

YOUR GUISE 811

Chapter 811

Pearl couldn't shake the feeling that Estrella might be the author of the memoir due to its realistic portrayal.

She tried to call Estrella. Her attempts to reach her proved futile as she couldn't get through to her. Left with no other option, she settled down to read the memoir attentively.

Written in a third-person perspective, it recounted a brief but memorable high school romance.

Estrella's first encounter with Silas at sixteen was highlighted, set against the backdrop of a scorching summer day. During a stamina test at school, exhaustion overcame many, including Estrella, who was frail and prone to sickness since childhood. Her delicate appearance earned her the nickname of a charming but fragile goddess, although envy and disdain lingered among some peers.

After collapsing from exhaustion, Estrella suffered further when a fellow student callously stepped on her wrists, causing her immense pain.

"Why did you suddenly scream? I just walked beside you and did nothing. Don't frame me." The aggressor, feigning innocence, mocked Estrella's reaction, attracting laughter from onlookers.

"Alas, the sick lady must be putting on an act again. You just brushed past her, but she made it sound like you've stepped on her," another girl said, mocking Estrella as well.

The other girls in the class were not close with Estrella because the latter was charming and had snatched away everyone's limelight. At that time, they watched her misfortune, using the incident as a distraction from their own post-test stress.

"You stepped on my hand. Say sorry." Estrella demanded an apology, only to be met with denial and ridicule.

"What do you mean? When did I step on you? Do you have evidence?" Then, she glanced at the surrounding people and challenged them, "What do you think? Did I step on her?"

Naturally, the surrounding people didn't dare to say anything because they were her lackeys.

"Don't frame me if you don't have any evidence." She crossed her arms confidently.

Estrella clenched her fists. She had no evidence that the girl had stepped on her; the only proof was the redness on her wrist.

Defeated, she decided to get some medicine from the school nurse and turned to leave.

"Don't go in a hurry. It's not settled yet."

Enter Silas, who had observed the altercation. When he noticed that Estrella's strong facade had only lasted for three seconds, he shook his head helplessly and stepped forward.

The fierce and arrogant girl turned pale. Silas never meddled in this kind of thing, but he seemed interested in wanting to help Estrella today. She smiled and apologized, "I might have done something wrong. Let me say sorry to Esti."

Despite her initial defiance, Silas's involvement compelled her to offer a begrudging apology, sensing the consequences of crossing him. His reputation as the school's top bully preceded him, adding weight to his support for Estrella.

Chapter 812

Although Estrella was shocked, she maintained her composure. She had encountered Silas before; he appeared just as she remembered, with his casual short hair and ever-present, carefree smile. But she never anticipated that these two seemingly unrelated people would become entangled in such a trivial matter.

"Why are you in a hurry to say sorry? Weren't you adamant that you hadn't stepped on her?" Silas questioned, his tone laced with skepticism.

The culprit began to perspire nervously. "I started to doubt whether I had stepped on her because I didn't feel anything. Considering how slim she is and how thin her wrist is, it's possible that I didn't notice."

"Oh?" Silas's gaze shifted to Estrella's wrist. After a moment's contemplation, he approached and carefully examined her wrist.

It was rare for a man to touch Estrella because of her charm and aloofness. The male students in class rarely teased her.

But Silas was different because he was fearless.

The touch of his hand sent a jolt through Estrella, leaving her feeling helpless under his scrutiny.

"What's wrong? Are you scared of me?" Silas asked, noticing her trembling hand.

However, Estrella's reaction was more a result of shyness than fear, though she wouldn't admit it. Their interaction seemed romantic, stirring an undeniable connection between them.

The culprit, realizing the budding connection between Silas and Estrella, hastily apologized to Estrella and promptly ran away.

Rumors soon began to circulate, suggesting that Silas and Estrella were dating. Although Silas had a reputation as a playboy, it was the first time such rumors had surfaced about him having a girlfriend.

