



Definitely Christmas
By Stephanie Vaughan

“You want to go shopping a little later?” Coming up behind Danny, Aaron slipped a hand beneath his shirt and caressed his back. “Interested?” Circling around, Aaron sat down on Danny’s bed, tugging him closer.

He couldn’t tell exactly what Aaron was asking. “In going shopping?”

“Yeah.” Aaron lifted Danny’s shirt with one hand as he ran the other up Danny’s chest, found a nipple and pinched it. “Eventually.”

Grinning up at him, Aaron's smile was irresistible. Danny stepped closer, between Aaron's knees, and threaded his fingers through Aaron's soft brown hair. "And what are we supposed to be shopping for?"

Aaron's gaze dropped away from Danny's, focusing on Danny's chest. His lips curved upward in a soft half-smile and his eyes drifted closed as he leaned forward to lick Danny's belly. "Mmm, I love your skin -- the way you taste."

The hand clutching Danny's shirt flexed until the thumb could reach his other nipple and begin brushing over it, sending sparks of electricity through his body, his dick twitching automatically.

"Screw shopping. Let's just stay here." Palming the back of Aaron's head, Danny pressed Aaron's lips close to his chest. His cock was filling rapidly -- as quickly as his ability to think was fading.

Soft kisses and teasing little licks landed in random spots all across Danny's belly. Shifting his hands from Danny's shirt to his ass, Aaron squeezed and twisted his neck around until he could mouth the bulge behind the placket of Danny's jeans. Shooting a teasing glance up in Danny's direction, he dragged his teeth over the hardening shape of Danny's dick. "Why can't we do both?"

"I like the way you think."

Aaron was unzipping Danny's jeans, sliding his hands beneath Danny's underwear and skinning them both off in one motion. "I like the way you do everything." And then Aaron's mouth was on him, the warm, slick slide of his tongue doing amazing things to Danny's cock.

Danny tried to fight it, but it felt too good. It always did. Aaron was completely unselfconscious -- wildly uninhibited. He was always ready to try something new or content to do whatever Danny was in the mood for and there was something dangerously seductive about that.

Like now, for instance.

His eyes closed, lips wrapped around Danny's dick, Aaron was sucking Danny like the world was about to end and this was the last blowjob he'd ever give. Aaron might not be the cutest guy Danny'd ever been with, but the expression in his eyes when he looked at Danny was what kept Danny coming back.

Aaron pulled his mouth away, but replaced it with his fist, jacking Danny slowly as he licked his lips and stared at Danny's cock. Tearing his gaze away to glance up at Danny's face, the look was back in Aaron's eyes, the one that said that in that moment, only Danny would do. "Fuck me?"

Releasing Danny, Aaron slid backward onto the bed, unsnapping his pants to free his own straining dick. Without breaking the gaze he had fastened on Danny's face, Aaron smiled a

tentative little smile and stroked himself, as though offering it all to Danny. Offering himself. "Please?"

The tone of voice, the air of expectation and subtle pleading was so exactly what Danny had used with Gabe, that in an instant it all came back. How much, how unspeakably much, he'd wanted Gabe and how easy it had been for Gabe to use that.

Danny groaned. "Dude. Don't... don't say that."

"Come here, then." Aaron stroked himself again, his eyes closing for a moment when he swiped his thumb over the tip, smearing the clear drops that oozed out. "How can you resist all of this hot, young perfection?"

The tone might be self-mocking, but Aaron wasn't far off the mark. He might not think he was sexy, with his slim build and pleasantly average features, but Danny couldn't seem to stay away. It seemed like every time he looked Aaron was just that little bit more attractive: the way his smile made his eyes nearly disappear, his habit of tucking a strand of hair behind his ear, exposing the naked vulnerability of his neck, the slide of his pants off his non-existent hips that invariably flashed a sizeable chunk of pelvic bone. It all drew Danny in.

Every day Danny found something new and beautiful about Aaron, something he hadn't noticed before.

"Slide up." Danny dropped a knee onto the bed, not waiting for Aaron to move, but following him up. Tugging Aaron's pants off, for once Danny didn't have to hassle with the shoes first, sliding the pants over Aaron's bare feet, and he wondered if Aaron had planned this.

"Oh, all right. I love it when you get all dominating and stern." Aaron pushed further back onto the bed, bracing his feet and shimmying his ass a bit.

Danny fumbled in the nightstand for a condom and some lube. "You do, huh? How come I didn't know that?"

"I have no idea." Aaron bit his lip and fought a grin. "But I've been bad and I probably ought to be punished."

Danny paused. "Like, what'd you have in mind?"

"What've you got?"

"My hand? Or... what if I just don't fuck you?"

