

## Your Guise 921

### Chapter 921

James stared at Jonathan coldly, sending shivers down the latter's spine. "I hope you're not thinking of trying anything clever, like finding a lawyer to mess with our deal. I know all the lawyers around here, so don't even think about altering the agreement."

That put an end to any ideas Jonathan might have had.

"Don't worry, I wouldn't dare," Jonathan replied with a forced laugh. "Take care on your way, Mister James."

Once James was gone, Jonathan sank back into his chair, feeling defeated. He couldn't believe that all the wealth he had worked so hard for over the years might end up in some woman's hands.

He was so angry at Hugo that he immediately told his secretary, "Cut off all deals with Sapphire Group. I don't ever want to see Hugo again!"

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After leaving the building, James asked Pearl, "Do you need a ride home?"

"Oh no, I have my car. I'll drive myself. Thanks, though," Pearl quickly declined, sensing he was just being polite. Besides, she didn't want to deal with another argument with Richard if he saw her being driven home by another man.

James could guess the situation and smiled. "I never thought Richard would have such an effect on you."

"That's not the case..." Pearl replied, even though it kind of was. She didn't want to admit that Richard had that much influence over her. "But really, thank you for today. I couldn't have dealt with Jonathan so smoothly without you."

James just nodded, accepting her gratitude graciously. "No problem. You're Esther's friend, so helping you isn't an issue."

He was actually surprised when Pearl reached out, mentioning her connection with Esther. Had it been purely professional, he might have hesitated, but the mention of Esther made him more inclined to help.

After sharing this with Esther, she was giddy with excitement. "Say yes to her. Pearl has never asked for my help before, so if you can, you must agree. I finally get to help her now!"

And so, James agreed to it. He went above and beyond to ensure Esther's happiness.

"Thank you. I owe you and Esther dinner sometime. But I should get going now, it's getting late," Pearl said, waving goodbye to James.

Though she mentioned going home, Pearl had other plans.

She hadn't visited Dark Bar in a long time, a place she used to manage before handing it over to Damian due to her busy schedule. On a whim, she decided to drop by.

When she arrived, Dark Bar was bustling as usual. The place was filled with people and the strong scent of alcohol.

Pearl looked around for Damian, who usually kept to a quiet corner. Not seeing him there, she was about to leave when suddenly someone hugged her from behind.

Startled, she was about to react aggressively until she recognized the familiar smell of peppermint.

Chapter 922

"Don't move, let me hug you for a bit." Damian buried his face in her neck like a child.

Pearl instantly felt this was crossing a boundary, so her expression changed. "Stop that, Damian," she said firmly, her voice steady and clear.

Damian let go, looking disappointed at her serious rejection. Luckily, the dim light of the bar masked his expression.

"You've had too much to drink. You should have some water and sober up," Pearl suggested, unsettled by the intensity in his gaze.

"I'm not drunk. I'm perfectly fine—" Damian attempted to clarify, but Pearl interrupted.

"Yes, you are drunk."

Damian got her hint. She was distancing herself from him. "Ha, yeah. Guess I did drink a lot. I even hugged the wrong person," he joked awkwardly.

Pearl found his comment strange, but then watched as he walked over to a young woman who was dressed like a teenager.

When the woman turned in response to Damian's hug, Pearl was shocked to recognize her. Wasn't that Gigi? What was she doing here?

Then it hit her. She had asked Damian to look out for Gigi.

"Hello, Pea. You're here!" Gigi's voice wavered slightly after the unexpected hug, then she noticed Pearl.

"Why are you here?" Pearl sounded worried.

Gigi smiled. "Dame said he's a little drunk and asked me to come pick him up."

Pearl eyed Damian, her voice neutral yet probing. "Does he need you to drive him home?" It puzzled her how Damian, known for his tolerance, could be so affected by alcohol that he required someone else's help to get home.

Gigi grew nervous under Pearl's questioning. "He called me—" She stopped, wondering if Pearl was upset. But Pearl was with Mister Richard now, wasn't she? Why did she seem concerned about Damian?

To prevent any potential issues with Pearl, Gigi hurried to clarify, "There's nothing going on between us."

"Why do you feel the need to explain? It's none of her business," Damian said with a reassuring smile, gently patting Gigi's head.

Feeling the conversation turn more awkward, Pearl quickly changed the subject. "Gigi, come live with me starting tomorrow."

"Huh?" Gigi was stunned.

