

No News Is Good News ©K.A. Mitchell

for Andy

Aaron narrowly avoided tripping over the foot of the bed. He wasn't drunk. Wouldn't have let himself drive if he were. He was just exhausted, the kind of feeling that made him want to dive into an empty blackness and stay there as long as he could. Bumping the bed would be bad, because Mr. Fucking Sunshine was asleep in it, and Aaron was not in the mood.

He considered crashing on the couch, but fuck he wanted to stretch out.

No amount of silence mattered, though, because as soon as Aaron's knee brushed the sheet, Joey sat up, scrubbed at his face, then shook his head. "How bad is it?"

Aaron hadn't wanted to tell him. Didn't as far as he could remember. But the little shit was too good at figuring things out. Or maybe Hennie had called him. Either way, Joey had found out that the woman Aaron had been riding with for almost ten years was waiting on a biopsy.

Not anymore. "Bad." Aaron sat on the bed. The next word slid out without his permission. "Three."

A sharp sound, almost a whistle, as Joey drew a quick breath. Yeah, stage-three cancer could definitely knock the wind out of you.

Then the reasons why Aaron had considered curling up on the couch became obvious. Joey plastered himself to Aaron's back, arms sliding around his chest. "That sucks. But--"

"Don't." He didn't want to hear the good parts right now. To look on the not-as-fucking-bleak-as-stage-four side of things. Didn't want to think of Hennie going through all that, the surgery, the chemo.

He tried to get up, but Joey tucked his chin onto Aaron's shoulder and slid a hand down Aaron's chest.

"Don't." Aaron held his breath. If Joey tried to joke with a who-are-you-and-what-have-you-done-with-Aaron remark, Aaron wasn't sure he'd be able to keep his temper. Something felt like it was trying slip out of his control even now. Something big and ugly. Something that scared him.

Joey's hand froze just above Aaron's navel. "Let me. It might help you to sleep."

"I'm not the one who needs something." Aaron pulled away, and this time Joey let him go.

Physically, he let go. Verbally, he stayed on attack. "You're wrong about that."

"Oh, I forgot. Your Masters in Counseling gave you a complete guide to my needs. Right."

Joey went on like Aaron hadn't spoken. "You're going to bottle this up for a few days and then we're going to have a huge fight and you'll have to totally kiss my ass, because you'll know I was right."

Aaron gave him his best death-laser eyes, which he'd been copying from Kim, and Joey blinked.

"I love fighting with you, Aaron. But if you don't get this out now, it's going to be ugly. And it's going to hurt."

Joey didn't have to say who was going to get hurt. They both would. The little bastard knew he'd managed to get himself good and tight into that part of Aaron's world that he'd die to keep safe. If he unleashed on Joey, he'd be knifing himself in the gut.

Because this wouldn't be the rising-volume-to-be-heard-over-each-other, who-was-supposed-to-

have-taken-the-dog-out, kind of thing. It didn't take Joey's bullshit voodoo degree to tell that this thing Aaron was hanging onto was only going to get nastier.

"There are more fun ways to do it." Joey rolled over, tucking his knees under him, ass in the air, and Aaron got the picture. He got the whole damned photo album.

"No."

Joey looked over his shoulder. "Why not?"

"Because it's not going to be how you think. One of your games where it's all about you."

Joey knee-walked to the edge of the bed, and they were almost eye level. "And who likes it that way?"

"You." Aaron stared back. Those fucking Bambi eyes didn't work on him anymore. The damned dog was better at them.

"Yeah, because then you don't have to admit how much you like your hand on my ass. And not because it gets me off. If it's all about me, you don't have to admit that you get off just as much on dishing out the pain. Because you know I can take it."

Aaron grabbed Joey's shoulders, fingers biting into bone and muscle. Joey didn't flinch.

"I don't want to hurt you."

"Yeah, you do." Joey's smile had nothing Mr. Sunshine about it. More like Mr. Shark. Predatory.

"I mean—"

"Stick to my ass, with your hand or the paddle, and you can't do much damage."