"You wouldn't do that. And deprive yourself?" Cupping his balls with one hand, Aaron was back to stroking himself. He might look confident now, but Danny'd seen a flash of something an awful lot like panic in Aaron's eyes when he'd threatened to withhold.

“When you’re right, you’re right.” Danny finished rolling on the condom and lubed himself and then Aaron. He slid a finger into Aaron’s ass and smiled when Aaron arched against it, fucking himself. “Whoa, whoa. Wait for me.”

“Unh-uh. Can’t. Too nice.”

Replacing his finger with his cock, Danny shoved inside, loving the hot, slick press of Aaron’s body. As soon as he was all the way in he stopped, the better to focus on exactly how good it was to be in all the way and rubbing his hands Aaron’s thighs and stomach.

Sprawled out beneath him, Aaron opened his eyes at regular intervals to smile up at Danny, but mostly he rolled his head from side to side, moaning appreciatively. “Mmm, that’s nice. God, squeeze my dick.”

“You’re kinda demanding tonight. I thought you’d been bad. I was going to punish you.” Danny pulled out, and then pushed back in again, giving Aaron a hard swat on the butt as he did.

“Ow! Maybe later, just touch me.” Aaron opened his eyes and looked up, giving Danny that little quirk of the lips that was almost, but not quite, a smile. He looked gone -- lost in sensation. “Danny.”

It was the look in Aaron’s eyes that melted Danny, made him bend low to catch Aaron’s mouth in a kiss and made wrapping his hand around Aaron’s cock inevitable. Aaron nearly came up off the bed when Danny began stroking him in time with each thrust, he moaned against Danny’s mouth, his hands gripping the worn cover of Danny’s bed.

Burying himself in the sweet hot squeeze of Aaron’s ass, Danny gave himself up to the pleasure. Thrust in and pulled out -- going too fast, probably -- but he didn’t care. He couldn’t stop kissing, couldn’t stop fucking, just gave in to the need, the absolute desire to be as close to the one writhing beneath him as possible. He’d crawl inside if he could.

Just a little... just... *Yeah! Like that. Just like that.* Inside the tight grip of his fist Aaron’s cock pulsed, shot spurts of hot, sticky come. All over his chest, all over Danny’s hand and then Aaron’s ass clamped down hard on his cock and Danny was coming. Want and need and Aaron’s ass had Danny shooting, emptying himself inside Aaron.

Danny didn’t know when he’d closed his eyes, but they were squeezed tight against the pleasure and as the driving need gave way to a mellower kind of want, he could finally open them. Aaron was licking his lips and taking little gulps of air when his eyes came open, too, and their gazes met. “Sweet.”

“Yeah.” Suddenly Danny couldn’t meet Aaron’s gaze any more. Couldn’t look him in the eye because suddenly all Danny could think about was Gabe. “It was...”

He looked away and pretended that pulling out and getting rid of the used condom took all of his attention. When Danny could finally glance Aaron’s way again, Aaron was watching him, one

hand propped beneath his head. Mercifully Aaron didn't say anything, didn't ask him what was wrong, just held out his arm in a welcoming gesture and Danny slid in next to him. "Want something to clean up with?"

"I know where the Kleenex box is, Danny."

"Right." He was a jerk. A jerk and a user for fucking Aaron when he couldn't get Gabe out of his head. He probably shouldn't even be seeing anyone.

They lay there, the tip of Aaron's finger drawing figures on his arm, neither one saying a word. Danny's breath was almost back to normal when Aaron finally broke the silence. "Listen, I'll, um... Is it okay if I use your shower?"

"Yeah, of course." Danny leaned his head back to look Aaron in the face and immediately wished he hadn't. He wasn't sure if it was hurt mixed with anger or with regret, but it was definitely pain. Danny ducked his head away again.

"Thanks." Aaron got up and grabbed a handful of tissues from the box beside the bed. As he walked he wiped at the come drying on his chest, stopping when he reached the bathroom door. "So I'll take a shower and you can decide if you want to go shopping with me or not?"

Danny winced at the questioning tone in Aaron's voice. Aaron was a nice guy and Danny was a dick for using him, even if Aaron made it easy to do. "I forget -- what are we shopping for again?"

"Just... Christmas stuff. I dunno, maybe I should just go on my own."

"Aaron, step away from the newsboy caps and focus. You already have plenty and God knows I don't want to crush your holiday spirit, but friendship forces me to point out that those stopped being cool about a year and a half ago."

"Huh?" Aaron looked up from the tweed cap he was fingering to where Candice stood, clutching her own selections, impatience showing on her face.

"Come on. I want to get to the brooches before they're too picked over. If I find what I'm looking for, that's what I'm going to get for Deb."

"Yeah, okay. Whatever. Give me a minute." The cap was woven in shades of brown and it would look perfect on someone with black hair and dark eyes.

