

Chapter 24

A kiss

Aaron choked on his drink.

I immediately got excited.

Did I hit the nail on the head?!

I raised my eyebrows with a devious smirk. He must've done something with another man. I looked him up and down.

He's not bisexual, is he?

"Is this forbidden love of yours... for a man?" Truth be told, I have never been one for gossip, but Aaron was making it so easy to jump to conclusions.

He coughed harder and I watched his usual composed expression crack little by little. Everyone around us was looking at him now, but he couldn't stop coughing. Eventually, I had to drag him to the bathroom.

He leaned over the marble sink, still coughing. His neck was tense and his face was red. I patted him on the back while I waited for him to stop overreacting.

"Whatever it is, don't get so worked up. Take it slow. I have all night to listen." I felt wicked for it, but I couldn't conceal the joy and excitement in my tone.

After a few minutes, Aaron finally calmed down.

"Olive..." Aaron narrowed his eyes dangerously. "You would have a lot more fun spending the night listening to your own screams than to my old stories... I know I would..."

He leaned down again to splash his face with water before locking his glacial eyes on me again. Without looking away, he grabbed a paper towel off the countertop and handed it to me. Then he raised his eyebrows and motioned for me to wipe his face.

I didn't refuse.

I took it from him and lifted it to his mouth. His lips were soft, and the droplets of water rolling down his cheeks made him even sexier up close. I traced the corner of his mouth through the napkin, and when I looked up, I saw my smiling face reflected in his eyes.

"I'm just asking. You don't have to answer, but you don't have to kill yourself either. It's none of my business." I shrugged with a giggle.

"Can we just keep this between us?" Aaron's eyes darkened lustfully. He looked at me as if he was looking at prey.

"Maybe if you pay me..." I tossed the damp napkin in the trash, then leaned against the counter while I looked at him.

He didn't speak, but his mouth curled into a confident grin, his signature. He sighed, "I can think of a much better way to get you to keep your mouth shut."

"Oh, yeah?" I lifted my chin and waited for him to go on.

In the next second, it felt like my breath was stolen. The taste of champagne was warm on my mouth as Aaron's lips moved over mine. It was too much, too fast.

I struggled against him and tried to reason with him between

feverish kisses. I placed a hand on his chest, and through the fabric I felt the hardened strength of his muscles. His arms wrapped around my waist, clamped tightly around me, and pulled me harshly against him.

There was no escape. He kissed me from every direction, no matter how I turned my head. He pressed his body forward and pinned me against the counter. My attempts to shove him away looked like gentle caresses against his unmoving form.

His tongue forced its way into my mouth and swirled in hypnotic circles. He lapped at my lips like a man dying of thirst. A few times, his tongue flicked at the roof of my mouth.

"No... A-Aaron..." I could barely say a whole word. I was only able to slip out a single syllable between breaths.

When Aaron said he'd shut me up, I never imagined this. I made it clear I didn't want to kiss him because it felt too intimate! He'd always respected that before... And we weren't anything more than friends with benefits at this point. What was the point of kissing?

I didn't know why Aaron was acting this way all of a sudden. He was kissing me uncontrollably. No matter how much I wanted to refuse-how much I wanted to escape-he wouldn't let go of me. It felt like he was a desperate addict, and my lips were his drug.

My brain went blank. I couldn't see anything. Couldn't hear anything. I had the vague sense that someone pushed the bathroom door open, but it didn't seem like there was anyone inside except for us.

Aaron's hands wandered down my back and made me shiver. With that, the final shred of my resolve disintegrated. His kisses were so goddamn delicious... I accepted his every lick and bite, and surrendered myself to him without any more

resistance.

It wasn't that I hated his kisses. I just didn't have it in me to be as passionate.

Finally, he let me go.

I felt like I'd swallowed too much of his saliva-like I was drunk on it. My chest heaved violently from the lack of oxygen, and my dress was being pushed even further down. I must've looked embarrassingly ravaged. Hopefully my makeup wasn't ruined...

Aaron didn't seem like he was having an easy time either. He panted harshly, and the smell of the air freshener was a harsh jerk to reality, away from the raw intimacy of the moments before. It left the atmosphere confusing and ambiguous.

He loosened his bow tie so he could undo the top two buttons on his white shirt, and I watched a blush creep up his face.

Was he shy?

I'm the one who should be shy!

"There..." He spoke first but stopped short. He bit his lip, then finally seemed to make up his mind.

"Someone came in. Just

now."

Was that why he was so flustered? My attention was wholly focused on him... Did he really have the awareness to notice

someone coming in?

But I understood why he might've been worried. This could be serious. Maybe gossip was rushing through the building right now: Aaron was kissing a redhead in the bathroom!

"Why did you kiss me?" I asked once I finally calmed by breathing.

It was too sudden, and this was hardly a romantic place. Our awkward conversation wasn't helping the mood either.

The most important thing was—we were just two betrayers.

"I've always wanted to kiss you. Ever since I first saw you." His eyes flickered, and I saw the desire still burning in them.

"Don't do that." I wanted to be stern-to tell him to not be so thoughtless-but he interrupted me.

"I was so jealous that he came to pick you up today." He spat. "You ran to him. Kissed him."

After a few seconds, I realized what he meant.

He actually saw me with Vincent earlier.

My face flushed. Sure, at the time there had been several people passing by. It wasn't like I was trying to be subtle when I kissed him. Hell, I wanted Emily to hear it! I didn't care who

saw us!

But the idea of Aaron watching...

"And I was thinking... If you could kiss me like that, just once... I could die happy."