"I mean it. Move in with me. Damian's a man, so he might not be the best at looking after you. Let me do it instead," Pearl offered.

Damian's protective instincts kicked in. "Gigi's been living with me for a while now, and she's used to how we do things. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of her. Plus, she wants to stay with me, right?" He looked at Gigi with affection.

Unable to resist his charm, Gigi simply nodded.

"See, she wants to stay with me."

Pearl frowned, realizing the situation was more complicated than she expected. "Then make sure you take good care of her," she said, setting clear expectations.

Chapter 923

She then sighed and said, "Gigi, come with me. I need to speak to you."

Damian was holding onto Gigi so tightly that she couldn't move. She gave Pearl a worried glance. "Pea, I—"

"Let her go, Damian. I just want to talk to her for a minute," Pearl reassured him before she took Gigi's hand and led her aside.

"Do you know why I'm asking you to stay with me?"

Gigi nodded first, then hesitated and shook her head.

Pearl tried to explain, "It's pretty clear how Damian feels about you."

Gigi blushed.

"Don't get too excited. It's not what you think," Pearl said, noticing Gigi's shy look. "My mom asked me to look after you, and I don't want any guy, including my friend, to hurt you. He's not great with relationships. He's not right for you."

Pearl was worried. Gigi was young, and she wasn't sure if Gigi fully understood the gravity of her words.

"I know... Damian likes you..." Gigi admitted, looking both sad and disappointed.

"If you're aware of that, then you shouldn't let him take advantage of you," Pearl said gently, touching Gigi's face. "I'll find someone good for you. Don't fall into anyone's trap."

"I know you mean well," Gigi replied, though it was clear her feelings were complicated. Love wasn't something people could control.

"But you still like him, right?" Pearl could see the truth in Gigi's eyes.

Gigi looked down, unable to respond.

"Does it make you happy, being used by him to make me jealous?" Pearl hoped the harsh truth would help Gigi let go.

"I don't want to be used, and it doesn't make me happy, but I—" Despite everything, Gigi was content with any attention Damian gave her, even if she wasn't the one he truly wanted.

"Are you willing to overlook everything because you're in love?" Pearl asked, puzzled. "Can't you see how this will end?"

"I know." Gigi understood the consequences but was still drawn to him, ready to face the inevitable heartache.

"If you've made up your mind, I won't try to change your mind. There's only one thing I can do to help," Pearl said after a moment of thought.

Gigi paused. "What's that?"

Pearl chuckled. "I'll keep my distance from him. If he stops focusing on me, maybe he'll have room in his heart for someone else. That could be your chance to get closer to him."

Hearing this, tears began to well in Gigi's eyes.

Chapter 924

"Thank you, Pea. I won't forget all you've done for me."

Pearl gave her a reassuring hug and a gentle pat on the back. "Don't mention it. I'm here for you."

Once their talk was over, Pearl and Gigi returned to Damian.

"Look after her properly, or you'll answer to me," Pearl warned.

Damian just raised his eyebrows in response. "Of course, she's like a sister to me."

Hearing him refer to her as family made Gigi feel a pang of sadness.

"Make sure you go home soon. And don't let her come pick you up if you've been drinking, especially not from a place like this," Pearl advised, showing her concern for Gigi's safety. She wouldn't let her mother down.

Damian seemed uninterested in her nagging, simply agreeing to appease Pearl before taking Gigi away.

Once outside, Damian's expression changed, and Gigi, perceptive as always, picked up on it. "What's wrong? You seem upset."

"What do you think of me, Gigi?" he asked, stopping to lean against a car and lighting a cigarette.

Despite disliking the stench of cigarettes, Gigi found herself not minding when Damian smoked. "You should smoke less. It's bad for your health," she said, avoiding his question.

Instead of putting out the cigarette as he usually might, Damian leaned in and blew a smoke ring in her direction. "Why? Do you care about me?"

"Yes..."

"Then answer me. What do you think about me?"

"I think you're a really great person. To me, you're like the moon," she said, implying he was beautiful yet unreachable.

Damian scoffed. "You think too highly of me. I'm not the person you think I am. In fact, I have my own reasons for keeping you around."

He moved closer, and Gigi felt intimidated, wanting to escape.

"I don't believe you're bad," she insisted.

"Why not? I never said I'm a good person." Damian finished the cigarette and tossed it into the trash can. "Alright, I'll stop scaring you." He felt disinterested after noticing her discomfort.