Stroking the material with two fingers, Aaron sighed. He wasn't fooling anyone. He'd been thinking of how good Danny would look in it, wearing the cap and very little else. Maybe just some work boots -- unlaced with the socks showing.

“So what’s the deal with you? You’re hooked up, getting it semi-regularly. You should be bouncing around like puppy dog about to go for a walk.” Impatience giving way to puzzlement, Candice shifted her shopping basket from arm to arm. “What’s wrong with this picture?”

Aaron left the cap behind and joined Candice. Together they made their way through the store crowded with holiday shoppers. “Nothing. It’s... You know. We’re working things out.”

“Ooh. ‘Working things out.’ That doesn’t sound promising.” Candice thrust out her lower lip in an exaggerated show of concern. “You haven’t been seeing each other that long; you ought to still be in the honeymoon phase. Can’t keep your hands off each other and boffing all day long. What the hell went wrong?”

“Thanks, Can. Concern noted -- sympathy, not so much.”

“I am, too, sympathetic. Maybe not in your traditional hearts and flowers way, but I care. As far as you know.”

“Yeah, I know.”

As they moved through the store, weaving through the crowd, Aaron was thankful for the company. After the way he and Danny had parted, he didn’t want to be alone with his own thoughts too much. He knew he tended to obsess and he was counting on his friend to distract him.

They passed the shoe department and women’s lingerie without incident, but consumer electronics was full of gaming equipment -- exactly the types of games he and Danny shared a passion for. Every clothes display they passed Aaron realized he was judging based on either how it would look on Danny or whether Aaron could picture taking it off for him.

This was hopeless.

It was time to admit that he was way too into this guy. Aaron just wasn’t sure what good admitting it would do for him, though. In fact his stomach heaved at even the thought, but it felt like time to at least consider it. “Candice, do you think I should stop seeing Danny?”

“Why? I thought you two really hit it off.”

“Dude, don’t gawk. People are staring.” Candice had come to a dead stop in the middle of the store’s main drive aisle and people weren’t so much staring as cursing and swerving to avoid hitting them. “Come on.”

“Then what’s the matter? He’s no good in the sack? What am I saying? If he was no good in bed you wouldn’t be mooning and sighing. So what is it?”

“Okay, now you need to keep it down. I don’t need the entire store to know the details of my private life.” Aaron tugged his friend out of the stream of shoppers and off into one of the side

aisles. "Can we compromise? Will you be happy if only half of them hear you? And, just so we're clear? I don't moon and sigh."

"For the record, you do. You're not usually so squeamish, though. Honey," Candice took him by the arm. "If he doesn't make you happy, dump him. It's as simple as that."

Aaron sighed and pulled a bag of cookies off the shelf, dropping them into the shopping basket Candice carried. He knew better, but the idea of sitting down with a bag of cookies and a glass of milk while losing himself in a marathon of video gaming sounded way too appealing.

"He does, though. See, that's my problem. He makes me really happy. I'm just not sure it's mutual." Taking a less traveled route, Aaron tried to get them back moving in the direction they'd been going. Hopefully they'd encounter fewer people to overhear the embarrassing details of his problems this way.

"You're not talking sexually, are you? 'Cause in my experience, just showing up is eighty-percent of the exercise. Guys are usually easy that way."

"No, that part's good. He's... God, he's so hot. The way he moves, the things he... He's amazing in bed -- we have such a good time. It's just afterward."

They'd arrived at the ladies' jewelry section and Candice began sorting through the offerings with the seasoned eye of a professional shopper. She picked up perhaps one in every ten, inspecting several, but only one made it into her basket. In just under three minutes she was finished with her task and focused on Aaron again. "Nothing to talk about?"

"No, that's not the problem. Actually, we find lots to talk about. I mean, we're not twins separated at birth or clones or anything, but--"

"Good thing because then you'd be having sex with your twin brother which would make it, what? Twincest? Hey, let me think about that for a minute. That's actually kind of hot. Actually."

"Dude, you're a freak."

"Whatever." Shaking herself, Candice smiled up at him. "Okay, I'm back. I guess I don't get what the problem is, then. You like each other, he's good in bed, you have interests in common. So where's your problem?"

"He just..." Aaron sighed. "If I'm totally honest? He just doesn't seem as interested in me as I want him to be. 'Cause I am *so* into him."

Candice gave him a pitying look as they approached the cashier but, mercifully, restrained her take-no-prisoners style of conversation until they were through the line and back at the car.

“Well, can’t you just have fun? Try thinking of him as your boy toy -- a little recreation on the weekend. Try that.”

“I don’t know if I can.” Aaron hated to speak the words, because saying them out loud made them somehow more real. “It just means too much to me.”

