

## Your Guise 861

### Chapter 861

Suddenly, they found themselves falling back into the banter of their early days, with Pearl often teasing Richard.

"No, it's not," Richard retorted, a smile on his face without him even realizing it.

"You're too unromantic," Pearl teased as she settled into a nearby chair. She observed him, noting his reluctance to turn around, and asked with curiosity, "What's the matter? It's been so long since I last saw you, and now you're acting all shy."

"I'm getting married tomorrow," Richard replied, his words dampening Pearl's mood.

"I went to all this trouble to see you, and you hit me with that news," Pearl lamented, feigning sadness. "Fine. I'll go have a drink with Wayne. Damian's not a bad choice. Or maybe I'll find-"

Pearl felt the world spin around before she could finish speaking. Richard immediately pushed her against the wall.

"Go and find a man if you dare," he warned, his calm exterior barely concealing his anger.

"Mister Richard, you're as overbearing as ever," Pearl remarked, flashing him a mischievous smile before planting a quick kiss on his lips.

"I can't do anything about you." Richard sighed, his anger dissipating as he pulled her into a tight embrace. He leaned on her shoulders and muttered gloomily, "I've been waiting for you for so long."

Pearl felt a pang of guilt. She only managed to settle everything after such a long time. "Aren't you afraid I'm here to wish you happiness?" she asked softly.

Richard shook his head. "Your presence here means you've done everything well. If nothing is stopping you, I won't let you go this time."

Pearl felt a rush of warmth at his unwavering trust and understanding. This might have been why she found herself in love with him. He always had unwavering faith in her, consistently showing understanding and support.

They were perfectly in sync, even matching each other's pace.

"What about Winona, Richard?" she asked, the seriousness of the situation weighing on her mind.

Richard shrugged nonchalantly. He had already made arrangements to handle Winona if Pearl's cure came before the wedding.

He explained his plan to Pearl, but she frowned in disapproval.

"You want someone to pretend to be you and sleep with Winona?" she exclaimed, appalled by the idea. Despite Pearl's strong dislike for Winona, she didn't wish disgrace upon her. After all, Winona's grandfather was Pearl's nominal mentor.

Richard reassured her. "It's just a ruse. We'll stage some photos and use them to convince her to call off the wedding discreetly. It won't be spread to the Internet."

The Jesselton family took these matters seriously, and once the wedding was called off, it would be final. This realization finally brought Pearl a sense of relief.

Richard caressed her hair, his eyes filled with determination. "Trust me, I'll take care of everything and give you an explanation."

Chapter 862

After careful consideration, Pearl decided not to tell Richard about her mother's passing. She felt it would only bring unnecessary worry and ruin his mood.

"In that case, I won't disturb your sleep," she said, preparing to leave.

But before she could go, Richard pulled her into a tight hug from behind, his warmth enveloping her.

"Don't leave. Stay with me," Richard pleaded, unable to let go of her. Pretending to despise her for so long had driven him to the brink of madness.

His touch stirred something within Pearl, but she remained composed. "Then, I'll sleep in your bed, and you can sleep on the floor," she suggested seriously.

But Richard immediately rejected the idea. "Let's sleep together."

Pearl almost choked. "Oh, my! What are you thinking?"

"No, I mean, we're going to sleep together in the same bed." He added quickly, "We won't do anything else."

Pearl trusted him, but she couldn't help feeling taken aback by the suddenness of his request. "I should go home. You're getting married tomorrow, and it wouldn't look good if someone saw us together in bed."

Richard's expression darkened as he remembered the impending wedding. He cursed the event inwardly, wishing he could spend the night hugging Pearl instead.

Reluctantly, he nodded. "Go home then."

His gloomy look amused Pearl, and she couldn't resist teasing him before she left, giving him a peck on his cheek. "Don't be so sad. You look like an old man with that face."

With a laugh, Pearl leaped out of the window, leaving Richard feeling a mix of emotions.

He leaned on the window and watched her figure gradually disappear from his sight, a new emotion taking hold of him.

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The following morning, the Waldorf Residence buzzed with excitement as preparations for Richard's wedding began.

