

YOUR GUISE 521

Chapter 521

Mobius felt like he'd been played, but when he saw Esther looking at him with those puppy eyes, his irritation melted away.

"You really want to get engaged? This isn't just a sudden decision?" he asked Esther with a serious expression.

"Of course. I've wanted to do this since I was sixteen and it never changed in the past three years!"

Esther had waited three years for him. After all she went through in the past three years, she was even more sure about her feelings for Mobius and stayed true to it.

"Alright, I'll do whatever you say after this." His tone was serious, but at the same time, it was a bit frustrating.

Esther knew that the strict life of being under surveillance would return, but it didn't matter to her. She was going to be with Mobius, and that was all that mattered.

They all laughed, relieved that the young couple was finally taking a serious step.

The engagement was now officially on their calendar, set for the twentieth of May.

Pearl led Esther to Cerubleu's underground exhibition room. When Esther saw the elegant dinner dresses, she finally realized how foolish it was to have fought with Jenny in a different wedding dress store. She almost missed out on these beautiful dresses.

"Pick any dress you like."

Clothes were meant to be worn, and since Esther's size was similar to Pearl's, they should fit her as well.

Esther happily chose a dress to try on and emerged from the fitting room blushing. She twirled in front of the mirror, and the pink dress fanned out.

"It's so beautiful, Pearl. How do I look?" she asked with a giggle. She knew she was going to stun'

Mobius!

Pearl nodded in approval. "You look stunning, but there's something missing."

She retrieved a pearl necklace from a box and placed it around Esther's neck. With the addition of the necklace, she looked even more exquisite. "There, now you're dressed perfectly for your engagement.

Esther was curious about Pearl's own attire. "What are you going to wear?"

Pearl smiled mysteriously and pointed to a simple, plain white dress with no embellishments. It lacked

the glitz and glamour of a wedding gown, appearing quite ordinary.

Esther was puzzled. "That dress looks so plain."

"You'll see on the day of the engagement," Pearl said with a wink, putting Esther's worries to rest. She

trusted that Pearl wouldn't make a mistake on her own engagement day.

Esther admired herself in the mirror, imagining her engagement day.

On the day of the engagement, Enswood came alive because it was the engagement party of

two Waldorfs, a Sanders, and the granddaughter of a Jordan.

Even though Pearl didn't have much contact with the Jordans, they sent an engagement gift. However, it wasn't from Ezra but from Blake, along with a letter.

[Pearl, how could you not invite me to your engagement party? I can't attend because I need to take

care of Grandpa, but do you know how upset he is? I'll try to sneak out for your wedding and bring a

big gift with me.]

His tone seemed humble.

Chapter 522

Pearl smiled but didn't say anything as she put the gift away.

Today, all eyes were on Pearl. Her stunning beauty was accentuated by the flawless white dress she wore, captivating everyone's hearts. This engagement event had earned her a new nickname: The White Rose of Enswood.

Mobius and Richard stood at the door, welcoming the guests, while Esther waited in the villa, chatting with her girlfriends.

Esther's friends were all elegant young ladies. One of them spoke with a hint of jealousy, saying,

"Esther, you've secured your golden ticket now, but no one wants us anymore." Pearl could tell this girl wasn't a good person. She sounded arrogant and envious of Esther. Esther chuckled with an air of innocence, "Oh, Hannah, not at all. We're all close friends, and we were supposed to achieve success together."

Pearl couldn't help but shake her head, not quite understanding what was going through Esther's mind.

Her so-called "best friends" were clearly ready to attack her, yet she smiled as innocently as a lamb.

Hannah continued with her jealousy, saying, "But we're different. You're marrying into the Waldorfs, so you'll be elevated. We won't be able to compare."

Esther smiled awkwardly.

Pearl was prepared to step in and give Hannah a piece of her mind when a gentle voice intervened, “If you’re capable enough, go ahead and do the same. No one’s stopping you.”

The statement was straight to the point but funny. Only Sean could have said something so frank.

They hadn’t seen Sean in a while. After looking after Dustan, he had been assigned to work in a branch office and had returned to this situation.

