

## **YOUR GUISE 771**

### Chapter 771

Throughout the entire journey, Pearl and Richard remained silent.

When they arrived at Waldorf Residence, Pearl got out of the car first, and Richard followed behind her, maintaining a noticeable distance. They appeared as if they were not well-acquainted with each other.

Upon entering the house, they were greeted by Ramona, who stood at the door and greeted them with a warm smile. "Mister Richard, Miss Pearl, you've come back together."

Hearing this sent an uncomfortable shiver down Pearl's spine, causing her to momentarily freeze. She tried to speak but was seemingly ignored as Ramona continued, holding up a plate of roast pork she was preparing. "I've made roast pork for you and Mister Richard since I know both of you love it."

"Ramona, I..."

Before Pearl could finish, Ramona returned to her cooking, leaving Pearl feeling a bit awkward. After a lengthy pause, she finally managed to ask Richard, "Have you never brought Winona here?"

Richard hadn't considered it, and he responded calmly, "I haven't thought about it yet, but I'll bring her here eventually."

Pearl didn't quite know what she had expected, but a wave of disappointment washed over her. She struggled to find words and simply said, "Okay," before walking further into the house.

The birthday celebration for Susan was an intimate family dinner with only a few invited guests. As Pearl entered, she recognized familiar faces.

"You're here, Pearl," Mobius greeted her warmly, then added, "Please have a seat. Esther will be here shortly."

This surprised Pearl. Mobius noticed her reaction and explained, "She's Mom's future daughter-in-law, so I need to bring her here. I've been quite preoccupied with this and haven't had time for her. I asked her to come over and get something, so don't give anything away. It's her first time here, and I want to give her a big surprise!"

Pearl immediately realized what was going on. Mobius had been planning this surprise, which explained why Esther had been feeling down lately.

After chatting with Mobius for a while, Pearl turned her attention to Sean. She hadn't expected him to attend, as she had heard that the Coopers were grooming him as the heir to their business, keeping him extremely busy.

Sean looked somewhat different, his once bright smile having faded. He appeared more mature now.

"It's been a while, Pearl."

Pearl smiled back at him. Although they had a history of animosity, and Pearl had faked her own death, she felt a bit awkward seeing him again.

"I knew you had some tricks up your sleeve, but I didn't expect you to come back from the dead," Sean teased in a familiar manner, instantly dispelling the awkwardness.

"Alright, I messed up there so I won't argue with you," Pearl replied with a smile.

Mobius quickly said, "No, Pea. You know how sharp his tongue can be. You should show him who's boss!"

Everyone burst out laughing.

"You're all in a good mood. I hope my arrival won't spoil it," a familiar voice chimed in, filled with warmth.

Pearl turned to see Hugo standing not far away, staring at everyone coldly.

Chapter 772

Hugo's unexpected presence surprised everyone.

Mobius, aware of Hugo's character, frowned. "Who invited you?"

"Mom did. Am I not welcome?" Hugo replied with a casual smile, seemingly unfazed by the tension in the room.

Mobius, however, couldn't hide his dissatisfaction. "I don't know what Mom is thinking. Why would she invite you to her birthday after everything you've done?"

Mobius had always been frank, but this still made Hugo frown. "Mom raised me, so what's wrong if she invited me to her birthday party?"

Recognizing the futility of arguing with Hugo, Mobius merely shot him a disapproving glare and took a seat on the couch.

Hugo's attention shifted to Pearl, who was sitting nearby, and he greeted her with a smile. "Long time no see, Pearl."

Pearl forced a smile and replied, "Not at all. We just met two days ago."

Their exchange was filled with tension and awkwardness.

Esther's arrival later disrupted the uncomfortable silence. She was surprised to find everyone sitting around quietly. "Why is everyone here? Am I late?"

Her voice broke the awkward silence, but she immediately sensed that something was amiss. She cast a disgusted glance at Hugo, who stood out conspicuously, and asked, "Why are you here?"

Hugo couldn't tolerate her attitude and rolled his eyes in response.

