

Chapter 134

Chapter 134. Emily Is Victim! My tone was calm, but I knew Aaron could hear the distress and frustration layered just beneath the surface. Aaron sighed and held me tightly in his arms. "Olive, I regret telling you all of this. Please don't think about it anymore. You haven't done anything wrong here." I shook my head and pushed him away. I knew the intimate, seductive scent of amber on his body would distract me, and I needed to clear my head right now. Despite a few gaps in my knowledge, I tried to imagine the timeline as clearly as possible. I attended graduate school in the Midwest, and it was during that time that I decided I would apply to Columbia for my PhD. As I prepared to apply, I started paying attention to the top students at Columbia University. That was when I met Vincent. He was handsome, funny, smart, and he was an intern at Morgan Stanley. With his academic passion and his great sense of style, I couldn't help liking him immediately. When Vincent found out I was trying to choose a school for my PhD, he enthusiastically started introducing me to professors and researchers at Columbia, helping me gain a foothold at the college. From his actions, anyone would have realized he was falling for me. But although Vincent was warm and friendly, he wasn't too aggressive, and he kept some distance between us. He always spoke respectfully to me, and even when no one was around, he never tried anything inappropriate. He seemed both sincere and polite in every interaction. Our relationship only progressed to another level when he got his official job offer from Morgan Stanley. When he heard the news, he was as happy and giddy as a kid in a candy store. His eyes lit up with excitement, and he jumped up to hug me in the restaurant where we were eating. Finally, he pulled me into a secluded corner, covered my eyes with his hands, and asked softly, "Olive, can I kiss you now?" That was the day Vincent got his job offer, and it was also the first day that Vincent and I were officially together. After that, we went on several dates, and Vincent carefully chose the location each time. I had offers from several universities, but the professor I admired the most had a full research lab and was no longer offering PhD positions. Largely because of Vincent, I finally chose to accept my offer from Columbia University. During those early stages of our relationship, Vincent became more and more involved with his career, and I was busy with my studies. We didn't have time to go on as many dates as before, but whenever I was exhausted from a long day at the lab, he would take time off and take me on a vacation to relax. He cared for me in every possible way, and even when we weren't together, I knew he was thinking about me. That's why I felt so embarrassed and angry when I found out that Vincent was having an affair with Emily. But now I was finding out that our entire life together had been a lie. Judging from the timeline Aaron had explained to me, Vincent and Emily knew each other well before I came into the picture. From Emily's perspective, Vincent was having an affair with me! This was almost too much for me to take. I was short of breath, overwhelmed by pain and betrayal, and I tried to stop thinking about it. But my mind was already racing ahead, and I realized that Vincent must have wanted to get rid of Emily after he successfully used her to get his job at Morgan Stanley. Maybe meeting me had seemed like the perfect opportunity to do that. "Olive." Aaron put his arms around my trembling shoulders and pulled me in close to him, planting a feather-light kiss on my forehead. "Can you try to calm down?" I choked out a bitter laugh. "Aaron, did Vincent stop seeing Emily because of me?" I thought of Emily's undisguised hostility and resentment toward me. At the time, I thought Emily was completely in the wrong. From my perspective, she had seduced my boyfriend away, and she'd tried to start fights with me on several occasions. But from Emily's perspective, all that provocation was completely justified! How could she not blame me for taking Vincent away from her? She had known Vincent longer than me, and she'd put more effort into their relationship, even going so far as to help Vincent get a good job and elevate his status in society. But in the end, once Vincent had everything he wanted, he abandoned her and ran off with me instead. In being with the man I thought I loved, how badly had I hurt Emily? Aaron's expression stiffened. He didn't answer my question, just came over and kissed me on the lips, obviously trying to distract me. As he started to pin me to the bed again, I reached up and braced a hand against his shoulder. "Not now, Aaron." "Okay, okay." Aaron sat up and started toying with my fingers absentmindedly, still pointedly ignoring my question. But by this point, I was so desperate for answers. I turned my face toward's Aaron's and locked eyes with him before I asked again, "Aaron, tell me. Did he dump Emily for me? Is that the truth?" Aaron glanced away uncomfortably, unable to hold my gaze. But as he realized he couldn't avoid my questions any longer, he grabbed my palm and kissed it before saying quietly, "Yes. Before that, Emily and Vincent were a couple." Even though I had prepared myself to hear this, I was still devastated to hear Aaron say this. Not only did I feel hurt by Vincent's deception, but I also felt bad for how Emily had suffered. My eyelashes fluttered inadvertently. "So... Emily is the real victim." And I was partly responsible for what happened to her! I suddenly understood all of Emily's hatred toward me. In her mind, I was the homewrecker who destroyed her relationship with Vincent!