Hannah blushed after Sean’s comment. All the Waldorf sons were outstanding among their peers, and marrying any of them would bring pride to the entire family.

Hannah responded, “That’s not what I meant, Mister Waldorf...”

Sean was smiling, but his eyes were cold. “I’m not sure what you mean, but your choice of words is shocking. I doubt you’ll find a suitable match in Enswood.”

Initially, Hannah thought Sean was praising her, but her expression quickly changed as she realized his implied message—that she was arrogant, and no man would be interested in her. Her urge to flirt with Sean evaporated instantly, and she scoffed before leaving. She didn’t want to become the city’s laughingstock if news of this incident got out.

Seeing Hannah's departure, others also dispersed, not wanting to be part of a similar situation.

Pearl looked at Sean and smiled. "You're becoming quite skilled in conversation, Sean."

Sean responded in his typical laid-back manner, "I'm still nowhere near your level. Remember, you managed to silence me in the past. That's true talent."

Pearl smiled, accustomed to Sean's teasing, and decided not to engage further in conversation.

Gifts continued to pour in like a never-ending stream. Pearl assisted with organizing the gifts when she noticed a particularly intricate box.

The wooden box had a familiar pattern, one her father had always used. Pearl recognized it immediately and opened the box with trembling hands. It was empty, except for a silver necklace inside.

Pearl removed the necklace with a heart-shaped pendant and compared it to the one she was wearing. The heart of the two necklaces fit perfectly together!

Chapter 523

Pearl's heart skipped a beat. She glanced around, but the line of people delivering gifts seemed endless, making it impossible for her to spot the gift giver. Even those who had just presented their gifts

had vanished into the crowd.

Anxiously, she turned to the butler, Uncle Levi, who stood beside her. “Uncle Levi, did you see who brought this gift?”

Levi hesitated for a moment, the unique box triggering his memory. “I believe it was a woman wearing a mask, perhaps in her forties, but why do you ask-?”

Pearl didn’t wait for him to finish his sentence. She abruptly stood up, holding her dress, and dashed away.

The sudden action left everyone at the party surprised, with even the typically composed Richard appearing concerned.

Mobius was shocked and commented, “What’s going on with Pearl? She looks like she’s running away.”

Richard shared Mobius’s worry, but he offered some reassurance. “No, let’s wait and see.” Given that it was their engagement party, Pearl must have had a valid reason for her actions.

Mobius still couldn’t shake off his concern. “You should go after her. What if something happens to her?”

Richard nodded, loosened his tie, and hurriedly followed Pearl.

The guests were left in shock, wondering about the unfolding events. Why was the bride-to-be running away, and now the groom-to-be chasing after her? Some started speculating if they were just trying to grab gifts without returning.

Esther and Mobius could only suppress the stress coming from the crowd and hoped they would return soon.

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As Pearl dashed outside, she realized that she couldn't find the person who had given her the gift.

Feeling disheartened, she turned to head back to the party when a voice called out to her.

"I guess your mom is very important to you since you suddenly ran out."

Pearl froze in her tracks. She turned around, her gaze meeting Hugo's, and an unsettling feeling washed over her.

Ever since Eric had taught him a lesson, Hugo had kept a low profile, and Pearl thought he had finally learned his lesson. But now he seemed to be aware of her weakness.

“What are you trying to say?”

“Have you always been curious about your mother? I’m here to give you some clues.”

Hugo’s smile seemed angelic, but Pearl, who had seen his cruel side before, knew better. “What are these clues?”

Hugo shrugged. “They’re with you. I had to go through a lot to get my hands on that necklace.

Is it related to your mother?”

Pearl clenched her fists. While her face remained composed, her gaze turned icy. “Where did you get that necklace?”

“The necklace... Haha, I had to go through great lengths to obtain it. Would you like to know?” Hugo’s smile grew smug.

“Stop playing games,” Pearl retorted, rolling her wrists in a threatening manner. “You’d better be wise and start talking, or I won’t be gentle.”

Hugo wasn’t scared. In fact, he started laughing. “Sure. But remember, if you lay a hand on me, you’ll never find out anything about your mother.”

