## **YOUR GUISE 611**

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Hugo felt quite sorry for Pearl, seeing her red eyes. "Alright, we'll leave today if that's what you want."

"Then, my mother's illness..."

"Don't worry about it. I won't go back on my word." Hugo reached out to touch Pearl's head, but she

dodged his hand, creating a noticeable distance between them.

"Okay, I'll book the tickets now," Pearl said, ready to get up, but Hugo stopped her.

"Have you forgotten that you're supposed to be dead? Booking tickets could expose you. Aren't you

afraid Ezra might find out that you're still alive?"

With a lot on her mind, Pearl was growing increasingly frustrated by Hugo's words. She sat back down

on the couch to collect herself. "What should we do then?"

Hugo lit a cigarette, took a slow drag, and then replied calmly, "We'll take a boat today. Tomorrow, we'll

fly to Aflus from another country. Your mother will have to endure some rough seas with us. You'll need

to come up with a plausible excuse to deceive her.'

An idea struck Pearl. "I have a plan. Don't worry."

Hugo looked at her in shock. "Don't tell me you want to risk everything and tell her the truth." "Am I that stupid?" Pearl rolled her eyes. "Remember Drew? When you and Jenny forced me to jump into the sea, I bumped into him. He saved me and I got onto his family's cargo ship." She recalled that unpleasant incident with frustration, and Hugo's reaction mirrored her own discomfort. "So, you're saying?" "Since the Cooper family let me go, they might be willing to help me now. I plan to ask Mister Reese's help in crossing the border," Pearl explained confidently. "Oh, I didn't know that I didn't save you with ease. It was him who didn't really want you to marry Sean." Hugo was enlightened. "But how are you going to explain it to your mother?" Stunned, Pearl seemed to be thinking about its feasibility. "Don't worry about it. My mother has a history with the Coopers. I believe that once I explain things and mention her past friendship with them, she'll understand," Pearl reasoned.

Hugo was impressed by Pearl's quick thinking. She came up with a resolution instantly. "I didn't expect

you to be so clever." "Of course. Do you think everyone is as naive as Jenny, who relies on men for everything?" Pearl couldn't resist taking a dig at Jenny, seizing the opportunity to disparage the woman. But Hugo didn't react with agitation or try to defend Jenny. He looked at Pearl with a mocking smile. "It seems you hold quite the grudge against her." Pearl held onto the pillow and regarded Hugo seriously. "How could you say that, Hugo? Do you think I don't hold a big grudge against you?" Stupefied, Hugo smiled and said, "We've known each other for so long. I forgot we were once sworn enemies. Pearl quickly corrected him, "Not just once. It'll always be the same." Suddenly, without warning, Hugo pressed her onto the couch, catching her off guard. Pearl's heart skipped a beat, and she stared at him warily. "What are you doing?" Chapter 612 "Do you hate me that much?" Hugo's frown and fierce tone were uncharacteristic of him. Pearl, feeling helpless, retorted, "Don't you hate me just as much, Hugo?"

"I'm not-" But Hugo's expression shifted, and he fell silent.

Pearl could sense the complexity of his emotions and deftly sidestepped him, increasing the distance between them. "Alright, let's not waste any more time. I'll go find Drew." Pearl quickly applied heavy makeup, donning a cap and a mask to disguise herself and avoid being recognized. Hugo found her pretense amusing. "Do you really need to dress up like that?" Pearl adjusted her cap to conceal her eyes but couldn't hide her disdainful eye roll. "I'll go on my own and be back later." Hugo raised his brows. "Yes, I know. There's nowhere else for you to go here." Pearl shot him a contemptuous glare. "Wretched man." with your mother She hailed a taxi and headed to Cooper Residence, eager to leave the place as soon as possible. However, when she arrived at the door and was about to knock, she noticed a sign on it. It seemed that the Cooper family had moved out. Pearl was disappointed but understood the reasoning behind their decision. The Coopers had found

Sean and their business was abroad, so it made sense for them to relocate.

