

Bloodyrose82

Rating: Possibly R max

Warnings: This fic contains spoilers for season five. In particular, there are season finale spoilers. Be warned.

A/N: Finally, it happened. This is to make myself feel better about the ending. Thanks to [danijol](#) for the beta and the 'yank picking'.

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Prologue.

Some people call it falling in love as if it's accidental, as if you're walking down the sidewalk and trip up, grabbing onto a stranger's hand to balance yourself, and then you look up into their wide concerned eyes, and...just know.

But it doesn't have to be that way, and more often than not it isn't. Lust at first sight, most certainly, but love? Isn't that just a Hollywood concept, created to give hope but ultimately hollow in execution?

It can be painfully slow, inching along without agenda, and then you wake up one morning and look at him lying there, his hair spilling across the pillow, and you realize that somewhere along the way, during nights out at Babylon spent drowning in a semi-lucid drug induced haze, he wrapped himself so tightly into what you thought was your private-party, trespassers-will-be-prosecuted life, that you couldn't imagine a single day without him.

It happened, and you crashed and flew all at once, and in the space of twenty-four hours everything implodes.

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I. Brian

He left without looking back over his shoulder, and you stood there in the middle of the loft, sunshine pouring in through the windows, staring at the empty spaces where his life used to be. The corner where he kept his easel screamed out in silence, and the chair where he always threw his coat felt cold to the touch.

You walked around in endless circles, stalking around the open-plan floor like a disgruntled alley cat, your eyes fixed on everything and finding nothing. Work was in an hour and you wanted nothing more than to call in sick, letting Theodore deal with the fallout. But that was never your style, and as you buttoned your shirt, ignoring the space where his clothes had been, you made a promise to yourself that you would go on, even when you couldn't. You would show them that Brian Kinney was far from dead.

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II. Justin

The airplane was crowded, the sickly-sweet smell of bottled milk floating along on borrowed air in the compacted cabin. You closed your eyes, ignored the flashing light that told you to fasten your seatbelt, and wondered why it was that you suddenly felt reckless to the point of destruction.

You had your freedom as the plane took to the runway, pelting down the tarmac like a runaway train, and it sat bittersweet underneath your tongue, residing in an oddly familiar way like the heaviness of Brian's cock.

Your arm was jostled and you looked up into the anonymous face of a nobody, eyeing you like a sniffer-dog. You shook your head, no. This wasn't a time for games. Ten minutes out of Pittsburgh and already you were being cruised.

You declined the perfunctory alcoholic beverage, and sat looking out of the window at the rolling clouds. No matter where you go, the sky is always the same.

Less than an hour and your feet were on the ground. You felt giddy, a little sickness from being airborne, and the faint tang of something you were never supposed to know: regret.

The airport was dull, censored under a heavy blanket of your indecision, and you almost turned back, before the nice young man in official airport attire, held out his hand and welcomed you to the Big Apple.

And big it was. How you tried to take a bite, riding a yellow cab down into The Village, and knocking on the door of the friend Daphne assured you would show you around and introduce you to those in the know.

Nobody seemed to know. No matter how many hands you shook, how many smiles you cracked, like the faint trace of morning sun trying to break through a cloud, you couldn't shake the oppression: the sinking feeling that you had gone out without your key and now there was no way back inside.

~*~

III. Brian

He convinced you that you needed grounding and that the club was the way to do it. You gave in, more to shut him up than anything else, but as the walls were repainted and the new floor was laid, hiding any evidence of the destruction that had almost cost you everything, Liberty Avenue forgot. And so did you.

Re-opening night was an obvious success, and you admit, leaning up against the bar, a Beam in your hand, that part of you enjoyed it. The part of you that cruised around and picked up every available cute guy, rolling them in your hands like easily won marbles. The part of you that closed your eyes and relished the thrum of the beat as it shuddered through your body in a state of almost-orgasm. The part of you that lived easily, carefree in a time when Justin was nothing more than a little blonde twink who followed you around with his big puppy dog eyes and a boner that never went down.

But everything had changed, and in this mock-stasis, a bubble-sphere that pounded and writhed like a living thing, you felt unsettled and slightly out of touch. You tried to ground

yourself, of course, allowing Mikey to look after you the way he always did, wrapping his arms around you and guiding you to a prominent position on the dance floor. His touch was familiar, his kisses even more, and you tried to abandon whatever newfound knowledge Justin had implanted in your brain on the day he left.

You shut your eyes and swayed to the music, the lights overhead burning rainbow bruises behind your lids, and tried to forget. But it never had worked for you, this forgetting business. You just hid it well. And when Mikey squeezed your hand, slipping from the stand to wrap himself around Ben like a wedding band, you pasted on your performance face and danced like a Maori warrior, kicking up your feet almost as if you felt you could reach a state of Nirvana through the monotonous social ritual.

You couldn't stop the flashes of memories drilling their way through your skull, could you? A five-minute history of all you knew of Justin, zooming past like a missile intent on death. It was just too much, too soon. The dance floor where you took him in your arms all those times before. The backroom where you pressed him against the wall and wrote your desire across his skin, as if you were the artist and he was the canvas, working together to create some sort of abstract masterpiece.