Both Dustan and Susan beamed with joy, relieved that their eldest son was finally tying the knot. The rest of the family hurried back to join in the celebration and bid Richard farewell.

Hanzel, dressed as the best man, approached Richard, who stood with a stoic expression. "Rick, it's your wedding day. Why aren't you happy?"

"I am happy," Richard replied indifferently.

Chapter 863

"Richard, you look anything but happy. You seem mad, like you're not satisfied with this wedding. If you don't like her, why marry her? I don't get it," Sean remarked, lounging on the sofa with crossed legs. He clicked his tongue in disdain when he saw Richard standing there gloomily.

"Hold on, Sean. Rick might have his reasons. He wouldn't take his wedding lightly," Hanzel intervened, trying to calm the situation.

"I don't care about his reasons. All I know is he's wronged Pearl. She must have been blind to fall for you. If I knew this would happen, I wouldn't have let you near her," Sean retorted sharply.

Hearing Pearl's name, Richard's gaze met Sean's, his voice icy. "Go ahead and try to win her over, see how that goes."

Sean shot Richard a fierce glare, but Hanzel stepped in again, trying to defuse the situation. "Calm down, Rick. Today is your wedding day. Let's not dwell on the past. Just focus on the ceremony ahead."

Clearly, Hanzel was talking about Pearl as if she were part of the past. Looking at him, Richard thought Hanzel seemed a bit slow-witted, so he didn't say much in response.

Meanwhile, Mobius, sitting quietly in the corner, remained withdrawn and despondent since his breakup with Esther.

Sean was irked after facing a setback due to Richard. Turning around, he noticed Mobius sitting close by and asked, "What's got you down too? Still hung up over your break-up?"

Normally, Mobius would have retorted to Sean's remarks. However, today, he appeared disinterested in engaging with Sean, not even bothering to respond.

Finding the lack of interaction dull, Sean chose to remain silent.

Not long after, it was time to fetch the bride. Richard, accompanied by his family, proceeded to Jesselton Manor to pick up Winona. He escorted her to the wedding car, where she appeared shy but content.

As they drove to the hotel, Winona went to her room to prepare for the ceremony.

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Meanwhile, Pearl observed from a nearby room, sitting on the couch while eating grapes.

Esther, however, was bothered by Pearl's calm demeanor. "Aren't you worried? What if this fake wedding turns real?"

After hearing Pearl and Richard's plan, Esther finally understood everything. They had silently coordinated and arranged everything in advance, leaving Esther feeling left out and a bit foolish for not being in the loop.

But with Pearl having filled her in, Esther found herself without objections. Her only option was to back Pearl up.

Pearl reassured Esther. "Don't worry. We've got it all planned out." She blinked, then couldn't help but laugh at the latter's anxiety. "It'll all be okay. I'm here to make sure we avoid any trouble or accidents."

Esther nodded with relief, but a sudden realization struck her, causing her to sweat nervously. "Ugh... You still want to be with Richard?"

"You got it right."

Esther suddenly remembered her previous interaction with him, prompting a nervous chuckle from her. "Richard... He won't be vindictive, right?"

She was simply seeking justice for Pearl. But she knew she would be the one to suffer if they got back together.

Chapter 864

Pearl touched her chin. "I don't know. Why not ask him yourself?"

Esther's eyes widened in horror at the thought. "Maybe I should introduce you to other men instead. There are plenty of good guys out there..."

"If Richard hears that, he might hold a grudge against you," Pearl declared, laying down Esther's punishment.

Esther finally realized the gravity of her blunder, lamenting her predicament.

"Okay, I'll stop scaring you. Just stay put. The show's about to start," Pearl announced, checking the time with a raised hand. With only a minute left, she prepared to leave.

A minute later, the door to the adjacent room burst open with a resounding kick, followed by the clamor of footsteps, unmistakably belonging to reporters.

Before leaving, Pearl donned a mask and glasses, instructing Esther to stay put unless absolutely necessary. The latter obediently nodded as she knew that she would make matters worse if she went out.

