## **YOUR GUISE 81**



Pearl's question caught Hugo by surprise, but he asked patiently, "What's wrong? How did you know?" After a brief contemplation, Pearl decided to be honest with him because she felt that it was okay. "In to day's interview, a woman named Katie Sullivan addressed Richard as her brother-inlaw, and his reaction was quite dramatic." Katie Sullivan.... Hugo raised an eyebrow and smiled as he confirmed, "Yes, Richard did have a girlfriend named Jenny Sullivan. Katie is her younger sister." Biting her I\*p, Pearl pressed on, "Why did they break up?"

After looking around, Hugo whispered, "It was because Jenny wanted to pursue her dream abroad and didn't want to be limited to our country. Richard, on the other

hand, didn't want her to be so far away from him. Jenny ended the relationship. but he hasn't dated an yone else since."

Pearl felt a sudden emptiness inside her upon hearing the whole story

"So, you're saying that Richard liked that woman very much?"

Hugo smiled in approval. "Absolutely. He wouldn't have remained single for so long if he didn't. Besides

, he used to smile more often, even though he wasn't as gentle back then."

He paused and offered a comforting smile as he observed Pearl's distracted expression.

"Maybe you have feelings for Richard, but no one can predict the emotions of one's past. However, don

't take it too seriously. Richard treats you in a special way too. Perhaps you're the "

Pearl cut him off. "Okay, stop."

She felt that Richard would never fall for another woman because he liked his ex-girlfriend so much.

After that, Pearl went upstairs and returned to her room.

Feeling upset, she sat in her room and turned on her laptop to investigate Richard's past.

As a top hacker, finding information was a breeze, and she swiftly found everything between Richard a

nd Jenny.

They had met in college and were each other's first love, sharing four happy years at the university. But

after graduating, Jenny broke up with Richard as she aspired to pursue her career abroad.

Pearl also saw Jenny's photos. Jenny appeared gentle and adorable, no less appealing than Katie.

The various snapshots of Richard and Jenny's college life depicted a complete first love story, featuring images of them holding hands, dining together, and cycling side by side. Pearl sighed deeply as she looked up from her laptop. Suddenly, a text notification on the laptop snapped her back to reality. It was a message from Wayne. [Miss Pearl, I've done handling Cuza Root for you. You can come and take it whenever you're free.] Wayne's text reminded Pearl that she had to make medicine for Simon, and she had left the Cuza Root [I'll come by later. Let's meet at the bar.] [Okay.] After receiving Wayne's reply, Pearl turned off her laptop and headed out. However, she unexpectedly b "Where are you going?" Pearl snorted. "I don't think it's any of your business."

Pearl's sudden fierceness puzzled Richard and made the latter frown. "It's already seven o'clock. You're

However, Pearl shot him a frosty glare. "I'll say it again. It has nothing to do with you. Focus on your ow

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Consequently, Richard was enlightened. "Are you talking about this afternoon's incident?"
However, his question earned him a sneer from Pearl. "You're so busy every day, Mister Richard. I ha
ve no right to ask about your affairs. You'd better care about your ex–girlfriend, Jenny Sullivan."
At the mention of Jenny's name, Richard emitted a cold aura. "Who told you about her?"
Pearl kept her sneer because of his impatience. "There's nothing I can't find, Richard."
Richard took a deep breath to calm down. "I don't care if someone else told you or you found it on your
own. Don't bring her up in front of me again."
However, Pearl looked at him distantly. "I'm not interested in your ex–girlfriend, Richard."
After that, she brushed past him and left the house to hail a cab to Dark Bar. On her way there, she gra
ppled with indescribable
emotions.
She could understand Richard's former aloofness, but she was infuriated by his anger directed at her to
day because of his ex- girlfriend.
Upon arriving at the bar, Wayne got a bottle of wine for Pearl because of the latter's foul mood. "What's

bothering you, Miss Pearl? Did some Waldorf drive you mad?"

Pearl raised her glass and gulped the wine down. "I'm fine. Just drink with me tonight because I'm not g oing home." "But we've got an important issue now. Cerubleu's local development has surpassed its foreign one due to its collaboration with Waldorf Enterprises. Maybe yo u should consider relocating the headquarters here and focus on local growth." However, Pearl's mind was elsewhere. "Sure, do what you think is best." She was still sober even after a few glasses of wine. Suddenly, she smelled someone's fragrance, and she looked up and saw a figure clad in white standin g in front of her. The figure's slightly familiar face wore a friendly smile. "You're Pearl Leighton, aren't you?" Unmoved, Pearl said, "Miss Katie, what can I do for you?" "I'd like to have a chat with you." Katie sat down and looked at Wayne with mixed emotions. Pearl whispered, "Wayne, please give us some privacy."