“Oh, honey. You can’t just play? Have fun?”

“I don’t think so. I can’t *not* take him seriously. Does that make sense?”

“It doesn’t have to make sense to me. It’s your life. But I still say dump him if he doesn’t make you happy.”

Later that night, his friend’s advice was still echoing in Aaron’s thoughts. *Dump him if he doesn’t make you happy.*

Maybe Candice was right.

Maybe it was time to stop putting so much energy into daydreaming about Danny and focus more on school and his design work. He was only a year away from finishing his degree. Then he’d have to make the decision on whether to invest in more training or test the waters and see what kind of job he could get with the skills he had at that point.

His summer intern job at a small skate shoe manufacturer had led to a job, albeit part-time. Part-time was all he could manage, though, while carrying a full load at school. And as much as he liked the people he worked with, Aaron couldn’t see spending the rest of his life rendering patterns onto templates for the factory overseas to turn into shoes to then be shipped back home and sold to the local skate rats.

Besides, he was too young to think about settling down with one guy yet. Getting married. Not that that was really an option even, but maybe someday. Maybe by the time he was older -- figured things out a little more, experienced a lot of different types of guys -- maybe by then it would actually be a realistic possibility.

Getting married?

Holy shit. Had that thought really come out of his brain?

Man, it was just another sign that he was in over his head, as if he needed one. What he needed was to seriously pull his head out and start thinking rationally again. Definitely not the time to think about Danny with the dark eyes and fantastic dick.

Firing up his Mac, Aaron settled in for an evening devoted to adding to his design portfolio and avoiding anything that reminded him of Danny.

Danny shoved his chair back from his work desk and rubbed his eyes. He seriously needed to find out who was in charge of the company's budget process and see what it would take to make an upgrade to the website happen. He'd been asking jokingly for a while now who he had to blow, but as of this most recent round of requests by the executive team he was now only half-joking.

The process was beyond antiquated; calling it outdated would be a compliment. Making changes to anything beyond the most basic information required updating information in five separate locations and a revision to a page could take anywhere from fifteen minutes to all day. And how ridiculous was it that the company didn't even have a dedicated webmaster?

Tired and close to burning out, Danny was counting the days until Christmas. The company closed for the holidays every year and this year Christmas fell on a Monday. Which meant that if he didn't get any shopping done until they went on hiatus, he would have only two whole days to get everything done.

When had Christmas become a chore?

It used to be fun. He used to love picking out the perfect little gifts for his friends and family and watching their faces when they opened them. He'd never had a ton of money to spend, but what he'd always had was a knack for finding that exquisite little something that showed how attuned he was to his friends' tastes, how aware he was of their likes and dislikes, how inventive he could be in demonstrating that knowledge.

It didn't help that Gabe's birthday fell in December. In years past Danny'd spent months searching for just the right gift to prove to Gabe how unique their bond was. This year, the day had loomed large for weeks, then come and gone -- the elephant in the room.

He'd tried his best to ignore it, but his subconscious kept suggesting little scenarios. Maybe just a card. A small gift, perhaps -- a quiet demonstration of how well Danny understood Gabe. Better than anyone else, for sure.

Danny had stayed strong, though. He was proud of how he'd distracted himself whenever he'd had the urge to call, turned away when something in the mall tried to insinuate itself into his head as just the thing he'd been not-searching for.

He wasn't quite so proud, though, of how he'd treated Aaron.

The shitty part was that he really liked Aaron. Aaron was easy to be with; funny and sexy and kind. The big question was, which one of those did Danny have a problem with? Was there something really twisted in him like a deep-seated need to feel unappreciated? God, he hoped not.

Hadn't Aaron wanted to go Christmas shopping? Something Christmas-related, anyway. Suddenly that all sounded good, like something fun that might be the perfect antidote to the

nearing burn out, semi-depressed loner he'd turned into lately. Before he could think of a reason not to, Danny picked up his phone and dialed Aaron's number.

One ring shy of voice mail, Aaron answered. "'Lo?"

"Hey, Aaron. It's me."

"Hey." There was a long pause in between words, like Aaron had trouble placing the voice.
"Danny."

"Yeah. You sound like shit. Are you sick?" One of these days he was going to have to learn to moderate his mouth. It was true, though. Aaron *did* sound like shit.

"Ha. You think so? This is the improved version. You should have heard me a couple of days ago." A whispery croak, Aaron's voice sounded like a one of those rope bridges that creaked and strained as the intrepid hero made his way across. Like it was stressed to its limit, barely up to the task.

"Shit, what is it? The flu? Are you all right? Do you need anything?"

"I don't know. Could be the flu, I guess. It came on pretty fast, though. I was okay at lunch, and then by about three I was lying on the bathroom floor moaning, trying not to move. Every time I moved my head I threw up."