That rumor spread for a few days, but no one refuted it.

One day, Estrella discreetly left a note on Silas's desk, asking if he wanted to be her boyfriend. Silas accepted her proposal, and they became a couple, sharing a kiss under the night sky.

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Pearl found it increasingly difficult to read on, feeling somewhat detached from the youthful and innocent romance portrayed in the memoir.

The memoir's author had a knack for storytelling, drawing in over five million readers in just one day.

As interest in their romance surged, a mysterious organization called SilasEsti Love emerged. However, not everyone was supportive; former fans of Silas and Celine criticized Estrella, accusing her of being a homewrecker who had interfered in their relationship.

The people involved made no statements, but their fans were engaged in a fierce argument.

Consequently, this incident became one of the top three trending topics overnight. Pearl found herself in a dilemma, feeling at a loss for words.

Amidst the chaos, Celine insisted on visiting Silas. "Miss Pearl, Silas is my partner. I should visit him since he got into an accident." She looked worried, adding, "Plus, he helped me a lot. It's only natural that I do this."

Pearl watched Celine with suspicion, sensing ulterior motives behind her sudden concern.

Chapter 813

Recently, Celine's popularity had dipped slightly, but this incident had thrust her back into the limelight.

On one hand, she was eager to spend time with Silas, hoping to earn his admiration by caring for him. On the other hand, she saw an opportunity to boost her fame.

Naturally, Pearl was not oblivious to Celine's schemes. She promptly turned down Celine's request. "You're quite busy with work. Just stay at the company. There are people looking after him, so don't worry about it."

Celine's expression shifted rapidly. She forced a smile. "Miss Pearl, I'm not insisting on visiting him, but he's helped me a lot. And I won't visit during work hours. It'll be after work, so it won't interfere." Her real aim was to get Silas's address.

Pearl knitted her brows. "As a streamer with millions of fans, shouldn't you avoid any hint of scandal?"

The recent gossip involving the three of them was well-known, and Pearl suspected Celine was well aware of it. Although getting infamous was considered some kind of popularity, it was unnecessary... Besides, Pearl didn't want to make Celine famous.

The smile vanished from Celine's face. "I understand, Miss Pearl."

After their exchange, Celine left, her demeanor subdued, but a flicker of determination gleamed in her eyes.

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Later that evening, Pearl realized that she had been cruel to Silas earlier. So, she bought some food for him.

When she arrived at the hospital, she was taken aback to find Celine sitting by Silas's bedside.

Celine looked equally surprised to see Pearl. Of course, she wouldn't tell Pearl that she had gotten Silas' address by calling and pestering him that afternoon.

"Miss Pearl, I..." she began, but Pearl cut her off.

"Just stay if you're here," Pearl said coolly, not giving Celine the chance to explain.

Celine felt awkward and frustrated, but she remained silent, mindful of her status.

Silas noticed the tension and decided to diffuse it by offering Celine an orange from the nightstand with a warm smile. "You've been here a while. Have an orange."

Celine felt touched by his gesture, wondering if he had been moved by her visit. Shyly, she lowered her head and peeled the orange, then ate it in small bites.

But Pearl, seeing his actions, rolled her eyes internally. Silas was indeed a playboy. She tossed the snacks she had brought onto the table and said, "Eat. I got them for you."

Ignoring Pearl, Silas pushed the snacks toward Celine. "I've already eaten, but you must be hungry. Have these."

Pearl shot him a disdainful glare and picked up a cup to get some water. But she did not drink it. Instead, she tilted her hand and splashed the water on Celine's hand.

"Ah!" Celine panicked in an instant.

Chapter 814

The warm water splashed on Celine's body. Pearl apologized calmly, unfazed by the incident.

"It hurts so much..." Celine grimaced, her face contorted in pain.

Pearl cast a calm glance at Celine. "You know perfectly well if that water was hot or not."

