

YOUR GUISE 761

Chapter 761

Esther forced a smile while responding to Winona's remarks, though she couldn't hide her uneasiness. Winona's unfriendly gaze made Esther apprehensive, but she concealed her true feelings.

When the director yelled "action," they began their scene as scripted, engaging in a heated argument. Winona wore a sinister grin as she warned Esther, "I'm warning you. Stay away from the prince."

Esther, looking frail, retorted, "I am his first wife. Have you forgotten your place?"

Winona, wanting to provoke Esther, mocked her. "You? You're just a country girl who appeared out of nowhere, yet you dare to dream of winning the prince's heart."

Esther's expression suddenly changed, and a glint of determination appeared in her eyes. "Country girl?"

Winona, taken aback by Esther's calm response, decided to teach her a lesson. "Then, allow me to teach you a lesson today and remind you who's in charge here."

While speaking, Winona slapped Esther forcefully, creating a loud "pa!" that echoed in the hall.

Pearl noticed that Winona had gone unnecessarily hard, likely as a way to exact revenge on Pearl since she couldn't target her directly. Unable to bully Pearl, Winona turned to Esther instead.

Esther widened her eyes in shock, unable to comprehend why Winona had slapped her so brutally.

"Director, can we pause for a moment?" Winona smiled and signaled the director to cut the camera. "Este is supposed to give me a cold look here, but she seems too helpless. It doesn't suit her character."

As a result, they decided to reshoot the scene. The director nodded in agreement, "You're right. Let's take it again."

Winona then suggested, "Director, I think my slap wasn't convincing enough. It might look weak. How about I slap her again?" Despite her seemingly gentle face, Winona's tone was harsh.

The director hesitated briefly, glancing at Esther, whose face was now red and swollen. "Este's face has already swollen. If you slap her again, her face might—"

"Director, a true actress must be willing to face challenges," Winona asserted, making her argument difficult to refute.

After a moment of contemplation, the director asked Esther for her opinion. "Este, would you like to do another take?"

Esther shot Winona a cold glare. "Let's do it again."

The second slap was just as brutal as the first one.

Esther's lips were now bleeding, but she persevered through the pain, maintaining her character's expression.

The shoot continued, but Winona requested another pause. "Director, please stop."

Even the director found something wrong here. He asked impatiently, "What is it again?"

"I think the camera angle wasn't ideal in the previous take. Could we try shooting it from a different angle?" Winona requested openly, causing everyone on set to recognize her ill intentions.

"But Este's face is already..."

Winona covered her face and snickered. "Director, I invested 15 million in this film. If you do this, then..."

Chapter 762

A voice from behind interrupted their heated argument, catching both Winona and Esther by surprise.

"Wait, I have something to say."

It was none other than Pearl, who had been observing the situation closely. She had brought some ice cubes with her and gently applied them to Esther's swollen face. "Miss Jesselton has been receiving numerous acting requests lately, but I don't think she's quite skilled. Maybe I should give her a lesson."

Shocked, Winona asked, "How are you going to teach—"

Before Winona could finish her sentence, Pearl slapped her with incredible force, cutting her off mid-sentence. "This is how you should slap someone," Pearl declared, applying full strength.

Winona, who had inflicted pain on Esther earlier, found herself sprawled on the floor with just one slap from Pearl. She felt intense pain coursing through her entire body, and when she tried to speak, she found her mouth filled with bloody foam, making her words unintelligible.

"How... could you do..."

"What? Did you think it wasn't hard enough?" Pearl scoffed. "You appear fragile, but you fell to the ground with such a light slap. People might think you were trying to deceive me."

Everyone around was flabbergasted, especially by Pearl's unexpected strength.

Esther couldn't contain her excitement. She had long found Winona obnoxious but hadn't been able to teach her a lesson until now. Despite the pain in her cheek, Esther felt it was worth it to see Winona in such a miserable state.

Winona had never experienced anything like this. She cried profusely and spotted Richard nearby. Shaking and desperate, she approached him. "Rick, help me..."

Richard's eyes flicked to Pearl.

