

## **YOUR GUISE 421**

### Chapter 421

Dustan appeared to have changed his mind about Jenny, and he looked at Pearl with a guilty expression. "I'm sorry, Pearl, I-

"It's fine, Mister Dustan. I understand that you just wanted to save your wife."

Touched by Pearl's understanding, Dustan's eyes welled up with emotion. He had almost lost such a good daughter-in-law.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Jenny seemed oblivious.

but

you

Pearl addressed Jenny directly, explaining the situation, "You know Master Jordan agreed to help you get Richard, don't know he kidnapped Aunt Susan to force Richard to compromise. Jenny, this has been a one-sided thing. So now that the truth is out, have you awakened from your dream?"

Jenny turned to Richard in disbelief, seeing the loving way he looked at Pearl. Her heart shattered into pieces.

Dustan tried to advise her. "Jenny, I know you like Richard, but Richard and Pea are meant for each other. Even if you had a past with him, that time has long passed. You should move on."

"I don't believe any of this!" Jenny broke down and stumbled. "Mister Dustan, you like me more, right?"

Why would you have treated me so nicely otherwise?"

"Jenny, you may be naive, but you should know shame. Can't you see why he's nice to you?" Pearl

responded bluntly, not mincing her words.

Jenny lost control of her emotions and bawled. "Rick. I love you. How could you-"

Feeling flustered by her tears, Richard said, "Stop crying. It's embarrassing."

'Embarrassing...' Jenny stared at him in disbelief, feeling that this man before her was a stranger. She

could never have imagined Richard speaking to her in such a manner, let alone shaming her in front of

so many people.

"I know. You're all working together to lie to me, right? I was curious why Richard agreed to be with me.

It's all part of the plot!" In a state of distress, Jenny stood up suddenly and declared, "I won't let this

slide. I won't let you get away with this!"

She then left, stumbling.

Pearl, despite Jenny's actions, felt a sense of concern for her mental well-being. She frowned as she looked at Richard." Honestly, I'm worried about her mental well-being."

Richard reassured her, hugging her shoulders. "It's fine. She did this to herself. It's none of our business."

While Jenny's actions had consequences, she also appeared pitiful.

"I don't think she was joking about the last thing she said," Pearl expressed her concern with a sense of impending danger.

"It's fine, I'll protect you," Richard assured her, holding her close.

"Ahem..."

They both suddenly realized Dustan was still present and felt a bit awkward.

"It's normal for you to be so lovey-dovey, so you don't really have to pay attention to me. Pretend I'm not even here." Dustan realized he was unintentionally third-wheeling and offered an awkward smile.

"Don't get ahead of yourself, Dad. How's Mom?" Richard asked with genuine concern, as he always kept his mother in his thoughts. Despite Dustan's assurances, he remained worried about her.

“She’s upstairs. Let’s go see her,” Dustan replied, leading the way.

## Chapter 422

In the room upstairs, Susan lay in bed, breathing normally and sleeping peacefully.

Dustan explained to Richard and Pearl in a hushed tone, “After your mom returned, she had a sudden heart attack due to the shock, but she’s fine now. I just put her to sleep, so she probably won’t wake up for the next few hours.”

“Great, then. Just inform us if anything happens,” Richard responded, glancing at Pearl and expressing his pride. “Your daughter-in-law here is really smart.”

Dustan felt touched by their understanding, but he lowered his voice since Susan was sleeping. “Yes, all thanks to you. But I’m sorry, Pearl. I took the wrong side when Susan was kidnapped and forced you to break up with Richard, or this wouldn’t have happened.”

Pearl shook her head, showing her forgiveness. “It’s fine, Mister Dustan. I would have made the same decision if I were in your shoes.”

“Thank you for your understanding, and even more for saving her. I really don’t know when I’ll see her again if it weren’t for you.” Dustan took a deep breath, looking at Susan with a mix of heartache and

love.

The three continued chatting without realizing that Susan had awakened and was listening to them.

She couldn't help but open her eyes.