That statement made the pretentious Celine soften her expression.

Meanwhile, Silas, seemingly oblivious to their exchange, grabbed a tissue and began drying Celine's hand, asking if she was okay.

"I'm fine. The water isn't very hot. I screamed out of fright," Celine insisted, shooting a quick glance at Pearl, wary of her reaction.

Pearl saw through Celine's attempt to cast her as the villain. She leaned in with a smile. "So, you're saying that the water is very hot, right?"

Frightened, Celine withdrew her hand.

Silas looked at Pearl in confusion. "You burned Celine's hand. Can you stop making things difficult for her?"

Pearl raised an eyebrow. "I said she knew if the water was hot or not." She then dipped her finger into the cup of water to demonstrate. After withdrawing it, she wiped it dry with a tissue.

"This water isn't hot," Pearl stated firmly, shocking them both with her composed actions.

Celine was dumbfounded, realizing her plan had backfired. She hurriedly made excuses, "I'm sure the remaining bit of water has turned cold."

Silas, however, could tell from Celine's hand that the water wasn't hot. Though he didn't respond to her explanation, he showed concern for Celine, partly to provoke Pearl.

Celine turned livid when they ignored her. Besides, she had spent a lot of money to customize the ring on her finger. It was equipped with a video recording device...

However, it had become useless. She hurriedly bade them goodbye and left.

As soon as Celine left the room, Pearl looked contemptuously at Silas. "Did you think I wouldn't catch on to your tricks?"

Silas blinked, feeling aggrieved. "I didn't mean it. You've always ignored me, so I tried to make you jealous."

"And you fell for her tricks?" Pearl felt like poking his head to see what was on his mind.

Chapter 815

Confused, Silas tilted his head. "What are you talking about? I don't understand."

Pearl sighed, realizing she needed to spell it out for him. "Celine was wearing a ring with a hidden camera. She might have wanted to record your time together. And yes, I splashed water on her hand to ruin that plan. You didn't catch on to her scheme?"

Enlightened, Silas said, "So, you did it to stop her from recording us?"

"You catch on quick," Pearl remarked with a snort.

"Did she want to make us look like a couple while we're trending?" Silas grimaced, feeling repulsed by the idea that Celine might have wanted to manipulate their image for social media.

He hurriedly wiped his hand with tissue paper, wanting to rid himself of any trace of contact with Celine.

"Be more careful next time. Celine isn't as naive as she appears," Pearl warned, her tone serious.

Silas reluctantly agreed, feeling chastised by the experience. Then, a thought occurred to him. "Will she work for another company instead?"

Pearl's expression darkened. She hadn't considered that possibility. If Celine left, there was a chance she might end up at Hugo's company.

She didn't care if Celine would resign or not. She was merely concerned about Hugo's ulterior motives and might make a move again.

"What's on your mind?" Silas asked.

Pearl rolled her eyes at him. "Kids shouldn't be busybodies."

After chatting briefly with Silas, Pearl left.

Then, an unexpected visitor arrived.

Silas was taken aback to see Richard, Pearl's enigmatic ex-boyfriend, standing in his hospital room.

"I don't believe we've met, Mister Richard. Are you here to see me?" Silas greeted him cautiously. Aware of Richard's history with Pearl, he wasn't inclined to be friendly.

Richard looked at Silas calmly. "I'm just here to advise you not to get involved with her."

Silas didn't have to guess that he was talking about Pearl. "And why should I listen to you?" He laughed, finding his behavior strange. "You're her ex, with no current ties to her. Why come and challenge me? Who do you think you are, huh?"

Richard remained composed while fixing his wristwatch. "You're young, and I'm warning you out of respect for Mister Elijah. But know this: Pearl is not someone you can pursue."

Undeterred, Silas stood up to face Richard, who was as tall as him. "Well, I happen to fancy her."

Their confrontation was tense, their eyes locked in a silent battle.