Chapter 524

“Tell me what you want,” Pearl said, not bothering to be polite with Hugo.

Hugo looked at her and grinned mysteriously. “Don’t you know what I want? Break up with Richard, and I’ll tell you everything.”

Pearl’s expression became exaggerated. “You’ve gone to great lengths to be the heir to the Waldorf estate. What’s the point of all this?”

“You wouldn’t understand. I simply despise Richard. If you break up with him, he’ll be heartbroken, and I love seeing him in pain. The more miserable he is, the happier I am.” Hugo couldn’t help but feel a surge of delight as he imagined how devastated Richard would be after their breakup.

“Forget it if that’s your reason,” Pearl retorted, shaking her head. She had no intention of letting this pointless clue jeopardize her love life.

Finding her mother was important, but not at the cost of her relationship with Richard.

As Pearl turned to leave, Hugo dropped a heavy bombshell. “But your mother is on the brink of death.

Aren’t you curious to know where she is?”

Pearl’s face paled at his words. “How do you know that?”

“Hahaha, I told you. Be wise and break up with him, and I’ll reveal everything.”

Pearl lowered her head, conflicted and hesitant.

“Pearl, don’t listen to him,” Richard’s voice broke in as he arrived on the scene. He had seen Hugo trying to manipulate Pearl from the moment he got there.

His eyes bore into Hugo, cold and filled with anger. Threatening Pearl to break up with him? Hugo was becoming increasingly audacious.

“Richard,” Pearl quickly ran to him, her voice trembling as she explained, “I didn’t run away on purpose. I found some clues about my mom!”

Thankfully, she hadn’t fallen for Hugo’s tricks, or Richard would have been furious.

“It’s alright, I understand,” Richard said as he gently stroked her hair, reassuring her.

“Haha, I knew you wouldn’t-”

“I’ll punish you when we get back.”

Pearl froze. Richard’s words were like a death sentence to her.

Hugo, however, wasn’t fazed at all, perhaps because he believed he had powerful backing. Richard, what a coincidence that you’re here.”

Richard nodded. "If you keep luring Pearl out and playing your little games, next time, when you're thrown out, it won't be on some remote road but right in the middle of the city."

He made such a humiliating threat sound casual, causing Hugo's expression to darken immediately.

It was the most humiliating moment of his life—being thrown naked onto the street and judged by onlookers. He had curled up in shame but couldn't hide his entire body. He never wanted to experience that again.

"I won't tell you anything if you speak to me like that," Hugo retorted, his temper flaring. He wasn't immune to their taunts.

"Feel free to do as you wish because we don't need your help," Richard said calmly, looking at Pearl.

"Let's go back. Everyone's waiting for us to get engaged."

Chapter 525

Pearl found herself in a dilemma. On one hand, there were real leads about her mother's whereabouts;

on the other, they had been preparing for this engagement party for a long time.

She lowered her gaze and remained silent.

"Rick, look, even Pearl is tempted. You shouldn't stop her." Hugo raised his brow, confident that Pearl

would choose what worked best for her.

“Richard, I really want to follow up on this clue,” Pearl finally spoke, her face troubled. “Can we proceed with our engagement after I find the answers?”

Richard looked at her with a mix of concern and determination. “Alright, but there’s no need for any trouble. We’ll go back to our engagement, and I’ll have my men extract the information from him.”

Hugo’s smile disappeared. What? While they enjoyed their engagement, he would be subjected to torture? What a joke!

Hugo raised his hand, and a few burly men appeared behind him. “I wanted to take the easy way, but you’re leaving me with no choice.”

Even if Richard and Pearl could fight, they were outnumbered, and Hugo believed his men could overpower them.

“Get them!”

“Take them down and grab Hugo,” Richard said calmly, showing no signs of fear. He gestured, and a group of men instantly appeared on their side.

Hugo realized he was in trouble. “It seems we’re evenly matched, Rick. Are you sure about this?”

He smirked, trying to keep up his bravado.