"Why are you looking at me, Mister Richard? I was just teaching your fiancée how to act," Pearl emphasized, locking eyes with Richard.

Richard kept a cold face and said, "Apologize to her."

Winona managed to spit out the bloody foam into a cup and, encouraged by Richard's support, straightened up to speak more clearly. "Miss Pearl, I can forgive you if you apologize to me."

Despite her desire to retaliate physically, Winona decided to be diplomatic and make a favorable impression on Richard.

"Why should I say sorry?" Pearl questioned stubbornly.

Winona's expression turned ugly. "I asked for an apology because you slapped me so hard. What's wrong with that?"

Pearl faked a smile. "Then, shouldn't you apologize too for slapping my friend?"

"We were shooting, but you took revenge on me. It's not the same thing." Winona looked livid.

"Why is it different? I clearly told you I wanted to teach you acting," Pearl retorted, standing her ground.

Frustrated by her inability to subdue Pearl, Winona turned her tearful eyes to Richard.

Richard's expression remained intimidating and impassive. "I'll say this one more time. Apologize to her."

"Apologize? Why should I?" Pearl exclaimed, her anger flaring. She believed she had done nothing wrong and couldn't fathom why Richard was taking Winona's side.

If he was that kind of person, then she was wrong about him.

Richard's cold and penetrating eyes grew even more ominous. "You must say sorry to her today.

Chapter 763

Pearl raised her head and objected, "Richard, I won't apologize to her today. If you insist on getting involved, don't blame me for forgetting about our past."

Richard snorted, his tone ambiguous. "Do we even have a past to hold onto?"

Pearl couldn't help but chuckle. It was evident that Richard had moved on and no longer cared about their history.

"It's okay, Rick. I'll let it go. My father always taught me to be kind and gentle. Let's forget about this." Winona had enjoyed the heated exchange, but she now played the role of a peacemaker. "My cheek hurts terribly right now. Could you accompany me to the hospital?"

She subtly made it seem like Pearl was being unreasonable, causing the latter to scoff. "Funny coincidence! My dad always taught me to stand up for myself when treated unfairly."

This left Winona in a tricky situation. It seemed she wouldn't back down without getting what she wanted.

After a brief pause, she leaned against Richard's shoulder and spoke softly, "Rick, I'll let it go... But she's quite fierce. I'm scared."

Richard cast an icy, stern glance around before addressing the director in a cold tone. "Waldorf Enterprises will withdraw its investment from this film." With that, he took Winona's hand and left.

Pearl watched them leave in silence for a long moment. If Waldorf Enterprises pulled their funding from the film, it meant Winona would no longer play the second female lead.

The director's expression instantly turned grim. They would lose the 15 million investment and the second female lead.

"What do we do now? This is terrible!" The director was deeply concerned, as he had never anticipated such a turn of events. "Miss Pearl, why did you let this escalate like that?" Finding a new investor midway through production would be a daunting task.

"I'll cover the 15 million," Pearl declared confidently. She stepped forward assertively, garnering the attention of everyone present.

"You're saying you want to invest in the film?" The director found this hard to believe.

Esther tugged at Pearl's clothes, concerned. "Pearl, think this through. Don't make impulsive decisions in the heat of the moment."

Pearl had never done something like this before in Esther's memory. She wondered if Pearl was acting out of anger because of Richard and Winona's provocation.

"It won't be a loss to invest in this film," Pearl assured her. She had reviewed the script earlier and believed that if they executed it well, the film could become a hit.

The director's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yes, but I need a favor from you," Pearl answered.

The director smacked his chest. "Don't worry. I'll help you since you've given us such great help. Anything you want."

Pearl looked around and noticed a few good-looking people among the extras. When they met her gaze timidly, she knew they were interested.

"I want to select a few extras to become streamers for my company."

Pearl was confident that with her resources, she could easily propel someone to fame, even if it meant investing 15 million dollars.

All of the extras looked at Pearl enthusiastically when they heard of this incredible opportunity.

