

Your Guise 821

Chapter 821

James couldn't read her expression but could guess what she was thinking. He chuckled, the sound echoing in the quiet space. "So, you'd prefer Esther dating me, huh?"

Pearl shook her head and regarded him with a scrutinizing gaze. "I'm not sure if you're a good person, so I'll continue keeping an eye on you."

Despite being better than Mobius in terms of family, temperament, capability, and looks, Pearl remained cautious because James seemed like a schemer.

"Since you're Esther's best friend, I won't let you down," James assured, his eyes softening as he looked at the unconscious Esther. "Esther, I'll make you mine."

Pearl was shocked. She had something on her mind and ended up blurting it out, "I want to know how you met Esther." Why did he suddenly develop such strong feelings for her?

James didn't try to hide anything and just said, "I fell for her three years ago when she first stepped on stage." It was love at first sight, plain and simple, with no elaborate buildup.

Pearl felt a bit foolish. She had thought numerous theories about why he might have fallen for Esther, but the reality was far simpler than she had imagined. Was he just another fan turned admirer?

Suddenly, a memory struck her. Her voice trembled slightly. "Three years ago, Esther did a series of photoshoots and sold out all her copies. Was that..."

Esther had mentioned this to her before. During her debut, Esther had done a series of photoshoots, and the sales had surpassed those of famous A-listers at the time by several times.

Esther suspected someone was behind it but couldn't figure out who. After that, her rise to stardom had been smooth sailing. She became a B-lister within a year, and now, with Pearl's assistance, she

was on the cusp of joining the A-list.

"I bought them," James admitted. How could one make a girl happy without spending money?

Pearl was stunned but also touched. This man was quite the romantic.

Esther's success might have been partly due to him. Her goldmine was just right in front of her!

"In that case, I have no objections to you two dating," Pearl concluded. James seemed willing to spend money on Esther, treat her well, and protect her. There didn't seem to be any downsides.

James coughed. "Your motives are pretty obvious, Miss Pearl."

Pearl suddenly realized her transparency and offered him an awkward smile.

"But thank you for entrusting Esther to me. If your company ever needs assistance, feel free to reach out." He raised his wine glass. "To our partnership."

Pearl raised hers and clinked it against his. "To our partnership."

Chapter 822

After dinner, Pearl gave them time to be alone and prepared to hand Esther over to James. She trusted him not to do anything untoward to Esther, so that's how the tipsy Esther ended up in his car, just like the last time she got drunk.

As soon as she settled into the car, Esther drifted off to sleep. James observed her restless movements and sighed. Carefully, he fastened her seatbelt, being careful not to wake her up.

When he sat up straight, Esther's seductive and dazed eyes fluttered open, leaving him stunned.

"James..." she murmured.

Surprised yet happy that she recognized him in her intoxicated state, James responded, "Yes?"

Esther reached out and playfully tousled his hair. "I've always wanted to touch your hair. Finally got the chance, hehe."

James was at a loss for words. After gently pushing her hand away, he settled back into his seat.

As he started the engine, Esther suddenly announced that she needed to use the restroom.

"I'm driving now!" Reluctantly, James pulled over to find a public restroom. "Should I bring you over?"

Esther blinked and flashed a cheeky smile. "I lied. Didn't need to go."

James didn't know what to say. If that was the case, there was no point talking to this drunk silly girl. He glanced at her grin and knew there was no way he wouldn't fall for her, but he had one concern.

"I need to throw up," Esther mumbled.

Remembering her previous trick, James ignored her and accelerated.

However, a moment later, he heard the unmistakable sound of vomiting.

James's heart dropped as he quickly pulled over and watched as Esther continued to vomit. It was a new car worth millions, and she was making a mess of it!

Unfazed by his reaction, Esther slurred, "Why aren't we moving?"

Feeling exasperated, James responded, "I'm going to kick you out if you want me to drive."

Esther looked hurt, her eyes welling up. "Why would you kick me out?"

Realizing he was being too harsh, James relented. "Okay, okay, my mistake. Go ahead and finish. We'll go once you're done."