After Wayne left, Katie disclosed her reason for being there. "I'm aware that you're quite popular now,

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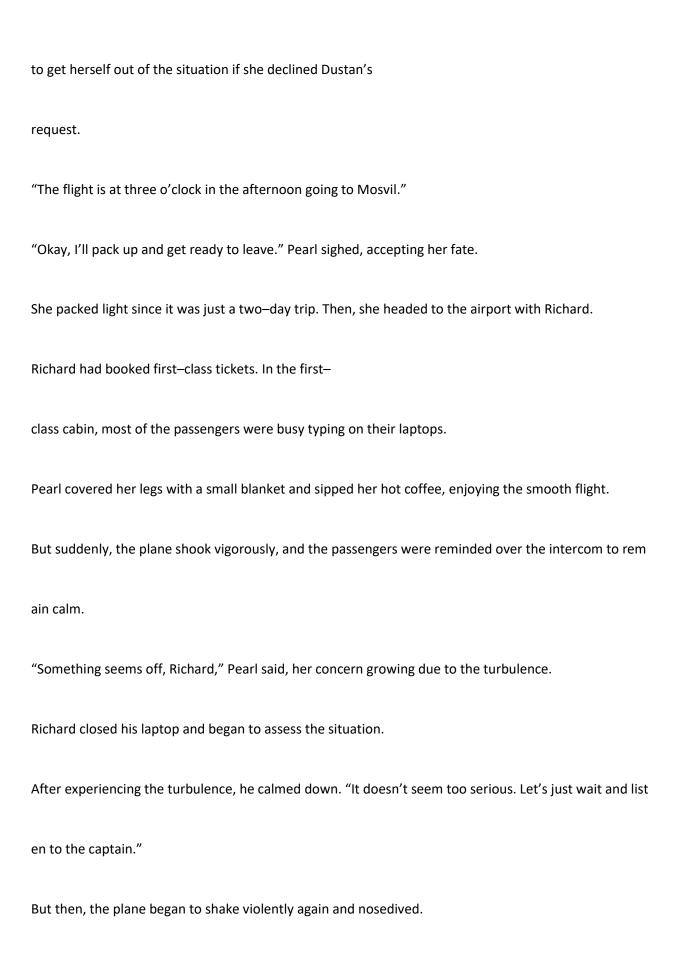


When she came home, she saw Richard reading a book on the sofa Since it was the weekend, he hadn't gone to work. His dark blue casual clothes made him look neat and approachable, quite unlike his usual distant demeanor. "You're back?" Richard, as though he had forgotten their earlier quarrel, greeted her. Pearl, however, responded with a grumpy snort. "Don't go drinking late at night again. You reek of wine." Pearl sniffed the light jasmine scent of her b\*dy and frowned. "I don't smell of wine." Quietly, Richard closed his book. "Did you get someone to stalk me, Richard?" An idea suddenly dawned on Pearl. Calmly, Richard explained, "It was Dad's idea. He's afraid something might happen to you." Pearl was inexplicably uneasy after hearing his explanation. "Don't worry about me. I'm going to bed. Bye."

Pearl was about to go upstairs when Richard grabbed her wrist.

"Don't be mad." It was the first time Richard softened his tone and spoke nicely to her.

Pearl attempted to pull away but couldn't break free. She shot him a defiant glare. "Whether I'm angry or n
"I'm going on a business trip this afternoon for two days. Dad asked you to go with me." Richard's intense
Pearl considered refusing but hesitated because it was Dustan's request
"Why does Mister Dustan want me to go with you?" Chapter 84
1/1
Pearl couldn't figure out why Dustan knew about Richard's business trip and even asked her to acco
mpany him.
Richard released her wrist when he sensed she wasn't upset. "Maybe he wants us to bond by spending
some time together."
Dustan might wish for Richard to marry her instead of Abby, so he might have wanted to provide them
with some alone time.
"What time in the afternoon?" Although Pearl resisted the idea of being alone with Richard because of
what had happened over the past two days, she anticipated that it would be difficult



