



## Aaron

*J.P. Barnaby*

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I can't describe what it's like to want to scream every minute of every day.

Two years after a terrifying night of pain destroyed his normal teenage existence, Aaron Downing still clings to the hope that one day, he will be a fully functional human being. But his life remains a constant string of nightmares, flashbacks, and fear. When, in his very first semester of college, he's assigned Spencer Thomas as a partner for his programming project, Aaron decides that maybe "normal" is overrated. If he could just learn to control his fear, that could be enough for him to find his footing again.

With his parents' talk of institutionalizing him—of sacrificing him for the sake of his brothers' stability—Aaron becomes desperate to find a way to cope with his psychological damage or even fake normalcy. Can his new shrink control his own demons long enough to treat Aaron, or will he only deepen the damage?

Desperate to understand his attraction for Spencer, Aaron holds on to his sanity with both hands as it threatens to spin out of control.

## Aaron Details

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## From Reader Review Aaron for online ebook

### Gina says

I was looking for an emotional read and i definitely got it with this story. This story was intense, heartbreakin and highlighted the power of friendship. This story for me is also a reminder that surviving a horrific event or illness means more then just existing and breathing, it means finding the strength to live again.

In this story of Aaron Downing, two years after a horrific event that left his best friend dead and him scarred physically and emotionally, he is barely existing. Having done from one therapist to another, he is getting through his days and nights with medications and avoidance. His family walks on eggshells around him and doesn't know how to help him at this point. Aaron still holds onto his hope of "living" and unburdening his family of worry and fear for him. When he fears his family is about to wash their hands of him he reluctantly agrees to attend college, and in his one and only class he meets Spencer.

Spencer is also trying to cope with his own issues, born deaf he is frustrated the way others see and treat me. Spencer is deaf, not stupid and he doesn't want anyone's pity. He longs for someone to see him, not his deafness.

There is a whole host of other characters in this story, Aaron's mother and father, his younger brothers. All of whom are trying to survive and live through the aftermath of Aaron's terrifying night. And there is Spencer's dad, who has his own issues and is not handling them well. Now, this was a difficult one for me, because despite his dad's issue he is also trying to help Aaron. And while i can understand why some people have a problem with this part of the story, what I think is what do we really know about the lives of professionals who are here to help us? And while I agree Spencer's dad needs to deal with his problem, he obviously helps Aaron.

I am giving this story 4 stars because I didn't have the intense emotional connection I was expecting with a story of this nature. Maybe because Spencer was just "existing" for much of this book that I found it difficult to get an intense emotional connection with him. I expect a lot from stories such as these, I expect to be moved to tears (both happy and sad) and I want to be touched in a way that leaves a permanent mark on my heart. And while this story accomplished some of this, not at the intensity i was hoping for. What I loved about this story was that everything was not wrapped up in a neat package, Aaron and Spencer didn't walk into sunset together with all of their issues resolved. Rather, we get light, warmth and a real chance at living, not just surviving. I will definitely be reading Spencer, part 2 of this story.

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### T.A. Webb says

I had the honor to read an early copy of this wonderful book.

Aaron is a broken young man, physically, spiritually and emotionally. He's the survivor of a vicious attack, the details of which are slowly revealed over the course of the book. He's frozen in time, uncertain if he even wants to live.

Then something happens that forces him out of his paralysis, and he dredges up the little courage he can find and dares to venture into the world again. Back to school.

I don't want to venture too far into the storyline, but he meets a young deaf man, Spencer, who challenges the vision of the future - or lack of vision - Aaron has resigned himself to.

This is a difficult book to read. It's moves me on a visceral level, and I struggle with wanting to help this young man and trying to imagine his pain. But damn it, it is so worth the journey. Ms. Barnaby knows how to touch us on a primal level while maintaining her own emotional distance, and it's a rare and beautiful feat.

This book will not be for everyone, and that's okay. But for those willing to step out without a net, it's worth the risk.