"You're awake!" Dustan exclaimed in surprise when he noticed her. "Why didn't you sleep longer?"

Susan responded with a playful tone, "Pearl is back, and you want me to sleep so I don't get to see

her?"

Dustan's face turned red with embarrassment. "I... No!"

Pearl covered her mouth and giggled at his flustered response.

"Pearl..." Susan reached out her hand, and Pearl approached her. "Let me take a good look at you.

You've lost so much weight. It must be because this kid was too stupid to appreciate you!" Her heart

was filled with affection for her brilliant daughter-in-law, and she cared about no one else.

"Of course not. Our relationship is good. Richard-" Pearl attempted to explain, but Susan interrupted

her. "Why are you calling him Richard? Don't you call each other by nicknames?"

Pearl froze, confused.

"Oh, like baby, honey, my dear..."

Pearl was taken aback and almost choked on her saliva. "These are... a little... too much." Her lips twitched, and she didn't know how to respond.

Susan patted her hand and patiently explained, "Not at all. This is just right. Don't all the young people who are dating do this? Dustan called me 'baby' every day when we were dating." Then, she turned her gaze to Dustan. "Right?"

Dustan's face turned red, but to avoid making his wife angry, he nodded vigorously. "Yes, that's how we addressed each other back then."

"You're ahead of your time." Pearl didn't know how to describe it, so she settled with that.

Dustan had never been in such an awkward situation before, so he nervously tugged at his sleeve and stood there.

Susan reminisced with a smile, "Look at him. This is how he looked when he asked my father for my hand in marriage."

"Alright, alright, enough of that. Let them solve their own problems. You should rest till you feel better."

Unable to bear the teasing anymore, Dustan implored Susan to stop talking.

Richard and Pearl understood what was happening, and the latter decided to take action. "Alright, Aunt Susan, you should rest. We'll come see you again later."

Feeling weak, Susan didn't object, and she looked at Dustan. "Alright, come see me when you have time."

Pearl nodded and left the room with Richard.

Once downstairs, she looked at him and immediately went back to business. "Let's go see Hugo now so he can meet with Mister Harrison soon. He might be able to convince him to turn around."

Chapter 423

Pearl noticed that Richard seemed a bit distracted, so she playfully waved her hand in front of his face.

"What's on your mind?"

Richard frowned. "Baby sounds too cutesy, babe is too flirtatious, and cutie just doesn't feel right.

Maybe I should just call you

missus."

"You're thinking about nicknames?" Pearl was stunned. "We shouldn't be worrying about this. Help me figure out how to ask Hugo to meet with us."

“I think this is quite important.” Richard seemed genuinely concerned about the nickname issue.

“Richard, stop being childish!”

Richard appeared earnest. “This isn’t childish. This is what normal couples call each other. Besides,

you shouldn’t call me

Richard.”

Pearl realized he was fixated on this matter, so she decided to play along and tried different nicknames.

“Baby?”

His ears turned red.

“Hun...”

His Adam’s apple moved.

“Honey-”

He couldn’t hold back any longer, and after the last one, he took her wrist and passionately k\*ssed her.

The moment their l\*ps met, Pearl’s thoughts dissolved, and she could feel his warm breath and rapid

heartbeat. Her own heart raced wildly.

This was... a feeling that could make anyone forget all reason.



“Richard... Mm.”

Richard’s lips caressed hers, savoring her taste. After what felt like an eternity, he reluctantly released her.

Pearl was left breathless, trying to catch her breath. When she looked at Richard, she saw him smirking proudly, which only made her more annoyed. “Richard, you jerk!”

Ignoring her outburst, Richard calmly remarked, “Weren’t you the one who started seducing me, missus?”

Pearl was indignant. “That was teasing, not seducing!”

“Just your presence is enough to seduce me,” Richard quipped.

He moaned a little when they were kissing, and his tone just now has a hint of hoarseness that sent Pearl’s heart racing.

“This guy...” Pearl muttered under her breath.