"Jesus--" Danny glanced at the clock. "Listen, I'm pretty much done here today. How about I come over and make sure you're okay? See if you've got everything you need."

"Aw, man. I appreciate it, but you don't want to come over. I'm not a ton of fun to be around right now."

Screw it. He could go shopping any time. Seeing Aaron and making sure he was all right was now at the top of Danny's To-Do list. "Let me put it another way, then: I'm coming over and making sure you're okay. Do you have soup? Juice? Tylenol?"

"Don't make me laugh. I'm tired of throwing up." Aaron's anemic laugh was cut short by a coughing fit.

"Why is that funny? Dude, I'm coming over."

"Okay, but you've been warned. Hey, Danny?"

"Yeah?"

"I'm allergic to Tylenol, but some Ibuprofen would be good. And, um... thanks."

"No problem. See you in a few."

It took longer than Danny planned to get to the drug store and fight the traffic down to Naples, the chi-chi section of south Long Beach where Aaron lived. The neighborhood was artsy, bohemian, and generally occupied by people way older than Aaron and his roommate, Gary. Danny'd never had the nerve to ask Aaron how he could possibly afford to live there.

Parking was a nightmare even by Long Beach standards and by the time Danny found an open spot and walked the two blocks to Aaron's place, over an hour had passed. The place was all decorated up for the holidays, though, and Danny had a little smile on his face by the time he found his way to Aaron's door.

Until Aaron opened the door, looking like a street waif.

Dark circles under his eyes, hair looking like it needed a wash and about three days' stubble on his on his baby-faced cheeks, Aaron leaned against the door like it was all that was holding him up. Wearing only pajama bottoms and a T-shirt, his already slender body looked like it might have lost some weight. "Hey, there. Thanks for making the trek. It's a pain this time of year, huh?"

"What? Oh, yeah. The lights are cool, though."

Like its sister city Venice, Naples was built on a series of canals and the local parade of boats, all decorated in lights and vying for bragging rights, was an annual Christmas tradition.

"Listen, you don't have to stay. Just bringing the supplies was above and beyond. Why don't you take off before you catch whatever it is I've got?" The door swung open a little, disturbing Aaron's shaky balance, and he swayed as the support moved.

"And why don't you go sit down before you do a face-plant into the doorjamb? Come on."

Danny slipped an arm around Aaron's waist and walked him over to the sofa. As he helped Aaron sit down, Danny took a quick look around. He'd only been over once before to pick Aaron up and he hadn't seen past the door. The sofa, the TV, the lamps -- everything matched. Not quite brand-new, but not very old and not Wal-Mart quality, either.

"Thanks. This is all really nice of you, but you can just leave the stuff. I don't want you to get sick."

"Shut up, Preston. I'm here and I'm not leaving 'til I'm satisfied you can take care of yourself. Kitchen is...? Okay, got it. You want some soup? I brought chicken noodle -- Campbell's, just like Mom used to open."

Aaron laughed and again the sound cut itself short with a hacking cough. "Don't make me laugh. I haven't thrown up in almost six hours. I'm on a roll, so don't upset the delicate balance, all right?"

“Answer the question.”

“What question?”

“Well it was,” Danny popped the top on the can of soup and dumped it into a small pot he found under the stove, “ ‘Do you want soup?’ But you were slow, so the question has now become, ‘Can you feed yourself, or do I have to do it for you?’”

He fixed a serious eye on Aaron, who had pulled a blanket up over himself and was leaning back against the sofa, watching Danny move around his kitchen.

“Again with the stern thing. Not that it’s not intriguing, but, dude... you need to time it for when I can do something about it.”

Aaron’s body language had changed subtly and the expression on his face as his gaze met Danny’s sent signals that went straight to Danny’s cock. “Like, do what?”

“I don’t know, like, service you, maybe. Lick your boots. Has anyone ever licked your boots?”

His pants were suddenly way too tight, his cock pressing insistently against the placket of his cotton chinos. The image of Aaron down on all-fours -- naked. How did Danny know it would absolutely have to be naked? -- ass in the air, pressing his lips to Danny’s shoes was maybe the hottest single thought he’d ever had. “I, uh... I don’t own any boots.”

“So buy some.”

They stared at each other, gazes locked, the half-wall separating the kitchen from the living room all that stood between them. Until a hissing sound somewhere close broke through the silent communication pulsing between them and Danny looked down in time to see the soup boiling over, dousing the stove’s little blue gas flame.

Aaron gathered the blanket around him and did his best to feign interest in the TV show he’d had on since before Danny’s arrival, while Danny puttered in the kitchen. The action on the screen was hardly compelling, but the two actors portraying brothers were hot and occasionally the script would call for one or the other to partially disrobe, so Aaron pretended to watch the screen while surreptitiously keeping an eye on Danny’s movements.