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### **? Jaela ? Killer ? QUEEN says**

Aaron (the book and the character both ) broke my heart. So heart-wrenching. Why do I keep doing this to myself? I cannot stop reading books full of angst.

I can't imagine where Aaron finds the strength to get up every day and deal with his life after all that has happened to him. This book is so realistic. It describes perfectly the internal "war" that's happening inside Aaron. All his fears and struggles.

I felt/feel so sorry for him. I know this is fiction, but the things described in this book are things that have a great possibility to happen in real life and I feel so angry for that. No person should be exposed to "that". Why?? Why did they have to break Aaron?

And Spencer? I adored him. He reaches to Aaron where nobody before him succeeded and returns colors into the miserable life that Aaron's been living for the past 2 years.

There were many parts in the book that made me cry. The writing flows along and it keeps your interest.

It wasn't a cliffy, but there are a lot of things not yet resolved. "The relationship" is still new and fragile and both the MCs have to come to terms with their problems. This is why I'm skipping the 2nd book and jumping directly to the 3rd one, where Aaron and Spenser's story continues.

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### **Alona says**

4.5 stars.

This book is so painful, yet beautiful and tender.

It is not without flaws at all, but these flaws did not put me off enough, to give it less stars than it deserves.

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### **Simsala says**

Aaron was a touching romance, no doubt, but I'm not so easily sidetracked by gentle kisses, tears and deep emotions.

When I read a book dealing with serious issues - in this case PTSD after being brutally attacked (Aaron) and dealing with everyday life when being deaf (Spencer) - I want to have the feeling that authors know what they are talking about, because - what do I know about severe trauma therapy, medication and how a character feels in the aftermath of an attack - next to nothing.

There were some tiny slips in this book like Spencer looking up after Aaron asked him something or how Spencer didn't like to hear the vulnerability in his own voice....um....dear author, dear editor - Spencer is deaf - he can't hear Aaron and certainly not his own voice....

There were more of these slips and they gave me the impression that the author didn't put enough effort and research into the story to make it believable even if it is "just" a romance.

Didn't work for me, sorry....

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### **Tiya Rosa says**

It's Jake Bass on the cover. Jake fucking Bass. I can't NOT buy it. I don't care what that says about my gay porn addiction and how it affects my life choices 'cause Jake Bass.

Oh, and the book has pretty good reviews so there's that.

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### **Awilk -never sleeps- says**

What can I say. I started this after the last book I was reading annoyed me so much I gave up, and then couldn't move until I had finished this.

I do like my books steamy, but with this masterpiece, I didn't miss it. The emotions that I felt while reading this were all over the place. I cried buckets for what Aaron had been through, I held my breath as he took the first steps with Spencer, and I screamed with frustration with Aaron's misguided mother.

This book will stay with me for a long time, and I would recommend it to everyone to read.

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### **Kaje Harper says**

Somehow lost my original review of this one.

This is a very intense story about survival, PTSD, and reclaiming life from the effects of severe trauma. It pulls you into Aaron's world of darkness from the start. I really liked Spencer, and his own issues and progress, and how his deafness played into the dynamics. I appreciated that Aaron's parents seemed like real

people, not perfect, not evil, just doing what they felt was best, coping with a child who is hurting so much, but so hard to reach. I loved that this book moved slowly, and didn't end with all problems solved and everything HEA.

It loses a star, because I had really significant issues with the therapist in this book; there were times when he behaved quite unprofessionally, and in ways that could have had serious repercussions. I felt like Aaron got better partly in spite of, not always because of, his actions.

An intense, emotional book about the healing power of love and human connection.

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### **Lisa Henry says**

[ which included the murder of his best friend (hide spoiler

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### **Sheziss says**

[Spencer is deaf. There are degrees but he's at the top of it because he hears nothing. Zero. And that's some interesting topic to develop in a book and in a romance. He's young. It seems stupid to say that, but not when we join the word "young" with the term "the father is a psychologist", or a shrink?