As Pearl stepped out, she was met with a throng of reporters holding cameras, fervently snapping pictures. Curious, she peered into Winona's room and witnessed a shocking scene: Winona lying unconscious, her wedding gown torn, with a man atop her.

A blush spread across the faces of some reporters as they averted their eyes, but continued taking photos.

Winona stirred awake, bewildered and incensed by the situation. "Who are you? What are you doing here?" she demanded, struggling against the man's weight.

Earlier, she was feeling a bit sleepy and had laid down to rest. Surprisingly, she woke up to find herself in an intimate situation with a man.

However, the man continued to hold her close, yet refrained from going any further.

"Get up now! Do you realize who I am? I'll not let this slide if you cross the line!" Winona wanted to push him off, but his strength overpowered her attempts.

Ignoring her protests, the man helped cover her with her wedding gown to keep her body concealed. He spoke menacingly, "Miss Jesselton, you better behave, or I might do something to you in front of everyone."

Enraged, Winona widened her eyes. "Get out of here!"

Seizing the opportunity, Pearl gestured for the reporters to clear a path, allowing Richard to approach.

"What are you guys doing?" His fury was palpable as he demanded an explanation.

For the first time, Winona witnessed Richard erupt in anger, leaving her momentarily speechless.

As she was about to explain, the man interrupted, "You've seen it for yourself, haven't you? Can't you see? Miss Jesselton is only interested in me. She doesn't want to marry you at all!"

Winona reacted by pinching him. "What are you talking about? Rick, don't listen to him. You're the one I love. I have no idea why he suddenly appeared in my room—"

"That's enough!"

Pearl watched Richard's display of anger and disbelief with a smile. Richard was quite the actor, convincing enough to fool people. It was a pity he didn't become an actor.

Winona, not anticipating Richard's furious reaction, was struck with fear. "Rick, you know me better. I would never do something like this, especially not before our wedding. You know I've always looked forward to marrying you—"

"I said enough." His words firmly called out her sin.

Crushed, Winona collapsed on the floor, looking up at Richard in his suit and leather shoes. But he seemed to be very far from her.

Chapter 865

Winona reached out to grab Richard's trouser legs, but he recoiled in disgust.

"Let's cancel the wedding," he declared, unable to contain his revulsion.

Winona felt her dreams shatter at that moment. "Rick..."

The idea of their marriage being called off was unbearable for her. After overcoming numerous obstacles to get to this point, she was about to marry Richard. How could he possibly call off the wedding now?



"Rick, I'm begging you. We've come so far. Please reconsider. It would be such a waste to cancel now," she pleaded through tears, reminiscing about their shared moments.

But Richard remained impassive, observing her silently.

Feeling the absurdity of her plea in the silence, Winona relented. "Fine, let's call it off."

Richard turned and left without a backward glance, putting an end to the spectacle.

Wasting no time, he headed to Jesselton Manor to speak with Martin.

The sudden cancellation rattled Martin when he saw the evidence of his daughter's indiscretion. Reluctantly, he consented to the cancellation of the engagement and left with Winona.

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Richard changed into casual attire before leaving the hotel, interrupted by a familiar voice.

"Rick, you're quite something."

It was Hugo, his expression grating on Richard's nerves.

Richard had neither the time nor the interest to talk to Hugo, put off by his insincere smile and hypocritical look.

"What's wrong?" Hugo's smile was unflappable. "I've noticed your knack for manipulation. You handled Winona so easily. You could even get married or cancel it as you wish."

"Are you done?"

"Not yet." Hugo continued, "Oh, thank you for the two amazing shows. If I hadn't paid close attention, I might have been fooled too."

Two shows...

Richard narrowed his eyes. "You're welcome." It seemed Hugo knew everything. If that was the case, it was unnecessary to lie.

"Although your acting was very convincing, there's something I need to tell you."

This piqued Richard's interest. "What is it?"

"Pearl's mother has passed away."

Richard's face flinched instantly.

"Rick, didn't you know? Have you ever wondered why Pearl returned suddenly and went to you again?" Hugo's gaze bore into Richard, his mockery icy and full of scorn.