Esther nodded, wiped away her tears, and resumed vomiting.

James, a clean freak, couldn't bring her home in this state. Since they were closer to his place, he dropped her off there first before heading out to get his car cleaned.

If Esther hadn't been in the car, he might have just sold it.

It took two hours for his car to be cleaned up and ready again.

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Chapter 824

"Why do you care? If I recall correctly, you're broken up."

Mobius snapped, his jealousy evident. "You're just an outsider. Who are you to get involved in our relationship?"

"Yeah, well, I'm her soon-to-be boyfriend. I have more right to get involved than anyone else," James replied calmly.

Mobius was taken aback. "Soon-to-be boyfriend? Has she agreed to date you?" No, Esther wouldn't do that. She wouldn't change her mind so quickly.

"Of course. You should stop harassing her. We're going to sleep now. Night." James hung up, blocked the phone number, then deleted it without hesitation.

He placed the phone back where it was and smirked.

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Mobius felt lost after the call. He wanted to go search for Esther, but instead, he found himself heading to Richard's room when he noticed the light was still on.

Richard was just getting ready to sleep, but when he saw Mobius walking in with a distraught expression, he was concerned. "What happened?"

"I just called Esther, and some guy claiming to be her boyfriend answered. He told me to stop contacting her. I'm worried. Can you help me find her?" Mobius almost started crying, his voice quivering with emotion.

He had been losing internal battles in the past few days. He wanted to see Esther but was worried all he would get was her cold shoulder.

Today, he finally found the courage to call her, but she was now with a different man. He couldn't accept that.

Richard remembered seeing James Crawford on set that morning. "Calm down," he urged, seeing Mobius on the brink of tears.

Mobius balled his fists. "I really don't want to break up with Esther. Please, could you help me find her? I can't get a hold of her. She blocked me... Can we go see Pearl? I'm sure she knows where she is! I'm close with Pearl so she'll definitely tell me!"

Richard's expression darkened. "Are you sure you won't regret this?"

Mobius, consumed by his worry for Esther, didn't catch the underlying meaning. "Of course! I need to find Esther now, I can't take this anymore!"

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At two in the morning, there was a loud knock on Pearl's front door.

Irritated by the disturbance, Pearl, a light sleeper, reluctantly got up to answer it.

Chapter 825

As soon as Pearl opened the door, a dark figure burst in and grabbed her arm.

Startled, she stepped back. But upon closer inspection, she realized it was Mobius. "Mobius, why are you here at this hour?"

"Pearl... You know where Esther is, right? Please tell me where she is," Mobius implored urgently.

Pearl sensed something was wrong but answered truthfully, "She's probably sleeping at home. What's going on?"

Mobius shook his head. "No, Esther is with a man at his place."

Pearl felt a surge of anxiety. "What? James brought Esther to his place?"

That jerk. Pearl had thought James was a decent guy, but now she realized he was capable of something terrible. It would have been bad enough if Esther were sober, but if she was drunk, she could easily be taken advantage of.

"James..." Mobius muttered the name with venom, his eyes burning with hatred. "Do you know where he lives, Pea? I'm going to find Esther!"

Pearl shook her head, reacting quickly. "No, I don't." She genuinely had no idea where James lived.

"I'm sure you know something about this, Pea. Please don't hide things from me, okay?" Mobius's voice trembled. "I can't lose her. I love her. Please believe me!"

Turning to Richard, who had been lurking in the shadows, Mobius begged, "Please help me, Rick. I love Esther so much. Can you talk to Pearl please?"

Pearl noticed Richard standing nearby for the first time. He seemed to be distancing himself from the situation, unwilling to get involved.

"Stop ruining the family name, Mobius," he coldly warned.

Mobius was at his lowest point, feeling his heart sink even further.

Pearl felt sorry for him, but she also found it ironic. "Honestly, Mobius, I know pretty much everything about what you've done."

Mobius froze, his expression stricken.

"You clearly love Esther, and she loves you too, but it's difficult for things to go back to how they were. Forgiveness is possible, but forgetting is not," Pearl explained gently.