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### **JustJen "Miss Conduct" says**

I am giving this 5 stars right off the bat because I stayed up all night reading it, couldn't get to the end fast enough, and when I got there, I still wanted more.

Now, for the story. I felt the beginning was dragging on a little bit. We learned about how Aaron feels about his life now, and it seemed to be told over and over, until things started moving again when he went to college that first day. Then, things rolled along nicely. Poor, sweet Aaron. I was scouring the pages for details of his attack/rape where they were handed out like crumbs on a trail to the full story. He is just so broken inside, it is hard to believe he will ever be able to function normally again.

Spencer is such a sweet little slut puppy. I never knew there were people actually having Twitter sex! Anyway, I loved that he was damaged as well and was able to understand Aaron's needs, wanted to help and to be his friend. They really are perfect for each other in so many ways. I really enjoyed watching Aaron start to heal with the help of Spencer and his father.

I loved Aaron's brothers and the way they stood up for him and helped him through the difficult times even though they had to be totally frustrated by the situation. Their parents didn't bother me until close to the end. It bugged me that they couldn't see the positive changes in Aaron after he started seeing Spencer's father.

At the end, I felt like I missed a big chunk of their life. I suppose the book would be way too long if it didn't skip ahead through some points, and perhaps I was just being greedy in wanting to see and learn more about Aaron's attack, further healing and the budding relationship between he and Spencer.

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## Monique says

**This is one of the most emotional and heartbreakingly beautiful books I have had the pleasure to read in a long time! Outstanding!...**

I am not sure I can even begin to explain or even do justice to the words of Ms. J. P. Baranby! This book touched my heart in so many ways. Being in the mind of Aaron, his soul so utterly and completely shattered was devastating! but the heartwarming journey for his chance at 'normal' and the two families involved, who themselves were stretched to breaking point was poignant in its delivery.

Aaron, a beautiful boy damaged and broken, scarred both inside and out, by the most heinous of crimes from which he can never escape. Night after night he is plagued by debilitating nightmares, taking him back to the garage where he and his best friend Juliette were attacked. He can see the stained concrete floor, the water damaged ceiling - it's dirty and he can smell the oil, there is blood and always, Juliette's eyes pleading. But he is helpless....awakes full of fear and nausea, trembling, his very soul tortured. He survived....and now he can't live with that guilt and wishes that he too had died that night with his friend.

Aaron now simply exists, the sixteen year old boy with everything to live for died on that garage floor and what is left is an empty vessel, unable to function on his own. The many psychologists who were unable to help him, simply administer drugs for his suffocating depression and panic attacks, which leave him incapacitated and completely impassive, and with flashbacks of the fateful night triggered by any touch to his body, he is left without even the comfort of his mother's arms.

Spencer Thomas is deaf, born three months premature he is left with hearing impairment, and having been mainstream schooled he is also angry at the world and those who could not see past his stilted speech and deafness and saw him only as a retard! Ostracised by his peers and no friends for company, even his Father, a leading Trauma Specialist, who he was once so very close to has now slipped into a depression, finding his comfort in a bottle. Spencer is alone. He may be deaf, but he is like any other normal teenage boy, same wants and needs...in other words, he thinks with his dick! His solution, which was very enlightening for me was...Twitter Sex! Over the internet, where his deafness was not an obstacle he found willing partners. He just wants to be touched!

Spencer is drawn to Aaron - so sad and frightened, he feels compassion, wanting only to help him. So when the two are paired together as project partners, which is the perfect solution to what could have been a very harrowing and humiliating experience for both, through Twitter, IM and email they slowly come to trust one another and we are taken on a journey fraught with emotion, good and bad, compelled by evocative prose, moving dialog and characters so well developed you become immersed in their lives, willing them to make the right decisions, hoping with all your heart that the pain and hurt in their lives, if not forgotten, will at least be behind them and truly find solace in their friendship and love in their blooming romance.