Yet, he showed his care by gently tugging at her shirt. "Come on, I'll take you home."

As they walked, Gigi, gathering her courage, shouted, "I believe you wouldn't do anything to hurt me."

"No, can't you see? I've always been using you." Damian gave her a wicked smile. "I have feelings for Pearl, and all the affectionate things I did were just to get a rise out of her."

Even though Gigi had suspected as much, hearing it confirmed cut deep, like her heart was being torn apart. "I know."

Chapter 925

Damian shook his head, clearly thinking Gigi didn't fully understand the situation. "If you really knew, you wouldn't be so keen to stay close to me."

"But I want to be close to you," Gigi insisted, holding his hand. His hand was large, with slender fingers, yet it felt cold to the touch.

"Do you really understand what you're getting into?" Damian didn't pull his hand away, instead, he just smiled at her.

"I know, I—" Gigi's words trailed off, but her expression said more than her words could.

"Why don't you go live with Pearl tomorrow?" Damian moved his hand away, his gaze turning icy. "I don't want your feelings or your company. I regret asking you those questions. Everything you said was just out of impulse."



Gigi panicked, fearing he would push her away. "Please, don't send me away. I don't want to leave you." Tears began to stream down her face.

"But staying with me won't do you any good. You'll just be wasting your time," Damian argued.

Gigi wiped her tears. "It's not a waste to me."

Seeing her cry, Damian softened. "Okay, stop crying. I hate seeing you upset." He felt he had been too harsh. Gigi hadn't done anything to deserve such coldness.

"Let's make a bet then," he proposed, catching Gigi by surprise.

"What?" she asked, looking up at him, puzzled.

"If you can make me say 'I like you' within a month, then I'll be with you," Damian laid out the terms.

Gigi frowned, realizing the unfairness of the bet. "But you control whether you say it or not. How can I possibly win?"

"You're quite clever." Damian patted her head with a smile. "But it's your choice. Take it or leave it."

He was setting her up for failure, hoping she'd back down. Realizing his intentions, Gigi felt disheartened but also challenged. "Okay, let's do it!"

"Are you sure? It won't be easy," Damian warned, doubting she understood the difficulty of her task.

Gigi was determined. "All I need is for you to say 'I like you' in a month. What if you end up liking me for real?"

Delusional, but adorable.

Damian laughed at her naive confidence. "Alright, if you're so sure, I won't crush your spirit. Good luck, Gigi."

Gigi corrected him, "If I win this bet, you can't call me 'little girl' anymore."

"What should I call you then?"

"Just Gigi."

"Okay, Gigi girl."

Seeing her pouty face, Damian realized there was no downside to this. Instead, it was... interesting.

Chapter 926

Pearl was surprised to find Winona waiting for her at the office the next day. Winona looked thinner, her features sharper than Pearl remembered.

"Hi, Miss Winona. It's been a while," Pearl greeted, ready to deal with her if needed, to prevent any potential problems.

"I need to ask you something," Winona said, her usual fierceness replaced with a more subdued tone.

"Sure, but make it quick. I've got work to do," Pearl replied, not really wanting to engage in a long conversation.

"Are you the woman Richard married?" Winona asked, clearly struggling with the news of Richard's marriage, which she discovered after being cut off from the world for a few days.

This was a lethal blow to her. Without seeing it for herself, she couldn't fathom Richard, who had still shown her affection, ending their relationship to marry someone else!

"Does it matter if I am? It's not like you have a chance with him now, do you?" Pearl chuckled and tapped her heart. "Maybe you should ask yourself if Richard ever truly loved you."

Did Richard really love her? That question hit Winona hard. She had avoided considering Richard's feelings, fearing the answer might confirm her worst fears.

"It didn't matter if he loved me. I just want to know if you're his wife," Winona persisted, her eyes welling up with tears.

"Since it wasn't announced publicly, it seems he wanted to keep it private. Why not ask him directly?" Pearl smiled. She knew Richard had blocked her and asked that intentionally.

If it were someone else, she would have felt sorry for them. But this was Winona, and she deserved everything that happened to her.

"He's blocked me. He refuses to see me. What have you said to him? Why is he avoiding me?" Winona was desperate, realizing Pearl must be the one Richard had chosen.

Pearl hadn't even made an effort, yet she effortlessly captured Richard's heart. Meanwhile, despite all her attempts, she couldn't even earn a bit of pity?