Fever-induced lunacy. Weakness brought on by two consecutive nights of fitful sleep... Aaron wasn’t sure. Something had to account for his slip, though. He’d never confessed his weakness for a guy in boots before and why he would do it now, he couldn’t explain.

All he knew was that when Danny had threatened to feed him, he’d opened his mouth to say one thing and something wholly other than what he’d planned had come out. Now he just had to watch and wait. See what Danny would make of his suggestion.

Maybe Danny could explain it to *him*.

“Here you go.” Danny set the bowl of soup and a spoon down on the coffee table in front of the sofa and went back for more. His second trip included a napkin, a plate of crackers and a glass of juice.

There was no suggestion this time that Danny would feed him.

“You thought of everything.” Sitting up, Aaron pulled the blanket around his shoulders and took a tentative first taste of the soup. “It’s good. Thanks.”

“Not a problem.” Danny took a seat in the adjacent chair and watched in silence as Aaron ate. He said nothing until Aaron finished off the soup, offering only, “Want more? There’s a little left.”

“No, that was perfect, thanks. I don’t want to push my luck.”

Danny nodded before taking the remains of the meal back to the kitchen and placing them in the sink. He ran a little water in them, adding some liquid soap, and Aaron was surprised at the thoughtfulness -- not to mention struck by the extent of Danny’s domestic instincts.

When Danny came back, instead of taking up the chair again he now stood beside the sofa where Aaron still sat, blanket draped like a shawl around his shoulders. Danny stood tugging his lower lip between his thumb and forefinger, gazing thoughtfully at some random midpoint between the floor and Aaron’s knees.

Aaron was the first to crack. “What?”

“Huh? Oh, nothing. Move over, would you?” Sliding sideways, Aaron made room and Danny settled himself in the corner, and then swung his legs up until he sat with his legs stretching two-thirds of the length of the sofa. “C’mere.” Danny spread his legs, gesturing for Aaron to sit between them, flush up against Danny’s chest. Leaning back, Danny took most of Aaron’s weight and wrapped his arms around Aaron, moving the blanket to cover their combined forms. “There.”

“What are you doing?” Craning his neck, didn’t help -- he still couldn’t see Danny’s face -- so Aaron faced front again.

“I’m watching TV. ‘S’that all right with you?”

Danny’s voice was a low murmur in Aaron’s ear, Danny’s breath ghosting over his neck and sending a shiver down his back. “Sure. I can’t believe this is how you want to spend your evening, though.”

“Believe it. Now, do you mind? I’m trying to get into the story.”

“Well, give up. If you haven’t been watching all season, you’ll never pick it up at this point.”

“I won’t if you don’t shut up. So... please?”

“How do you expect--?” Aaron lost interest in talking when the hands beginning to roam his body registered with his conscious mind. Slow, delicate strokes down the length of his thighs circled back to trace the crease where Aaron’s legs met his groin. They wandered up his stomach to his chest where Danny’s fingers spread to cover Aaron’s pecs, t-shirt rasping over nipples now rising to taut attention.

Something else was rising, too.

In Aaron’s mind sick didn’t readily associate with horny, but Danny’s leisurely exploration beneath the blanket was changing that.

“Mmm, you’re hot.”

“It’s the fever, you dope. I’m sick.”

“Yeah, that, too.” Danny’s voice was a low rumble in Aaron’s ear, tickling the tiny hairs inside and making him shiver.

“Danny, oh jeez...” A wave of weakness passed over Aaron, but he couldn’t tell if it was fever-related or a result of what Danny was doing to him. His head rolled back, resting on Danny’s shoulder, his eyelids fluttering shut.

Danny brushed the fingers of one hand over the tips of Aaron’s nipples, stopping occasionally to pinch at them, while the other hand drifted south. Sweeping restlessly back and forth, around and around, it never quite touched Aaron’s cock. Approaching stealthily first from one direction then another, Danny’s hand came achingly close time and again, always retreating at the critical moment.

“Oh, cool. Did you see that? They almost kissed.” Placing a kiss just beneath Aaron’s ear for emphasis, Danny’s hands stayed busy as he quietly talked. “I bet they really did while they were filming, but the networks made them edit it out. I heard they’re doing it in real life.”

“Who?” Aaron tried to arch into Danny’s hand, but Danny eluded him.

“The two guys. What, are they supposed to be related or something?”

Enough of Aaron’s critical thinking was still working that he recalled they’d been watching TV. “Um, yeah. Brothers. I don’t think they’re allowed to kiss. Or if they do, probably no tongue.”

“On cable they could.”