11

Pearl chuckled. “Hugo, if you intend to kidnap someone, you should have brought more people. Not only did you fail, but you’re also in an even worse situation now.” She then tilted her head to the side and said, “Show yourself.”

Once Pearl said that, a new group of people emerged.

Hugo was shocked. Who were these people? Even his men didn’t see them!

“Do you think we’re still evenly matched?” Pearl lazily looked at Hugo, and seeing how worried he looked, laughed.

Hugo’s heart dropped because he knew he was done.

“Richard, let them fight. Let’s get back to our engagement,” Pearl declared, determined not to let this delay ruin their special day. With such a disparity in numbers and the quality of her men as top fighters, she knew Hugo’s men would likely be severely beaten.

Richard nodded and issued orders to his men. “Keep Hugo alive. Do whatever you want with the rest.”

Their fate would be determined by their ability to withstand the onslaught.

As Richard and Pearl walked away, Hugo grew frantic. There were too many opponents, and he was on the losing side. Panicking, he tried to slip away during the chaos, but within moments, one of Pearl's men spotted him and grabbed him by the collar.

"Let go of me! I'll pay you any amount of money you want if you release me!"

The man scoffed. "We serve people, not money. If you mention money again, I'll ensure you leave here in worse shape!" Their orders were to keep him alive, but his limbs weren't part of the deal.

"I'll double whatever Pearl is paying you!"

Seeing that Hugo wasn't changing his tune, the man slapped him. "How many times do I need to tell you? We serve people! Are you the boss of Evil Spirits too?"

"E... Evil Spirits?"

Hugo had heard of the organization, but he never imagined they were connected to Pearl!

Chapter 526

"Alright, enough talking. You talk more than our boss," one of the men said as they prepared to take

Hugo away.

However, just as they were about to proceed, a new group of people suddenly appeared, and these newcomers were visibly stronger than the previous group.

The men immediately raised their guard, ready to protect their captive. However, it quickly became apparent that the new group of men wasn't there to engage in combat. Instead, they focused their attention on Hugo, staring at him intently.

The situation was tense as the two groups faced off, both on high alert, preparing for a potential confrontation. Just when it seemed like a fight might break out, the newcomers threw a smoke grenade, instantly filling the area with thick smoke.

Amidst the chaos and obscured vision caused by the smoke, the group lost track of Hugo and the newcomers. When the smoke finally dissipated and they regained their sight, the mysterious group had vanished, along with Hugo.

"Report to the boss immediately!" one of the men instructed, clearly flustered.

"But she's getting engaged. Interrupting now might not be the best idea," another one pointed out.

"Let's follow them and send one person to inform the boss after her engagement."

Pearl and Richard returned to the engagement party, and the once-noisy hall fell into a sudden hush.

Those who had come for the drama were disappointed to see the couple appear unscathed. On the other hand, Mobius and Esther, who had been in charge of the event, felt relieved that nothing had gone wrong.

“Alright, since everyone is here, let’s begin.” Richard’s voice, usually stern, carried an unusual gentleness as he addressed the gathered guests.

Pearl nodded in agreement, about to speak, when laughter near the door caught her attention. It sounded familiar, like Eric’s.

Turning to look, she saw Eric standing at the entrance, appearing somewhat late. However, the person accompanying him made her frown in surprise.

Jenny?

Jenny’s expression was dark. She had been told that Eric was bringing her to an event to regain some public attention, but she had no idea it would turn out to be Pearl and Richard’s engagement party. If she had known, she would have dressed more extravagantly to steal Pearl’s limelight.

“I’m not too late, am I, Pearl?” Eric said as he placed his gift aside, his tone gentle.

“Not at all. If you had been a little later, you might have arrived in time for the baby’s first birthday,”

Pearl quipped.

Eric raised his brow, as this was something only Pearl would say.

“But since you’re here, why did you bring someone?” Pearl raised an eyebrow as well, her smile

mischievous. “I don’t recall inviting Miss Jenny.”

Jenny hadn’t expected Pearl to publicly humiliate her like this, especially in front of a crowd.” What do

you mean? I’m here to attend your engagement party so I’m showing respect,” she retorted, trying to

keep her voice down to avoid further attention.