“You should call me hubby from now on.”

Pearl refused to play along and turned her head away. “No, absolutely not!”

“How about ‘hun,’ then?”

Pearl’s expression softened slightly; it was a more acceptable option. But no. Why should she give in?

She glared at Richard. “I’m going to get the car, and you can tell Uncle Dustan that we’re leaving. Then,

we’ll go see Hugo.”

Chapter 424

Pearl had arranged for Hugo to meet in the office at Waldorf Enterprises. After the recent events

involving Raymond, Richard was no longer comfortable with her meeting people in unfamiliar places,

so they opted for the safest location-Waldorf Enterprises.

Hugo arrived shortly, entering the room with a skeptical expression.

“What’s going on, Richard? What do you and Pearl have planned?” Hugo scoffed and sat down in a

chair, his eyes fixated on

Pearl.

“Hugo, I have something to tell you about your biological parents,” Pearl stated plainly.

Hugo’s expression darkened immediately. “I’d rather not hear anything from you if it involves them.”

“Do you really think Dustan is the one who killed your entire family? Hugo, if you use your head even

just one bit, you wouldn't hate the man who raised you for decades!" Pearl's tone held no sympathy; she had little patience for him.

Hugo initially chuckled, then his laughter grew manic. "What do you know, Pearl? Your parents aren't the ones who are dead. You haven't experienced unequal love. You sit in judgment from your high horse. Who do you think you are?"

Hearing Hugo's crazed laughter, Pearl cast a glance toward the restroom.

Suddenly, a stranger called out, "Hugo."

Hugo turned to see the unfamiliar yet oddly familiar face of a man approaching-Kingsley Harrison. He was struck by the uncanny resemblance between the man and himself. It was like looking into a mirror from twenty years in the future.

His mouth hung open in shock as he stammered, "You're... My dad?"

At the word "dad," Kingsley couldn't contain his emotions any longer. "Hugo, it's me, your dad!"

Hugo's head spun, and he glanced at Pearl, suspicion in his eyes. "This is nonsense. Pearl probably found someone who looks like me. You're not my dad. My dad died over twenty years ago!" The idea of someone who had supposedly died over two decades ago suddenly reappearing alive was too much

for him to accept.

Pearl, undeterred by Hugo's disbelief, stated firmly, "Hugo, I don't care if you believe me or not. This man is your father. I have the DNA test result right here. Take a look for yourself."

Hugo took a deep breath and scrutinized the man before him, his eyes filled with a mix of warmth and coldness. "Why are you back now?"

Kingsley approached, attempting to hold Hugo's hand, but Hugo pulled away. "Hugo, it's my fault.

When your mother died in that accident, I was severely injured. I wanted you to have a better life with the Waldorfs, so I left you there. But-

"You never expected me to sever all ties with the family. You couldn't bear it, so you've come out now, is that it?" Hugo cut straight to the point.

Kingsley was momentarily stunned but then nodded. "Hugo, Mister Dustan wasn't responsible for the accident. I was trying to escape from my debtors, and Mister Dustan, in his desperation, ended up chasing after us..."

Kingsley vividly remembered that fateful afternoon when he was trying to flee with his family to escape

a massive debt. However, they had an unexpected encounter with Dustan on the way.

#### Chapter 425

He sped up, desperate to escape, but in his haste, he forgot that the road ahead was a danger zone.

He collided with a boulder by the side of the road, resulting in severe injuries. Tragically, his wife died

instantly in the accident. The only survivor was their child, who had been protected by his wife during

the crash.

Kingsley, as he recounted this painful memory, couldn't help but feel a profound sense of sorrow for his

son and Dustan.

Hugo, however, reacted with anger and bitterness. "So what? He was the one who forced you into that

situation."

Kingsley's tone was grave as he replied, "Hugo, you should be grateful that he raised you for so many

years, provided you with a good education, and ensured your well-being!"

Hugo, blinded by hatred, remained resolute. "Do you think I'll forgive them just because you said so?