"Then be prepared to face the consequences." Richard maintained his cool demeanor.

Chapter 816

For the first time, Silas felt intimidated by another man. He squinted, sizing up Richard, who exuded an air of authority.

But Silas was not one to back down. He straightened his body and tried to make himself appear taller. "I'm not afraid to play this game with you."

Richard remained silent and left the room, understanding Silas's decisive look.

As Silas watched him go, he couldn't shake off the feeling of being threatened. Frustration boiled within him.

"What's he so smug about? He broke up with her, yet he's here trying to intimidate me," he muttered to himself, clenching his fist in frustration.

Initially, Silas considered telling Pearl about Richard's visit. But then he hesitated, realizing Pearl might think Richard still loves her and may stir up old feelings between them.

He decided to keep it to himself.

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Esther returned to work after taking a few days off to recover.

During the shoot, Winona's disruptive behavior caused tension on set, much to Esther's annoyance. But Esther held back from criticizing Winona since they were on set. She simply reminded Winona to be serious.

Winona grinned at Esther. "Este, you know what? Rick spent 40 million to help me—"

Esther rolled her eyes. "I don't care if Rick spent 40 million, 4 billion, or 40 billion. You have to do your job seriously." She then felt quite pleased with herself for scolding her.

Winona had always been spoiled, so she didn't take Esther's frank criticism kindly. "How dare you say that? Aren't you here because of some connections?"

Esther, hands on her hips, retorted sharply, "So what if I did use my connections? If I have them, why shouldn't I use them? Besides, I'm more popular than you. We're not even on the same level."

This hit a nerve with Winona. She attempted to slap Esther, but her wrist was caught firmly before she could.

Shocked, Winona turned to see Pearl, expression unreadable, holding her wrist. Winona's panic was palpable. "You're hurting me," she complained.

With a forceful push, Pearl sent Winona stumbling to the ground, the momentum causing her to fall hard and her arms to ache from the impact.

"How dare you!" Winona began to scold, but upon noticing someone else entering, she quickly shifted to a more pitiful tone. "Why did you push me? I didn't do anything wrong."

Pearl guessed Richard must have arrived, given Winona's quick change of behavior. Turning around, her guess was confirmed as she saw Richard standing a short distance away.

Their gazes met, both cool and composed.

Chapter 817

Hugo was right behind Richard, hands in his pockets. He watched the unfolding drama with a curious gaze, occasionally stroking his chin as if deeply entertained.

Pearl crossed her arms, her expression unreadable.

"Rick, my hands are really hurting..." Winona said, holding out her hands in an exaggerated way.

Richard hesitated for a moment before helping her up, their closeness leaving Pearl at a loss for words. It struck Pearl that maybe letting them come to the set was a mistake; it felt like trouble was brewing.

"Rick, you saw that, didn't you? Pearl pushed me for no reason. You've got to stand up for me," Winona complained, looking down but sneaking peeks at Pearl.

Pearl was quite puzzled. These women were usually so pleasant, but they turned hostile toward her.

First Abby, then Jenny, and now Winona. Richard's romantic troubles seemed to follow a pattern.

Pearl, unfazed, challenged, "Got any proof I pushed you without reason?"

Winona was speechless, caught off guard by Pearl's admission. Pearl's tactic left her scrambling, her planned accusations falling apart.

"Is it because Rick is kind to me? Are you jealous? I get it, moving on from someone as great as Rick is tough." Winona tried to provoke Pearl, touching a sore spot.

Esther saw through Winona's tactic and jumped in to defend Pearl. "Rick this, Rick that, why so noisy? Can't you say anything else?"

Winona, who could handle a straightforward Pearl, was lost on how to deal with a crazy person like Esther. After all, she couldn't act outrageously in front of Richard.

"Este, I've done nothing to you. Why attack me?" Winona pleaded, trying to maintain her composure in front of Richard.