You shook your head, trying to rid yourself of scenes, splashing the floor of the club like water droplets, and strode out into the night, the fog accumulating on the pavements and dancing around your feet. It was closing in and your head hurt from too much Ketamine. You stumbled blindly home, reading the roads with the soles of your feet and somehow found yourself in bed, sprawled on your back, your eyes clenched tightly shut as if somehow it would prevent you from seeing; your fingers clenched in the sheets as if this was a ship and there was every chance of drowning.

But the only storm was the one called your life.

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IV. Justin

By the third week you had lost five pounds and gained a magnetic attraction to your cell phone, jumping every time it rang and glaring at caller ID like it was your worst enemy. It was never him until that second day into the week, and the only time you failed to check.

You stuck one hand out from under the covers and grabbed the phone, snapping it open before sticking it to your ear.

"Hello?"

"Sunshine!"

You sat up hard, banging your head on the over hanging beam.

"Sunshine?"

"Yes. Brian."

The silence was thick like custard, and nowhere near as sweet. So many things hanging, but no words left to speak.

"How are you?"

Miserable, completely miserable. But you were determined, which he should have known.

"Fine. Tired. You?"

"The same."

What did that mean? Was he fine and tired, or did he spend every waking moment trying to push back on that itching under his skin, numbing it with every known intoxicant?

"Oh."

"What have you been up to, Sunshine? Found yourself a studio?"

"Sort of"

You had a studio on the east side; a tiny backroom that had little in the way of comforts, but perfect light.

"I see."

"Brian..."

You left it hanging. His name was floating in the ether like a balloon without a string. One pull...

"Justin?"

"I have to go. I'm meeting a curator for brunch."

"Alright."

More silence, punctuated with his breathing. You smile then, something token, but there all the same. This was something you were familiar with. The little sighs. The quickening of his breath that you pretended not to notice.

"I'll see you then."

So casual a tossing of words, almost as if they had no meaning, no hidden sufferance that would keep you both awake long into the night.

"I suppose."

And you did. You knew you could go back and see him under the pretence of seeing everyone. Or he could come here to check how you were settling in.

"Goodbye, Justin."

"Goodbye."

Twin clicks.

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V. Brian.

Everyone was worried but they tried not to let on. Ted would bring you endless cups of coffee and linger longer than he needed when you requested his work.

Emmett pranced around you like a ballerina, with his constant talk of party after party and how hot this guy or that guy was. Sometimes you wonder if he really even cared you were there.

Mikey tried as hard as he always did, calling you up at work or popping round for lunch, making sure that you spent most of your nights at Babylon with at least someone by your side. He was almost sacrificing his own happiness until the day Ben came to see you and told you that Michael was barely making it to work on time because of all the late nights.

Linds and Melanie called on a regular basis, spilling stories about Gus that made you feel even more homesick. Their soothing happiness echoed down the phone and taunted you with ringing ears until you could stand it no more and claimed someone had knocked at your door.

Worst of all, nobody spoke his name. It was if he was dead and they were all afraid of his ghost floating around in familiar corners. *Justin, Justin*. You whispered his name under your breath every single time you felt that awkward silence where it should have been uttered. You no longer bothered about the strange looks.

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VI. Justin

Your first art show was a phenomenal success, with five newspaper reviews and one editorial. You spent the evening in your starched suit with the sharp collar, welcoming people you had neither heard of or recognized.

You were the gracious host, a guise developed from the influences of Emmett and Br--

You weaved your way through the crowds, occasionally pointing out where your inspiration for a painting came from. Then you realized it was all a lie and tried to backtrack but feared the label of 'crazy artist type' when all you did was utter that one name.

You felt detached, oddly sparse in your happiness. It was everything it was supposed to be and you sold two paintings in the first hour, four by the end of the night. It was working and you were on your way up.

So why did it feel like you were falling down?

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VII. Brian

They wondered why you didn't want to fuck. Surely Brian bloody Kinney would want to pull some tricks. So you did, and it felt empty, just as it always had done, but now even the gloss had worn off.

You slammed them into alleyways and iron doors, leaving your fingerprints across their scorched flesh. You bit down into the muscles of their shoulders, just to hear them cry out, and wondered if it wasn't torture you were courting these days.

You still refused to kiss, and it felt wrong to even try; the first boy who did received a blackened eye for his trouble.

You rode them hard and fast, as if you were chasing smoke, and they kept coming, lining up around the block as if there has been a draught and now you were back.

The strange new bodies felt familiar in their own way, and you comforted yourself that there would be no strings left attached in the morning.

You liked it this way, even if you cried his name every time you came.

*

VIII. Justin

You fucked people. A few arty types that took their time, and random tricks in clubs that weren't Babylon. You tried to pretend you enjoyed it, and in a way you did. You liked fucking people, you always had, but it wasn't the same.

There were no games, no chance encounters of Brian walking in and looking amused. No stolen moments and getting to throw them out in the morning when he came back from a night on the tiles, tiredness creeping into the fresh lines around his eyes.