That's absurd. I hate them not only for taking your life but for everything else I've lost and endured. I'm

going to get everything back!" His emotions overwhelmed him, and his eyes became bloodshot. He

couldn't believe what he was hearing.

"What have you suffered?" Pearl frowned, puzzled.

"I won't forgive the Waldorfs, no matter what you say!" Hugo's anger flared, and he turned to Kingsley, glaring at him with a mix of disappointment and resentment. "Especially you!"

He stormed out, slamming the door behind him.

Kingsley collapsed to the floor, tears streaming down his face. "It's my fault... I'm to blame..."

Pearl helped him to his feet. "Mister Harrison, I told you, Hugo's perception of his past is deeply distorted. It's not surprising that he won't listen to you."

Kingsley sighed. "I'm still his father, and that will never change. I'll try to talk to him again."

With that, he left, leaving Pearl and Richard looking at each other, both feeling drained.

"Richard, why do you think Hugo turned out that way?"

Richard replied calmly, "It's hard not to be competitive when you grow up in an affluent family. I used to be like that."

This piqued Pearl's interest. "Did you secretly feel sad when you thought you weren't good enough?"

Richard reminisced about his past. "There were five of us. I was the best academically. Hanzel and

Mobius would follow me around. Every time we had an exam, Sean would tear up my test paper and claim I got a zero. I would often be sent to my room without dinner.”

Pearl burst into laughter. “Sean was evil even as a child?”

Richard looked at her sadly. “You’re enjoying this?”

Clearing her throat, Pearl apologized, “I’m sorry, go on. I promise I won’t laugh unless I can’t hold it in.”

Richard continued, “After midnight, when everyone was asleep, Hugo would bring food to me because he was afraid I’d be hungry.”

Pearl touched her chin, finding Hugo’s kindness heartwarming. “Hugo was quite kind.”

“But the one who tore up my test paper was actually Hugo.”

Pearl was shocked. “But didn’t he bring food to you?”

Chapter 426

“I wasn’t sure either. I always thought it was Sean because why would he taunt me every time, but there was one time I asked him, and he said he didn’t do it.”

Pearl found it hard to believe. “Maybe he was lying?”

“No, even though Sean is outspoken, he doesn’t lie. His ears turn red when he lies, so he can’t hide it

for more than three seconds.” Richard, knowing Sean well, was convinced that Hugo was behind it all.

Pearl was astonished and asked, “So Hugo has always been jealous of you, and this time he wasn’t cutting ties with the family because of built-up hatred?”

Seeing how she connected the dots, Richard smiled and looked at her with admiration. “That’s what I think too. So if Hugo were to reunite with our family, it would likely be through Lawson Enterprises, and that wouldn’t benefit our family.”

“Did you warn Uncle Dustan to be cautious about this?”

“It wouldn’t make a difference. My father would never be wary of Hugo because he raised him. Even if Hugo did something to him, he wouldn’t hold a grudge.” Richard knew Dustan’s character well. Though he was a fierce competitor in the business world, as a father, he had a soft heart.

“We should prepare and make sure Hugo doesn’t get to your father.”

“Oh, you’re already concerned about your future father-in-law even before we’re married? Is this because you love me and want to protect my family?”

“Don’t flatter yourself. I’m just worried about Uncle Dustan because he’s been kind to me. I wouldn’t



want anything to happen.

to him.”

Richard ruffled her hair and spoke in a gentle tone, “I know you care about him, Pearl, but you’re taking on too much. You’re constantly plotting this and that. I think you should think about yourself.”

“What do you mean?”

Richard pulled her into his arms and pressed his chin on her forehead. “Think about our sweet time together, right, missus?”

‘Again with this nickname?’ Pearl felt like she was blushing all over. What was going on with Richard?

He didn’t have a lot of relationship experience, but he seemed to be quite skilled at flirting!

“Richard, you always put up a cold front, but you’re secretly a closet minx, aren’t you?”

The term “closet minx” hadn’t crossed Richard’s mind, so he froze and asked, “What do you mean?”