Esther's response was fierce. "Done nothing? We both know the truth. But let me tell you, mess with Pearl, and I'll set your hair on fire!" she threatened, making Winona instinctively protect her hair.

"You can't do that, Este. It's against the law..." Winona muttered angrily.

Pearl, seeing Winona's defiance, suggested, "Let's check the security cameras. That'll show us the truth."

The mention of surveillance footage made Winona panic.

"Did you hear that?" Esther raised her chin smugly.

"According to Article 20 of the Criminal Law, actions taken to stop an ongoing infringement in order to protect the interests of the state, public, individuals, property, or other rights that result in harm to the infringer are recognized as legitimate defense. Such actions shall not be subject to criminal liability."

Just then, a new voice joined the conversation. A tall man in a black jacket entered, walking over slowly.

Chapter 818

Esther's eyes lit up when she saw who it was. "James, what brings you here?" she asked, clearly surprised and confused.

James smiled, amused by her reaction. "I just came to check on you. When are you planning to return to work?"

At his question, Esther looked disappointed. She rubbed her forehead and sighed, while throwing a pointed look at Winona. "I'd love to get back soon. But there's someone here, acting all important because she's engaged to the sponsor, causing delays on set. It's a tricky situation," she said, not naming Winona directly, but making it obvious who she was talking about.

Winona, catching the indirect jab, became furious. "Watch your mouth, Esther! I won't let you off if you keep talking nonsense!"

Esther glared at Winona and snorted. "Oh, dropped the nice act, have we? Weren't you just playing the victim, calling for Richard?"

James, catching on to the drama, chuckled. "So, this is Mister Richard's fiancée. Seems quite hot-headed."

Winona wasn't new to being called out, but it stung coming from James. She pointed at him angrily and said, "I don't care who you are. You're clearly on Esther's side, and I won't stand for your lies!"

James, unfazed by her anger, watched Winona's outburst with a cold detachment.

Richard eventually intervened. "Enough, Winnie. Stop making a scene."

Richard's words seemed to settle the matter, leaving Winona feeling wronged yet unable to protest. Pearl had pushed her down, but she became the unreasonable one here.

But everyone was waiting for her to embarrass herself. Of course, she couldn't give them that satisfaction and ruin her image.

"Mister James, I'm sorry about this," Richard spoke to James with a cool detachment, his demeanor showing clear displeasure at him for siding openly against Winona. Since James had openly rebuked his fiancée, he had embarrassed him as well.

James just nodded, seemingly indifferent to Richard's fame in Enswood. He then turned his attention back to Esther. "Why didn't you tell me you were being bullied?"

Esther rolled her eyes. "Why bother you? Besides, it's Pearl they're after, not me. It's all so confusing with Winona constantly targeting Pearl." Her words, loud enough for others, implied Richard's role in the drama.

James glanced at Pearl, who remained calm and detached. "Look at Pearl. She's so calm, yet you got angry and wanted to seek justice for her. But I think Mister Richard isn't the kind of person to let his fiancée bully his ex."

The conversation between James and Esther continued, touching on the dynamics of past and current relationships. This prompted Richard to leave, clearly annoyed and tired of the bickering.

Winona, left alone as Richard departed abruptly, felt increasingly isolated and blamed Pearl for her predicament, her frustration obvious in her glare.

Chapter 819

Pearl felt Winona's angry stare and responded with her usual calmness. "Got a problem? You seem upset. Do you want to see the surveillance video?"

The mere mention of that rattled Winona. "No, just wondering when we can get back to shooting," she quickly said, trying to steer away from the topic.

Pearl covered her mouth in surprise. "Oh, the high-and-mighty Miss Jesselton is now eager to push things forward?"

Her tone dripped with sarcasm, but despite Winona's irritation, she had no comeback.

Pearl shifted from teasing to action, signaling the crew to resume work.

Winona, under the watchful eyes of Pearl and James, didn't dare to cause any trouble and focused on her scenes, finishing without incident before quickly leaving to avoid the awkward situation.