As she turned to leave, someone suddenly blocked her path. "Pearl." The voice was gloomy, fierce, and filled with doubt. Pearl turned around, and her face drained of color. "Richard? What are you doing here?" Richard took a deep breath and scrutinized Pearl. After confirming that she was indeed alive and not some supernatural entity, he breathed a sigh of relief. "I came to see what had happened to you." Pearl knew that Richard was different now, so she didn't feel as close to him as before. Awkwardness gripped her, leaving her at a loss for words as she nervously clasped her hands together. "So, now that you see I'm still alive, will you expose it?" Richard had assumed that Pearl would be shocked to see him. After all, he had lost his memory while she hadn't. However, she reacted with panic rather than surprise. "Will it affect you if I tell the others?" Stunned, Pearl's expression turned icy. "I'll get into trouble if you tell the others." Chapter 613

What kind of trouble?"

earl's face displayed a range of emotions. "I can't tell you that right now."
ichard took a step closer, as if he intended to grab her wrist. "I'm your fiance. What's there to ide from
me?"
errified, Pearl staggered. "What are you talking about? Why would you say that?"
Didn't we get engaged?" Richard's question was thought-provoking.
Yes, we did, but you feel nothing for me. It's pointless to mention that now."
earl's deliberate actions of distancing herself from him left Richard feeling uneasy for easons he
couldn't quite pinpoint. Frowning in frustration, he struggled to make sense of his wn emotions. "Why
did you fake your death?"
'earl had known that Richard was intelligent, but she hadn't expected him to figure it out so uickly. "It's
my business, and it doesn't concern you." She couldn't tell him the truth, as the onsequences would be
unimaginable.
s Pearl tried to walk away, Richard suddenly gripped her wrist tightly. She turned to see his rim
expression.

I'll give you another chance, Pearl. Why did you fake your death? And where are you staying low?"
nable to hold back her emotions any longer, Pearl, who had been suppressing them for so ong, finally
let them surface. "Richard! You no longer love me. You feel nothing for me. Why re you still hounding
me? You're obsessed with your first love, aren't you? Go to her. Why did ou come looking for me? I've
been deeply disappointed by your indifference, from the time ou lost your love for me until now. Isn't it
absurd that you're acting as if I'm your fiancee?"
ichard slowly released his grip on her hand and lowered it.

Richard, let me make it clear one last time. It's over between us."

ichard had always been a reserved man, and after losing his feelings for her, he had remained motionally detached. Yet, her words caused an unbearable pain to well up in his heart.

You don't love me anymore?" Richard muttered, disbelief lacing his tone.

Jis words stung Pearl, causing her legs to weaken. She had initially intended to leave coldly, ut now she stood there, speechless.

No, I still do, but what good does that do?"

What good was love? Could it save Beah? Could it mend their broken relationship? Since it ouldn't

accomplish any of those things, she felt it was best to leave and find some peace.
earl slowly turned away and began to walk off, and Richard didn't try to stop her, as if verything was
truly over.
richard remained in a daze, feeling that was really gone.
suddenly, from a distance, he heard Pearl's voice. "Richard, I hope you won't tell anyone that
I'm still alive. Please do this one last favor for me, as I once loved you."
Her voice trembled with tears, and she found it difficult to say more.
Pearl assumed he had agreed, as he made no response. She hailed a taxi and drove away.
Finally, it was over between them.
Back at Hugo's house, Pearl was beside herself. Chapter 614
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Hugo was watering the plants in the garden when he noticed Pearl walking towards him in a daze. She
seemed oblivious to his
presence.

"Why are you so out of it? You just went out to ask for help," Hugo playfully asked, but Pearl paid no attention.

"What's wrong with you now? Your morning makeup is all smudged. Did you cry?" He took a step closer to inspect Pearl's makeup, but the latter was infuriated.

"Can you just go away and not touch me?"

"What's gotten into you?" Hugo had initially approached her with concern, but he was met with harsh rebukes, causing his expression to darken instantly. "Fine, I'll stop asking if it upsets you." His tone curt, he walked back into the house with the hose.

All Pearl could see was his retreating figure.

Stunned by her own outburst, Pearl hadn't anticipated venting her anger on someone unrelated to her current predicament. She struggled to catch her breath as she recalled her encounter with Richard.

She rubbed the space between her brows, feeling overwhelmed.