Bruises. Joey's skin, that never-tanned pale skin, dark red from the blood rushing to the surface. The image didn't just grab onto Aaron's dick. It wrapped right around his soul. Need hardwired into his brain—like a fucking addict. How many pained breaths from Joey's lips would it take to feed that want?

With one last bit of effort, he held back. "Once I start—"

Joey's smile faded, but the heat in his eyes gave Aaron all the reassurance he needed.

"I can look out for myself."

Joey went back down on his knees, arms stretched across the width of the bed, fingers holding onto the edge.

Aaron pulled the paddle out of the drawer. Usually he'd tease Joey, warm him up, get his cheeks pink with a hard hand before bringing out the paddle. Then Aaron would flex it against his palm, tap it on around Joey's ass to make him squirm, even smack it onto the bed to make him jump. Not this time. As soon as his fingers wrapped around the handle, he slammed it across Joey's ass hard and fast, three times in the same place, fast enough that Joey barely had time to flinch between the blows.

Joey shifted and swayed as a dark red band popped up across his pale skin. He'd been driven forward with the force of it, and Aaron could still picture the way the black leather had looked flattening the skin, biting in. He waited. He'd warned him. This wasn't play, and the sooner Joey backed down the better.

Joey hissed out a breath and shook his ass like he could shake the pain out of it. He tightened and released the muscles while he panted. Then he pressed his chest flat against the mattress again, ass tipped high.

The little shit.

I don't want to do this. The lie never made it past Aaron's lips. It wasn't the way they normally played, but he did want to do this. Wanted to lose himself in something bigger, push them farther than they'd ever gone. But mostly, he wanted to find away to get that tearing, aching pain at the idea of losing Hennie out of him, push it into Joey's waiting, willing body.

Joey was the strong one. Always had been.

Aaron dropped the paddle. He wanted this to be flesh to flesh. Kneeling next to Joey, Aaron wrapped an arm around Joey's hips, before using a strong right hand to turn every inch of Joey's ass bright red. Aaron spanked it darker, arm aching, palm going numb, time blurring by.

With every stroke of Aaron's hand, Joey seemed to open up and take more, give Aaron a space to put that pain and fear, give him a way to feel safe and okay, even as bruises began to form where Aaron's finger tips drove harder under the curves.

They were breathing in time now, both of them; gasped inhalations before the impact of Aaron's hand, harsh exhales buried beneath the crack of his palm against Joey's ass.

Joey never tried to squirm away, though his body rocked a little with the force of each swat, his back shining with sweat.

Salty drops collected at Aaron's hairline and dripped into his eyes. He could barely lift his arm; his palm and fingers prickled and burned. Why couldn't he stop? It was like his body was waiting for something, driving him toward some kind of release, like coming, except not as good. But, just like the helpless power that took control of his hips as he fell over that edge and started to shoot, he couldn't stop his hand slamming into Joey's red and bruised flesh until they got there.

It started first as a sound, a hitch, a roughness in his throat. Aaron knew it was a sob, even though there were no tears in his eyes. There was an answering hiccup of rough breath from Joey

and then a shudder. Aaron was gasping, choking, but his eyes stayed dry.

But it was gone.

That terrifying build inside him, whatever had been fighting to get free of him, was gone.

Aaron slumped down, dragging them both onto their sides. Joey wiggled around to face him, breath still ragged. That wasn't sweat on Joey's face.

Aaron couldn't cry. But Joey could.

"Jesus, Joey." Aaron wrapped his arms around Joey's back and pulled him close. "Why didn't you say something?"

Joey's lips twisted in a half smile that Aaron was pretty sure he'd seen in the mirror. "Uh, well..." Joey hitched his hips in closer. His dick wasn't rock hard, but it wouldn't take much to get it there. He reached around to rub his ass. "Could have gotten there a little more slowly, but damn, that burn feels nice now. Mmmm. Almost like getting fucked."

It was on the tip of Aaron's tongue to ask if he was serious, but there was no denying the evidence. Spanked to tears or not, Joey was horny. And with that aching pressure inside gone, Aaron could feel his own interest building.

"Yeah?" Aaron rolled onto his back and pulled Joey on top, running a soothing hand down his back and gently over the scalding hot flesh of his ass.