"Ladies and gentlemen, please remain calm. The captain is trying to control the plane..." The frequent announcements made Pearl realize the severity of the issue. After around a minute, the plane's speed decreased, but it was still descending rapidly. "I want to go to the cockpit, Richard." Frowning, Richard rebuked, "Don't mess around at a time like this." The critical situation made Pearl unbuckle her seatbelt and get to her feet. "I'm not messing around. I want to see if there's anything I can do to help land the plane safely." Richard abruptly grabbed her wrist to stop her. "Don't make light of people's lives, Pearl. Besides, the co "Yeah, I know. Trust me, Richard." Pearl pushed his hand away. "I have a flying license, and although I Richard still refused to budge. "No, it's not safe." Suddenly, the announcement over the intercom changed. "Attention, passengers on flight G12548. Is th "Listen, Richard. The captain might not be able to handle this emergency. Every passenger will die if I

Richard's heart skipped a beat, but he eventually let her go. "I'm going with you."



g to find a solution.
When Pearl and Raymond rushed there, the anxious captain frowned upon seeing them.
"Why are you here?" The captain scolded them, worried because of their young age. "This isn't a playgr
ound. Go back to your
seats!"
Pearl took a step forward and asked patiently, "Hello, Captain. I have flying experience. Can I give it a t
ry?"
"You? You're in your early twenties, aren't you? This is a commercial flight, not your family's private jet.
You better go back to your seat!" Naturally, the captain didn't trust her and impatiently drove her out.
"You won't know if you don't let me try. Also, something is clearly wrong with the flight, and the plane is
on the verge of crashing. Do you want to see every passenger die with you because of your subjective j
udgment?"
Raymond also chimed in, "Let her try. You've failed to resolve the crisis
in two minutes, and the plane is descending rapidly. It's clear that your capabilities are insufficient."
His harsh words struck the captain and his assistant with a heavy sense of guilt. They had called the fli

ght attendant for help because they couldn't handle the crisis themselves. Recalling this, they stood up and gave up their spots to Pearl and Raymond. "It's all in your hands now, but it's fine if you don't succeed. After all, you're giving it your best shot," the captain said as he patted their sh oulders and sighed. Pearl abandoned her politeness and promptly took her seat to start managing the plane, while Raymond assisted by monitoring the aircraft's condition and flight route. "The fuel is sufficient, and the pressure is stable, but why is there an issue with the plane and its trajecto After observing the indicators carefully for a long while, Raymond said slowly, "Could it be that someone has tampered Shocked, Pearl asked, "Are you saying this was deliberate?" Raymond pointed at the dashboard in front of him. "Look at the current flight path. We should be headin However, Pearl doubted him. "But this is a commercial flight."

"So what? Any top hacker could alter a plane's flight path settings." Raising his brows, he added, "Don't

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"No, hackers wouldn't do something like this, especially those with a conscience. They wouldn't harm p
eople," Pearl firmly asserted. Despite being a top hacker, she had never engaged in immoral
or malicious activities.
While staring at the numbers before him, Raymond muttered, "Maybe we can revert the flight path if ther
e's a hacker to help us change the data. It'll be easier for us to handle it by then."
Pearl's eyes lit up at his suggestion. She promptly rose from her seat and rushed back to retrieve her la
ptop.
With her
hacking skills, she attempted to breach the civil aviation website. Although it was more difficult than her p
revious challenge, she successfully hacked into it.
Upon gaining access, she located the information pertaining to their flight and modified the flight route, e

nhancing it based on the original data. With intermittent guidance from Raymond, she assumed control

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f the plane, and they managed to steady the plane. "We did it!" Pearl exclaimed in joy as the plane's condition steadily improved. Raymond relaxed too. "Yeah, it's all because of you.! Pearl smiled faintly. "I couldn't do this if it weren't for your suggestion and advice." "All right, enough with the modesty. Since the plane can now fly automatically, let's go back to our seats," Raymond proposed. Pearl nodded, and they made their way back to the first-class cabin. Though they had only been gone a short while, it felt like an eternity to Richard. Overwhelmed with indes cribable emotions upon seeing Pearl return, he anxiously asked, "You're not hurt, are you?" His question made Pearl burst into laughter. "Of course! I'm Pearl, and there's nothing I can't handle." "I didn't expect you to be so talented and brave given your young age, Miss Pearl." While Raymond was alking, his eyes were full of amazement and admiration for Pearl, which did not go unnoticed by Richard. As a man, Richard naturally knew what Raymond's gaze meant. "You're not so bad yourself. Without your insights, I wouldn't have been able to think of

a solution and save the plane," Pearl complimented Raymond politely. Richard interjected coldly, "You could have done it even without him." His abrupt remark caused Pearl to realize belatedly that he was taking a stance against Raymond. Was h Snickering inwardly, Pearl explained to Raymond, "My friend can be a bit competitive. Please don't take Raymond kept his smile, now having a clearer understanding of Pearl's relationship with Richard. "I understand. Maybe he's just... trying to protect his girlfriend, so he's a little hostile." He couldn't help but "No, you've got the wrong idea. We're not in a relationship." Shocked, Pearl spoke up to deny it. However, Richard was not eager to refute Raymond but pulled Pearl into his arms. "Okay, it's over. You can go back to your seat now. We'll arrive at Mosvil in a while." Chapter 87 1/1 "Don't be so nosy..." Helplessly, Pearl rolled her eyes, but she could only sit down because she was no

t as strong as Richard

Seeing that, Raymond returned to his own seat as well.