At that moment, her phone rang. She pulled it out of her pocket and answered the call.

"Hello, Pearl. Are you alright?" It was Damian.

Curious, Pearl questioned, "Why do you ask?" "Haven't you seen the news? Richard posted online that he wants to break off the engagement. He wanted to call off the marriage... Pearl trembled slightly. "Okay, got it. Thank you for telling me." Weary, she managed a smile. It appeared that Richard was deeply disappointed in her and had no feelings left for her. But she was fine with that. She wouldn't be burdened if she married Hugo. "You must be heartbroken right now. If you want to cry, go ahead. It's okay. I'm here for you," Damian expressed his sympathy for Pearl. Pearl had always been tenacious and determined—she had pursued Damian for three years without giving up. And now, she was head over heels in love with Richard. But Richard's actions made Damian see him as ungrateful. Pearl must be devastated. "No, I'm not. I'm used to it. He no longer loves me. Besides, he's just giving me an answer." A long sigh escaped Damian. "Okay, let me know if you're feeling down in the coming days. I'll be

online all the time."

Pearl found it hard to speak without revealing her emotions. Her voice quivered, and she was on the brink of tears. "Okay, bye." She hung up on Damian.

"No wonder you were upset when you came back. So, Richard has called off the engagement," Hugo teased Pearl with a mocking tone.

Pearl ignored him and turned to head to her bedroom.

"Now that he's ended it, you're free. Be with me. I'll treat you better than he ever did." Hugo couldn't determine if he was being sincere, but he felt a strong urge to protect her when he saw her dispirited face.

"Hugo, do you think it's fun to tease me right now?" Pearl turned to look at Hugo with a cold expression.

She wasn't at all moved by his words.

"Forget it if you don't believe me." Hugo shrugged and looked elsewhere.

Chapter 615

Pearl gave herself only half an hour to grieve. During that time, she made an effort to reconcile her feelings with Richard and bury her love deep within her heart.

What mattered most now was not dwelling on her sorrow but saving her mother. She couldn't afford to



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Blushing, Pearl retorted, "Nonsense."
"Alright, I'll stop teasing you."
Sean acted as if nothing unusual had happened between them. It felt like they were still the partners
who worked together at the company, and this eased Pearl's discomfort.
"So, why are you calling him instead of me?"
His question left Pearl momentarily speechless. However, she knew that Sean was also a Cooper, and
he would find out about her plans sooner or later. Deciding not to keep it a secret, she answered
honestly, "I called Drew because I need to borrow his cargo ship."
Sean, being perceptive, could deduce the reason behind her request. "You want to leave secretly,
right?"
Pearl nodded, acknowledging that she couldn't hide the truth from him. "Yeah, I want to go abroad."
Sean, in his usual playful manner, started teasing her. "But he can't arrange the cargo ship for you. You
called the wrong guy."
Pearl had expected a refusal, and while she was disappointed, she understood that others weren't
obligated to help her.
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"Alright, I won't bother you with this. You don't have to tell Drew either. Just forget about it." Pearl was about to hang up when Sean dropped a bombshell. "I'm the one who can arrange the cargo ship." His words left Pearl stunned, causing her fingers to tremble, almost disconnecting the call. "But I have a condition since you asked me for help. After all, you put me in an embarrassing. situation. You should make it up to me, don't you think?" Pearl had expected him to make a request. She bit her lip and asked, "What do you want me to do?" "Don't worry. I won't ask you to do anything outrageous, since I've let you off the hook despite such a serious issue concerning our marriage." Chapter 616 Sean burst into laughter. "You think so poorly of me." "Okay, what do you want?" Sean didn't beat around the bush and said, "Be my girlfriend for a day." "No," Pearl immediately refused, showing no hesitation.

"Why not? You have nothing to do with Richard now. Why hold onto your integrity?" Sean laughed

while listening to the running bath. "Why are you so infatuated with him?"

Sean appeared to be mocking her at that moment. As expected, Pearl was infuriated and snorted. "I'm

just not that easy. I'm not preserving my dignity for him!"

"Well, I won't know either. But you'll have to ask someone else for help if you say no."