“Um...” Pearl slapped her forehead. “Never mind.”

“Tell me.” Richard firmly grasped her wrist. “Explain what you mean by ‘closet minx’.” It didn’t sound like

a compliment.

Pearl didn't know where to start, so she just shook her head, her face now as red as a tomato. "I don't know, I was just guessing."

Richard smirked, and a second later....

After some quick Googling, Pearl wished she could dig a hole and jump in.

"A closet minx is someone who appears quiet but is secretly passionate. They may not be great at expressing their emotions, but under certain circumstances, they can act unexpectedly." Richard read the definition out loud and then looked at Pearl with interest. "Do you think I'm a 'secretly passionate' person who might 'act unexpectedly'?"

The word "passionate" made Pearl's already crimson face turn even redder. "That's not what I meant –

"She tried to retract her hand, but Richard held it firmly.

"Would you like to do something else with me, Pearl?"

Chapter 427

Pearl froze because she couldn't imagine what Richard meant by that.

Richard's Adam's apple bobbed as he appeared to be contemplating something slightly naughty. "Why don't we set all that aside? Tomorrow, I'll take you to Hazelton."

“Why Hazelton? Are we going to watch their shoot?” Pearl wasn’t particularly fond of the place.

Richard playfully tapped her on the head. “No, we’re not going there for a shoot. Hazelton has some good tourism spots as well, not just for filming. I’m taking you there for some fun.”

“But I don’t like-” She had never been a fan of traveling.

“Why do I feel that you’re not happy about this?”

Pearl recollected her past experiences and couldn’t help but let out a wistful chuckle. “You know, I got stung by a jellyfish at the beach once with my dad. We got caught in a trap in the forest. We took a cable car, and due to poor maintenance, we nearly had a life-threatening experience...”

Richard couldn’t help but laugh at the litany of her “misfortunes” while traveling. “So you’ve had your share of bad luck when traveling, huh?”

“Yeah, so I’m not a big fan of traveling. If you want me to go, you might as well just kill me. It’s the same thing.” She half-joked that she’d die either way.

“The place I’m taking you is absolutely safe.”

Pearl chuckled. “I hope so. But where exactly are we going?”

Richard looked mysterious. “You’ll find out once we get there.”

The mystery deepened as he didn't reveal their destination even after they boarded the plane.

The next day, Pearl met up with Richard, sporting prominent dark circles under her eyes. She couldn't sleep well due to her curiosity, as she couldn't guess where they were heading.

Seeing her tired appearance beneath her makeup, Richard felt sorry for her yet found it somewhat amusing. "Okay, you can take a nap on the plane. I'll wake you when we arrive."

Pearl nodded, rested her head on his shoulder, and promptly drifted into a deep sleep.

Witnessing her docile behavior, Richard couldn't help but feel strange. He had a strong urge to lean over and plant a k\*ss on her forehead.

He thought she was asleep, but she wasn't. Her slightly trembling finger betrayed her nervousness.

Richard suddenly realized his shoulder was damp when they disembarked from the plane. Sweat?

Wasn't it cold enough?

He didn't dwell on it much and took Pearl to their hotel. However, at the front desk, they were informed that only one room was available.

Pearl hesitated. "Maybe we should... find another place?"

“No.” Richard didn’t hesitate for a moment. “We’ll stay here.”

Pearl was then pulled into their room.

Richard’s expression was calm, but Pearl was apprehensive. “Richard, I think... we should keep our distance...”

Chapter 428

“But we’re a couple. There’s nothing wrong with us sharing a room,” Richard insisted.

Pearl still saw a hint of cheekiness on his face. Richard was still Richard, except his usual cool classiness was no longer there and was replaced by a wolf’s skin.

“Richard, can we sleep separately? I’m not ready for this.” In truth, she had never been prepared for such a situation.

Richard didn’t even raise an eyebrow. He merely detected a trace of panic in her expression. “It’s alright, there’s a first time for everything.”