Chapter 866

Richard just assumed that Hugo was saying nonsensical stuff, but he stopped in his tracks. He wanted to hear what ridiculous things Hugo could say. "Don't go crazy here."

Hugo, accustomed to Richard's cold tone, simply smiled and replied, "That's all I have to say. If you want to know more, ask her." With that, he left, leaving Richard to mull over his cryptic words.

Watching Hugo's back disdainfully, Richard felt hatred beneath his icy exterior.

Heading to a nearby restaurant, Richard spotted Pearl waiting outside, accompanied by Esther and James. Esther was engaging in light banter with Pearl, while James seemed content by Esther's side.

Pearl's face lit up when she saw Richard. "There you are. I'm starving."

Richard, his mind still occupied by Hugo's words, apologized. "I'm sorry I'm late."

Pearl sensed his somber mood and urged him, "It's okay. Let's go inside."

Meanwhile, Esther sensed trouble brewing from their affectionate exchange. She feared the worst, questioning whether Richard might silently hold a grudge or even seek retribution. She even wondered if it was too late to try and please Richard now.

Lost in her anxious speculations, she realized Richard was approaching her. With no escape, she faced Richard with determination, adopting an innocent look and a genuine smile. "Richard, I don't remember what I did before. I hope you won't take it to heart if I offended you."

Pfft...

Nearly choking on her own spit, Pearl couldn't believe Esther's boldness. She had always known that Esther was straightforward, but she didn't expect it would be to this extent.

"Oh?" Richard arched an eyebrow, contemplating Esther's words. "Are you referring to the time you called me a liar?"

Esther broke out in a cold sweat.

"Or a beast?"

Terrified, Esther felt a pang of regret.

"Or—"

"Oh, stop. I've made a mistake, okay?" Esther sobbed, feigning grievance.

Witnessing Richard's behavior, James stepped forward to defend Esther, criticizing him. "I didn't expect you to be so mean as to tease young women, Mister Richard."

Intrigued by James's unexpected defense, Richard retorted, "I didn't expect the stern lawyer to be so protective."

Their exchange grew heated until Pearl and Esther intervened, ushering them into the restaurant to diffuse the tension.

Seated at the table, Pearl poured wine to celebrate their victory.

"Pearl, were those reporters your subordinates? Did they come here intentionally?" Esther asked, admiring Pearl's strategic prowess. She hadn't anticipated Richard and Pearl crafting such a flawless strategy, one that even led the devious Winona to call off the wedding.

"Yeah, and there's more. I even hired the man in that room."

Chapter 867

Confidence and high expectations can be achieved when you have trustworthy allies handling things for you.

The Jesselton family decided to keep their scandal private and instead grounded Winona.

"You're awesome. I wish I could be as crafty as you," Esther remarked, relishing in their triumph.

"It's not a good thing, really. You don't need to learn this. I'll always have your back if anyone tries to bully you," Pearl reassured Esther with a smile.

Esther realized Pearl was teasing her and feigned disappointment, pretending to sob. "You think I'm dumb, don't you?"

James chimed in, adding insult to injury, "Well, aren't you? You might not even notice if someone betrays you."

Initially, James saw Esther as clever and charming. Yet, the more time he spent with her, the more he realized she was somewhat naive and silly.

But he was okay with that and chose to accept her as she was.

"What are you talking about? James, remember all those problems you had at the law firm? Didn't I help you sort some of them out?" Esther raised her chin smugly.

"Oh, you're talking about that civil case, right?"

Esther nodded. "Yeah, that one."

Curious, Pearl asked, "So, Este is good at law?"

Esther chuckled, but James tapped her head playfully. "They were figuring out how to split the puppies since two dogs from separate families had mated. With only five puppies, they couldn't split them evenly. Guess what Esther suggested?"

Pearl's curiosity grew. "What did she say?"

"Her solution was to slaughter the dog and divide it by weight."

Pearl was at a loss for words, imagining Esther coming up with such an outlandish idea.

"Plus, she went on to describe how to butcher a dog in front of one of the kids from the families. That scared the kid so much they burst into tears and refused to take care of the puppies. As a result, all the puppies were given to the other family."