"Hey, I'm talking to you." Esther rolled up her sleeves and walked over to confront him, but Mobius held her back.

Even Pearl pinched the bridge of her nose. Esther always acted impulsively without considering the consequences.

"What business is it of yours?" Hugo retorted with a cold smile, his words laced with hostility. "You're just an outsider here. Who are you to judge me?"

"Hugo, you better watch your mouth. You tormented Pearl and now you show up here acting like you own the place. Are you trying to provoke a fight?" Esther warned sternly, her anger fueled by sympathy for Pearl.

"I tormented Pearl? Who told you that? Pearl herself? Or someone else?" Hugo's smirk was anything but innocent. "We were close when we were abroad. These are baseless accusations."

The term 'close' left room for speculation about their past relationship, further fueling Esther's annoyance. "I'm warning you, Hugo. Don't ruin Pearl's reputation!"

"Alright, the food is ready. Time to eat!" Susan intervened, putting an end to their argument. She had dressed up for her birthday celebration, creating a sense of anticipation in the air.

Esther walked past Hugo and bumped into him hard. However, she wasn't very strong, so it was nothing to him.

As everyone gathered around the dining table, Esther intentionally picked the seat across from Hugo. Pearl had a bad feeling about it.

Chapter 773

"Aunt Susan, wishing you health and happiness," Esther said as she handed her present to Susan, who was clearly delighted.

Turning her gaze to Hugo, Esther raised an eyebrow challengingly. "What did you get Aunt Susan?"

Hugo took out a beautifully packaged box from his pocket, clearly an expensive gift, and placed it on the table.

Esther grabbed it, saying, "I'm curious to see what's inside."

Esther had a somewhat childlike attitude, often speaking and acting in a cute manner. Everyone indulged her and played along with her antics, including Susan, who seemed to adore her future daughter-in-law.

Opening the box, Esther found an emerald ring inside. She examined it under the light and couldn't help but scoff. "It looks ordinary. How could you give this to Aunt Susan?"

"It's just a gift," Susan chimed in, understanding that Esther had not put much thought into her words. "The price doesn't matter. It's the thought that counts."

Esther playfully remarked, "Aunt Susan, I think you deserve the best things in the world. You're so beautiful that wearing this would lower your status. I'll get you a bigger one when I have the time!"

Her tone was light, and her playfulness was endearing. Susan played along, saying, "Sure, I'm looking forward to a bigger one."

Esther laughed and said, "Aunt Susan, let me get rid of this ring for you," before throwing it into the trash. It was an obvious challenge to Hugo.

She felt proud of her actions, seeing them as a way to insult Hugo. However, when she looked at him, she noticed that he remained expressionless. His patience seemed endless.

Esther decided to sit back down, as the situation was no longer fun to her.

Pearl was worried about Esther's actions. She knew that Susan had a mild temper and loved Esther. If anyone else had thrown their gift into the trash, it might have caused a scene.

Pearl tugged at Esther's shirt and whispered, "Don't go overboard."

Esther responded, "I'm doing this for you. Look at how arrogant he is. I'm just trying to teach him a lesson." She then turned her attention to the leather shoes at Hugo's feet, thinking of a plan.

Pretending to take a sip of water, she raised the glass and deliberately spilled it on the floor. Naturally, the liquid also splashed onto Hugo's shoes. She didn't stop at just a few drops; she drenched the shoes thoroughly. As if that weren't enough, Esther extended her leg and deliberately stomped on his shoes.

Suddenly, a man's voice rang out, exclaiming, "Who made my shoes wet and stomped on my feet?"

Esther's smile vanished when she heard the voice. It was Mobius?

Chapter 774

Esther had initially tried to target Hugo with her prank but ended up unintentionally affecting Mobius instead. Guilt weighed on her as she explained, "I'm sorry. I was drinking and accidentally spilled the drink on your shoe and stepped on your feet." She then shot a disapproving look at Hugo, cursing at him inwardly.

Seeing that it was Esther, Mobius calmed down. "Oh, it's fine. Just be more careful next time."

