'm going to file for a divorce. Our marriage was just for show. I married him because I wanted Elise to have a good life, but... I've been blind to his true nature. How could I make such a terrible mistake?" "But we can't let Elise continue to suffer for no reason. We need to get something from Zachary," Pearl suggested, her mind racing.

"But... The Zimmers are one of the wealthiest families in Bodgow, and I'm just an ordinary person. I wouldn't stand a chance against them," Jenna replied, wanting to just leave as soon as possible.

Glenn scoffed. "The Zimmers are nothing. They're not even a tenth of my family's wealth. Ellie is my friend, and she has suffered enough. I'll make him pay!"

"Yes, the last time he hit me, he was drunk and mentioned that he helped Lawson Enterprises evade 169 million in taxes during his time there. This could be something we can use against him," Elise revealed.

'Lawson Enterprises?' Pearl suddenly remembered that the company's headquarters was in Bodgow.

Taking down Zachary could potentially expose Lawson Enterprises as well.

“It’s alright. With a snap of my fingers, I can bring him to his knees,” Glenn reassured Elise. “Pack your things. After the divorce is finalized, you can stay at my villa. Don’t be shy about it.”

“Thanks, Glenn.” Elise’s tears started falling again.

To prevent any news from leaking, Pearl and Glenn pretended nothing happened and left the house quietly.

After Pearl returned to the Jordans, she saw Richard in his room reading and recounted everything that had happened.

“Lawson Enterprises evaded 169 million in taxes?” Richard raised an eyebrow, contemplating the implications. “I didn’t think about this before, but if they managed to dodge taxes, he must have been involved in even more illicit activities. Let me handle this. I’ll investigate and try to kill two birds with one stone.”

Pearl nodded, appreciating that she didn’t need to involve Wayne in this matter.

“By the way, Master Jordan came by.”

“Why?” Pearl was nervous.

“He asked about my condition and suggested that if I were well, I should leave the house immediately.”

Pearl knew he would say that, so she dismissed it. “Ignore him. Just rest and leave when you’re fully recovered.”

Richard smiled. “Are you saying we’re going to sleep together?”

“What?” Pearl didn’t take that into account, or rather, she had forgotten about it.

“There’s only one bed in this room. If you’re asking me to stay, does that mean we’ll be sharing it?”

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Hearing the suggestion that they would share the bed made Pearl’s face flush with embarrassment.

She shot a glare at Richard. “Fine, then leave.”

Richard turned his face away casually. “No.”

“I’ll prepare the guest room for you.” Pearl beamed.

“I’ve grown quite fond of your bed. It refuses to let me go,” Richard replied, shaking his head playfully.

Pearl’s lips twitched. “Try talking to it and see if it responds.”

Richard sat on the bed and leaned forward, teasing, “Are you willing to let me go?”

To Pearl's amazement, the bed was jolted three times, producing loud creaks.

Richard continued, "Do you want to let me sleep with Pearl?"

Once again, the bed was shaken, and the creaking sounds grew louder.

Richard shrugged. "See? I told you, the bed wants me to stay with you. Otherwise, it gets upset.

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"You're behaving like a child, Richard." Pearl rolled her eyes.

"And if you sleep alone, monsters will crawl out from under your bed and stare at you you sleep-

Richard started trying a different approach.

Pearl slapped his head. "I'm not afraid of monsters!"

"But I am, I don't want to sleep alone." Richard looked sadly at her.

while

Pearl raised an eyebrow, puzzled. "Who are you trying to scare, then?" Seeing how adamant he was,

she eventually relented. She pointed at him and declared, "Fine, you can sleep here, but you sleep on

the floor, and I'll take the bed."

Richard opened his mouth to respond, but before he could say anything, Pearl gave him a

out!” stern look. “And if you try to sneak into my bed, I’ll kick you

With Pearl’s scent on the bed, Richard didn’t want to leave it. He agreed to sleep on the floor, as long as he could be in the same room as Pearl.

That night, Pearl couldn’t sleep well. It was her first time alone in a room with a man, and she felt nervous and uneasy. In contrast, Richard slept soundly, seemingly undisturbed by the situation.