Tears welled up in Mobius's eyes. "I don't stand a chance anymore, do I?"

"Did you know what Esther told me? She said she doesn't regret meeting you or what you've been through, but if she could go back, she wouldn't choose you again. It doesn't mean she hates you. She just can't handle how things ended," Pearl revealed softly.

For the first time, tears streamed down Mobius's face, dampening the ground beneath him. "I'm sorry."

Pearl pulled out a napkin from her pocket and comforted him, patting his shoulder. "It's okay. Let go of this burden. Leave each other with fond memories, and as for the rest, let it be. You'll heal in time."

Let go? Heal?

Hearing Pearl's words, Richard glanced at her with a cold gaze but was surprised to find her looking back at him.

Chapter 826

Richard sensed Pearl had something on her mind. But it was clear she didn't want to linger, so when he noticed Mobius lingering, he frowned.

"Come home with me, Mobius," Richard said, walking over to his brother.

Mobius nodded, then shook his head, looking sad and defeated. "I want to see her again, please?"

Feeling sorry for him, Pearl agreed. She also worried about Esther being drunk at James's place. She picked up her phone and dialed James's number, knowing Esther might not answer.

James picked up after two rings.

"Are you with Esther?"

Surprised by the call, James nodded. "Yes, she threw up all over herself so I brought her to my place to clean up."

Pearl's mind raced at the thought. "Did you give her a shower?"

James chuckled, and Mobius, who was standing next to Pearl, looked up with red-rimmed eyes.

"No, I didn't."

"Is she sleeping?" Pearl inquired further.

James glanced at Esther, who was sound asleep. "Yes, after cleaning up, she fell asleep right away."

Pearl sighed in relief, trusting James's words. "Take good care of her."

"Of course," James assured.

With the knowledge that Esther was safe, Pearl hung up, troubled by Mobius's state. "She's asleep. Let's talk tomorrow"

Mobius clenched his fists, ready to speak but thought better of it. He turned away, offering a tired smile. "It's late. Let's not keep Pearl from resting. Let's go home, Rick."

Richard just nodded and got back into the car. Mobius nodded at Pearl and followed suit.

In the car, Mobius sat in the passenger's seat, gazing out into the night. "How did things turn out this way, Rick?"

Richard kept his eyes on the road. "You did this to yourself."

Mobius suddenly chuckled, reminiscing about their first meeting: Esther chasing after him, relentlessly trying to get close. At first, he wasn't interested, but she brought warmth to his life like the sun, and he fell for her.

Despite his temper, he truly loved Esther. He started to learn about love because of her. However, after two years, she left him because of his actions, and there was nothing he could do to change that.

Chapter 827

Finally recognizing Esther's worth, Mobius realized the gravity of his actions. He wouldn't blame Esther for not forgiving him.

"Do you think James would treat her right?" Mobius wondered aloud.

Richard thought back to his encounter with James and nodded. "I believe he cares for Esther deeply."

"You know him?" Mobius asked, feeling a pang of curiosity. Why did everyone seem to know James except him?

"I met him once, and he seemed very protective of Esther."

There were only a few who dared to oppose Mobius in Enswood. However, this newcomer from abroad didn't seem to show him any deference, likely due to his strong connections. Mobius resolved to investigate this James further.

"I feel so lost without Esther. I really love her..." Mobius confessed, his usual confidence faltering in the face of rejection.

"I know, but it's time to move forward," Richard advised gently.

Mobius's heart ached. "Why are you saying the same things as Pearl? Weren't you two together before this?"

Richard's grip tightened on the steering wheel at Mobius's words.

"I understand your pain now. You must have been devastated after breaking up with Pearl too," Mobius observed.

Richard's gaze turned icy. "It's not the same."

"Why not? We both lost the women we loved and didn't get forgiveness. Pearl treats you like a stranger... But now you're moving on. I heard you're marrying Winona next month?"

Richard had enough and pulled over, his glare piercing. "If you say one more word, I'm going to kick you out."

Mobius felt helpless. "I've been dumped, and you're treating me this way?"

Richard looked away, his jaw clenched. He didn't want to admit that he knew this man.