Chapter 764

Even though becoming a streamer might not sound glamorous, the promise of fame piqued the interest of some bold individuals. They eagerly approached Pearl, awaiting her guidance.

Pearl scanned the eager crowd, and her gaze landed on a woman in the distance who seemed slightly familiar but ultimately unknown. While everyone else reveled in the excitement of potentially becoming a streamer, this woman remained aloof and absorbed in her script, seemingly disinterested in the proceedings.

She portrayed a minor character in the film, with only a few lines and a thin script. Despite her limited role, she exuded charm and sophistication, standing out among the other women. Her distinctive birthmark near the corner of her eye added a touch of mystique to her appearance, dispelling any notion of innocence.

Pearl took an immediate liking to this woman and approached her.

"What's your name?" she inquired with a grin.

The woman pulled back slightly, seemingly uncomfortable with interacting with strangers. "I'm Rosalie Sawyer."

Pearl found Rosalie's name quite appealing. "Would you be interested in joining me somewhere?" She raised an intrigued eyebrow as she regarded Rosalie.

Rosalie hesitated for a moment, then rolled up her sleeves. "I don't think so. I'm busy, and I have a film to shoot."

Pearl maintained her smile. "What's your role in this film?"

"Just a nobody. You don't have to ask, Miss Pearl," Rosalie replied flatly.

Pearl's admiration for Rosalie grew, recognizing her as a unique individual. If she could persuade Rosalie to join her company, it could make a great impact.

"Here, you're just an extra, but with me, I can make you a famous streamer," Pearl suggested. She entertained the idea of recruiting Rosalie to work for her company instead.

However, Rosalie shook her head firmly and expressed impatience. "No, I have no interest in becoming a streamer. I want to excel in acting."

It became clear that Rosalie held a low opinion of streamers.

Pearl pondered for a moment. If Rosalie had no desire to become a streamer, convincing her to work for her company would be a challenge.

After a brief pause, she changed her approach. "Do you aspire to be an actress?"

Rosalie became more willing to engage with Pearl when the topic shifted to acting. "Yes, I dream of becoming a good actress, not a streamer."

Pearl leaned in slightly, her smile growing. "Do you know who I am?"

"Pearl Leighton, the president of Cerubleu."

"And do you know that I have an entertainment company?"

Rosalie's eyes lit up momentarily but quickly dimmed. "Yes, I'm aware, but your company doesn't take in amateur actresses like me."

Naturally, Rosalie had heard of the famous Brilliance Entertainment, the company that many yearned to join but few succeeded. Securing a script from there was the surefire path to stardom, but it felt out of reach for her.

Pearl nodded thoughtfully. "Indeed, we don't typically sign amateur actresses. However, we do consider individuals who have achieved fame. In other words, the company will consider taking you in if you're famous enough."

Chapter 766

The woman was left speechless. She knew that Pearl was referring to her but couldn't accept it. "Miss Pearl, I didn't mean that. I was trying to say that I—"

Pearl walked over and pinched the woman's chin, scrutinizing her. "Well, you're a bit devious, and your appearance isn't up to par."

The woman had been praised for her beauty since she was young, so Pearl's words infuriated her. But she couldn't argue with someone of Pearl's stature.

"Miss Pearl, you've misunderstood me," she stammered.

The others were baffled by what had just happened. They witnessed Pearl intimidating the woman, who seemed on the verge of tears. It appeared as though she might break down.

Moreover, they were already disgruntled because Pearl hadn't chosen them. This incident only fueled their criticism.

"This president is quite ruthless."

"I'm glad she didn't pick me. I couldn't bear working for someone like her."

"Stop it. If she hears you, she might punish you. Don't forget, she owns this film now."

"But can she really be this unreasonable?"

"Stop defending me. It's not good if you all get into trouble because of me," the woman pleaded, thinking that the group's collective power would make it hard for Pearl to retaliate. This way, it wouldn't be her fault.

Unfortunately, the result was beyond her expectations.

Pearl turned and glanced around, smiling. "Yeah, she's right. Keep on gossiping if you don't want to remain as extras. I guarantee you'll never find work in the entertainment industry again."