Sean questioned him, "What do you mean it's fine if it's her? Are you saying you'd fight with someone else?"

"Sean!" Mobius chastised him with an irritated click of his tongue. He then decided to head upstairs and change into a different pair of shoes.

Surprisingly, after the brief bickering, the mood seemed to lighten.

Pearl, biting her fork in embarrassment, sighed and told Esther, "See? I told you not to go overboard. Look at what happened."

Esther, looking remorseful like a child who had made a mistake, lowered her head. "It wasn't intentional. I was just trying to help you get some justice, but I ended up with the wrong pair of shoes."

Feeling sorry for Esther, Pearl didn't have the heart to blame her any further. She sighed and advised, "Be more careful next time. Don't act impulsively."

Esther nodded earnestly. "Alright, I'll do whatever you say."

Mobius returned with dry shoes and a fresh set of clothes, but he didn't look particularly happy.

Esther, wanting to ease the atmosphere, asked, "You asked me here to get something. What is it?"

Mobius shook his head without much enthusiasm. "Not today. Maybe next time."

Esther felt guilty, realizing her actions might have affected his mood. She decided not to press further.

Pearl sensed that something was amiss. When Mobius had been chatting happily with her earlier, it seemed like he had something important to say. Now, it seemed like he had suddenly changed his mind.

There was a high chance he was going to propose, but why would he suddenly cancel it?

Pearl didn't want them to miss the chance, so she spoke up. "Why not? What's the delay?"

Before Mobius could respond, Richard, who had been silent throughout, abruptly interjected, "I don't think this concerns you. Stay out of it."

Everyone seemed uncomfortable after hearing that.

His words stung, and it hit home for Pearl, effectively silencing her immediately. Feeling hurt and reminded of her outsider status, she decided not to push the matter further. She wasn't a Waldorf, so she didn't have the right to voice her opinion.

Even Mobius found Richard's comment too harsh but could only glance helplessly at Pearl and say, "I hope you don't mind what he said, but today is just not the best time."

Chapter 775

Pearl managed to maintain her composure and offered a smile. "It's alright, it doesn't bother me."

While Pearl remained calm, Esther was clearly agitated. She stood up and shouted angrily, "Hey, what's that supposed to mean? She can't speak? Just eat your dinner. Why do you care?"

It was a declaration of war.

Richard coolly responded, "People should respect the owners of the house and stay in their lane. That should be something everyone understands." His words were an obvious condemnation of Esther's actions.

In the past, when Richard and Pearl were still a couple, Esther might have accepted his reprimand, but now that they were separated, his comment came across as rude. "Sure, this is your home, and you have your rules here. I don't think someone lowly like me should stay here. Pearl, let's go."

She grabbed Pearl's wrist and prepared to leave, but Pearl didn't budge. "Why aren't you moving? He was attacking you. Are you going to keep quiet and stay here?"

Pearl forced a smile. "It's fine, let's leave after the party."

Pearl had her reasons for not wanting to leave. First, she didn't want to strain Esther and Mobius's relationship further. Second, it was Susan's birthday, and she didn't want to spoil the celebration.

Esther's anger flared as she said, "They're bullying you, and you're still trying to be nice. I know what you're worried about. You're worried about Mobius and me."

Pearl had a sinking feeling.

Esther continued, "I'm just someone who didn't understand the rules. If the Waldorfs have strict rules, I don't think I'm good enough to be a part of it."

Mobius, typically cheerful, suddenly turned cold like Richard. "What are you saying, Esther?"

Esther locked eyes with Mobius and stated, "I want to break up with you."

The word "break up" shocked everyone, including Mobius. Even Hugo, who had been uninterested in the situation, turned his attention to them.

Pearl put aside her emotions and said in a serious tone, "You shouldn't make such a decision so lightly."

Esther's emotions welled up, and the sadness she had been feeling over the past few days reached its peak. "I've been thinking about it for a while now. He has been distant toward me for the past few days, and I've been contemplating a breakup."