People who know me, will be aware of how much I love my smut...but most of all I love books that make me 'feel' a book that has me so engrossed and invested in the characters that I am part of their lives. This is an erotic romance, but not between our two MC's, they are merely fledglings, taking baby steps in an emotionally complicated relationship, that is so beautiful in its delivery, I found myself in tears through the

most part, my heart both assaulted and warmed by the numerous emotions this book evoked. There is more to the tale of Aaron and Spencer and I am hoping the extremely talented J. P. Barnaby will not be making me wait too long to read it.

Do I recommend this book...HELL YES! Just read it!

Sinfully Sexy Book Reviews

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### **Meep says**

This book doesn't work for me, in fact it got me upset and almost angry for all the wrong reasons. The authors speciality is very obviously in computer technology and not counselling, but if choosing such an emotive subject as a characters rape to be central in a work of fiction, I feel it should be thought out carefully and treated respectfully rather than for shock value.

At one point there is a whole page of what I assume is coding, I don't expect that in a work of fiction, I don't know coding so it's a wasted page. I also don't twitter so have no interest in it's protocols. I'm not a 'wargame' fan, the characters names bare no significance to me so mere mention of one as a source of disagreement leaves me confused.

The top of his field psychologist is too unprofessional for words. There's a few therapy concepts thrown in but warped and the situations are terrible.

I found the book has a habit of guiding the reader in what to think, then telling the reader what conclusions they should be drawing. This should be show not tell. When characters behaviour frequently drew me to one impression, and the narrative instructed me to think otherwise it made me feel uncomfortable.

(view spoiler)

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## **Mandy\*reads obsessively\* says**

4.5\*

This is a hard book to categorize, it is touching, beautiful, heartbreakin, meaningful, tragic and hopeful. It isn't in anyway a romance imo, it's more of a journey that Aaron is on to find his way back into a life that had been stolen from him.

Aaron's POV is difficult and painful at times, but I never felt any gratuitous angst or drama was included, it was just a hard place to be.

Finding and loving Spencer is just one of the stepping stones on that path, and I'm glad, because as much as I would want it to be otherwise, love just doesn't conquer all.

Aaron's family is amazing and even the decision they make with respect to Spencer's dad is understandable. Spencer and his issues take a bit of a backseat to Aaron's but they are just as heart wrenching...I finished this book with a hopeful outlook for all the people and lives involved in this story.

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## **Trisha Harrington says**

J.P. Barnaby did a wonderful job with this book. Aaron was a book I was extremely nervous to read. Two difficult issues were dealt with in this, both were tackled head on and done very well. The abuse and rape character versus the deaf character felt very natural. I enjoyed this read and have read it a few times since.

Arron was trying to deal with issues he has since an attack that left him psychologically scarred and his best friend dead. I loved the way he was portrayed, everything was a battle for him and there was never a magical cure. The magical cure works well for fantasy but a story that felt so real, needs to be shown realistically. My heart bled for him throughout his struggles.

From his parents, to his issues being around and seeing people, Aaron was dealing with a lot. His feeling like he would be better off dead was also a situation that was handled impeccably. He didn't come across as a weak character as such. He came across as a boy who lost his way after something tragic and horrific. Nothing about Aaron was particularly weak. Just broke.

Spencer was deaf. He was not any less complex but his issue was not as difficult. He was deaf. Although he had to do things differently, he was still a normal kind of guy. One of the issues he had was getting guys to stick around after they found out he was deaf. I felt kind of bad it made such an impact on him.

The romance in this book was sweet. I smiled during the scenes Aaron and Spencer shared as friends, and those between them as a couple. It was not all about sex, but healing and love. The ending was something that melted my heart. I would gladly read this book again and again. Highly recommend this book. It's one of those must reads.

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