Pearl, puzzled, asked, "Have you ever actually killed a dog?"

Esther, scratching her head, replied, "Well, I saw people butchering pigs back in the village when I was young..."

James felt helpless. "Don't you think her 'solution' was a bit over the top?"

Esther frowned, unhappy with the criticism. "But didn't I settle the dispute?"

Trying to lighten the mood, Pearl patted Esther on the head and forced a laugh. "Well, it's certainly one way to do it."

Yet, the whole scenario just seemed absurd.

"Alright, let's not get hung up on the specifics. We can eat now and chat later..."

The food arrived quickly, and in silent agreement, they all began to eat.

Once they finished, they lingered over conversation for a bit. By four in the afternoon, James and Esther left, saying there was unfinished business at the law firm.

This left Pearl with a chance for some one-on-one time with Richard. They decided to visit a nearby ecological park for a stroll and to watch the sunset.

"Won't you need to head back to the office?" Pearl asked.

Richard shook his head. "I took the day off since it's supposed to be my wedding day."

Pearl teased him, "Are you mad that I've accidentally ruined your wedding?"

Richard stopped walking and turned to look at her with a serious expression. "Yes, I am. So, by all accounts, you owe me a marriage partner as compensation."

Pearl's heart skipped a beat. As expected, she had gotten herself into trouble.

Chapter 868

Pearl smiled, but she averted her gaze to the scenery by the lake.

"So, Miss Pearl, how do you plan to make it up to me?" Richard asked, squeezing her hand against his chest.

"I don't know. Don't ask me." Although Pearl had said so, she could feel his strong heartbeat through the thick clothes.

She wondered if Richard was nervous. Or was he moved?

"But I want to know now." Richard wanted an answer there and then.

Blushing, Pearl glanced around, noticing curious onlookers. "Come on, let go. People are watching," she urged.

Naturally, Richard wasn't about to let her go that easily. He swallowed hard, observing her embarrassed expression.

In the midst of their close encounter, he suddenly drew her into a firm embrace. He said softly, "I know that your mother has passed away."

Pearl's smile faded as she stiffened in his arms.

"You're very sad, aren't you?"

Speechless, Pearl nestled against him, her emotions overwhelming her. "I'm not very sad," she lied, rubbing against him for comfort.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Pearl sniffed. Her nose turned red from the coldness of the late autumn. "I didn't think it was necessary to tell you. It would just make you upset."

Richard gently turned her to face him, looking deep into her eyes. "But does keeping it to yourself make you happy?"

Pearl looked down, trying to hide the emotion in her eyes. "No, it doesn't. But I didn't want to burden you, especially under those circumstances."

Richard's frustration grew at her noble reasoning. "You matter the most to me. How could I be happy knowing you're unhappy?"

Pearl softly mumbled, "I know that."

"Then you should've shared it with me. Got it?"

Hearing his words, Pearl felt she was a little pretentious. She nodded quietly, tears threatening to spill. "Understood."

"So, can you tell me everything now?" Richard's earnest gaze met hers once more. He realized this might reopen her wounds, but his intention was to heal her, not just to uncover her pain.

"Okay."

Pearl took his hand and led him to a nearby step by the river, where she recounted recent events in detail.

As he listened, Richard's fists clenched at Beah's actions. Pearl had endured so much pain and injustice. It must have weighed heavily on her.

Chapter 869



After all, Pearl had helplessly seen her dearest family's lifeless body, hours after passing away. It must have been a massive trauma for her.

"That's almost everything. It's all over now. And I respect her choice." Pearl took a deep breath, her eyes filled with grief.

"But I can tell from your eyes that you find it unacceptable."

Pearl gave a sad smile. "Yeah, that's for sure. Things didn't have to be this bad at first. But someone made it so secretly."

Richard instantly understood Hugo's cryptic warning. "So, you're planning to get back at Hugo?"

Pearl nodded firmly. "Yeah, I want more. I want him to suffer." It wouldn't be any less than the pain she felt inside.

"Why do you suddenly hate him so much?" Richard asked.

Pearl closed her eyes in pain as she recalled the letter she had found. "Hugo had found my mother."