This was the only time Sean didn't give in to her. His words made Pearl hesitate. It might be her only

chance and the best choice for her. She could get what she wanted by being his girlfriend for a day,

and she didn't know how to secretly leave the country without his assistance.

With a determined expression, she gritted her teeth. "Okay, you

have my word."

Sean laughed heartily. "Alright, let's make it tomorrow. I understand that it's quite urgent for you."

Pearl nodded without much emotion. "Okay, I'll wait for you at the city center at eight tomorrow

morning." She then remembered the Cooper Residence. "Did you guys go abroad?" Sean found her

question amusing. "It's all because of you. Your fake death caused an uproar. We had to move out and

go somewhere else to avoid public scrutiny."



thought it was because of the upcoming wedding, but he soon realized that Sean had already foreseer
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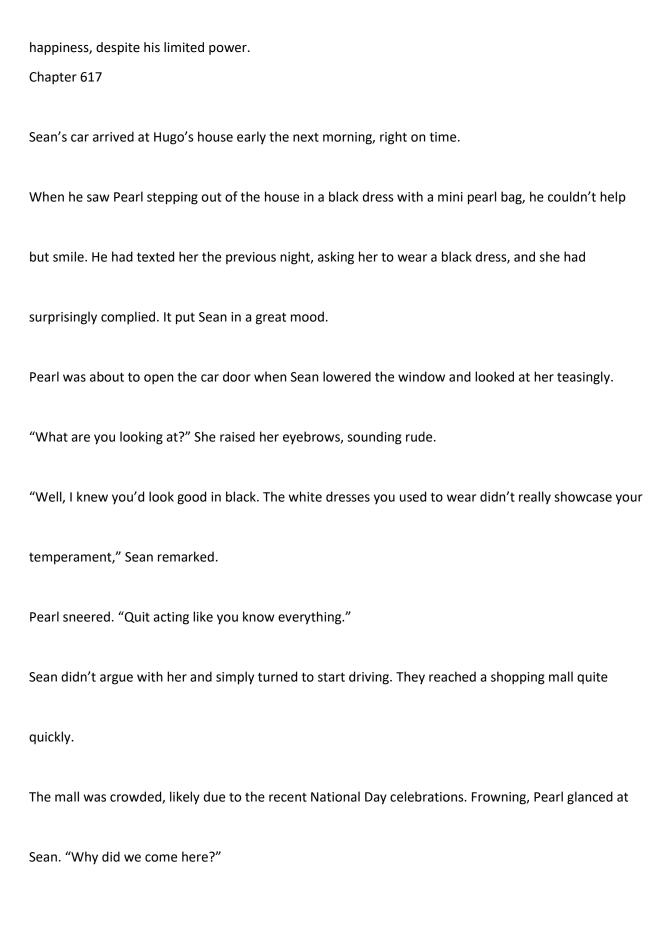
Thinking about it, Drew felt some bitterness. He cared about Pearl; she was the woman who had helped him when he was in trouble, and her charisma had captivated him during the shareholders' meeting.

However, circumstances had changed, and all Drew could do now was ensure her safety and happiness, despite his limited power.

He recalled the sight of Sean downing wine at the table until his eyes turned red. Drew had initially thought it was because of the upcoming wedding, but he soon realized that Sean had already foreseen the outcome and was grieving for himself.

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"Do you remember that we first met at a mall?" Sean seemed to be reminiscing, his tone melancholic. Pearl recalled that Dustan had sent his five sons to take her shopping for clothes after she arrived at the Waldorf Residence. "You're not planning to take me to all those places for a trip down memory lane, are you?" Sean shook his head. "There are too many of them. I won't do that." Pearl was puzzled. She hadn't had much interaction with Sean-they would greet each other when they crossed paths, and occasionally he'd tease her. So, his comment left her confused. "We weren't that close, Sean." Gloominess gleamed in Sean's eyes at her words. "I was around most of the time, but you didn't know." Pearl tightened her grip on her bag. "What do you mean?" "Nothing. Let's go buy you some clothes." Pearl responded coldly, "No, that's unnecessary. I've got enough clothes." "I want to buy them for you, so it doesn't matter whether you like them or not. Besides, you're my

girlfriend today so I'll just do what I want." With that, Sean reached out and grabbed her hand. He felt a