‘What kind of answer was that?’ Pearl curled up in bed, visibly trembling.

Richard leaned over, placing his hands by her side before removing the blanket from the bed. Shortly after, the sophisticated Richard settled onto the couch in his suit, leaving the entire bed to her.

“Sleep.”

Pearl didn't react and thought Richard was going to force himself on her. “You're a true gentleman,

Richard.” Her eyes welled up with tears as she regarded him with even greater admiration.

Richard closed his eyes and responded with a neutral tone, “Of course, I'd climb into bed if you

asked.”

“Don't. I'm going to sleep now.” Pearl shut her eyes tightly.

Some time passed, but Pearl was still awake. She could hear the steady breathing nearby. Then,

Richard's hoarse voice when he had just awakened broke the silence. “Why? Did you have a bad

dream?”

“No, I can't fall asleep.”

“Try your best, or else you won't have the energy to enjoy tomorrow.” Richard's tone lacked sympathy.

“I am trying my best, but sleep won't come. I don't know why I suddenly have insomnia.” Pearl was

acutely aware that her insomnia was caused by the presence of the man on the couch, but she dared

not voice her thoughts for fear of angering him. “What should we do then?”

Pearl thought about it and came up with an idea. “Why don't you tell me a story?”

“I don’t do that.”

“My dad used to tell me bedtime stories when I couldn’t fall asleep as a child,” Pearl reminisced about her childhood.

“Alright.” Richard frowned, reluctantly agreeing. “Our building projects in Enswood are outlined below.

We’re set to start on the 31st of August, and we have to make sure that everyone stays safe throughout the process-

“Stop it, Richard. I want a real story!” Pearl looked at the shadow not far away with annoyance. How could someone have such low emotional intelligence?

“What do you want to hear about?”

Seeing that he truly had no experience in this, Pearl dropped a hint. “What about stories about cute little animals?”

Chapter 429

Richard couldn’t quite grasp what Pearl had in mind, so he decided to search on his phone.

“Bedtime stories to put your girlfriend to sleep.”

After scanning through some options, he furrowed his brows and finally settled on his favorite story.

“The little prince loved cherries, and the king planted a lot of cherry trees. There was a fairy living in one of the trees. The prince eagerly anticipated the growth of sweet, red cherries on the trees, but as time passed, they didn’t appear.

“The prince felt sad, and that’s when the fairy living in the tree emerged. She said, ‘Kiss me, and the cherries will start to grow. ‘So, the prince puckered up his l\*ps and k\*ssed the fairy. Blushing, the cherry fairy made the tree immediately sprout red cherries.

“When the prince puckered up again, the fairy said, ‘The cherries are sweet enough, so there’s no need for more k\*sses.’ The prince beamed and replied, ‘But you’re sweeter than the cherries.’”

Richard’s voice was gentle and slightly husky, enough to make anyone fall for him.

To Pearl’s surprise, she thought she’d be too excited to sleep while listening to that voice. However, the rhythmic storytelling actually had the opposite effect, lulling her into a deep slumber.

The following morning, when she awoke, she found herself tightly wrapped up in the blanket, and

Richard was no longer on the couch.

Feeling a bit uneasy, she got up and started walking toward the door. Just as she reached for the



doorknob, it turned, and Richard, holding an umbrella and breakfast, appeared on the other side. His shoulder was wet from the rain.

“You’re up,” he greeted her as he placed the umbrella next to the door and set the food on the table. “I figured you’d be hungry when you woke up, so I brought breakfast.”

Pearl nodded appreciatively. Although she had just woken up, she realized she was quite hungry.

It felt thoughtful, as if they had been married for years. She eyed the food on the table and gulped.

“Why? You don’t like it?” Richard frowned.

“No, how could I? I love this.” She then sat at the dining table, picked up a fork, and took a bite. “Yum!

This is really good. You should try some.”

“I had some coffee outside so I’m not very hungry, and I’m not particularly fond of this dish. Go ahead and enjoy it,” he replied.