Richard raised his brows in surprise. "What?"

"He found her not long after I returned here. He wrote her a letter, saying he would continue to treat her but only if she arranged our marriage. It was full of threats and pressure. He even threatened to make sure I never found her if she refused. Naturally, my mother couldn't agree to such blackmail, so..."

Pearl felt a surge of anger at the thought of Hugo threatening Beah. His actions were clearly malicious.

Richard felt sorry for Pearl and held her tenderly. "Don't worry. It's all over now. He can't hurt you anymore."

Pearl tightened her grip on his clothes. "I know. I don't have the luxury to be weak now." She was determined to fight Hugo and make sure he faced the consequences.

"I won't let him bully you again," Richard vowed, his anger matching Pearl's.

Pearl nodded, forcing a smile. "Thank you, Richard. I know you'll always support me."

Richard hugged her when he heard that. "Don't be sad. I'm sure Aunt Beah wants you to live well and happily."

It was the first time Pearl had heard such comforting words from Richard, and it warmed her heart. She hugged him back. "I know. Thank you."

"No need for thanks," Richard remarked, slightly uncomfortable with her formal gratitude. He saw this as an opportunity to help her break this habit.

Pearl, touched by his gesture, didn't realize he had a different plan in mind for her.

"What's your next plan?" Richard asked.

Pearl thought for a moment before answering honestly, "I want to start with what he cared about the most."

Richard understood her plan, but he was still unhappy. "So, part of the reason you came back to me was to make Hugo jealous? He wants you, so you want to be with me to make him angry, right?" His tone was stern.

Pearl swallowed, sensing his displeasure. "That's not the whole reason. I came back to you because—"

Before Pearl could finish, Richard's expression darkened.

Chapter 870

Pearl felt like running away. She was scared that staying here might mean trouble for her. But she didn't have the guts to make any sudden moves after seeing Richard's reaction. All she could do was watch him closely.

Richard was trying hard to control his anger. He noticed the innocence in Pearl's eyes as she looked at him. He instructed coldly, "Close your eyes."

Pearl nodded, feeling confused. She wondered if he would hurt her.

But instead, she felt a sudden, passionate kiss that took her by surprise. It was forceful, almost like a punishment.

Pearl kept her eyes shut, letting herself get lost in the moment.

When the kiss finally ended, she opened her eyes to find Richard looking less gloomy.

"I'm giving you another chance. Speak up. Why did you come to me?"

Pearl seized the opportunity to survive. "I came because I love and miss you."

Richard nodded, satisfied. "I'm going to bite you if you say nonsense again."

Pearl shuddered at the thought. "Got it," she said quickly.

At some point, the sky had turned dark. The lights flickered on, signaling the arrival of night.

Richard stood up and helped Pearl to her feet. "Okay, it's getting late. Let me drive you home."

As they drove, Richard remained silent, only offering his cheek for Pearl to kiss.

"Just because I know now doesn't mean you can do whatever you want. You have to tell me everything," he warned, feeling Pearl might unknowingly cross some lines if he had not reminded her. Pearl's lips twitched slightly, sensing that Richard was thinking about something else. "Don't worry. I'll keep you informed," she reassured him.

But Richard found it insincere. Tilting his head, he questioned her, "What do you see us as right now?"

Pearl paused, uncertain. "A couple?"

"Wrong. You're my fiancée," corrected Richard firmly, "which means any man who tries to get close to you will become my enemy." His tone suggested a warning more than a question. Pearl asked tentatively, "Are you talking about Damian?"

Richard didn't answer, signaling her to go on.

"Silas?"

With each name, Richard's expression darkened, yet he remained quiet.

"Is there someone else? Let me think..."

Richard's irritation grew with her speculation, feeling a surge of anger. "Okay, stop. Just remember to keep your distance from any man looking to get closer to you."

Pearl, taking the hint, quickly agreed. "Understood. You don't have to worry."

"You said you understand, but you were quite friendly with Silas recently," Richard pointed out. He had even confronted Silas over it.

Richard wondered if Silas had taken his warning seriously.