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The next morning, Esther woke up to find a man beside her.

He lay on his side, propped up on his hand. Had she not been fully clothed, she might have assumed something untoward had happened between them.

"Why are you in my bed?" Esther hid under the blanket.

"This is actually my bed," James replied casually.

Esther felt the blanket in her hand and noticed it was softer than the one she had. "But why am I here? Did you do something to me? Why did you bring me here?"

"Why do you have so many questions?" James teased, his tone playful.

Blushing furiously, Esther retreated further under the covers. "Just tell me why I'm here," she pleaded, poking her head out cautiously.

"I honestly don't know. You insisted on coming here and wouldn't let go of me," James explained with a resigned sigh.

"You're lying. Why would I do that?" Esther countered skeptically. "I know myself. When I'm drunk, I just pass out. Why would I ask to come here?"

Chapter 828

James reached out and lightly tapped Esther's head with his hand. "You caught on pretty quickly."

"Alright, I want to go home now," Esther said, glancing at her clean clothes as she sat up.

A memory of throwing up flashed in her mind. Why were her clothes clean? If she remembered it, it couldn't have been a dream.

Suddenly, a strange smell caught Esther's attention. Sniffing around, she realized her clothes didn't smell like her detergent.

"Did you take off my clothes?" Esther blurted out, feeling awkward even saying it.

James, feeling stressed but wanting to reassure her, explained patiently, "No, the cleaner did it."

He had to admit he saw something, but he didn't do anything to her. He washed her clothes and dried them.

When the cleaner came that morning, he asked her to put them on Esther so she wouldn't wake up naked. Esther was in such a deep sleep that she didn't even wake up when she was dressed.

Esther realized she was a little rude. But just as she was about to apologize, her phone rang.

"Hello, Pearl," she answered, dreading what her friend might say if she found out she didn't go home and stayed the night at James's place.

"Where are you?"

Pearl's voice sounded calm, but Esther sensed trouble. She stuttered nervously, "I... I'm at home, just woke up. What's going on?"

Pearl frowned. "Home?" Esther would usually still be asleep at this hour. How could she be back from James's place so early?

Esther took a deep breath, summoning her best poker face. "Yes, I'm at home. You know I'm not a morning person." She was getting better at lying.

Pearl realized Esther was lying and softened her tone. "You're trying to lie to me? Do you think I don't know you're at James's place?"

Realizing her mistake, Esther quickly apologized. "I'm sorry, Pearl. I won't do it again."

"He didn't do anything to you, did he?"

Esther looked at James, who smiled reassuringly, and shook her head. "No, nothing happened."

Before James could say anything, Esther shot him an angry look and turned back to Pearl. "Please, Pearl, don't tell my dad I stayed over here. If he asks, say I stayed at your place."

Pearl felt a headache coming on. She knew what she had to do and had already spoken to Esther's dad to cover for her. "Okay, just make sure to get home soon. I'll be heading to the office so I won't have time to check on you."

Chapter 829

"Don't worry, I'll be home soon." Esther reassured her.

After ending the call, she let out a long sigh.

"Breakfast is ready." James got up and stood up straight. "Let's go."

Remembering the awkward moment, Esther nodded and headed to the bathroom, still feeling a bit overwhelmed by the morning's events.

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Richard and Winona's upcoming wedding was the talk of the town. As the most eligible bachelor in Enswood, Richard attracted plenty of attention, and people were eager to see who would win his heart.

Despite being the subject of envy and gossip, Winona remained unfazed. Marrying Richard meant she was the ultimate victor, and she saw no point in engaging with jealous women.

One day, Pearl was surprised to see Winona at her office, looking somewhat annoyed.

"Why are you here instead of preparing for your wedding?" Pearl asked, her tone sharp.

Winona stood tall, her expression haughty. "Well, since you know I'm getting married soon, shouldn't you be offering your well wishes? As his ex-fiancee, you surely want him to be happy."

It was clear Winona was there to show off.

Pearl dropped her pen on the desk, her smile icy. "Tell me, what kind of well wishes are you expecting?"

