

## AENWH 283

### Chapter 283: Has She Begun To Appreciate My Effort?

Katrina hears the footsteps outside fade away. When she doesn't hear any further sound, she turns on the tap and washes her hands.

"No matter how much I care about Marcellus, I'll always be an unscrupulous, profit-seeking woman in Mrs. Brook's eyes," she thinks sadly. "How could she think so lowly of me? Just because I'm a poor orphan. Just because I don't have a real family?"

Katrina leaves the bathroom with a heavy heart. Disappointed, she returned back to Aaron's side. She didn't want to participate at Marcellus's wedding, but she can't do anything because Aaron brought him here.

After the wedding banquet, Katrina and Aaron make their way back home.

Katrina is physically and emotionally exhausted. After trying to find a comfortable position against the car window, she finally holds Aaron's arm and leans against his shoulder.

Unconsciously, she becomes more and more comfortable with him.

Aaron always acts like her boyfriend and protects her. Gradually, she becomes more accustomed to his presence and starts to depend on him. She doesn't notice that her actions become more dependent on this man whom she hated.

"Having Aaron around doesn't seem like a bad thing anymore. I used to want to be as far away from him as possible, but now I've grown used to him. He always been with me and ready to lean a helping hand,"

Little by little, Katrina leaves her experience with Aaron in Hadley City in the past. After all the kindness and support that Aaron has done for her, she slowly starts to forgive all the harm he had caused her.

Suddenly feeling Katrina hold his arm and rest her head against his shoulder, Aaron smiles in surprise. Without Katrina saying anything, Aaron understands her feelings from her unconscious actions. To make her more comfortable, he stretches his arm around her shoulder and pulls her closer.

From their first meeting four years ago to their reunion in Hadley, from her running away from his oppression in Hadley to her gradual dependence in Abbe, his long road of pursuit finally pays off.

"Has she finally accepted me? Has she already begun to appreciate my effort?"

As Katrina starts to nod off in Aaron's arms, her phone suddenly rings. When she picks up her phone, she sees that Farrah is calling.

Is she calling to ask about Marcellus' wedding? Katrina answers the call with confusion. – The moment the call is connected, Farrah's anxious voice rings in Katrina's ear. "Katrina, where are you? Are you free now?" Hearing the unusual worry in Farrah's tone, Katrina quickly sits up in alarm. "Farrah, what happened? I'm free. What do you

need?"

“My neighbor just called me,” Farrah says anxiously. “He said Patton was taken away by some strangers while he was playing outside! They took him to the park, but my neighbor didn’t know what to do, so he called me. There’s an emergency at work, and I can’t get away for awhile. Katrina, can you help me find Patton? I’m really worried about him!”

There’s a hint of desperation in Farrah’s voice, and she sounds like she’s on the verge of tears.

“Don’t worry about it, Farrah. I’ll go find Patton right now. I’ll call you back as soon as I find him. Don’t worry, and I won’t let anyone bully him!”

“Please find him!” Farrah pleads. “You should call some of your colleagues, I’m afraid they’ll be too many for you to handle on your own.”

“I know, don’t worry. I’ll be careful!”

After hanging up, Katrina immediately gives Farrah’s address to the driver and turns to Aaron. “Aaron, some thugs took my best friend’s brother. I have to go find him right away!”

Patton is Farrah’s weakness. Every time something happens to him, Farrah becomes a nervous wreck. As her best friend, Katrina treats Patton as her own younger brother.

Because of his intellectual disability, Patton has always been bullied by his peers since he was young. Farrah has every reason to be worried about him.

Sensing the urgency of the situation, Aaron tells the driver, “Speed up!” “Yes, sir!” The driver immediately hits the accelerator.

Although Aaron doesn’t say a word to comfort Katrina, his actions speak louder than words. Knowing he is willing to accompany her without question, even telling the driver to speed up, is enough to calm down Katrina’s panic.

“As long as he’s with me, everything will be okay.” Fifteen minutes later, the car stops in front of the park near Farrah’s house.

Katrina immediately pushes the door open and rushes out on her high heels. “Patton! Patton! Where are you?” she calls frantically, looking around for him.

When she passes by a small copse, she sees several teenagers surrounding Patton. They take turns kicking him and pushing him around.

“Where’s your protection fee!” one of them demands. “Not a penny in your pocket! Are you looking for a fight on purpose?”

Since he’s been bullied as a child, Patton has grown to be timid and fearful. In the face of these gangsters, he can only cower and bow his head in fear, not daring to fight back or resist in any way.

Despite his condition, Patton has always been a good person. He never starts a fight and always does his best to avoid trouble.

Seeing him being bullied makes Katrina flare up in anger. As if her own son is being bullied, she rushes over and shouts, “Hey, stop that! Let him go!”

The gangsters don't take Katrina seriously. Instead, they whistle and joke, "Patton, is that your sister?"

"Your sister is very beautiful! Do you know if she has a boyfriend? Even if she's older, we'll take her company as compensation for your protection fee."

Katrina becomes angrier when the thugs start to make fun of her instead of leaving Patton alone. "Do they think I'm just a weak woman? I'm a police officer!"

"These entitled high school dropouts do nothing but cause trouble and bully the weak! Who do they think they are? I put thugs like them behind bars all the time!"