Pearl couldn't help but remind Winona of her past actions. "Have you forgotten what you've done?"

Winona's mind flashed back to the humiliating incident where she woke up with another man on what was supposed to be her wedding day. Though the man hadn't gone too far, the implication was enough for Richard to reject her.

"I was set up. I didn't know anything about it! I'm sure Richard would understand if I explained," Winona said, holding onto a sliver of hope that there was still a chance for her to clear her name.

Chapter 927

Pearl wasn't expecting that. Why was Winona still so stubborn? This woman was just delusional.

Also, what she meant by the question was about what she had done to her. "Time to face reality. You're fooling yourself if you can't see the truth."

She worried talking more with Winona, who was too in love to see clearly, might start to influence her own thinking.

As Pearl was about to leave, Winona called out, "I saved your life. Is this how you treat your savior?"

Pearl turned back, still smiling gently. "Do you really believe you're the one who saved me?"

Winona's eyes widened, surprised and angry that Pearl was twisting the truth. "If I hadn't convinced my grandpa to help you, do you think you'd be here now? You don't seem grateful."

"I admit your grandpa did save me, but this doesn't seem to have a lot to do with you?" She knew Winona did contribute a lot to this, but compared to what she had gone through, it was nothing.

"I'm my grandpa's favorite. If it weren't for me, you'd never have been cured!" Winona wanted to tear apart Pearl's smug look.

"You're right, but who said I wouldn't survive without your grandpa's help?"

Winona was at a loss for words. She realized when they took Pearl to her grandpa, she wasn't sure if there were other ways of curing her. "But... But Grandpa said he was the only one who could cure you."

Pearl clicked her tongue. "I'm the student of a famous doctor, Simon Freeman. Did you think he would just let me die?"

That old man was dying to get her to take over his job so he could retire. The day she was supposed to go to Jesselton Manor, Simon had called her about a cure.

She was planning to fly out to see him but got kidnapped that day. She was still confused about how that happened. If she hadn't been trying to learn something important from Howard, she would have tried to escape. Sadly, she didn't get a chance to use what she learned.

Pearl looked at Winona sternly. "Don't be quick to judge others based on what you think you know, or I might just reveal your true nature to everyone."

Winona had nothing to say.

"Also, I'm only tolerating you because of Howard. If you come at me again, I won't hesitate to embarrass him." Pearl smiled and gently tapped her shoulder. "You should stop losing sleep over a man. It's quite pathetic, you know."

Chapter 928

Pearl wasn't sure if Winona had taken her words to heart. Winona just stood there, head down, looking like she was about to cry.

She didn't feel sorry for her at all. She would be too naive to believe everything people said. Crying wouldn't earn her any sympathy.

Ignoring Winona, Pearl went into the office.

At 10 in the morning, while Pearl was working on some paperwork, her phone rang. Seeing the caller's name made her head hurt, but she answered anyway.

"Are you busy, Pearl? I need to speak to you about something?" Howard sounded like he wanted to talk about Winona, but Pearl was hoping it wasn't just that.

"I'm a bit busy right now. Can we talk after I finish work?" She respected Howard because he had taught her a lot and was a mentor to her.

Howard sounded calm. "Sure. I'll send a car for you later so we can meet."

Pearl hesitated, but Howard reassured her. "Don't worry. It's just between us. Winona won't know."

Convinced Howard was being truthful, Pearl agreed. "Alright, see you at 6 then."

After hanging up, Pearl took a moment to ease her tense shoulders and began planning for the evening. She guessed Howard might try to persuade her to divorce Richard.

She felt awkward because she had promised Howard she wouldn't interfere with Richard and Winona's relationship. But she hadn't been the one causing trouble; it was all Richard's doing. She was just caught in the middle.

Thinking it over, she decided to inform Richard she'd be going out.

"You can't go," Richard said, calm but firm.

"Why not?" Pearl sounded a little anxious.

"I'm worried something might happen to you." Richard didn't hide anything and just said what he was thinking.

"There's nothing to worry about. I get along with Howard. He wouldn't hurt me," Pearl tried to reassure him.

"Still, he's Winona's grandfather. He'll take her side," Richard pointed out, his main concern being Pearl's safety.

"I know, but I've spent enough time with him to know he's fair. He's not unreasonable," Pearl argued, confident in her judgment of Howard.

It was easier to know someone's true character when you spend a lot of time with them. That was why Howard didn't question her and spoke to her calmly.