As the president of Cerubleu, she was a prominent figure in the entertainment world. She had no fear of a few extras spreading rumors about her. It would be absurd if such gossip got around.

The people who had initially tried to seek justice for the woman immediately averted their gazes and walked away indifferently.

"You guys!" The woman glanced at them before looking at Pearl. She stomped her feet in shame and ran away.

Pearl then looked at Rosalie. "You should choose your friends wisely from now on."

"Understood, Miss Pearl." That incident had a profound impact on her. Indeed, making friends might not be suitable for her.

"Alright, it's getting late. Come to the company with me. I have something to discuss with you."

Rosalie nodded, and as she thought of something, she asked tentatively, "Miss Pearl, may I ask you something?"

"What is it?" Pearl seemed to have anticipated the question.

"I'm curious why you chose me out of so many people. I'm not the prettiest or the most talented."

"Well, I think you're the prettiest."

Rosalie was stunned. While some people had complimented her over the years, nobody had ever said she was the prettiest. It caught her off guard.

"As for the second question, how can you be certain you're not the most talented if you haven't tried?"

Rosalie was beginning to be persuaded. It seemed that Pearl always presented reasonable arguments. "Then, why did you choose me?"

Pearl smiled calmly and answered honestly, "I chose you because you remind me of someone very much. With a little makeover, you'll become famous easily."

Chapter 767

Rosalie was once again taken aback. Slowly, she began to ponder things she had never seriously considered before.

There had been some discussions on the set about a month ago. She couldn't recall the details, but they mentioned that she bore a resemblance to a popular streamer. That streamer appeared to be Celine Beaumont.

"You're saying that I look like Celine, the streamer?"

Pearl nodded matter-of-factly. "You catch on fast. Do you know which company Celine works for?"

Rosalie ventured a guess. "Is it your company?"

Pearl confirmed, "You got it."

"Wouldn't it create a conflict if I join your company since Celine already works for you?"

Pearl seemed a bit weary from standing for so long. She took a seat and spoke in hushed tones, "I need to share something with you since I want you to work for me."

Rosalie became anxious when Pearl lowered her voice. "What is it? Please tell me. I won't breathe a word to anyone."

"Relax. I want you to know that I'm planning to let go of Celine and make you famous."

Huh? Pearl wanted to let go of Celine?

For a moment, Rosalie couldn't comprehend this startling news. Her mind went blank.

Celine was an extremely famous streamer, but Pearl intended to let her go. What about all the resources invested in her?

"It's because I believe you'll bring me even more profits, greater than what Celine could achieve." Pearl smiled, but the true reason behind her decision remained known only to her.

Celine may appear innocent, but she harbored hidden intentions. Pearl couldn't be certain that Celine would be loyal to her. Therefore, she decided to replace her with someone else.

But this reason was too practical to reveal to Rosalie right away.

"So, are you willing to be that person?"

Rosalie hesitated to seize someone else's opportunities, but Pearl's trust and enthusiasm swayed her decision. Enchanted, she nodded.

"Yes, I am. I'll always follow your lead."

At first, Pearl had chosen Rosalie because of her resemblance to Celine. However, as she got to know Rosalie better, she found herself drawn to her earnestness and determination.

Having someone like Rosalie as a subordinate would undoubtedly be advantageous.

"Alright, let's head back to the company." Pearl smiled, stood up, and prepared to leave with Rosalie.

"Pearl! You're going to ditch me so easily again, aren't you?" Esther's indignant voice rang out from behind. "You promised to have dinner with me just now!"

Naturally, Rosalie heard that too.

Pearl flashed an apologetic smile at Rosalie. "I'm sorry. She's always been this loud. I can't help it."

Though she was chiding Esther, she had great affection for her. Rosalie couldn't help but feel envious of such a relationship. "That's okay. I think Miss Esther is rather cute."

Pleased, Pearl took out her phone and sent Esther a text message: [I just hired a new recruit. I'm taking her back to the company to complete her registration. I'll treat you to a meal next time.]