After a night of restless sleep, Pearl looked at Richard with dark circles under her eyes. He observed her for a moment and asked, “Did you have trouble sleeping last night?”

“All thanks to you.” Pearl yawned and sounded annoyed.

Their conversation caught the attention of a passing butler, who almost slipped in astonishment.

Pearl noticed the butler’s shocked expression and knew he must have misunderstood the situation.

She quickly clarified, “It’s not what you think!”

Richard, however, remained composed and looked at the butler with a smile. “Don’t be embarrassed. I won’t bring it up again.”

The butler stammered, “Didn’t I prepare the guest room for Mister Richard? Why...” He started shaking

because Ezra asked them to sleep in separate rooms, yet they ended up sleeping together.

“Richard, you had the guest room for yourself, right?” Pearl’s eyes were filled with rage.

Richard moved his wrist around and said with a neutral expression, “The guest room bed is too hard. I

don’t like it.”

Pearl couldn’t fathom what kind of bed would be considered harder than the floor. She

clenched her jaw, her irritation growing. “You’re quite talented at making excuses, aren’t you?”

“I

Richard chuckled and teased, “I know I am, but there are other people present, so let’s not discuss it

further.” He glanced discreetly at the butler, who wore an awkward smile while breaking out in a cold

sweat.

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The butler couldn’t fathom why Richard and Pearl would share their private affairs with him. If the

master found out about this, he’d likely fire him for failing to maintain their privacy. However, he

concealed his frustration and replied, “I don’t know anything. The master had more tasks for me, so I

need to get going.”

Pearl had never seen the butler walk so fast. She turned to look at Richard, her expression a mix of curiosity and irritation.

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Richard was pretending to be innocent.

Pearl took a deep breath to calm down. “I’m going to visit Blake at the hospital later. Do you want to come with me?”

Richard’s smile disappeared when he realized Pearl kept running around to meet another man. “No.”

“Why? Do you want to have tea with my grandpa?” Pearl was interested to see how he was going to deal with the old man.

Richard frowned, not relishing the idea of pretending to be nice to Pearl’s grandfather when he didn’t particularly like the old man. “I’ll drive you there.”

They gathered their belongings and headed to the hospital.

Upon arrival, they found Blake and Glenn sharing a laugh. When they noticed Pearl and Richard, they greeted them. “You’re here.”

“Let me see your back.” Pearl was glad to see that Blake appeared to be recovering well.

“No way!”

Both Blake and Richard spoke at the same time. Blake looked shy while Richard looked angry. He

could tear Blake up right then and there.

“I’m a physician. Why are you two acting weird?” Undeterred, Pearl forcefully lifted the back of Blake’s

shirt and inspected his wound, satisfied with what she saw. “You’re recovering nicely, just as expected.

You should be fine in two to three days.”

Blake, taken aback by Pearl’s strength, mumbled, “Are you even a woman, Pearl?” He had never seen

a woman who had such strong wrist strength. He couldn’t move when she was holding his arm!

“If I’m not, are you?” Pearl mocked. Who should feel more embarrassed in a situation where a man is

overpowered by a woman?

Blake blushed in embarrassment and didn’t say anything.

Richard’s expression darkened as he watched the interaction between Pearl and Blake. His jealousy

was palpable as he said, “Are you done?”

“Oh, are you jealous? Why would you be jealous of your girl’s cousin? You’re so petty,” Blake taunted.

Richard’s cold glare moved to Blake’s face, carrying an unmistakable threat.

“Why are you glaring at me? Look at him, Pearl. Your man is so fierce.” Blake, oblivious to the danger

he was in, mocked Richard

Richard squinted. “You said that I’m fierce?”

Blake replied firmly, “So what if I did? You’re at my place now. If you start yelling at me, I’ll kick you out.”

Pearl, growing weary of their bickering, interjected, “Enough, both of you are injured. Could you please stop arguing?” The noise was grating on her nerves, and she smiled awkwardly to defuse the tension.