There was no joy in it other than the moment of sweet release, and yet you still tried to lose yourself in the tiny murmurs they made, making an elaborate show out of ripping the condom packet with your teeth.

Many of them came back for more, and couldn't understand why you wouldn't give it. You couldn't understand it either, why you turned down the sweet boy who worked at the cinema, the man who tried to be your mentor, the owner of the expensive gallery by Central Park.

You didn't allow yourself to linger on the old rule of *never more than once*. Why would it even be a consideration when you were the one who left him?

IX. Brian

It was Gus who found the rings, and you cursed yourself for leaving them on the coffee table. You returned from the bathroom and found him playing with them, clutching them in his tiny fists and holding them up to the light.

You stood there watching him for a moment, and then moved to gently pries them away, glancing at them before tucking them back into their velvet box as if they had burned.

He was just a baby and he couldn't possibly understand, but when he reached back for them, chuckling a 'mine!', you had to smile.

"They're not yours, Gus, they belong to Daddy. And Justin."

He looked up at you with wide eyes, and then as if he understood, he clambered to his feet and wrapped his arms around one of your legs.

It was going to be a long visit.

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X. Justin

You didn't want anybody to visit and see you in this state, this walking-talking-breathing person who existed but yet could not live.

When Daphne turned up unannounced you pasted on a smile and accepted her hugs, filling her in on the details you could afford, like the commission for a new painting, the series of shows you had somehow found yourself lumbered with after a chance encounter with one of New York's most infamous gallery owners.

You took tea with her in little Manhattan cafes, whiling away the hours people watching. You allowed her to get excited over the sophistication of New York men, and even tried to join in when she asked your opinion on where to go to find the hottest lays.

But your heart wasn't in it, and you think she knew from the way she shot you tiny looks when you stared a moment too long into your coffee cup.

"It's okay to miss him," she said finally, her finger tracing a coffee stain circle on the table.

You shook your head. It wasn't okay. You were never supposed to feel this much.

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XI. Brian.

You knew he would be coming home when Michael told you that he was organizing a party for Debbie's birthday. There is no way he would miss something as important as a celebration for his surrogate mom.

You braced yourself and tried to prepare as best you could, losing hours and sleep in the backroom of the club as you fucked someone else.

They were still worried, maybe even more so, and they all tried to tell you that it was best if you stayed as much out of his way as you could. No good falling hard for him again, they said.

You knew it was all bullshit. You couldn't fall again because you hadn't yet managed to climb out.

Brighton stood cold and empty, but the key swung on your ring, next to your car keys and the key to the loft. You couldn't bring yourself to sell it, and you couldn't bring yourself to see it. It stood in limbo, but nobody asked so you never told.

The day of the party drew closer, and you shopped for a new suit, telling yourself you needed one and you weren't trying to impress. You chipped in for the venue, an expensive hotel that Michael could never afford on his own, and threw yourself into long phone conversations with Lindsay about the best place to stay when she flew over with Mel, Gus, and JR.

You spent hours getting ready, combing your hair and using an extra dab of the scent that you remember him telling you he loved.

You looked in the mirror and cursed yourself for acting so silly. This wasn't a date.

Before you left, you shoved the rings into your pocket, and refused to question yourself why.

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XII. Justin

The plane was late and you had barely an hour before you were due at the hotel. You peeled off your jeans and hopped into the shower, soaping yourself up while you tried to banish images of slick liquid fucks out of your mind.

You dressed, working at your Windsor knot, and downed a couple of glasses of Jack Daniels to keep your nerves from forcing you on the next flight back to New York.

The cab arrived and it took ten minutes to get to the hotel, the time in which you spent going over the inevitable encounter in your head.

"Hi Brian."

"Sunshine."

And then you would turn and run and never stop running because some things just never stop hurting.

You squared your shoulders and stepped out of the cab. Emmett and Ted were there to greet you, and you tried to ignore the worried glances they shared before they stepped up and brought you back into the familiar fold of their arms.

Where was he?

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XIII. Brian

You knew he was there without turning around. Mel and Linds glanced over your shoulder and froze, their eyes flitting back to yours.

You cocked your head to one side, drained your glass, and pivoted on one foot.

He hadn't changed. His suit made your eyes smart as you were whisked back in time to a moment where you were choosing your wedding outfits together.

His hair was a little longer.

"Justin," you said, with a polite nod, and held out your hand.

He looked at it like it was some sort of foreign animal that was likely to bite, and then looked back at your face, shaking his head.

"You idiot," he whispered, and you weren't sure whether he was talking about you or himself.

He grabbed your hand and pulled you into an awkward hug. Behind him, people were staring, and almost collapsed in relief when you relented and hugged him back, inhaling his scent.

Everything and nothing had changed.

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Epilogue.

Some people say that love is just a passing fancy and that it can never last. Cynics say that we aren't designed to mate for life, and sometimes Justin thinks that they are right.

He and Brian were never monogamous, and he doubts they ever will be. But he likes to think that if you wait long enough, if you try hard enough, no matter where you go or who you see, if you really love someone, and they love you back, then you will always be tethered together.

That you can always find your way back home.

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