Joey nodded, smile growing. "If you're still in a mood, you don't have to."

Aaron rocked into him, shifted them until their cocks lined up. Joey's grin got bigger.

"Oh, I think I have to." Aaron reached into the drawer and came back with the lube. "Or actually

you do."

Joey's eyes narrowed for a second, then widened.

Joey didn't have much practice on this end of things. And neither did Aaron. So it was hard, God, yes, hard enough to make it as far as getting all the way inside Aaron without losing it. Not just losing it coming, but losing it, and just grabbing Aaron's hips and fucking away. As much as Joey loved being the one with his legs wrapped around Aaron's back, urging him deeper, the chance of having that wet, textured--oh God--hot and moving flesh on Joey's bare dick wasn't something he wanted to screw up.

So it was hard enough to get here, balls deep in Aaron's ass. It had taken almost two full Maroon 5 songs from his Distracting Earworm Playlist to make it this far. The hot tingling feeling in his ass wasn't helping. It had hurt like hell, but Joey loved the way he could feel even the air teasing over it.

Then Aaron had to grin and squeeze Joey's ass, and it was so on.

Joey's hips arched back and snapped forward and Aaron bit his lip. "You. Asked. For. It," Joey managed in time with his thrusts.

Aaron stretched his head back, and Joey wished he were taller, tall enough to lick the straining tendons under the warm skin. He held onto Aaron's hips and Aaron drove his heels into Joey's ass. He hoped Aaron had enough sense to jerk himself off because it was everything Joey could do to keep this from being a blink-and-you'll-miss-it.

Shutting his eyes didn't help. Because the sight of Aaron under him, open, wanting was burned into Joey's retinas like Aaron's hand print on Joey's ass.

God, they needed this. The flesh squeezing Joey's dick got softer then harder and he knew

Aaron's hand was on his dick. Joey couldn't look, but he could hear that quick slide, the way Aaron's breathing changed, and, oh shit, could Joey feel it on his cock.

He tipped his hips up, muscles cramping as he fought to hold back, keep what was boiling in his balls from spilling out. Aaron may have been the one with a dick up his ass but Joey was still the one begging.

"Please, God, please, Aaron."

Aaron jerked and the pressure around Joey's dick convulsed in hard, sweet pulses. Joey lost it. It was lightning, hot, electric shocks pouring from him and into Aaron. So hot. So wet. So damned good.

Joey collapsed forward. "I am never moving again."

"Like hell." Aaron bucked and jerked and Joey slid out of him. "Ow."

"You did it."

"Shut up."

Joey hoped Aaron would let him get away with faking sleep when Aaron came back with a washcloth and gently cleaned Joey up. But he made the mistake of rolling fully onto his stomach, hoping for a touch of that coolness on his sore ass and Aaron snapped the washcloth at him instead.

Joey yelped and Aaron chuckled. "Do you want some ice?"

"Fuck no. Sunburn cream?"

Joey really did fall asleep as Aaron was rubbing it in.

Piercing cheesy Sci-Fi tones jerked Joey awake. Aaron's alarm. No his phone.

Joey squinted at the clock. "Shit. You're really late."

Aaron dragged Joey in closer. "Furlough day. Fucking budget cuts."

The sounds of aliens invading continued. "Aaron. Phone still ringing."

"Fuck." Aaron grabbed it off the nightstand and grunted his name into it.

Joey knew right away it wasn't the hospital. The tension that slammed into Aaron could only mean family. Or Hennie.

Aaron stood up. "Where?...Well, someone there has to have details or a brain....Listen, I'm a paramedic in—....What?" Aaron pulled the phone away from his ear and stared at it. "Bitch hung up."

"What is it?"

"Get dressed and throw some shit in a bag for me while I get us a plane ticket. Darryl's in the hospital. An accident or something."

"Or something. That's all she said?" Joey found it impossible to believe that Aaron hadn't immediately redialed and demanded a supervisor.

"No. She said if I had questions, I should ask his boyfriend."

"His..." Joey shook his head. "Not Darryl. No way."

"Guess we will have to ask his boyfriend."