

Chapter 38

Truth or dare?

"Your girl's been killing it," Matt snickered. "You should've seen Aaron scramble to be on her team."

Vincent laughed, "Really? Is that true, Aaron?"

Aaron didn't respond. Instead, he kept a blank expression while he lined up his next shot...

Strike!

"Damn!" The crowd swore as they cheered.

Around seven o'clock, more people

started arriving one after the other, so we cleaned up the game and headed to the massive dining area.

There were more than twenty people gathered to eat, drink, and sing together. Near the table, there were two sofas side by side. On one, I sat next to Vincent. On the other, Aaron was lounging with a beautiful woman I didn't recognize. She leaned into him with most of her body held in his arms while she spoke quietly in his ear.

I got up, stretched, and went to the bathroom to check my phone.

Nothing.

When I realized I only checked because I'd expected Aaron to send me a message, I felt irritated with him.

That bastard!

On my way back, I saw Emily sitting next to Vincent. She was turned to face him with her chest pressed against his while she giggled and showed him something on her phone.

Vincent grinned as he pointed to something on the screen, and Emily slapped his hand away with a smirk. They were holding each other as if no one else was around.

but

I started walking up to them before they noticed me, Vincent must've finally seen me when I was about ten feet away. He quickly shoved Emily off of him and held out a hand to pull me down next to him. Emily sat back on the other side of Vincent.

There wasn't a hint of shame or embarrassment on her face. Instead, she smiled and said, "So Olive... My friend's in a band, and they have a concert in two days. Vincent already said he was down. Do you wanna come too?"

"I'm

not really interested in that sort of thing," I said with an apologetic smile. Then I turned to Vincent, "So it'll just be the two of you?"

"No," he said.

"It's still up in the air. Emily can save you a good seat if you change your mind." Vincent must've thought I was jealous; as he spoke, he scratched my chin with his fingers, as if placating his pet.

From the corner of my eye, I saw Emily's plastic smile. It made my blood curdle in my veins, and I turned my head away to avoid Vincent's empty show of affection.

"I want to go home," I said.

It was one o'clock now, and half the guests

had already said their goodbyes and left. The rest of the party was made up of Aaron's closest friends.

Vincent gave me an embarrassed grimace. "Aaron already

booked a room for us here. I don't wanna drive you home after I drank."

"Then let's go to our room now."

He leaned in to whisper in my ear, "Just sit here for now. I'll go up with you later, babe."

I didn't say anything to him after that. With a huff, I huddled in the corner of the couch and messed around on my phone until I heard someone call me. When I turned to look, I saw

Daisy waving at me.

I wasn't able

to get a good look at her while she was out on the terrace, but now I could see she was wearing a pink sequined dress. It was a tough

thing to pull off, but she made it work. She looked sexy without seeming too vulgar.

With a smile, I got up and made my way over to sit with her.

Vincent followed close behind. "You wanted to talk to Olive?"

Daisy gave him a customer-service smile and nodded, "I did. You can go now." She took my hand in one of hers while shooing Vincent away with her other. "Relax! I'm not gonna eat her."

She moved over to make space for me to sit next to her.

Of course, this put me between her and Aaron.

He'd been sitting sideways, but he took his legs off the bench so that I could sit at the table with them. Then he straightened up and handed me a glass of champagne.

"Thanks," I said as nonchalantly as I could manage.

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Daisy spoke up, "Pass the deck, boss."

Aaron reached across the table to grab the box of cards, and I leaned back a little so he could pass them to Daisy. Instead, he snaked his arm behind me to hand them to her, and I froze up at the feeling of him lightly brushing against me.

After she took the deck from him, Aaron withdrew his hand just enough to place his palm flat against the small of my back. Startled, I turned to look at him.

He'd been drinking a lot tonight, and even though his eyes were still bright, his focus seemed a bit scattered. I felt his hand slide down to hold my waist gently.

Subconsciously, I looked

to Vincent, who'd gone back to his seat on the sofa. He was too distracted by his phone to notice Aaron holding me, and sure enough, Emily was also tapping away on her phone next to him.

It was ridiculous. He was my boyfriend, yet there he was busy texting his mistress who was sitting right next to him.

And here I was with another man's arm around me, right next to Daisy.

Everyone was stealing their secondhand love.

I bit my lip as I leaned forward to pick up my glass, and I felt the warmth of Aaron's hand vanish.

Daisy gave me a wink and a smirk while she shuffled the deck, and the corner of my mouth twitched. She knew exactly what was going on between me and Aaron, and she was even enabling it!

As she dealt the cards, Vincent sat down across the table from us. He cracked open a can of beer and rubbed my arm. "What's up?"

Emily took a seat right beside him. "Everyone's over here. What's going on?"

Daisy shrugged and dealt them into the casual card game, and everyone chatted as they played. I rarely spent time with Vincent's friends like this, and when I looked around the table, I was surprised to see two of the guys making out.

Daisy must've noticed my confusion because she whispered to me, "He's gay—pretty open about it—but the guy on the right has a girlfriend."

I suddenly knew why everyone was so interested in staying late. Seeing their friends drunk like this was entertaining to them.

By the fifth game, I was caught up with the group's dynamics.

That was when Alex, who'd lost the last round, asked me, "Truth or dare?"

The past couple of dares I'd watched play out were too... out there for me. Frenching a random person at the table. Showing everyone your favorite sex position. Deep throating a banana.

"Truth."

Alex hesitated, apparently unprepared for that answer.

"Hey! Don't pick on my girlfriend!" Vincent interjected.

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Alex laughed, "Whoa there. Chill out, loverboy."

I wondered if Alex was playing dumb for my sake or if he really didn't know Vincent was cheating. I glanced over at Emily, who was biting her lip.

Aaron leaned over and said something in Alex's ear, then Alex nodded and asked, "Truth, Olive. What attracted you to Vincent?"

My boyfriend glanced at me with a smile, "Careful now. You wanna be able to walk in the morning."

Everyone laughed and teased, "Get a room!"

Aaron's eyes burned holes into me while he idly played with his lighter. Emily was staring at Vincent too. She looked nervous like she was holding her breath.

I smiled: "He wore a nice outfit on our first date."