Winona's smile faltered as Pearl's tone grew colder. "Are you upset? My apologies," she replied, refusing to back down. "I almost forgot how much you loved Richard. Why would you bless him to be with another woman..."

Pearl studied Winona's face carefully before speaking in a serious tone. "That aside, your eyeliner is lopsided."

Winona's smile vanished. "What!"

"Listen, I'm not interested in your wedding. Enough of this, the door is to your right. Please see yourself out," Pearl stated firmly, returning to her work.

"Never mind. I'll let you off this time, but I have a secret. It's about your family," Winona declared.

Pearl's thoughts immediately turned to Beah upon hearing the word 'family.'

"What do you know?" Pearl asked, her curiosity piqued, though she remained wary of Winona's intentions.

"I told you it's about your family, possibly related to your mom," Winona replied, still wearing an arrogant expression. "Aren't you curious?"

Pearl lowered her gaze. "How can I be sure you're telling the truth?" she questioned, her guard up.

"Well, if I'm lying, I'll never get Richard's love. How about that?"

While Pearl didn't put much stock in bets, she knew Winona cared deeply for Richard and wouldn't risk his affection lightly. It seemed plausible.

But she knew there was no such thing as a free lunch, especially coming from Winona, her rival.

"Why are you telling me this?"

Winona couldn't help but chuckle at Pearl's suspicion. "You certainly cover your bases, Miss Pearl. I do have a condition," she revealed.

"What is it?" Pearl asked cautiously.

"Promise you'll leave Richard alone after I tell you this," Winona demanded.

Chapter 830

This condition might have been tough for Pearl before, but since Richard was going to marry Winona, continuing to contact him didn't sound like a smart thing to do.

More interested in the information, Pearl immediately agreed. "Sure, I accept that. Can you tell me now?"

Winona was a little shocked. "Even though you've broken up, don't you have any feelings left for him at all? You didn't even hesitate. You didn't even hesitate."

"Why would I hesitate?"

Winona looked puzzled before shaking her head. "I really can't understand how you can be so cold."

"Alright, enough of this. Tell me the information."

"Sure, but not here. Come with me, and I'll show you," Winona said, gesturing for Pearl to follow.

"Why didn't you bring it over instead?" Pearl asked, confused.

Winona showed her distrust. "How would I know you wouldn't just snatch it away?"

They walked to the parking area, and Pearl noticed Winona hadn't driven herself. "You didn't drive? Isn't your driver supposed to pick you up?"

Winona turned around with a smile. "Of course, but he's not picking me up. You're coming too!"

Suddenly, a few burly men appeared, setting off alarm bells for Pearl.

"What is this?" Pearl demanded, eyeing the men warily.

Winan clapped her hands, and one of the men came over and asked, "I'm ready. When do we start?"

"Now. Why are you still standing there?" Winona replied.

The man rubbed his hands together and tried to grab Pearl, but Pearl quickly turned, delivering a kick to his head. He cried out in pain.

"I'm sure you know who I am," Pearl warned, glaring at the group. "Take one more step, and you'll end up like him."

The men, startled by Pearl's ferocity, hesitated. They hadn't expected her to fight back so fiercely. One of them said, "She looks really strong. Should we try plan b?"

Winona, losing patience, urged them on. "You're not getting paid unless you grab her!"

The men, emboldened by Winona's words, moved to apprehend Pearl.

"I'm not going to hold back then." Pearl rolled up her sleeves, ready for a fight.

After a few moves, Pearl managed to take down the men. Winona, underestimating Pearl's strength, cursed under her breath as she watched her henchmen writhe in pain.

However, Pearl's expression quickly shifted as she turned her icy gaze to Winona.

"Why are you staring at me?" Winona took a few steps back, unnerved by Pearl's cold eyes.

"Why? I'll take you down just like I did them," Pearl threatened, moving forward. But before she could act, one of the men tackled her from behind.

"I got her, Miss Winona!" the man exclaimed triumphantly.

Winona, seizing the opportunity, pulled out a bottle of spray and covered her nose, then aimed it at Pearl.