Sean abruptly stopped and turned to face her with a smirk. "Sean." Finally, Pearl had reached her limit. "I think pretending to be a couple for a day is unnecessary." Sean was stunned because of her sudden outburst, but then a mocking smile crossed his face. " That has always been my idea." Confusion flickered in Pearl's eyes. "You don't even like me, so why would you want to be my boyfriend?" Sean burst into laughter. "Who told you that? My feelings for you are probably even stronger than Richard's." Naturally, Pearl couldn't believe her ears. "But you've never shown any sign of liking me." "Of course not. By the time I realized my feelings for you, you were already in a complicated relationship with Richard," Sean explained. "Back then, I couldn't compete with Richard so I kept my feelings hidden."

On the day she had helped him out of his predicament and comforted him, he had realized his feelings

for her. However, with Richard's obvious affection for Pearl and Pearl's own feelings for him, Sean had chosen not to humiliate himself by openly pursuing her.

Although he generally loved to fight against Richard, he knew that he could never get Pearl. Hence, he buried those feelings deeply.

"So, you're saying?" Pearl inquired.

"I'm not asking for a long-term relationship or marriage," Sean clarified. "I just want to be your boyfriend for a day, fulfill a wish, and then put an end to my feelings." It was clear to him that he could never truly be with Pearl.

Standing in the bustling crowd, they locked eyes in silence.

Pearl could see the pain in Sean's eyes. "Alright, I understand," she replied after taking a deep breath.

"Our paths were never meant to cross."

She had initially disliked Sean's character before she fell in love with Richard. They were like two parallel lines destined to lead separate lives.

Similarly, Sean took a deep breath. "I've come to terms with it. No need to rub it in." He looked disheartened as he shrugged helplessly.

Pearl could tell he had accepted the reality, so she offered a faint smile. "But since you want to be my boyfriend for a day, I'll grant your wish. It's my final gift to you as a friend." His gloomy eyes brightened at her words. However, they dimmed when he heard that it was her final gift. "Yeah, you're going abroad," Sean said, trying to hide his disappointment. "So, you won't be coming back?" Pearl shook her head. "I'm not sure about that." She had kept her plan to get engaged to Hugo after going abroad a secret from everyone. They only knew that she wanted to go abroad to cure her mother's illness, and the uninformed might assume she intended to temporarily hide her identity abroad. Pearl was about to change the subject and discuss something happier when suddenly the crowd around them erupted into panicked screams.

Pearl wondered if she was cursed to always encounter fires.

"Fire! There's a fire!"

Chapter 619

As she complained about her bad luck, she realized that Sean was still in a daze. She grabbed his hand and pulled him toward the fire exit. While running, she assessed the situation and noticed that the fire seemed to be originating from the third floor, which was below their current location on the fifth floor. It appeared that the fire had blocked their path down. The flames had also reached the staircase, and thick smoke filled the area. Taking the elevator was out of the question. When the crowd reached the third-floor staircase, they found that it was impossible to use the stairs due to the intense fire. Frowning, Pearl quickly assessed the situation and decided on a different plan. But Sean held her hand tightly and asked, sounding anxious and worried, "Where are you going?" Annoyed, Pearl rolled her eyes and retorted, "Are you an idiot? Where can I go now? I'm going to look for a fire extinguisher and water." "I'm going with you!"

But Pearl shook her head. "No, the fire is very big now. You might die if you're careless."

Sean's concern was evident as he replied, "Don't you care about yourself then? Why do you want to go alone?"

"We're different! I went through years of stamina training, so this kind of fire won't stop me. I would have escaped already if it weren't for you and this group of people." She found Sean rather foolish because he had worried too much.

Sean reluctantly released her hand but took off his coat and handed it to her. "Take this. Wet it and use it to protect yourself. You're wearing a dress today, and you might get burned."

Pearl gladly accepted his offer, draping it over her dress. She thanked him with a smile before running to the fourth floor, heading for the fire extinguisher.

She grabbed a fire extinguisher, but upon shaking it, she discovered that it was empty. This didn't make sense, as fire extinguishers in such large malls should be regularly inspected. Besides, the mall had never experienced a fire before.