Pearl nodded and was about to take another bite when her b\*dy started itching, and she had to put her fork down to scratch.

“What’s wrong?” Richard noticed red spots forming on Pearl’s arm and frowned. “Are you having an allergic reaction?”

Pearl's sweat-drenched hair clung to her forehead as she replied, "Yes, I have a seafood allergy, but it's not bad. I'll be fine."

But the itchiness was becoming unbearable. Pearl was short of breath due to the discomfort.

"You should have told me about your seafood allergy," Richard said, dialing 911 and carrying her downstairs while waiting for the ambulance.

Pearl curled up in his arms and mumbled, "I thought it would be okay. Besides, you bought it for me, so I wanted to eat it all."

"Are you a pig? What happens if something happens to you?" Richard sounded cold.

"If something happens to me, you should marry a beautiful woman and name your child Pearl Waldorf," she mumbled with a sigh. "It actually sounds quite nice."

Richard was infuriated by her rambling, his gaze piercing. "If you die, I'll turn you into ashes."

"Oh, my ashes.. Wait, turn me into ashes?" That wasn't how stories typically went. Why was Richard not following the usual storylines?

Chapter 430

Pearl was taken to the hospital with Richard's assistance. The smell of disinfectants in the hospital

room made her scrunch up her nose. "Is there any way I can avoid staying in the hospital?"

Richard gave her a cold look. "What do you think?"

"Um..." Pearl smiled awkwardly. "I guess not."

"Good, now behave," he replied, sitting there with an air of aloofness and checking his phone.

"What about our travel plans?"

Richard, still composed, answered, "Life is full of surprises. Just stay here and recover. We have plenty of time so there's no need to rush."

Pearl silently lay down on the bed. Shortly after, a doctor doing her rounds entered the room. She found her vaguely familiar but couldn't quite place where she had seen her before.

The doctor suddenly let out an excited squeal. "Rick, it's you!"

Pearl frowned when she heard this and shot a glare at Richard.

"Yes," Richard nodded.

"How have you been? How's Hughie?"

Pearl caught the doctor's shy expression and instantly understood what was happening.

“We’re all doing well,” replied Richard in his usual polite manner, maintaining a friendly tone with people

he wasn’t familiar with.

The doctor seemed aware of this and didn’t press further. They exchanged some pleasantries before she approached Pearl’s bed to begin her examination.

Seeing Pearl’s expression, the doctor’s face twisted slightly. “What are you doing here, Pearl?”

Pearl finally remembered who the doctor was and offered a polite smile. “It’s been a while, Leah.” She didn’t particularly like this woman

Four years ago, Pearl had met Leah while studying abroad. They were both pursuing medicine, and

Leah had known Simon was abroad, so she tried to find him and hoped he would become her mentor.

However, Simon had chosen Pearl instead, and Leah harbored resentment, believing that Pearl had stolen an opportunity from her.

Realizing she was facing her rival. Leah’s expression immediately changed. “It has been a while, Pearl,” she replied in a flat

tone

Pearl ignored her and closed her eyes to rest.

Leah checked the charts when she noticed Pearl wasn't interested in reconnecting with her and then left the room. Shortly afterward, she ran into someone she knew.

"Hughie?"

Hearing that, the man turned around, revealing himself to be Hugo.

Hugo's expression softened when he saw Leah. "Oh, what a small world. It's been a while. Are you working here?"

Leah's infatuation was rekindled when she laid eyes on him again. "What brings you to Hazelton?"

"Business," replied Hugo, checking his watch and frowning his brow. "It's getting late. I need to go."

Leah nodded, and her dormant infatuation began to stir again. "Would you like to have dinner,

Hughie?"

Hugo had been about to decline her offer but then noticed the name "Pearl Leighton" on her chart and smiled. "Sure."

Inside the hospital room, Pearl wasn't particularly thrilled.

"What's wrong? Are you hungry?" Richard asked.

“No thanks, Rick”

Richard had never heard her call him that before and immediately understood the source of her mood.

“Jealous?”