Nobody could easily endure days of neglect, especially someone as sensitive as Esther. She continued, "I'm busy with work and don't have time to worry about anything else, but that doesn't mean I don't have feelings. My work performance has suffered because of this, and after careful consideration, I've made up my mind. Don't try to convince me otherwise."

Pearl felt anxious and wanted to explain, but she hesitated because Mobius had prepared a surprise proposal. She didn't want to ruin his efforts.

Esther wiped her tears away and declared, "I can't stand seeing you being treated like this... I'll love the person the Waldorfs couldn't. You're my best friend. I won't let anyone bully you!"

Chapter 777

"Aunt Susan, this is affecting me badly. I can't talk to him right now. Let me think about it for a few days."

That was a huge compromise. Esther didn't throw a fit or scream. The way she handled it was quite unlike her usual self.

"Uncle Dustan, Aunt Susan, we're leaving now." Pearl then headed toward the door with Esther.

Suddenly, a hoarse voice spoke. "Este, I... wanted to propose to you today."

The word 'propose' froze Esther in her tracks.

Mobius's heart was trembling as he watched her walk away, feeling an ache in his chest. "Este, would you still marry me?"

Esther's eyes appeared distant. She turned around and glanced at the ring box in his hand, but ultimately, she declined him. "Forget about it." With that, she left with Pearl.

Once they were outside, Pearl called for a ride. As they waited, she observed Esther looking dejected and couldn't resist pulling her close, gently rubbing her back. "If you feel like crying, go ahead. I know you must be feeling awful because you've been together for so long. Nobody would blame you for feeling this way."

Esther looked up, her eyes red from holding back tears. "I should have argued and yelled at him, but I saw the ring he bought me, and I know he loves me and wants to marry me. So, I couldn't make up my mind if I should have made this public."

She knew that if she had done that, there would be no turning back.

Pearl noticed something and tested her. "You're prepared to forgive him, whether it's true or not, right?"

Esther didn't say anything, but her reaction said it all.

Pearl playfully smacked her head. "What are you even thinking? He cheated on you, and you're just going to take him back? Twenty years from now, the illegitimate child might show up and demand a share of his inheritance..."

Esther frowned and shook her head. "No, this isn't some cheesy soap opera!"

"I'm just joking!" Pearl laughed.

Esther wiped her tears away sadly. "Why are you making jokes when I'm so upset?"

Pearl sighed. "So, what's your plan now?"

"Find someone new. If he can sleep with a friend, why can't I find a new man and have some fun?"

Pearl's eyes went wide. "Are you sure?"

Esther scrunched up her face because she couldn't release the emotions bottled up inside her.

Suddenly, a driver pulled up and waved to them. "Did you call for a ride?"

Pearl didn't respond, but Esther hurried over. "Sir, do you have a son around my age? Can you introduce him to me?"

Pearl couldn't help but chuckle softly at how quickly Esther was moving on.

Chapter 779

Was this the person in the picture?

The man noticed Esther standing there and approached her.

Esther finally regained her composure when he stood in front of her. "You're not an incel catfish."

"Incel catfish?" James Crawford looked puzzled and asked, "What do you mean I'm not a catfish?"

Esther realized she had blurted something out and quickly explained, "Oh, it's nothing. It was just a slip of the tongue."

"Well, this slip can lead to misunderstandings," James replied.

Esther chuckled awkwardly.

Seeing Esther's difficulty in conversation, Pearl decided to step in. "What's your name?"

James smiled and introduced himself, "I'm James Crawford."

The name sounded familiar to Pearl, and after a moment of thought, she realized that this was the well-known lawyer, James Crawford. Rumors had it that none of the cases he handled faced any issues, and none of his clients had ever lost a case in court.

"Mister Crawford, I've heard about you," she said.

Both of them were intelligent people, and they could understand each other's thoughts with just a glance.

James could sense Pearl's disdain, but he didn't seem bothered by it and continued to smile. He had a way with words and could easily charm his way into anyone's heart.

Esther, who had been busy with her acting career, wasn't familiar with him. "What are you talking about?"