Pearl's heart sank as she realized that the fire might have been intentionally set. It was too late to search for firefighting equipment now, and she couldn't carry much on her own. Were they doomed to

be trapped there, waiting for their death?

her fingers. Lowering her gaze, she saw it was her ring.

In her anxious state, she absentmindedly gripped her hands together and felt a hard object that hurt

This ring could help her contact the nearest organization. It was a perfect tool for escaping as it could

reveal her location. At that moment, whether or not she was exposed no longer mattered. She

decisively activated the sensor and tried to reach out to the nearest personnel. Swiftly, the indicator

started flashing, and Pearl hurriedly got in touch with the nearest

person.

"Boss, what can I do for you?"

"Get ten people here with firefighting equipment," Pearl urgently requested.

The person on the other end was stunned. "Firefighting equipment? Are you sure you don't need

weapons?"

Pearl got anxious because of that person's slowness. "I'm inside the mall, and there's a fire. Bring

firefighting equipment immediately. There are around a hundred people trapped here." The person

quickly grasped the situation and promised to comply with her order.

## Chapter 620

As Pearl hurriedly made her way back to Sean, she passed by a fashion store and grabbed a few clothes that could be easily torn. She quickly drenched them in the washroom before returning to Sean's side.

When Sean saw her come back safely, a sigh of relief escaped him.

Pearl explained the situation, her tone serious, "The firefighting equipment is ruined. I suspect someone wants to kill us after they learned about our whereabouts today."

But Sean was suspicious. "Are you sure we're the target?"

Pearl replied matter—of—factly, "I can't be certain, but I have plenty of enemies. There's not much I can do about it."

She spoke casually, as though discussing a mundane matter, but Sean wore a grim expression. He couldn't help but wonder why she seemed almost proud of having so many enemies. Her nonchalant attitude left him uneasy.

Pearl couldn't contain her laughter when she noticed Sean's discomfort. "Alright, I'll stop joking. Cover your mouth with this. Let's see if we can find a way out later." She tossed him one of the drenched

pieces of clothing. Sean instinctively caught it but was taken aback to find it was a female singlet. His face turned bright red in embarrassment. "How could you give me this?" Pearl was busy handing around the drenched clothes. She turned around and told him, "Your life is more important than your dignity right now. Just take it." Sean's question had drawn the attention of those around him. A tall man like him blushing while holding a singlet certainly piqued curiosity under normal circumstances. However, everyone was more concerned about escaping the fire and their uncertain fate, so they didn't pay him much mind. Sean resigned to his fate and put the singlet to his nose. He was grateful for the protection it offered and felt that he didn't have to be embarrassed about it. After all, the singlet was merely a piece of cloth. Once Pearl confirmed that everyone had a cloth to cover their nose and mouth, she led them

downstairs to assess the situation. The fire had grown larger, casting an eerie glow on the entire third floor.

Frowning, Pearl instructed everyone to move back. She anticipated her team would arrive sooner than the firefighters. But three minutes had passed, and her men had yet to reach them. Frustrated, Pearl retreated to a corner and activated her receiver. She heard a voice on the other end, sounding anxious, "Boss, we're downstairs." Only then did Pearl feel calmer. "How long until you reach the third floor?" "The fire is very big. We're still putting the fire out on the first floor." Pearl clenched her fists, realizing the severity of the situation. If the fire continued to spread, they would have to retreat to the fifth floor. The mall was relatively small, with only six floors. If the fire persisted, the entire structure might collapse. Feeling nervous, Pearl quickly devised a plan and instructed her team, "Don't focus on extinguishing the fire for now. Prevent it from spreading and create a safe path through the stairs. Evacuate the people on the fourth floor first."

The person on the other end of the line understood her instructions, quickly hanging up to carry out the rescue operation.

Sean had observed Pearl's covert actions nearby and couldn't resist teasing her, "Boss? I didn't expect there's still something I didn't know about you." She always had the ability to surprise others.

Alarm bells rang in Pearl's head as she realized it could be detrimental if Sean discovered her true identity, despite his feelings for her. She couldn't afford for anyone to find out she was the founder of Evil Spirits.