

Why Are You Here?

Aaron watched her leave the room, his heart in his throat. "What have I done?" He muttered. He pinched the bridge of his nose. He had been terrified when he saw Beau and Susan sitting there. Susan had panicked when she saw Evie was in Beau's condo building, but Aaron had shrugged it off when Evie said she was at Marise's. He figured she lived in that area, and Beau and Evie never talked; they had no reason to meet. Susan was convinced they knew and were fucking each other, but Evie would never do that to him.

He realized if she found out he was taking Susan to her parent's house, she would never forgive him and slowly sat down as fear filled his entire body. God, he had fucked up so badly. He hadn't wanted to hurt her like this, and watching her with Beau today had damn near broken him, the way her face lit up when he said she was his favorite author. He had been sincere, too; that wasn't something Beau would lie about. Aaron had never even read her book. She had signed a copy of her first one for his birthday the night they started dating, and it sat on his bedside table, still in pristine condition. She hadn't done that again; she just had taken his lack of interest with her usual quiet acceptance. He was surprised to hear she had more than one published and realized, at some point, she had just stopped telling him about her life.

Aaron heard her moving around upstairs when suddenly there was a crash, and she swore loudly. He jumped up and raced up the stairs, terrified she had hurt herself. When he reached the top, he heard her sobbing and followed the sound to her office. "Evie?" He said quietly. "Are you hurt?" He pushed open the door and saw she had knocked her laptop off her desk and split the screen from the keyboard. She was sitting on the floor next to it with her head in her hands. "Oh Sweetheart, it's ok. We'll get it fixed." She drew her knees up to her chest and sobbed louder, shaking her head. He walked in and bent down to pick it up. As he stood up with it, he saw the hole in the wall. She had thrown the laptop, he realized. "Evie! Why did you do that?" He felt a rush of anger that she would be so ungrateful. The laptop had cost him a lot of money.

Her phone rang; she jumped to her feet, snatched the laptop from him, and ran from the room. "Evie! Come back here!" Aaron chased her down the stairs. "We need to talk about this." She wrenched the front door open and ran out. Aaron followed her and came to a dead halt when he saw her in Beau's arms.

Beau looked up at Aaron and leaned down to her ear. "I need to know what happened. Can I talk to Aaron?" She nodded but held onto him tighter; he gently rubbed her arms and waited for her to let him go. When she did, he helped her sit in the car, picked up the pieces of the laptop she had dropped and put them in the backseat, then went over to him, fighting to maintain his calm expression. "What happened?"

"Why are you here?"

"Because she called me crying so hard she couldn't speak. What happened?" Beau repeated.

"I don't know! She said she wanted to move out to give me space and to be less needy. I tried to hug her, and she freaked out! She told me not to touch her. She went upstairs, and ten minutes later, I heard a crash. When I checked on her, she had thrown her laptop at the wall. I told her we could get it fixed, and I guess you let her know you were here because she grabbed it from me and ran out." Aaron put his head in his hands. "I don't know what to do, Beau."

Beau looked over his shoulder at her in the car. "Give me a second." He walked over and opened the door. "Hey Doll. Are you ok?" She shook her head, reaching out and gripping his leather jacket tightly, sobbing and trying to catch her breath. "Did he touch you other than trying to hug you?" She shook her head again. "Okay, I'm gonna talk to him for a minute and then take you back to the condo." She nodded. "Just breathe. I'll be right back." Beau gently took her hand off his jacket, squeezed it, and walked back over to Aaron. "Let's go inside." Aaron nodded numbly and went in, sitting on the couch.

"What do you want Aaron?"

"What do you mean?"

"She told me what happened before you went on the job and that it's been two months of you treating her like crap." He became very serious. "Are you and Susan having an affair?"

"No! Of course not!" Aaron shouted. "How can you ask me that?"

Beau raised an eyebrow. "Because Susan has been treating me like crap for two months, too, you lied about going on jobs, and both of us agree that our relationships with you two have been going downhill for at least eight months." Aaron stared at him for a moment, then put his head in his hands again.

"I'm not. I wouldn't, I love her, and you're my best friend." He mumbled, unable to look Beau in the eye. Why would she call Beau to come to help her? He had made sure they barely knew each other. Was Susan right, and they slept with each other? "Why is she calling you? Are you guys fucking each other?"

Beau smiled inwardly. Typical. Way to project Aaron. "No. But funnily enough, Susan asked me the same thing. Evie slept in the spare room at my place. We were honest Aaron, we genuinely do forgive you for the whole job thing, and we want to move forward. But she's dealing with more than just you lying to her. She doesn't think you love her anymore. So I'll ask again, What do you want, Aaron? Do you want her back, or do you want to cut your losses and give up?"

"She had a panic attack when I hugged her." Aaron looked out the window at her sitting in the car. She was staring at the ceiling, still crying. "Can I get her back?"

Beau paused. "She what?"

"I hugged her, but she pushed me away and couldn't catch her breath."

"I'm taking her with me; she can't be here." Beau said abruptly as he turned to leave.

"No! She's my wife, and she's not going with you." Aaron reached out and grabbed Beau's arm roughly. He was not losing her to Beau. He could accept literally anyone else but Beau.

"Yeah, and when you touch her, she has a panic attack, so now I'm concerned about her well-being here."

"Why do you care so much all of a sudden?"

"Why did you tell me she hated me and tell her that I hated her? I never hated her, and I definitely never said she was annoying. She is needy, but where you see that as a burden, I see it as a reaction and a request to be loved. I've always liked and cared about her. I only stepped back because I thought she didn't like me."

"And yeah, she thinks I'm a pessimistic asshole, but she also likes it and thinks it's funny. So why did you need to keep your best friend and wife away from each other? We both love you, Aaron, and we would never do anything to hurt you. I dropped her off this morning, and she was fine. Less than four hours later, I get a phone call where she can't articulate words because she's crying so hard. Of course I came; I was worried about her."

"Susan won't like you having her there." Aaron was grasping at straws. He desperately didn't want Evie going to Beau's condo.

"Well, Susan accused me of cheating and asked for a separation when we got home because I'm too happy. So I don't think she's gonna care that much. I'm gonna get her to pack a bag, stay in the living room." Beau walked out to the car again.