

## Chapter 20

I gaped like an idiot for five whole seconds.

“Wow~ Are you sure this is a charity for animals? Or is it human trafficking instead?”

I had to admit that Aaron's answer was even more scandalous than what I'd been thinking

Was this what rich men got a kick out of"? I'd heard from Cinder that the wealthier someone is the stranger their hobbies are. They might buy some odd things here and there, but to purchase the auctioneer himself... That was something else.

Aaron wasn't even in a position where he needed to put himself on the auction table. This must have been purely voluntary on his part

“It's not what you think,” he said as he parked the car.

He put his hands on the steering wheel and turned his head to look at me. My expression amused him, and he kept smiling with squinted eyes as if he'd just witnessed the joke of the century.

His smirk made me think of another possibility. One more in line with his lustful nature

I covered my mouth with one hand as my pupils dilated. I was staring at him like he was an alien. Like he'd grown a second head right in front of me.

“You mean you're auctioning your...” I trailed off. My mind was filled with images of Aaron rolling in the sheets with another woman. I racked my brain for some way to phrase it decently

Aaron raised his eyebrows like he was daring me to outright say it.

“... your time?” That felt more appropriate. I originally wanted to say ‘your body’, but if I had, he might have said something about giving me a discount or something else just as suggestive and lecherous.

That would've been a cheap way to derail the conversation! I couldn't let him off that easily.

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He nodded, pursed his lips, and tilted his head to one side as he considered my guess.

“Almost.”

I felt as if I was getting closer to the truth. The idea of Aaron sleeping with another woman made me feel strange. My heart didn't hurt at the thought, so I knew I wasn't jealous. I was, however, curious about what kind of woman he'd be sleeping with.

How would he treat her?

Wait.

I remembered Daisy saying that Aaron wasn't the most open man. Even with his one-night stands, he was always emotionally restrained. It wasn't like he slept with just anyone either. On the contrary, his

standards were very high.

The fact he was set up with Cinder on a blind date already explained a lot. I'd heard that Aaron doesn't always go to the dinners that are arranged for him. Even if he ended up rejecting all of his dates by the end of the night, the only women he's met with are the same caliber as Cinder.

His one-night stands are anything but ordinary. Daisy was a good example, but no matter how beautiful and capable these women were, none were immune to Aaron's charm. I remembered one time when

Vincent took me to one of his parties. There were some small-name models, and Vincent took the time to point out which ones had slept with Aaron.

Why would Aaron allow himself to be auctioned off to an irrelevant woman like this?

Then again, if he were sold to the middle-aged widow of some late billionaire, things would get interesting.

My eyes wandered back and forth across Aaron's face, and I started to get the feeling that things weren't as simple as I was imagining.

Aaron looked at me, put his hand on the back of my neck, and asked, “What's on your mind now?”

“I was just wondering...” I hesitated but still couldn't hold back. “Did you ask me out to keep your crazy ex away? Or some suitor I don't know about?”

I thought this could've been the only reason. Aaron probably wanted me there so I could outbid any woman he didn't want to spend the night with

“You...” He frowned at me, confused for a moment. “My G\*d, Olive. You should be a writer with an imagination like that.”

My forehead wrinkled and I opened my mouth to say something-I didn't think there was anything wrong with my guess-but Aaron spoke first. “If I'm done with a woman, the relationship's over. That's that.” His voice was at least an octave lower, a rich baritone in the small space.

“And if I'm interested in someone, I make time to spend with her. I find a way to let her know.” His hand gripped the steering wheel, and the shoulders of his blazer were pulled taut from the tension in his arms. “Then sooner or later, she's mine.”

The atmosphere shifted into something more... murky.

I averted my eyes. I didn't want to probe Aaron's mind anymore. I bowed my head and began unbuckling my seat belt. The party would start in a few minutes.

Aaron followed suit, and he stopped staring at me to unbuckle his own seatbelt. As he did so, he promised, “I wouldn't use you for something like this. I wouldn't need to. If I wanted someone or something, I could get it myself. Don't worry.”

“What makes you so sure?” I'd always wondered that. I know Aaron

was in a unique position, but that didn't mean his schemes were airtight. There was always room for miscalculation. For accidents.

He lifted his chin with a lazy grin. “Because I'm Aaron Morris.”

I was stunned.

What a hyper-masculine narcissist!

I scoffed, then turned my head toward him and asked seriously, “Have you ever not gotten what you wanted?”

“As long as you have a good plan, you'll succeed. It's simple. It's just that very, very few people can actually commit to it.”

“But there are always surprises. Not everything goes according to plan.”

“That's because it wasn't a good plan to begin with. It's like a basic probability problem: you have to factor in all the possibilities beforehand.” He shrugged.

“Right. And you went to college knowing you'd quit before graduating,” I pressed. No one enrolled just to drop out later.

“Aww... You got me there, darling.” Aaron gave me a rare roll of his eyes, but he didn't seem put off by my comment. “I obviously didn't plan on dropping out.”

“Ooh! He admits it!” I whistled as if I was calling for an encore. I'd

always been the type to gloat over the smallest victories.

“When I enrolled, the university was the best platform for me to expand my perspective. As soon as it stopped providing that—or start going against my overall goal in life-dropping out became the best decision.” He smiled, indifferent. “Having no skills or direction is much more terrifying than having no diploma.”

I knew I never stood a chance in a debate against him.

I sighed, “So it was never about not being able to find a partner.”

“Yes.” Aaron's eyes flickered. “I've simply stopped trying.”