

## We'll Fix This

After a few minutes of driving around, Aaron felt the guilt break through his anger. Evie was right; he had been a terrible husband. She didn't realize how horrible. And the worst part was it wasn't her fault; it was 100% on him, and it was his choices and actions now affecting the woman he had chosen to love, cherish and honor above everything and everyone else.

He should have been less of a coward and just took her up on the offer of divorce when she woke up after her operation, but she had so much going on at once. First, she got sick; then, her boss and long-time family friend, Tommy Sloane, fired her from her job as his assistant at Sloane Contracting Services and cut her off after finding out she was his sister. That was followed within weeks by the uterine cancer diagnosis with the devastating news that she would need to have a hysterectomy. He wanted to be there and support her. He devoted all his energy and focus to helping her recover, reassuring her that he loved her. They would find a surrogate to have the family they wanted.

Aaron had started looking immediately but quickly realized he didn't like the idea of another woman carrying his child with his wife, even if it was biologically theirs. He wanted to experience her pregnancy with her, and he backed off without saying anything to her. She hadn't seemed to mind much and just let it go like she did most things.

His ex-girlfriend, who he had dated while he and Evie were broken up for a brief time, Susan Fairchild, started working at Sloane with him. She had lost it on him when she found out that he had gone back to Evie despite telling her he loved her and accused him of using her. She then started dating Beau Corbin, his best friend, and partner at Sloane and convinced him to marry her after a year. Aaron had been jealous and angry at first, then Evie had needed him, and he forgot all about Susan for a while.

But Beau was infertile too, and they had turned to each other for comfort. Comfort became an emotional affair, and they started sleeping together four months ago. Then, two months ago, they decided they wanted to be together and have the family they had discussed. But Susan wanted Beau to leave her and suggested they drive their spouses away, so they had spent the last two months doing that. Susan said Beau had just withdrawn into himself and was spending more time at his condo. Still, Evie had tried several times to fix whatever was happening. She tried to spend more time with him, made his favorite foods, and gave him space while being supportive and kind. She went against her usual affectionate and loving nature to give him what he told her wanted after every argument he started with her. Being called out so directly had rattled him, and when she took the blame on herself, he had hit her with a low blow.

The truth was he loved her, and he loved her a lot. But she couldn't give him what he wanted, and it was eating away at him that he was hurting her so much. He turned the car around and headed back to their house. When he returned from Maine, he would ask for a divorce and hoped he could convince Susan to do the same. He hated what he was doing to Evie and Beau and wanted it to end. He hoped they never found out about the affair; he didn't want to lose them.

When he got back to the house, he saw that she had turned out all the lights. Not even the porch light was on, and he frowned. She always left the porch light on for him. Fumbling in the dark, he entered the code for the front door, and it clicked, but when he tried to open the door, it wouldn't budge. He realized she had turned the deadbolt and dug out his keys. He found the deadbolt key and let himself in. The first thing he saw when he entered was the blanket and pillow at the bottom of the stairs. His frown deepened. She never made him sleep on the couch. His heart began to beat harder. This wasn't Evie. She never punished him for his behavior. Looking up the stairs, he hesitated briefly, then decided to do as she clearly wanted him to and stay away from her.

Aaron picked up the blanket and pillow and went to the living room. He set up the couch and started to take off his clothes when he saw the paperwork on the coffee table. He picked them up and read the title. "A Affidavit of Defendant in Action For Divorce." His stomach dropped, and he slowly sat down. She had done it. This was what he wanted... Wasn't it? Panic filled him, he ran up the stairs and tried to get into their bedroom, but she had locked the door. He knocked frantically. "Evie! Evie, Sweetheart, please let me in."

There was no response except a soft sob on the other side. "Evie, I will break down the door." He waited a few minutes and then heard the knob click and her moving away. He slowly opened the door and saw her standing on the other side of the bed, her deep blue eyes red and swollen. "What is this?" He held out the papers.

"I want a divorce." Her voice was hoarse and sad. "I don't deserve to be treated the way you have been treating me."

"Evie, I'm sorry. I've been under a lot of stress and taking it out on you." He walked toward her, and she backed up, bumping into the nightstand. He stopped. Was she afraid of him?

"I don't want you to touch me. Go away, Aaron."

"Evie, we need to have more of a discussion. You can't just dump this on me before I leave on a job."

"You're always leaving on a job. When else was I supposed to do this?" She raised her eyebrow at him.

"I promise I'll take time off after I'm done, and we'll work on us." He slowly walked up and gently pulled her into a hug.

"It's too late." She muttered. She didn't pull away but didn't respond to him either.

"It's not. I love you, and we'll fix this." He put a finger under her chin and tipped her head up, kissing her softly as his other hand reached for her breast.

"Aaron, I don't think..."

"Don't think. Just let me fix this." He murmured as he kissed down her neck. God, he didn't want to have to do this tonight, but he needed her to stay. Luckily, he was still just as physically attracted to her as he was when they started dating, and his body responded to the feel of her compact, hourglass figure beneath his hands and against his body. He fisted his hand in her long, silky, dark brown hair and held her to him.

Evie could feel the distance, feel that he didn't want to make love to her, but she had no energy to stop it. Aaron barely touched her for foreplay, her body responded to his touch enough that he could slide into her, but after a few minutes, he pulled out. Unable to look her in the eyes, knowing he was leaving to be with his lover in the morning, he lost his erection as disgust in himself washed over him. He rolled over and stared at the door. After a few minutes of silence, Evie must have thought he was asleep because he heard her move away and quietly sob beside him. She cried the entire night, and he couldn't bring himself to touch or leave her in her pain, so he just lay beside her, knowing her pain was his fault, but not once thinking to change his plans and stay home with her and work on their marriage.

Early the next morning, he got up and packed a bag. Usually, she would get up, make him his coffee and breakfast, and see him off at the door, but today she didn't move. When he was ready to go, he crouched beside her, noticing sadly that she avoided looking at him. "We'll talk when I get back Evie, okay?" She shrugged. He lightly kissed her cheek and left the room.

When Evie heard the door shut, she got out of bed, showered, and went back to bed. She needed to think.