“Respect?” Pearl responded with a sharp tone, her eyes piercing. “Jenny, you know better than anyone

else whether you’re here to show respect or to embarrass me. Your presence is not welcome. Please

leave.” She also shot a pointed look at Eric, who had brought her there. Eric chuckled and touched his

nose, seemingly unfazed by the situation. “Well, I brought her here to show some respect.”

Pearl’s tone instantly shifted, becoming even more confrontational. “You brought my fiance’s ex to my

engagement party? What were you thinking? I know you’re not from here, but you should respect our

customs.”

Pearl's anger was palpable, and her gaze turned ice-cold as she addressed Eric.

Chapter 527

Pearl was not known for having a bad temper, but Jenny's presence was like adding fuel to the fire.

"You don't want me here? Well, I didn't want to be here either!" Jenny retorted, clearly disgusted by the apparent happiness of Pearl and Richard.

She made a move to leave, but Eric held her back, his grip firm. "Don't go. Do you want to make a comeback?"

His words stopped Jenny in her tracks. This was her chance to return to the spotlight, and she couldn't afford to lose Eric, her financier.

Pearl frowned, sensing the tension, but she then read Eric's lips. 'I have my reasons.' Pearl froze for a moment but understood that Eric had his motives.

Pearl knew that Eric wouldn't harm her, so she decided to proceed with the engagement ceremony.

The two couples continued with the event as planned, but the people in the front row displayed a range of emotions: Hanzel appeared relieved, Sean seemed amused, and Eric looked hurt.

Jenny, on the other hand, was burning with anger, as if her logic had been devoured. She believed that

all of this was supposed to be hers, and Pearl had stolen everything from her.

After the ceremony, everyone took their seats at their respective tables, but Eric pulled Pearl aside to a quiet corner.

“Tell me why you brought Jenny here,” Pearl demanded, ready to give Eric a piece of her mind if he didn’t provide a satisfactory explanation.

Eric’s expression suddenly turned serious, which was a rare sight. “I was concerned that Hugo might manipulate Jenny to ruin your engagement party. So, instead of allowing that to happen, I decided to keep an eye on her to ensure she behaves.”

Pearl had never considered that possibility, but Eric had been thinking ahead.

“That makes sense. Hugo showed up and tried to ruin it, so Jenny might have done the same. Thank you, Eric,” Pearl said, her eyes welling up with gratitude.

Seeing her emotional response, Eric smiled gently and patted her head. “Alright, you don’t need to dwell on it. I’ve protected Princess Pearl’s engagement party, haven’t I?”

Although he made light of the situation, Eric couldn’t hide the disappointment in his eyes. If he was a

little braver, would he be the one standing next to her now?

Pearl sensed his feelings and made him a heartfelt offer. "Eric, if you ever need help in the future, don't hesitate to come to me. I'll do my best to help you."

Eric took a deep breath and smiled. "What kind of help could I need? Don't forget, my father is an oil baron. I don't need money, and no one would dare to bully me."

Pearl chuckled. "You're right."

"Okay, you should go back now. Richard looks like he's going to stab me," Eric noted, seeing

Richard's stern gaze fixed on them.

Pearl stuck out her tongue playfully. "Alright, I'll head back to him."

"Go."

As Pearl happily returned to Richard's side, Eric couldn't help but feel a sense of disappointment. The person he had harbored feelings for over so many years was now engaged to another.

He had fallen for her when he was just sixteen, remembering how she had stood up for him. But back then, he had lacked the courage to confess his feelings and had missed his chance.

Throughout the years, he had met many people, some with her nose, some with her eyes, but none

could compare to the cold yet cheeky girl he had known. He couldn't help but feel that it was unfortunate.

Yet, he was genuinely glad to see her happy, and he was willing to be there to protect her.

Pearl didn't notice Eric's disappointment, but Richard did. He fixed his piercing gaze on Pearl's face

and asked in a cold tone, "What were you conspiring with Eric?"

Chapter 528

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Pearl noticed Richard's jealousy and couldn't help but chuckle. "Come on, I came back to you, didn't I?"