"Even so, be ready for anything. How about I come with you tonight?" Richard suggested.

"I don't think that's a good idea." Pearl felt uneasy about the thought of Richard staring at them while they chatted.

Chapter 929

Pearl wasn't sure if Richard would cause any trouble for Howard.

"What's wrong with that? You're my wife. Isn't it normal for me to be where you are?" His role as her husband made his argument sound reasonable.

Since Richard was so persistent, she couldn't say no. She told him to meet her at her office after work. When it was time, a car was already waiting outside.

Richard hadn't arrived yet, so Pearl waited by the door. Then, the door of a sleek black Maybach opened.

"Why aren't you getting in, Pearl?"

Pearl thought Howard would meet her at their planned location, but he had come to pick her up himself. Surprised, she said, "Just a moment longer. I'm waiting for someone."

Howard's smile disappeared. "Who? Richard?"

"Yes, he said he wants to come along."

It seemed like her marriage to Richard was an open secret. Although they hadn't made it public, everyone had their suspicions. Pearl felt she didn't need to hide this from Howard.

"I didn't realize you two were so close. I might have put you in an awkward spot."

"You don't mind?" She asked more out of politeness than anything, knowing Richard's decision was final.

"Of course. I just wanted to catch up with you. It's even better if Richard is there."

As they spoke, Pearl felt a hand on hers. Looking up, she saw Richard had arrived.

Howard, with all his experience, couldn't help but feel a bit shaken by Richard's protective stance. "Don't worry. I just want to talk to Pearl. No need to be on guard, Mister Richard."

"You're overthinking it, Mister Howard. I'm simply accompanying my wife. You said we're here to chat, right? Where will this be?"

Pearl, already confident in Howard's intentions, felt even more reassured by Richard's support. Being married felt good.

"I almost forgot. Get in. I'll drive you somewhere."

They sat together in the back, hand in hand, the entire ride.

Even Howard joked when he saw them, "You two are really close. It was really Winona who was in the way, wasn't it?"

"Absolutely." Richard didn't deny it.

Pearl gently squeezed his hand, signaling he might have gone a bit too far. But Howard didn't mind and simply smiled.

Soon, they arrived at a hotel and went into a private room to sit down.

"I'm curious about what you want to discuss with my wife," Richard said, emphasizing "wife" to boost Pearl's confidence.



Howard, taking a sip of his tea, replied, "I'm old, so there were no hidden motives in inviting Pearl here. I just wanted to discuss something about her family."

That's when Pearl remembered something Hugo had mentioned to her.

Chapter 930

Did Howard know something about her mother too?

"Can you tell me what you know, Mister Howard?"

Howard chuckled. "There's no rush. I don't know if this Waldorf here knows about it, and if it's okay to talk about it."

Pearl's heart skipped a beat. Richard knew nothing about this yet.

But Richard kept his cool. "I'm her husband. Is there something I shouldn't know?"

"Not at all," Howard replied. "It's about Pearl's mother—"

"She's gone, so maybe we shouldn't talk about her." Richard noticed Pearl looked gloomy and thought this topic was upsetting because it brought up sad memories.

That's exactly how Pearl felt.

"No, her mother hadn't passed."

Richard frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Her mother is still alive, but she's somewhere Pearl can't find."

Looking at Pearl, Richard saw she wasn't as worried as he thought, so he figured it wasn't as bad as he feared.

"Please clarify."

"What I mean is, the woman who passed wasn't Pearl's biological mother."

Pearl quickly asked, "Then do you know where my biological mother is?"

Howard seemed uneasy. "I only have this information. I don't know where she is."

Richard squeezed Pearl's hand, looking serious. "If that's all you wanted to tell us, why bring us all the way here?" There must be more to this meeting.

"Aren't you brilliant?" Howard laughed out of the blue, but his smile seemed off, making them a little uncomfortable. "I won't beat around the bush then. I want to speak to you in exchange for something."

Richard replied without hesitation, "If you're asking us to split up so I can go back to Winona, you might as well stop."

Howard's expression changed. "Do you think you're in a position to set terms?"

Pearl had never seen him like this. At Jesselton Manor, he always seemed kind and detached from worldly concerns. He had always been good to her, even sharing medical knowledge. She felt grateful and respected him.

But seeing his cold look now, Pearl realized she might not have known him at all.

"We're not the ones setting terms. It seems you're the one coming at us, right?"