“What is it with you people? First Candice, now you.” Danny’s hands were still making slow circles around Aaron’s body -- a languid stroke of his thigh here, a sharp pinch of a nipple there. Seeking some relief, Aaron brought his knees up, letting them fall open as he humped up in search of more contact.

“I haven’t talked to her in a while. Does she watch this show, too?” Danny’s fingers slipped lower still and crept into the crack of Aaron’s ass, moving gingerly along as they crawled their way north. When two of them pressed on his asshole, Aaron whimpered.

“Danny, either cut it out or fuck me.”

Arms closing around him a little, it was Danny’s turn to arch into Aaron, Danny’s erection grinding against his back. “We probably shouldn’t. I mean, you’re sick.”

“Maybe you should have thought of that before you started something.” Want and frustration colored Aaron’s voice as he used his own hand to press Danny’s onto his erect dick.

“I can’t help it. I was just going to feed you, maybe rub your back. But you feel so good.”

“Well, I didn’t have this before you got here, so I’m blaming you. Besides, if you don’t take care of it, I might have a relapse or something.” Their linked hands were rubbing Aaron’s cock in a vaguely circular motion -- up and back with a little press of palm, then heel.

“So, it’d be for your own good, then. More or less?”

“More. Definitely more. Come on.” When Aaron tried to sit up his head started pounding again, but he wasn’t about to say anything, not when he was this close to having Danny in his bed and Danny’s dick in him.

“Are you all right? Maybe we should stay here, or... What time does your roommate get home?”

Leaning against the back of the sofa, his gaze rested on Danny’s face, all worried expression and beautiful, dark eyes. Danny’s hair was mussed and he had the first faint shadow of a beard on his golden skin and Aaron had never seen anything more fucking beautiful in his life. “Gary’s in Vegas until New Year’s.”

“He left you here by yourself when you were sick? I’m gonna kick his ass when he gets back. What if I hadn’t called?” A troubled frown on his face, Danny looked prepared to back his words up with action and the worry on his behalf gave Aaron a warm feeling inside.

“I would’ve been okay. I always am. Besides, you did call.”

“Good thing.” Danny leaned in until their foreheads touched, Danny’s skin feeling smooth and cool against Aaron’s heated flush. “Are you sure this is okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine. See? All better.” When Aaron stood, Danny put his arm around Aaron’s waist and they walked slowly to the bedroom that way.

The room was a wreck, silent testimony to the amount of time Aaron had spent in it recently. The clothes he’d had on before he got sick lay in a pile on the floor and the bed was a rumpled mess; an open bottle of water and a pile of crumpled tissues took up most of the room on the nightstand.

Horribly embarrassed, there was nothing Aaron could do about it now. He’d had fantasies of how it would be, the first time Danny and he made love in his bed and this wasn’t even close to the least imaginative of them.

It was this or nothing, though, and Aaron would take Danny any way he could get him, apparently. Because sometimes sex was just sex and Aaron had had enough of the kind that was to know that what he felt when he was with Danny was different.

With any encouragement at all he could be in love with Danny.

“Let’s get you into bed, then.”

It was a little awkward, letting Danny undress him -- like he was a kid again and incapable of doing it for himself. But then he was sliding under the covers and Danny was next to him, moving over him, rubbing his heated flesh against Danny’s cooler body.

The throbbing in Aaron’s dick drowned out the pounding in his skull, the headache that had come with the fever retreating a little. Danny was placing careful kisses along Aaron’s forehead, cheeks, and neck, and Aaron was seconds away from begging when Danny’s hand closed around his dick.

Just a few strokes from Danny’s hand and he was begging anyway. “Danny. Oh, sweet-- Danny, Danny, yeah, oh please, please. Stuff’s in the drawer.”

Danny must’ve taken a detour on the way to the drawer in the nightstand, because his mouth was on Aaron’s cock now, sucking and licking and Aaron’s temperature was climbing. Sweat broke out on his brow and his hands couldn’t figure out where to go.

Too quickly the side-trip was over and Danny was slicking himself up, warming the gel a little before doing the same to Aaron. The finger he slid into Aaron’s body felt foreign and odd in a way Aaron couldn’t remember since his first time ever and Aaron chalked it up to the fever and overall achyness he’d been feeling.

Danny replaced his finger with his cock and was slowly filling Aaron up. The smell of Danny’s hair and the warm scent of his skin did things to Aaron’s head -- made him think of all of the favorite smells of his life and decide that none of them measured up. When Danny was all the way in he paused, catching Aaron’s eye. “Still okay?”

“No.” Aaron regretted his honesty for a split-second when Danny’s whole body stilled instantly. “I need you to move. Inside me. Fuck me. Now. Please?”

