

## Chapter 6

Aaron's accusation brought me back to reality. Emily was the one sitting at the table with Vincent's arm wrapped around her, so what did that make me?

His friends watched with rapt attention, and none of them dared to make a sound. Their eyes flicked between us, taking in the drama as it unfolded. My torture felt like cheap entertainment.

Suddenly, I didn't want to struggle anymore.

Emily bit her lip. The way she pouted and batted her eyelashes at Vincent made me sick to my stomach.

"Quit fucking playing. Get your hands off my girlfriend." Vincent's patience ran thin. I saw the anger simmering in his eyes as his breathing grew heavier, his chin lifting slightly. It seemed as if he'd strike Aaron out of anger at any moment.

VILLE

It made me a bit excited, to be honest.

Vincent's enraged expression made me feel... giddy. My frustration morphed into something that felt like satisfaction. I was vindicated. I'd learned of his betrayal in the cold quiet of our empty apartment, but now that he was exposed in public, now that he was shamed in front of his friends he distanced me from—he was caught, in every sense of the word.

"I said no," Aaron replied coolly, mimicking Vincent's chin raise, mocking him

Vincent jerked his arm away from Emily, snarling. "Get the fuck off me!" In the next second, he was throwing a punch.

The table shook as he lunged forward, and Emily screamed, trying to pull Vincent back. A few of his other friends stepped in to hold him, but he shook them off.

Aaron rushed to put me behind him, then ducked out of the way of Vincent's hook

Vincent didn't stop

We had the full attention of everyone in the bar now, and some had their phones out to record the show. Vincent's friends stepped back, giving up on trying to stop him.

It's normal to enjoy competition over yourself, right?

At that moment, I felt like Helen of Troy, though I knew that couldn't have been further from the truth.

But as much as I was thrilled by the confrontation, it wasn't the showdown with Vincent that I wanted. I didn't understand what Aaron was trying to accomplish by picking a fight like this, either.

I quickly walked around the two scuffling men and grabbed Vincent's arm, trying to calm him.

"Stop!" I shouted, using every ounce of strength in my body to hold Vincent still, but it was no use. He shoved me away and charged once more toward Aaron.

ILF 17

I slammed into the edge of the table, pain sweeping across my ribs as tears sprang to my eyes.

I could already imagine the nasty bruise that was going to appear later

It took all of my willpower not to rush up and punch Vincent myself.

But for some reason, I only noticed Aaron's alarmed expression. He paused, taking his focus off of Vincent, and shouted at me, "Are you crazy?!"

Vincent took advantage of Aaron's distraction, ramming his fist into his face. Aaron staggered back with a busted lip, blood staining his mouth crimson. I was ashamed that my first thought was that, in his disheveled state, he looked incredibly sexy

"Aaron!" A woman's scream rang out suddenly, "Aaron, darling, are you okay?!"

A woman I didn't recognize rushed forward, her auburn hair falling around her face. It was the same color as mine.

And... oddly enough, we shared the same shade of green eyes.

Our figures were strikingly similar as well.

We weren't related—we didn't share the same face—but I was certain that everyone around us couldn't tell us apart at first sight.

She shoved Vincent away, throwing her arms around Aaron.

IL

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?!" She screamed, glaring daggers at Vincent. Her arms were crossed tightly over her chest, and she

stood between the two men. "You better be fucking ready for court because I will ruin your life for laying your filthy hands on my boyfriend. My father has close ties with the chief of police—the NYPD is in his back pocket! Just you fucking wait!"

Everyone froze, and Vincent stared at her with wide eyes. I felt the crowd's confused glances between her and me, but I only met Aaron's intense gaze.

"I'm sorry, who are you?" Vincent asked, taking a napkin Emily meekly handed him and wiping blood from the corner of his mouth.

I narrowed my eyes, clutching my ribs with one hand while I watched the scene unfold.

Now that I thought about it, Aaron had never actually given me a straight answer when I asked if he was single, had he? I'd just assumed he was... Now I've gone and slept with another woman's boyfriend.

My heart ached for her. Not only was she his girlfriend, but we looked somewhat alike! I must've been some cheap substitute for Aaron.

I pursed my lips even tighter.

"I'm Molly Miller," she said matter-of-factly. "His girlfriend. Who the hell are you?"

"Girlfriend?" People around me whispered, "Aaron actually has a girlfriend?"

The man in question still didn't say anything, and his stare seemed more humiliating to me than anything else.

"Aaron, I think you've had a little too much to drink," Emily suddenly said. After glancing back and forth between Molly and me, she said more confidently, "You have Olive confused with someone else."

Aaron kept staring at me, not saying a word. There was a great deal of tension in the room.

"You mean the redhead?" Molly looked at me in surprise as if she just noticed I was there. "Who is she, Aaron?"

Her demeanor dripped with hostility. She didn't even bother asking me what my name was. How arrogant could she be?

I didn't think I could be humiliated anymore tonight. Any victory I felt over Vincent's torment was washed away by my shame at this moment.

"This is Olive. My girlfriend," Vincent said, coming over and taking me by the shoulders. I stayed silent, letting him put his arm around me with no protest. I didn't care who I was with anymore, I just wanted to leave. My head spun with anxiety. Stepping into this damn bar must've been the biggest mistake of my life.

Aaron snickered, but as soon as he took a step toward us, Vincent turned his body to keep me away from him.

Aaron stopped in his tracks, thinking, then suddenly leaned forward to examine my face. I couldn't meet his eyes this time.

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"Aren't you my...?" Aaron's mirthful tone had been replaced with a sharp harshness.

63276 "You're not thinking straight, man," Vincent told him, though his

tone carried an unspoken warning

"Aaron, you're drunk!" Molly repeated with a shriek. "Look, baby, it's me. I'm here now." She pulled Aaron away, turning him toward her for a hug. She glared at me over his shoulder. "It's over. Don't worry about her."

Then the door suddenly swung open.

"NYPD. We got a call about a fight here?" The officers that stepped in brandished their badges, ordering everyone to stay calm and cooperate.

And so the night ended with a trip to the local police station, where they took our statements.

It was well past midnight when we were finally released.

Luckily the owner of the bar didn't try to press charges. He was content with Aaron apologizing and paying for the damages.

Back home

Between the light at the bar and the questioning at the station, Vincent and I didn't say a word to each other. I knew one of us was just waiting for the other to speak first. I decided that that person wouldn't be me: I tossed my bag on the couch and lashed a set of pajamas out of my dresser, heading straight for the shower.

Vincent was visibly upset. Without saying a word, he put himself be

tween me and the bathroom door. Not having the energy to argue, I simply stepped to the side.

So did he.

I held my breath. Even though I was the one who caught his infidelity first, I felt solely responsible for the situation. Vincent's breath was ragged as he grabbed my hand, keeping me from walking away from him.

"What's going on with you and Aaron?"