The wailing and protesting from behind grew even louder.

"Pearl, you liar!"

Chapter 768

Pearl escorted Rosalie back to the company and helped her complete the necessary paperwork for her employment.

After that, Pearl intended to accompany Rosalie to her new workplace, but she received a phone call. She asked Wayne to take Rosalie there instead and hurried back to her office.

When she checked her phone and saw a photo, her eyes narrowed. The black-and-white surveillance camera image featured a familiar figure in a corner.

Pearl recognized the figure instantly after spending considerable time with that person.

It was Beah Jordan!

[Miss Pearl, I screened the places where Madam Beah might have gone and found this photo from the surveillance footage. I believe this person is highly likely to be Madam Beah, based on the photo you provided.]

[Yes, it's her.]

[Alright, I'll continue checking the subsequent surveillance footage to determine where she might have gone. I'll update you on the results.]

[Okay. Thank you, Fifi.]

After the conversation, Pearl stared at the photo in a state of confusion.

Following a brief moment of disappointment, she realized a significant issue. The hospital in the photograph appeared strangely familiar, and it seemed to be the same one where she had sent Estrella.

She meticulously compared the timestamps and found a perfect match. Both she and Beah had been at the hospital simultaneously. They might have even crossed paths.

This revelation perplexed Pearl. She couldn't fathom why Beah had chosen to leave without a farewell and refused any further contact.

Deep in thought, Pearl was interrupted by a call from Wayne.

"Miss Pearl, please come over now." He sounded anxious, as if he didn't know how to handle the situation at hand.

Puzzled but concerned, Pearl agreed, "Okay, I'll be there right away."

Based on Wayne's description, an irresolvable conflict had occurred.

Upon arriving at the scene, she found Rosalie standing quietly in one corner, clenching her fists. On the other hand, Celine appeared furious, her face flushed with anger.

"Miss Pearl, you're finally here. I don't know why they got into a fight, and I don't know how to resolve it." Wayne rubbed the place between his brows in frustration.

Pearl glanced at the chaotic scene and asked in a hushed tone, "What happened? Why are you fighting?"

Celine believed that Pearl would side with her, given her status as the top female star in the company. She spoke confidently, "Miss Pearl, she spoke to me rudely. How could the company hire such a person?"

Unbeknownst to Celine, it was Pearl herself who had hired Rosalie.

Pearl's interest was piqued as she smiled. "You mentioned she was rude. Can you elaborate on what happened?"

"She rolled her eyes at me. When I asked why a newcomer like her would do that, she said she found me an eyesore."

Celine was no fool. She realized the new hire bore a striking resemblance to her and appeared even more charming.

Chapter 769

Celine felt an inexplicable unease. She realized that her livelihood in the entertainment industry could be jeopardized if this newcomer managed to steal her spotlight in the future.

Pearl, seemingly lost in thought, approached Rosalie and placed a hand on her shoulder. She asked coldly, "Is what she's saying true?"

Rosalie shook her head calmly and firmly. "I didn't say that."

Everyone was aware of Celine's status in the company and chose to remain silent during this confrontation.

"You're the experienced one here. You should show patience to newcomers. Why did you argue with her?"

Celine had anticipated that Pearl would pressure the newcomer into backing down, allowing her to escalate the situation and drive the newcomer away. However, Pearl insisted that Celine should not quarrel with a newcomer.

"Miss Pearl!" Celine protested, pouting in dissatisfaction. "But she insulted me. You should punish her."

Rosalie had an urge to retaliate against Celine's overbearing attitude, but she restrained herself after glancing at Pearl. For some inexplicable reason, Rosalie trusted Pearl and believed that she would handle the situation fairly.

"Celine, we need evidence. You made unfounded accusations against her. If you want me to take action, you must provide concrete evidence." Pearl extended her hand, requesting proof.

Of course, Celine had no evidence. She had assumed that she could easily get rid of the newcomer without any issues, but things had taken an unexpected turn.