Danny began moving, slowly withdrawing, until just the tip of him rested inside Aaron’s body. Then, just as slowly, he pushed back in, the walls of Aaron’s body making room for him, the stretch and sweet hint of burn causing Aaron’s eyelids to flutter and his knees to draw up. Holding his legs, he opened himself, wanting to be totally available and receptive to everything Danny could give him.

He couldn’t help himself. When Danny looked at him like that, Aaron couldn’t do anything but offer himself completely.

Danny’s body was beautiful, just the right blend of muscularity and smooth, golden skin. Right now it was moving over Aaron, touching him so intimately it made his breath freeze in his lungs for fear of somehow ruining the perfection of the moment. When Danny’s hand wrapped around Aaron’s dick, it only took a few strokes before Aaron was coming, shooting in hot jets up his belly and chest.

Groaning but still moving, Danny’s gaze took on a heavy-lidded satisfaction, like seeing Aaron come made him happy. He changed his angle and his cock rubbed over Aaron’s prostate. Aaron couldn’t get over how it seemed even more sensitive now that he’d come. Almost too sensitive, where every stroke of Danny’s cock across the spot was like a mini-orgasm.

Then Danny sat up a little, gaze transfixed on the spot where his dick drove in and out of Aaron’s body; the undulations as he moved stole Aaron’s breath. When he came, Danny threw his head back, his whole body arching into one long curve of satisfaction, eyes squeezed shut like he was in pain, all the while a contented smile was breaking slowly across his face.

Danny woke up around midnight, the murmur of the TV in the next room bleeding through as the swish of tires on wet pavement faded away. Aaron’s condo was closer to the street than Danny’s apartment and it was the unfamiliar sound of traffic that had woken him.

It must be raining.

He liked the rain, especially when he didn’t have to be out in it, times like now when he could lie still and listen to it drip onto the leaves of the plants beyond the window.

Beside him, Aaron lay sleeping, one arm wrapped around his pillow like it was a life preserver, the other wedged between his legs as he lay curled on his side. Danny knew he snored like a trucker whenever he got congested, but Aaron was sleeping quietly, his features taking on an elfin cast in the darkened bedroom. Colored lights hung from the eaves outside and warmed the room with their reflected glow.

As long as he was awake, Danny figured he could turn off the TV -- forgotten in their rush to the bedroom -- and take a leak while he was up.

On his way back to bed, the sofa began to buzz and Danny located Aaron's phone, stuffed down between the cushions. Calls after midnight were invariably either drunken friends looking for a ride or distraught relatives. So when "Mom" flashed on the phone's display, Danny took a chance and answered it.

By the time he hung up, he was glad he had. Worried after two days' worth of unanswered calls, she'd been on the verge of calling the police -- middle of the night or not. Danny'd been able to reassure her that he was on the job now and looking after her baby.

It had sounded strange to say, but after a little consideration, Danny decided he liked it. Liked the feeling it gave him, too -- that he was the kind of guy someone else could count on.

And not just any someone, either.

The kind of guy Aaron could count on.

When Danny slid back into bed, Aaron stirred, shifting his pillow a bit, blinking his eyes sleepily. "You came back. 'S' nice."

"Yeah." Danny put a hand on Aaron's shoulder, rubbing and squeezing his way up to Aaron's neck. "How do you feel?"

"Better. I think my fever's down." Aaron smiled and closed his eyes again.

Danny couldn't help his answering smile, dopey and sentimental though it was. "Old family recipe -- works every time."

"Yeah? God, I wish I'd known. All of that money I wasted at the drug store..."

"You should've called me sooner." A stab of guilt hit Danny deep in his gut as soon as the words were out of his mouth. He was the one who should've called sooner and he was a jerk to put it back on Aaron.

"Next time I'll know."

"So, Aaron... I was thinking."

"I thought I smelled something burning."

"Shut up. So I was thinking... We never did go shopping. I was wondering -- you still want to?"

That got Aaron's eyes open again. "You mean it?"

“Uh-huh.”

“You’ll go Christmas shopping with me on Second Street?”

The incredulous tone was a little out of line, but Danny let it pass. “Yeah. Definitely Christmas.”

“Cool. I wanna have lunch at Northwoods’ and make out in the dressing room at The Gap store. And spend so much time upstairs at Cargo West they threaten to charge us rent.”

“Jeez, Preston. Anyone ever tell you you’re kinda high-maintenance?”

“High-maintenance? No way. That would be you, Valdez. Oh, and after Cargo West, I want to come back here and make sure -- you know -- that I’m not coming down with anything.”

Danny smiled and pulled Aaron closer. “Anything in those plans that calls for a stop at the boot store?”

“Ah, I wasn’t sure you were paying attention.” Aaron looped his arms around Danny’s neck and draped a knee over Danny’s legs. “Have I mentioned lately that I like the way you think?”

END

Definitely Christmas

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