It was nothing, really. Eric just explained why he brought Jenny here."

"Oh, that's all? Why did he have to touch you?" Richard had seen Eric's intimate gesture of patting

Pearl's head and wanted to cut off Eric's hand for it.

"It's okay, he was just being nice. Don't be angry. If it bothers you that much, you can touch me when

we get home." Pearl pouted and looked annoyed.

"Fine, I'll let it go if he was just concerned about you." Richard pinched her cheek affectionately and let

out a sigh.

After their brief conversation, someone approached Pearl. She recognized the man as a member of

Evil Spirits and immediately put on a serious expression. "What's going on?"

The man lowered his voice, "Hugo Waldorf managed to escape."

"Escaped? There were so many of you. How did he slip away?" Pearl was genuinely surprised. Had

Hugo suddenly developed the ability to teleport?

"No, it wasn't that. Another group of men appeared unexpectedly, and they were... stronger than us.

They didn't come to fight us but took Hugo away."

The man felt helpless because if they had engaged in a fight, they might have had a chance, but the

newcomers had used a smoke grenade to blind them, indicating careful planning on their part.

"Hugo was well-prepared for this. If you can't capture him, I'll try to track him down." Hugo seemed to

have a complex support system that Pearl couldn't entirely comprehend.

"One more thing," the man continued, cautiously choosing his words. "The deputy... will be coming to

Enswood tomorrow."

Pearl was at a loss for words. Her expression changed, and the man gulped and stepped back,

sensing her unease.

Richard, noticing Pearl's distress, asked, "What deputy?"

He wasn't shocked to discover that Pearl was the founder of Evil Spirits. This woman had surprised him too many times for him to be shocked again. However, the mention of a deputy, especially a male one, made him sense a potential romantic rival.

Pearl wiped the sweat from her forehead and let out a dry chuckle. "Deputy? He's more like the devil."

Pearl had endured two years of torture under Damian Scott's command. The relentless training and combat drills had brought her to tears many times. How could a retired special forces officer be so relentless?

"So... he's coming here tomorrow... to see you?" Richard asked, the words sounding somewhat awkward as they formed in his mouth.

"It's fine. He's not as harsh with other people," Pearl reassured him with a chuckle. "I'll introduce you."

Richard scoffed. "No."

Pearl finally realized that Richard was jealous. "Alright, alright. Damian and I are just trainer and trainee. Most importantly, Damian is eight years older than me. There's no way I would be with him."

“Eight years older? He’s practically an old man,” Richard remarked, his jealousy momentarily quelled.

Pearl rolled her eyes at his comment. If Damian showed up tomorrow, she certainly wasn’t going to submit to him!

Chapter 529

The next morning, Pearl was roused from her slumber by a ringing phone. She rubbed her eyes, groped for her phone beneath her pillow, and answered the call.

Her eyes were puffy from exhaustion. After the guests departed the previous night, it was already ten o’clock. By the time she finished her nightly routine and climbed into bed, it was midnight.

A familiar, cold, and slightly husky voice emanated from the other end of the line. “Pea.”

Pearl startled awake, sitting up in bed, the morning sun streaming into her eyes. She shielded them with her hand. “Damian, you’re back?”

“Yes. I should have asked them to inform you yesterday. Still in bed? Have you grown lazy because I haven’t trained you for too long?”

Damian’s voice was deep, clear, and carried a touch of drowsiness, as if he had just awakened. It sounded good.

“No, that’s not possible. I woke up at five for my morning jog and only went back to sleep after that. I’m not lazy.” Pearl was obviously lying as her eyes darted around.

However, when she spotted the hands of the wall clock, pointing to noon, her face turned pale.

“You slept long enough.” Damian couldn’t be bothered to expose her lie. He walked along the street, dragging his luggage behind him, the wheels clacking with each step.

“Where are you? Should I come pick you up?” Pearl held the phone with her shoulder as she rummaged through her closet. “Or you can tell me your location, and I’ll find you.”

Damian heard the sound of rustling clothes and knew Pearl was busy. He replied, “No need. I’ve already found my rental place.”