Realizing this, she attempted to maintain her usual innocent image, biting her lip and offering a helpless smile. "Alright, Miss Pearl. I think you're correct. I shouldn't have argued with a newcomer. It's just that

no one has ever treated me this way. I felt a bit uncomfortable when someone with a short temper suddenly appeared."

She subtly hinted that getting along with Rosalie was hard.

Pearl narrowed her eyes as Celine casually labeled Rosalie unfairly. She warned, "Everyone is different and unique, which is a good thing. But if you can't accept that, it might be better to limit your interactions with her."

Pearl's words enlightened the others, who began to understand the situation. She had openly defended the newcomer.

The staff members started to voice their support. "That's correct. The company encourages individual development, and there's nothing wrong with that."

One person spoke up initially, and others followed suit, echoing the sentiment. Celine would have to reconsider if she wished to antagonize Rosalie.

Her smile twisted, and she struggled to suppress her anger. She lowered her head to regain composure, feigning fragility. "Understood, Miss Pearl. I'll never do this again."

Despite her initial scheme to hinder Rosalie's progress, she now found herself apologizing. Now, she was more determined than ever to drive Rosalie out of the company.

With the issue resolved, Pearl planned to return to her office, but Wayne intercepted her.

"Someone's waiting for you outside."

"It's almost time to clock out. Who could it be at this hour?" Pearl wondered.

Wayne hesitated briefly before responding cautiously, "It's Richard."

Pearl was stunned. She knew that Richard hated her, so why was he waiting for her outside?

Chapter 770

Richard stood outside the company in a sleek black suit, appearing as though he had just come from his own company. His gaze was directed downward, revealing a prominent nose bridge and pale lips. His overall demeanor exuded a sense of gentleness, yet concealed within was a sharp coldness.

Pearl stood from a distance, her emotions complicated.

As Richard scrutinized her with a hint of icy indifference, he finally spoke in frustration, "Why are you keeping your distance? Are you afraid I'll do something to you?"

Strangely, Pearl didn't feel hurt or upset by his tone, even though he sounded as though he hated her. She obediently closed the gap between them and couldn't help but inwardly chastise herself. She questioned whether she was a lovestruck fool for being so compliant.

Richard took a step closer, looming tall before her.

"Why did you come here?" Pearl knew that Richard wouldn't have come just to see her.

He narrowed his sharp gaze. "It's my mom's birthday today. She asked me to invite you."

Pearl pursed her lips. "We're no longer together so why should I go?" Certainly, Susan was aware that they had broken up.

Richard responded coldly, "She just wants to meet you."

Pearl wasn't intentionally refusing; she just felt uncomfortable attending such an event given their changed relationship. Attempting to negotiate, she asked, "Can I say no?"

However, before she could finish, Richard had already gotten back into the car. Pearl thought he was about to leave after her refusal.

But just as she believed he was about to drive away, he lowered the window and spoke in a low voice, "In that case, call her and decline on your own."

Pearl's lips twitched. She couldn't decline a direct request from Susan, who had been kind to her.

After thinking about it, she reluctantly agreed to go. She looked up at Richard with a hint of timidity and said, "Can you drive me there? It's just that there might be traffic during peak hours, and I could be late if I take a taxi. I'm not trying to take advantage or have ulterior motives. It's just for convenience."

Richard fixed his gaze on her and said firmly, "Why do you think I came here?"

Enlightened, Pearl got into the back seat.

Surprisingly, Richard didn't start the car right away, leaving Pearl perplexed. She wondered if there was an issue with the car or if it had run out of gas. "Aren't we going to your house? Why didn't you start the car?"

After a long pause, Richard finally spoke, his voice cold and deliberate, "Why are you sitting at the back?"

"I noticed Miss Jesselton's note on your front passenger seat. It seems to be her designated spot, and I thought it might be impolite to sit there," Pearl explained softly.

As Richard lowered the car window earlier, she caught sight of the note, written with lipstick and elegantly scripted. A bitter feeling welled up within her. That seat used to be exclusively hers.

Richard refrained from commenting on what he had initially intended to say. "Then just sit in the back."

With that, he pressed the accelerator, and the car sped away.