Pearl didn't elaborate further. "Never mind. The Crawford name is quite well-known. You'll find out more if you have the time."

The Crawfords were all outstanding individuals, and they were a family of lawyers.

Esther nodded as if she understood. "Then why is your dad an e-hailing driver?"

James's smile froze. "That's his hobby. I don't know why either..."

Esther smiled. "That's okay. Well, now that we know each other, let's just be friends. Want to grab a drink? I just broke up with my boyfriend so I want to celebrate."

James blinked in surprise. "Really? You broke up with Mobius Waldorf?"

Esther remembered their engagement caused a stir and everyone knew about it, so she blushed. "Yes, I did."

"That's fine. You deserve better." James was tall, and he casually reached out to mess up her hair, which caught Esther off guard.

She took a few steps back. "Okay, enough talking. Let's get a drink."

Esther then pulled Pearl, who was looking alert, into the bar.

James followed them, wearing a wide smile and watching Esther's petite figure as she hurried ahead.

He had received a message from his dad about a girl who resembled the famous celebrity Esther asking about his son. Initially, he had asked his dad to reject the idea, but he later managed to

obtain a photo from her. Although it was taken from an odd angle, he could immediately recognize the girl he had admired for years.

The girl he had been secretly admiring was now single, and he wasn't going to let this opportunity slip away!

Chapter 780

After Esther entered the bar, she wasted no time and started downing drinks.

After a few glasses, her face turned red, and her words began to slur. She clung to a bottle, her eyes unfocused. "Listen, Mobius is a horrible person. I must have been blind to fall for him."

Pearl could only look at James and frown when she noticed his apparent interest.

"So, I'll never forgive him. He didn't even come looking for me. I'm sure he stopped loving me a long time ago... I hate him. I hate his guts!" Esther was so intoxicated that she kept smiling at everyone around her.

A fat man saw how silly she looked and walked over with a smile. "Are you single? Would you like to have a drink with me?"

Esther began shouting when he placed his hands on her. "Don't touch me. You're disgusting. Go away."

The man initially had a smile on his face, but after hearing her words, his eyes widened. "Listen, don't pretend to be a prude, or I'll teach you a lesson!" He raised his hand as if to slap her.

Esther looked up at his hand with twinkling eyes.

Suddenly, the man felt a sharp pain in his wrist, and when he turned to look, the slender man beside Esther had grabbed his wrist, his eyes emanating a terrifying aura.

"Who were you planning to teach a lesson?" The man sounded gentle and nonchalant, but there was a clear hostility in his tone.

"I don't think I've done anything to you. Why are you doing this?" The man's wrist was throbbing with pain, but he was at a loss for words.

"I asked you a question. Who were you planning to teach a lesson?" James glared at him with a cold expression, the hostility in his eyes getting stronger.

James might have appeared frail, but he had a fearsome side to him.

The man was now trembling with fear and began to plead. "I didn't mean anything by it. I just wanted to have a drink with this beautiful lady. If she's not interested, that's perfectly fine. I'm not forcing her."

James didn't seem inclined to let him off the hook so easily. He released the man's wrist but suddenly delivered a swift kick that sent him sprawling onto the floor.

The man started howling in pain upon hitting the floor, and everyone in the bar watched him as if he were a clown. Humiliated, he yelled, "Do you know who I am?"

"I don't need to know, but I know who you touched," James replied calmly.

Esther, too drunk to fully comprehend the situation, had a hunch that this was about her. She asked, "Me?"

James smiled at her. "Yes, you." He switched from fierce to gentle in a blink.

Pearl stood by, watching the events unfold, and decided it was best not to get involved. Besides, it seemed James was quite taken with Esther.

"I'm the boss of Enswood. My men won't let you get away with this if you've offended me," the man threatened, rolling over, standing up, and pointing his finger at James.

"Who are you pointing at?" James reacted quickly, grabbing the man's finger and bending it with lightning-fast reflexes. A loud crack echoed through the bar as the man's finger broke.

"Argh!!!" The man screamed in agony.