Before she had gotten to know Blake’s true character, Pearl had perceived him as an enigmatic, aloof figure-cold, unapproachable, and seemingly annoyed all the time. However, upon closer acquaintance, she realized he was more of a playful, childish soul who often hid deeper meanings in his words.

Blake, deciding not to push Richard’s buttons further, conceded, “If it wasn’t for Pearl, I’m not going to let this go.”

“If you do, I won’t hold back.” Richard was 6 feet and two inches. With his cold expression and menacing temper, he indeed looked capable of beating people up.

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Blake gulped. He braced himself for an impending blow from Richard, expecting a direct punch any moment.

Unexpectedly, Richard's expression shifted to one of hurt, a hint of pain visible in his eyes. "Wifey, he started it."

Pearl was rattled to the core. Was Richard trying to act coquettish?

Standing by Blake, Glenn mirrored his astonishment, their jaws practically hitting the floor. This tall, strong man behaving coyly was an unforeseen twist.

Hold on... "wifey"?

Pearl pointedly thumped Richard's head. "We're not married yet. Don't call me that randomly.

"It's just a matter of time," Richard smirked, oozing confidence that he had ways to handle her.

Glenn couldn't contain his shock any longer. With an inexplicable tinge of sadness in his eyes, he stood up. "I need to attend to something. I'll leave first." With those words, he departed abruptly.

Richard and Pearl had their own matters to tend to, so they left as well, leaving Blake to rest undisturbed.

As he watched the two exit the room, Blake's smile vanished as he made a call. "Come back. I know

you're still here."

After a while, Glenn re-entered the ward, the scent of smoke clinging to him, his eyes slightly red. "How did you know I didn't leave?"

"Tsk." Blake chuckled, finding it amusing. "I know you too well. Your eyes were practically glued to Pearl. If I couldn't figure out your thoughts, then what's the point of being good friends with you for so long?"

"But Pearl has a boyfriend, and they seem quite compatible. My feelings don't matter." Glenn sighed bitterly. He never intended to compete with Richard, but seeing the two as a couple made him incredibly uncomfortable. It wasn't just discomfort he felt; it was jealousy.

"By right, I should support your pursuit of happiness, but you know Pearl. Once she decides on something, she sticks to it, and no one can change her mind." Blake sighed, continuing, "Plus, Grandpa has found more suitable matches for Pearl and wants to introduce them to her. Richard might face many obstacles."

"I'm fine, I know it's impossible. I'll slowly let go." Glenn shook his head.

Blake nudged his arm, "Wanna drink?"

"Yeah, sure!"

After days of sobriety, Glenn finally relented.

As Pearl and Richard settled into the car, the latter wore a sullen expression, unwilling to converse much with Pearl.

"Why are you upset again?" Pearl struggled to comprehend Richard's mood swings. Since they became a couple, his emotions had been unpredictable, making him inscrutable.

"He likes you," Richard said gloomily.

Pearl's expression was a mix of disbelief as her lips twitched. "Richard, are you serious? I see him as a brother, we're related by blood."

"I meant the one next to him." Richard pursed his lips.

Pearl waved it off dismissively. "Even more reason to dismiss that thought. He has a younger love interest so he couldn't possibly like me."

"My instincts don't go wrong." Richard furrowed his brows in anger. The way that man looked at her was almost besotted-no one would believe there wasn't something there.

“Fine, even if he does like me—which, in this situation, is impossible – there’s nothing, and there never will be anything between us.” Pearl took a deep breath, speaking earnestly, “We’re already together, Richard. You should trust my feelings.”

It was exasperating. She genuinely wished she could peek into Richard’s mind to understand what was going on!

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The duo sat in proximity. Richard stared fixedly at Pearl’s face, lost in thought for a while before speaking slowly, “Your makeup looks a bit cakey.”

Pearl, a mixture of irritation and amusement, couldn’t help but laugh. “Don’t make me smack you when I’m professing my love for you!”

“So, shall we then focus on investigating Lawson Enterprises for tax evasion?” Richard’s tone shifted, all jesting set aside.

“Absolutely. I’ve asked Wayne to check with his contacts at the tax bureau to verify Lawson Enterprises’s accounts. If we manage to lay hands on their actual financial statements, it’ll directly prove their tax evasion,” Pearl explained.