Meanwhile, Estrella and Rosalie did well. Showing their professionalism, they wrapped up their parts swiftly, leaving Pearl, Esther, and James as the last ones on set.

James looked down at the silly-looking Esther and smiled. "Let's go. I'll treat you to a meal."

But Esther had already made plans with Pearl and clung to her. "But I have a date with Pearl. I promised to treat her."

James didn't even frown. "Then let's go together," he responded, showing his desire to spend time with Esther.

Pearl, ready to excuse herself but caught by Esther's hopeful look, agreed to join, turning their duo into a trio for the evening.

They ended up at a Jenovian restaurant nearby. During the meal, James revealed his reason for visiting: he had found a way to prevent their company from being sued.

"I got some clues during my investigation."

His casual tone emphasized his confidence, which prompted Esther to ask, "How did the investigation go?"

James sipped from a teacup. "Nothing much. I just know we can stop them from suing."

Esther widened her eyes. "Really?"

"Yeah, you can tell your dad to manage the company like he used to."

Esther was astounded. James hadn't communicated with Sanders Group, yet he managed to resolve everything perfectly.

Although she didn't doubt James's work capabilities, she found the situation amazing beyond words.

Chapter 820

But James wasn't that surprised. "By the way, tell your dad to fire the project manager involved in this collaboration." His statement hinted at the truth behind the situation.

Esther couldn't contain her curiosity. "I want to know how you figured out who the culprit was."

Pearl chuckled as she listened to Esther.

Esther turned to Pearl, noticing her suppressed laughter. "What's so funny? Do you know something too?"

"You should ask James to tell you," Pearl replied, unwilling to spill the beans herself.

James remained composed. "It's classified information."

"Great, just great. You guys are keeping secrets from me," Esther muttered, poking forcefully at her salmon with her fork.

Pearl suggested, "Let's have some wine to celebrate now that everything's resolved." She gestured toward the nearby bottle, noting that it wasn't strong wine, so a little indulgence should be fine.

Half an hour later, Pearl watched Esther, lost in thought. Esther's cheeks were flushed from the wine. She remembered a similar scene from the other day when Esther got drunk.

Meanwhile, James seemed sober after just two drinks.

Esther started leaping at the side, while Pearl and James sat calmly, facing each other.

"Mister James, your background is quite surprising," Pearl commented with a fake smile.

"I can say the same about you, Miss Pearl. You have quite the collection of identities," James responded, unruffled.

Pearl shrugged. "But you outshine me. I only discovered your true identity with the help of my elite system. The heir of SY Group—quite a hidden gem."

James burst into a reckless but charming laugh. "Then why didn't you reveal it earlier, Miss Pearl?"

Pearl just raised her hands. "What purpose would exposing it serve?"

Initially stunned, James then smiled at her. "You're straightforward, Miss Pearl. I appreciate you keeping my secret." If his identity were exposed, Esther might not react favorably, and it would be hard for him to win her over.

Pearl's all-knowing expression amused him, so he added, "But I find it strange. Why did you help me instead of Mobius?" Despite Richard's aloofness with Pearl, there wasn't any apparent conflict between her and Mobius.

But things were evidently more complicated than James had assumed.

Pearl glanced down at the exhausted Esther, who had collapsed on the floor after her antics. She felt a pang of sympathy for her. "What Mobius did disappointed me."

Initially, Pearl suspected someone had framed Mobius. But upon investigation, she found that Mobius was lying.

Mobius had been in close contact with the woman a month ago. Even during the week he and Esther were ignoring each other, he continued contacting the woman.

Clearly, Mobius had encouraged the woman's affection, which made her try her best to sleep with him, even though she was aware he had a girlfriend.

Surprisingly, Mobius fell into her trap.

Despite her closeness to Mobius, Pearl couldn't support such behavior, especially if it meant Esther would be hurt.