

## Chapter 19

"Don't go dying on me now." I teased, but I smiled inwardly. I got the answer I was looking for.

He thought I looked great, and I was satisfied with that.

"But thank you," I added quietly.

"Actually," Aaron winked at me, and I couldn't quite place his expression. "Do you think you could do something for me?"

"What?" I frowned.

I watched him pull his hands from behind his back as he held his bow tie out to me. "I need help."

I glanced from the tie in his hands to his face. His eyes were full of anticipation, like a dog expecting a treat. I didn't take the tie from him.

Instead, I crossed my arms over my chest and smirked. "Does your five star styling service not include the bow tie?"

Aaron tilted his head and smiled at me, unashamed, "If I don't want them to do it, they don't."

That was a bit bossy, wasn't it?

Still, he maintained his uncanny ability to keep a controlled expression. He didn't seem frustrated at all by my hesitation, he just wanted me to tie it for him. I knew I could say no-if anything, I say 'no' way too often when people ask me for favors-but this time I

couldn't.

This is just another little thank you, I said to myself. For what he's done tonight.

I took the bow tie but didn't spare him the teasing.

"You remind me of my friend's dog. He looks just like you when we hold meat out to him."

He must have been in such a good mood that he didn't mind me comparing him to a literal animal.

"Are you gonna pet me, too?" He replied with a hilarious smile.

I doubted there was a world where Aaron didn't have the upper hand in a conversation. He was always so shameless with his off-the-cuff

responses.

"Come here and find out."

Aaron was a very tall man, and even though I was wearing high heels, it would've been a struggle to reach up and tie his bow tie for him.

He obediently bent down without a word, at just the right height for me to work comfortably and make sure the bow tie wasn't crooked.

But he was a little too close.

His breath hit my face and warmed the tip of my nose while my fingers

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swiftly finished tying

The heat of his breath got even closer still, but I calmly continued adjusting his collar

Just as his nose was about to touch mine, I pulled away.

"Alright, the mirror's right there. Does it look good?" I patted him on the shoulder and shattered the intimate atmosphere that was building between us.

Aaron bit his lip and took a deep breath. It was a way of calming himself-of refusing to be provoked.

"You can see the mirror too. Does it look good?" He smiled sarcastically.

I narrowed my eyes as I teased him. "If that's your way of asking me to check you out, it won't work."

"Really?" He met my mocking with a good temper and moved his body closer to mine.

"No." I put my hands on his chest and pushed him before turning away

But he wasn't done yet.

Aaron put his hands on my hips and slowly walked me backward until I gently bumped into the dressing table. There was nowhere for me to

go as he massaged small circles into my skin.

"Your charity thing starts in thirty minutes. We need to go." I hastily reminded him. We didn't have time to play around like this.

"Why don't we just go back to my place? The party can go to hell."

"You can go to hell!" I shoved him away and took a playful swing at his shoulder. He smiled and sidestepped it.

There really was no time for flirting.

As I sat in his Ferrari, his speed told me all I needed to know: we were running late.

"So... this party..." My voice was very loud in the quiet car.

He nodded to let me know he was listening, but his eyes stayed focused on the road.

"What's it for?"

I'd never been to an all-out charity gala, only the small thrift sales organized by the university. Students would donate things they didn't need anymore, and profits would be donated to various charities. Would it be the same tonight? I imagined that a charity auction by the rich would easily reach millions of dollars in total value.

Really, I had no clue.

"Good things. Obviously. It's held every year." Aaron steered freely in his hands. "And it raises funds to protect endangered wildlife."

"Where do those funds come from?"

"Auctions." After crossing the intersection, Aaron began to speed up. We must've been even later now. He drove quickly and spoke concisely.

"For what? I can't imagine anyone who goes to these things needing anything... Is it art? Land? Dinner with Warren Buffet?" Then I dropped my voice to whisper, "Chris Evans' underwear?"

He braked suddenly-another red light-and I jerked in my seat.

Aaron finally had a second to look at me. His eyes were incredulous, and he couldn't hold back his laughter.

"Olive, you really are a breath of fresh air."

"What?" I didn't know what was so funny.

"You always surprise me with the things you say. Like when you rejected me. Like Chris Evans' underwear. No one ever talks to me like that "

Uh...

What was I supposed to say? That Aaron surrounded himself with unimaginative yes-men? Not only would that be rude, but I knew it

certainly wasn't true either. Besides, auctioning a celebrity's underwear didn't seem that outlandish, right?

"What's so weird about that? Of course someone would buy his used underwear, especially his fans. It's Chris Evans. People will bid like crazy for it." I shrugged. He was making too much of a fuss out of this.

"No, I don't think it's a bad idea at all. If it's your underwear, I wouldn't hesitate to drop a hundred grand." Aaron's low voice still managed to fill the entire car. "Twice that if they were used."

I was sure the people on the street could hear his maddened laughter and filthy jokes.

"Thank you," I huffed with a roll of my eyes. "When I'm broke, I'll get back to you."

Then I cleared my throat and continued, "But what are you going to auction? Or were you going to buy something?"

"If you see anything you want, I'll buy it for you." Aaron fiddled with the steering wheel. "As for what I'm auctioning..."

The car slowed to a stop and I watched him with bated breath.

"It's myself."