The plan sounded straightforward, yet obtaining Lawson Enterprises's financial records posed a significant challenge.

"Lawson Enterprises is incredibly guarded. They've erected layers upon layers of security around their financial information. I can't breach their internal systems." With so much protection, even Pearl, a top-tier hacker, would require substantial time to crack it.

"In that case, there's only one option," Richard concluded, stroking his chin.

Their eyes met, instantly comprehending each other's unspoken intentions.

Several minutes later, Richard's car came to a stop outside Lawson Enterprises's building.

"We have two choices. One is to infiltrate Lawson Enterprises's finance office to search for their records, but the risk is exceedingly high," Pearl suggested, shifting her gaze. "The other is to locate Lawson Enterprises's financial manager. He's likely involved in falsifying accounts.

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Richard flipped open his notebook, retrieving the personal information of Lawson Enterprises's financial manager.

“Derrick Miller, male, 38 years old, father of two – a boy and a girl. He indulges in gambling, frequents bars, and maintains two mistresses owing to his fiercely domineering wife.”

“Two mistresses? That’s...” Pearl’s expression conveyed exaggerated disbelief.

Richard casually remarked, “That’s just based on the data. His extramarital activities are probably more complex.”

Pearl scornfully cursed Derrick Miller, labeling him a ‘scoundrel’ while examining his personal details.

She wrinkled her nose at the balding patch atop his head, feeling repulsed. “A man like this wouldn’t even have a wife if he didn’t have some money.”

“What’s your plan then? Do you have something in mind?” Richard observed Pearl, chuckling at her righteous indignation.

“I intend... to use charm,” Pearl smirked.

But in an instant, Richard’s expression turned icy, “No, I won’t allow it!” If that sleazy man dared to lay a finger on Pearl, he would undoubtedly lose control and chop off the man’s hand.

“Do you have a better idea then?”

“Find his leverage, threaten him, and make him hand over the financial statements,” Richard proposed

his usual approach.

However, beneath the surface, Pearl discerned a deeper sentiment, "Firstly, his actions didn't necessarily break the law, so threatening him won't be effective. If he refuses to admit anything, we can't pressure him."

"If he refuses to admit, he's as good as dead," Richard stated coldly.

"If he dies, we won't find any evidence. Richard, I know you're trying to protect me, but for now, we need evidence against Lawson Enterprises, or else we won't stand a chance against them," Pearl spoke earnestly, her logic sound.

Reluctantly, Richard nodded in agreement. "Just don't let him touch you, or I'll finish him off.

"Got it."

Their next step was to wait for Derrick to come out.

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It was six in the evening, the typical end of the workday. Before long, a sleazy, overweight middle-aged man named Derrick leisurely strolled out of the building, a smile etched across his face.

Capitalizing on the moment, Pearl, carrying her bag, moved forward but accidentally collided with

Derrick. "Ah-"

Due to the impact, Pearl inadvertently fell to the ground. Her phone flew out, its screen shattering upon impact.

Startled by the sudden collision, Derrick's mood turned sour. "Hey, what's wrong with you!"

"Sorry, I was on the phone and didn't watch where I was going." Pearl feigned pain, tears welling in her eyes.

Seeing a delicate and charming lady in distress, Derrick's irritation disappeared. "It's okay, it's okay. Are you alright? Let me help you up." Saying this, he reached out to assist Pearl.

"How could I trouble you? It was my own fault for falling, and my phone..." Pearl stood up on her own, appearing apologetic. She stole a glance at her phone on the ground, feigning a pang of heartache.

"It's okay, I'll buy you a new phone. Miss, what's your name?" Derrick was already plotting how to take advantage of the situation to get closer to Pearl. Spotting her damaged phone, he felt a twinge of excitement.

"My name is Sarah White. And yours?" Pearl replied with a slight smile.

“I’m Derrick, the financial manager at Lawson Enterprises.” Derrick’s spirits soared as he disclosed his position. He had a plan; once he mentioned his job, she’d surely show interest like other women.