Pearl had heard of him. He was the president of NK Group, a company that had become famous overnight and had since established a significant presence across various industries. Despite his company's success, Raymond maintained a low profile and rarely appeared in public. Although Pearl was surprised by his identity, she introduced herself, "I'm Pearl Leighton, and this is Ric hard Waldorf-" "Yeah, I know. You're quite famous, Miss Pearl I've seen you on the news." Raymond turned and flashe d Richard a smile. I've heard so much about you, Mister Richard." He extended his hand to shake hand s with Richard. However, Richard fixed his gaze on Raymond for a long while before he gave the latter a firm handshake. "I'm heading to my room now." Raymond faced Richard's hostility with boldness and amusement. After he left, Pearl asked, "Do you have a problem with him, Richard?" Richard answered coldly, "No, I don't."

"But why do you look like you hate him?"

Richard stared at her with a gloomy expression but offered no explanation. Instead,

he simply said, "Let's go to our rooms and rest. We need to negotiate a deal at eight o'clock tonight."

"Okay," Pearl agreed half—heartedly. Suddenly, she recalled something and asked, "Do you know why our flight experienced prob

"Was it due to foul play?"

Shocked, Pearl exclaimed, "How did you know?"

Richard sounded composed. "I know a bit of flight principles, and it didn't look like a typical accident."

"Do you think it was Brandon or Lawson Enterprises' doing?" After thinking for a moment, Pearl couldn'

After a pause, Richard said slowly, "It wasn't them "

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Puzzled, Pearl sought clarification. "Why?"

"I've arranged for someone to deal with Brandon because he recently targeted Waldorf Enterprises. He

won't dare to make a move for a while. As for Lawson Enterprises... I don't think they'd take such a ris

k. The entire company consists of just a few hundred people, and this issue could land them in prison f

or several decades if they were caught."

His meticulousness earned him her admiration, but she needed to know the truth. "Then do you know



"Stop struggling, babe. You're mine tonight." His action of enjoying her scent disgusted her. Calming herself down, Pearl began devising a plan while surveying her surroundings. She knew that trying to attract attention by causing a commotion in the room wouldn't work due to the xcellent sound. insulation. Moreover, she couldn't contact Wayne as she had just taken off her ring to ta ke a bath Anxious, she had made up her mind to fight him. As he leaned in with his foul breath, Pearl leaned back in disgust. Just as she prepared to defend herse If, the door suddenly burst open. The sight that met Richard's eyes filled him with rage. He grabbed the burly man by his collar and pulled him up. After that, he kicked the man. "Who sent you here?" Richard sounded very dangerous.. The burly man had initially been confident about handling Pearl alone, but facing both Pearl and Richar d, he refused to say anything, fearing for his safety. Richard squatted down, his tone icy. "You're not telling us, are you?"

Fear began to creep into the burly man, fueled by Richard's menacing glare, but he remained resolute. "
What can you do to me?"
He did not know Richard. He was only here because someone paid him to harass a woman, and the sig
"I'll make you disappear from this world quietly."
The man was terrified by Richard's ominous words. "Don't kill me. I didn't do it on purpose. Someone
Richard
knew that a stranger wouldn't have been able to accurately locate Pearl's room. Someone else must hav
this.
"Who is it?"
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Brandon?
Both Richard and Pearl exchanged knowing glances, instantly recognizing the mastermind behind this i
ncident.
"I didn't expect Brandon to be so persistent and keep testing my patience. Does he really think I wouldn
't retaliate?" She gnashed her teeth. If it weren't for Richard, she would likely have taken this burly man

down with her today.
"Can I go now?" slowly, the burly man got to his feet, but as he attempted to run away, Richard's kick
to his knee sent him tumbling to the floor once more.
Coldly, Richard rebuked, "You must be punished by law given your failed attempt at assault."
"Oh no!" The burly man ignored everything else and wailed, "I've told you the man behind it. Why won't
you let me go?"
up if you say more."
His outburst earned him a stem glare from Pearl. "It won't be as simple as being locked up if you say
Threatened, the burly man fell into despair and remained silent.
After that, Pearl called the police, leading to the man's arrest. She decided to deal with Brandon after n
egotiating with Richard.
Richard and Pearl made an appointment with their partner in a private room on the first floor. When Pe
arl entered the room, she saw a familiar man standing across from her.
"What a coincidence! We meet again." Raymond greeted Pearl with a smile.