Pearl paused. “But you have money. Why are you renting a place?”

While they were talking, Damian arrived at an old apartment building and entered a room. The room, although small and covered in a thin layer of dust, was decent.

“I lived in this place alone when I was eighteen, determined to start working. Unfortunately...” Damian trailed off, squinting as he reminisced. “Unfortunately, my parents passed away, and I never returned.”

Pearl sensed this was something close to his heart, so she didn't say anything but just changed the subject. "I'll bring Wayne to see you later, after six. We can grab a drink."

Damian set down his bag, sat on the couch, and crossed his legs. "Oh, is Mister Richard willing to let his fiancée go out for drinks late at night?"

"You and Wayne don't count as 'men' in that context." Pearl chuckled but realized she made a mistake, so she covered her mouth.

"Enough of that. I'm going to take a shower, so you do whatever you need to do." Damian had always been direct, so he hung up promptly.

Pearl sat on a pile of clothes, feeling a jumble of emotions in her heart.

Just then, a gentle knock sounded at the door. That was what Richard would usually do.

Pearl opened the door and found Richard standing there, lips pursed, with a hint of darkness in his eyes.

"Are you going out tonight?"

Pearl opened her mouth, but no words came out. Richard must have heard her conversation with

Damian and misunderstood.

“Yes, I’m meeting Damian to welcome him.”

It was a completely normal thing to do, but Pearl detected disappointment in Richard’s eyes.

“What’s wrong?” she cautiously asked.

Richard’s shoulders slumped, and he shook his head. “Nothing. Go ahead, but don’t stay out too late.”

Pearl gulped. “Are you jealous?”

“No.” It was a blatant lie.

Chapter 530

Richard didn’t voice his feelings but instead gave her a smile.

After parting ways with Pearl, he leaned against the hallway wall. His phone kept buzzing with notifications. When he finally checked, he was met with a series of photos that left his heart heavy.

In these pictures, Pearl and Damian appeared very close. They were seen at a theme park, riding the carousel, enjoying hotdogs, and sharing an ice cream together. The last image was of a love letter written on a yellowed piece of paper, signed with “Pea.”

As Richard looked at the pictures, his heart constricted, and his breathing became labored.

When the pictures stopped coming in, a message from Hugo Waldorf appeared on his screen.

[I bet you didn't know Pearl has a lover abroad. Yes, that's her mentor. They had an amazing time together and looked so sweet. Look at how beautifully that love letter was written. I felt jealous just reading it. Was she ever this obsessed with you?]

That was the final message he received.

Richard lowered his gaze, his long lashes concealing his emotions. "Our relationship is none of your business," he responded before locking his screen.

Pearl's door was closed, separating them.

Richard lingered for a moment, took a deep breath, and then walked away.

Inside her room, Pearl was perplexed. Richard had been acting strangely today. Even when he was jealous in the past, he would usually try to make her apologize. Why did he look so sad?

She took out her phone, typed something, then deleted it.

Never mind. She decided it would be better to ask him about it once he initiated a conversation.

Choosing a white dress that accentuated her collarbone and figure, she applied light makeup, tied her hair back, and left her room.

She then called Wayne, but he found out even earlier and was the one who picked Damian up from the airport. He even complained that Pearl woke up too late and didn't pick him up.

Unable to tolerate his nagging, she ended the call and dialed Feather's number.

"Fifi, Damian is back. Let's meet up at Dark Bar."

Feather nodded and agreed, but before Pearl hung up, the latter heard a peculiar sound on the other end. The voice seemed oddly familiar—Hanzel's!

Pearl couldn't help but ask, "Why are you with Hanzel?"

Frowning, Feather glanced at Hanzel, who was holding her stuffed toy and appeared troubled. "I can't explain right now. I'll fill you in tonight."

Pearl found it all quite baffling. What could be so complicated? She didn't know what to say.

After hanging up, Pearl hopped into her sports car, named Dark Fairy, and headed to Dark Bar.

Upon her arrival, she sensed that there was some commotion inside. Turning off her engine, she stepped out and spotted Damian standing out from the crowd.