“It’s getting late, and I have some urgent matters. I’ll take off now.” Pearl glanced at her watch, displaying a hint of anxiety. “Regarding the phone, I’ll buy a new one myself later. Please don’t worry.”

“No, it’s partly my fault. Let me at least pay half the cost, or else I won’t feel right!” Derrick,

encountering this beautiful woman with an uninterested reaction toward money and status, experienced

a mix of emotions.

If she agreed to be with him, he’d immediately end things with his nagging wife and marry her instead!

Pearl hesitated for a moment, then proposed, “How about this, add me on WhatsApp. Once I’ve

purchased the new phone, you can transfer half the amount to me.”

Though reluctant, Derrick tentatively agreed. He reminded himself not to rush, as wooing a woman

required gradual progress.

Pearl provided him with a phone number, but it was only a secondary one. Even if someone attempted

to dig up information behind the number, they’d find nothing substantial.

After this exchange, Pearl smiled, waved, and departed.

Derrick remained in a daze, glued to his phone. Only late in the evening did Pearl finally

respond to his greeting on WhatsApp.

Seeing numerous messages from Derrick, Pearl felt annoyed but maintained a polite tone in her reply.

“Sarah”: [The new phone costs 850 dollars, just transfer 425 dollars to me.]

[Ding! You have received 4250 dollars via PayPal.]

“Sarah”: [...?]

Derrick: [Miss White, I mistakenly added an extra zero, my apologies. But it’s okay, it’s a small amount.

You can keep it.]

“Sarah”: [Well... alright then. To make up for it, I’ll treat you to dinner tomorrow. Maybe we can go out a

few more times, and gradually, I’ll reimburse you the whole amount.]

This scenario unfolded precisely as Derrick desired. He responded with two smiling emojis, appearing

especially pleased.

The following day happened to be the weekend. Early in the morning, Pearl went to the agreed -upon

location, with Richard discreetly following her out of concern.

“I’ll be sitting behind you,” Richard said.

With a somewhat exasperated eye roll, Pearl replied, “Are you worried I can’t handle this pervert?”

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“It’s not about worry, it’s about care. Except for me, any other man isn’t a good one,” Richard

remarked.

Pearl was left speechless.

Just then, Derrick approached. Pearl swiftly distanced herself from Richard and greeted Derrick with a

charming smile. “Mister Derrick, hello.”

Today, Pearl exuded elegance in a white dress paired with high heels, showcasing her figure

flawlessly.

Derrick was captivated, finding her allure far surpassing women covered in makeup.

“Hi, what are we having today?” he asked.

“I wasn’t too sure about your taste, so I picked a local restaurant. I hope it won’t disappoint you,” Pearl

said, a touch of concern in her tone.

“It sounds good already.” Derrick glanced at the menu, noting the pricey dishes. He silently applauded

Pearl's savvy choice.

After selecting a few dishes, they began chatting.

"Mister Derrick, aren't you working today?" Pearl feigned a mistake, chuckling apologetically. "Sorry, I forgot today's the weekend."

Who wouldn't appreciate a charmingly naive person? Derrick was no exception. "It's alright. Even if it were a workday, I'd come if you invited me."

"Isn't your job usually demanding?" Pearl furrowed her brows. Wary of Derrick's intentions, she tried to stick to the point.

"Not really. Just accounting and calculations. It's rather relaxed," Derrick replied.

Observing his eagerness to talk about the topic, Pearl gently prodded, "You must be quite familiar with Lawson Enterprises's financial records, then?"

"Of course. I manage them so I know everything about it," Derrick boasted, keen on impressing Pearl.

Resting her chin on her hand, Pearl's face revealed a trace of anticipation and subtle admiration.

"That's impressive. I studied accounting too, but I always struggle with maintaining records. I often get

scolded by my boss.”

“Don’t worry. If you have any difficulties, I’d love to help and teach you,” Derrick said, extending his hand to comfort Pearl.

“Really?” Pearl instinctively moved away, her enthusiasm dimming. “But I’m quite slow. Can you let me see Lawson Enterprises’s records and teach me step by step?”