Incredulous, Pearl turned to look at Richard as if wondering if their partner was Raymond or not. Richard explained slowly, "Our partner is NK Group, and I only found out an hour ago that he's the pres ident." Chuckling, Raymond added, "It seems fate has brought us together." After the three of them took their seats, Richard started discussing the deal with Raymond. "I can give up this piece of land to you, but NK Group has to promise Waldorf Enterprises ten percent o f profits." Surprised, Raymond said, "Well, you're asking an exorbitant price, Mister Richard. Ten percent is too hi gh. How about five percent?" However, Richard refused to give in. "Ten percent is already the lowest. If you refuse, I can only collaborate with another company." "Are you threatening me, Mister Richard?" Though both Richard and Raymond were smiling, Pearl could detect a sense of tension in their words. Chuckling, Richard denied, "I would never dare to threaten you, Mister Raymond. We are all businessm en seeking our own interests, aren't we?" Suddenly, Raymond ignored Richard and grinned at Pearl. "But ten percent isn't much if I'm doing Miss Pearl a favor." His words made Richard knit his brows. "You don't have to do me a favor, Mister Raymond. Just discuss it among yourselves." Pearl sensed the decided to stay out of it. "I admire you very much, Miss Pearl. We, at NK, are not quick to give up our advantages. This is my first." Raymond's words only seemed to make Richard's tone even colder. "Mister Raymond, you're quite goo With a laugh, Raymond remarked, "Every man would be captivated by an exceptional woman like Miss ordinary guy. If I've offended you, just tell me. You don't have to be so alarmed. Richard raised his brows and added sarcastically, "No, you got me wrong. It's not like Pearl will fall for ju Helplessly, Pearl wondered why Richard wanted to implicate her while bragging Raymond's smile faded, and his tone shifted. "You don't need to press me like this. I'll give in to your un

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"She doesn't need your favor"
After that, Raymond stood up. "If you're unwilling to cooperate with NK, we'll postpone this for now. Let's
revisit the discussion when you're prepared to negotiate another day "With that, he left the private room.
Sensing Raymond's annoyance, Pearl nudged Richard's arm. "Richard, what's gotten into you? Why did
you speak so rudely? We're here for negotiations, not to argue with him!"
However, Richard stared at her intensely and only managed to speak after a long while. "Are you dumb?"
Stunned, Pearl asked, "Why are you scolding me?"
But Richard got up and left, refusing to clarify his statement to her.
After B
Richard returned to his room, Pearl decided to
take a stroll in the garden, preferring not to return to her room.
As she wandered to a quiet corner, she dialed Brandon's number.
"Who's this?" Brandon's voice sounded weak. At that moment, he felt incredibly unlucky. He had merely s

et fire to Waldorf Enterprises, but someone had set fire to his own home while he was asleep in his
room that night. Miraculously, his family of five narrowly escaped death in the blaze.
Unfortunately, his assets had been frozen the following day due to irregularities discovered while he was
still associated with Waldorf Enterprises. Following an investigation, all his assets had been confiscated.
What infuriated him more was that Lawson Enterprises abandoned him that day too. As a result, his famil
y was now cramped in a tiny rental apartment. The endless bickering and complaints had left him emotio
nally drained.
"Brandon, do you know who I am?" Pearl's pleasant voice made Brandon realize who she was.
"So even you want to revel in my suffering, Pearl?" Brandon sneered as he took a long drag on his cigar
ette.
"You hired someone to violate my dignity. Do you think I'll let you off the hook?"
Confused, Brandon repeated her words. "Violate? Who hired someone to
do that to you? Don't make baseless accusations!" Pearl laughed coldly. "You know very well what you'v

e done."
However, her accusation sent him laughing hysterically.
"Don't tell me you're accusing me simply because you can't find anyone else. Oh, Pearl. Why do you have
His words made Pearl realize something was amiss, "You really didn't do it?"
"Of course not. You've ruined my entire family. I've lost my home and my job. I can barely afford meals no
"Understood."
After ending the call, Pearl felt perplexed. Brandon
seemed to be telling the truth, so it was highly likely he wasn't behind the incident.
Then who made Brandon the scapegoat? That person had used Brandon's nama to commli