“Sure, no problem!” At first, Derrick was hesitant and doubtful when Pearl brought up Lawson Enterprises’ records. However, his mood lifted instantly when she requested to be taught step by step.

“Thank you.” Pearl flashed a faint smile, seeing Derrick getting way over his head with joy.

The next day, they met at the same restaurant, and Derrick brought along the records.

As Pearl fl*pped through the documents, from the first page to the last, she wore an expression of admiration. “Impressive! These records are meticulously done.”

“It’s nothing. The key is to be smart. I think the reason your boss scolds you is because you’re too honest in your bookkeeping,” Derrick smirked with a hint of pride.

Puzzled, Pearl tilted her head. “What do you mean?”

Glancing around cautiously, Derrick leaned in. “You need to learn how to manipulate records.”

'Are you suggesting Lawson Enterprises falsified their records?' Feigning surprise but secretly

recording the conversation, Pearl pressed on. To ensure Derrick didn't hold back, she added with a

sweet smile, "Derrick, darling, tell me. I'm genuinely curious."

Who could resist such sweet talk from a beautiful woman, especially being called 'darling'?

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Derrick chuckled slyly. "Naturally, I've tampered with those records. Think about it, Lawson

Enterprises's annual tax revenue amounts to billions. With such a sum at stake, the boss wouldn't

willingly pay up. By making a few changes, we could save a significant amount of money, right? And I

could even pocket a bit of profit from it."

As Derrick finished his sentence, he discreetly made a hand gesture indicating the number 9.

"Mister Derrick, you're truly amazing!" Pearl, with one hand propping up her chin, smiled enigmatically.

But deep down, she felt repulsed while observing Derrick's lascivious expression.

Seeing even such an aloof woman as herself had been won over, didn't that indicate that his charm

was exceptional?

Anticipating the resolution of the situation, Pearl discreetly retrieved her recording pen, preparing to

rendezvous with Richard.

“Mister Derrick, let’s call it a day here. I have urgent matters to attend to and must leave now,” Pearl said abruptly.

They hadn’t even eaten yet, but Pearl was about to leave. Derrick was momentarily taken aback. “But the dishes just arrived. Can’t we finish eating before you go?”

Pearl turned around and flashed him a smile. “Mister Derrick, let’s continue tomorrow. I forgot to turn off

the gas at home. If I don’t go back right now, there might be trouble.”

Derrick understood the urgency of the situation, so he didn’t try to stop her. Watching her graceful exit, he eagerly anticipated their meeting the next day.

As Pearl stepped out of the restaurant’s door, she ran into Richard who had come to pick her up. They got into the car, and Pearl proudly presented her phone. “I’ve recorded everything he said. It’s solid evidence.”

“Just the recording might not suffice. We need tangible proof to bring down Lawson Enterprises entirely.” Richard pushed aside the phone and started the car.

Pearl accessed her phone's photo album and showed Richard her invention. "I've installed a Bluetooth camera in my ring. It captured all the pictures and records while I was browsing through the Lawson Enterprises' financial records."

"Wow! That's ingenious!" A hint of surprise flickered in Richard's eyes. Once again, he was impressed by Pearl's cleverness.

"Right! We're stealing confidential information using the Bluetooth ring I designed." Pearl was quite confident about her invention.

"For now, let's not reveal these things. We'll wait for the right moment," Richard calmly analyzed. "If we act first, we might be labeled as troublemakers. Let's wait for Lawson Enterprises to make a move."

Pearl nodded in agreement. "That's sensible. Let's head back to the Jordan residence."

Richard drove Pearl back to the Jordan residence. As soon as they entered, a large figure pounced on them.

"You're finally home!"

Startled, Pearl clung to Richard. When she calmed down, she looked at the magnified face of

your mind?" Felix, feeling embarrassed. "Hey, Felix, are you out of

"Every time I come home, you're never here. Are you avoiding me on purpose?" Felix

furrowed his brow, his voice resolute.

Pearl released her grip on Richard, feeling awkward as if she had acted irresponsibly and slept. with

someone, then left them hanging,

Richard shared her sentiment and asked, a mix of amusement and annoyance in his tone, Pearl, care

to explain? Who's this troublemaker again?"