Supersonic (Wo)man

by doorwaybullets

Summary

Sometimes, blaming everything else was easier than accepting the truth.

Or in which Brian's too afraid to discover a part of himself.

Notes

this can also be found on my wattpad (@/dustbiter)

i may still have to edit some of this but i got the idea and i was Excited to share it ok

Sometimes Brian blames his parents. His mother; who had raised him with feminine things as well as masculine. Who'd encourage him to wear a princess dress while he played with his toy trucks and told him what a pretty girl he made. Sometimes he blamed the changing era, with outrageous fashion
and communities filled with those who challenged the idea of tradition. The pattered shirts hung low on Brian's chest, the platforms he owned reminded him of women's heeled shoes. Sometimes, he even blamed his own friends. Every time Freddie sauntered in with swinging hips and fluttering eyelashes drove another spike deep somewhere in Brian's chest, carving out a sensation of fear, uncertainty, and want.

Maybe it was wrong, to be pointing a finger at all those people, but it was easier than the alternative.

Brian shifted in his bedsheets yet again. The covers were pulled up to his neck, hiding his too long legs and disgustingly flat chest. He didn't always feel like this. In fact, sometimes these bouts of discomfort went away for so long that Brian was sure he had just been making them up. But then they would come back, and the cycle of restless nights would repeat.

"Are you alright, mate?" he heard a soft voice whisper from the other side of the room. Brian turned his head to glance at Roger, who was nestled comfortably in his own bed and looking like a bird in a nest of blankets.

"I—yeah," Brian tried to prevent his voice from cracking. "Just don't feel well."

He wasn't lying. He did, in fact, feel sick to his stomach (though not because he was ill), and he also had to take a piss. But going into the bathroom meant having to look in the mirror, and Brian didn't know if he could do that at the moment without bursting into tears.

Roger nodded, rolling into his side to face the wall, "Alright, just don't get sick in here. I'm squeamish about that shit, you know."

Brian knew, he knew everything about his three flatmates down to their most specific drink order. He knew which one of his jackets Roger was going to wear in the morning. He knew Freddie was afraid of the dark when he slept alone. He knew Deaky's first kiss was with an upperclassmen in sophomore year, and that she tasted like an ashtray.

In return, they all thought they knew everything about him, which spiked a feeling of guilt into his heart. Somewhere deep down Brian was aware that he would feel better if he told them how he felt. How showering with the lights on felt unbearable, how he sometimes thought he could feel the missing weight from his chest. The only thing stopping himself was fear. Not just for how his friends would react, but how he, himself would if he came to terms with his own emotions.

No, Brian reasoned. He was only thinking so strangely about his body because he'd put the idea into his head. All of this would go away in the morning when he had things to keep him distracted. The burning behind his eyes would fade and the taste of bile would recede from his throat.

He just had to fall asleep.

Dull light filtered through the windows of the London apartment, seeping in through every nook and cranny, streaming weakly through the blinds and creating patterns that danced with every gust of wind.

Brian was already in the kitchen. His figure slumped into itself as sleep pulled at his eyelids. The night of fear and sickness and self doubt had resulted in an unsatisfactory slumber.

Good Day Sunshine came on the radio, the way it did every Saturday morning. Usually, Brian would dance a bit and hum along as he cooked breakfast, but not even the Beatles could lift his spirits. His body was robotic. The itching temptation to sing was nonexistent.
"Mornin'," he heard a raspy voice mumble from the hallway. Brian turned to give John a forced smile, nodding towards the island.

"You're up early," he observed.

John shrugged tiredly, "Fred sleep-talks sometimes. Gives me the creeps."

Brian huffed a laugh, "Have a cup of tea, god knows how long it will be before the others awake from hibernation."

He handed John a mug, who graciously accepted it with hands still swollen from sleep. His fingers tapped against the porcelain surface of it, a beat that he didn't recognize. He assumed it was an original thing John was working on.

Brian was already on his second cup himself when he heard a scuffle nearby.

"Fuck off, Rog! I have to pee!" came Freddie's voice from down the hall.

"Then maybe you should've woken up five minutes earlier! Let me through!" he heard Roger retaliate.

"Let go of the fucking doorknob! I swear to all things mighty, I will piss on you—"

John made eye contact with Brian over the rim of his mug, holding it until they both inhaled their drinks from the force of their laughter. Brian pounded at his own chest as he choked.

"What's so funny, darlings?" Freddie asked innocently, apparently having won the brawl for the bathroom. He didn't even wait for a reply before reaching over Brian and grabbing a plate. "Oh, you've made breakfast!"

"I make breakfast every Saturday, Fred," reminded Brian. He grabbed a plate of his own, shuffling around in his oversized pajamas to gather his own meal. (It made him feel better to wear baggy clothes when he was in one of his strange moods. The idea that nobody could see the shape of his body comforted him.)

Brian heard Roger spit his toothpaste into the sink. The man himself emerged not long after, still glaring at Freddie. His blonde hair was tousled and sticking up in the back.

"Good morning," he mumbled, taking his usual seat at the island along with the other boys. "Deaky, could you get me a fork?"

John scowled, "Your legs work, you know." He got up and retrieved a fork from the utensil drawer anyways.

"A spoon for me too, while you're up," piped Brian. He pointed to his cup of applesauce. John handed him one, and he turned it over in his palm. The curve of the spoon distorted his features when he looked into it like a funhouse mirror, but he could still make out his untamed mop of hair, and the way it covered the sharpest part of his jawline. He started wondering what he would look like with a delicate chin like that, pinker lips and softer eyes.

Suddenly, he slammed the spoon down onto the tabletop. "I'm cutting my hair."

The other three gaped at him. Freddie was the first to respond.

"Huh?" he asked intelligently.
"I'm cutting my hair. Short," Brian repeated, already feeling his throat begin to close. It was stupid, to be getting choked up over the thought of losing his hair. He'd had it short in the past, and it would always grow back. If he cut it, maybe it would help remind his brain of who he was. A man. It was worth a shot.

"Brian, you love your hair," John softly reminded.

He gripped the curls near his scalp, wishing he could tear them out then and there. Blood pumped in his ears to the tempo of his pounding heart. He couldn't tell the three about his situation. The idea of Freddie liking men wasn't absurd or unheard of, and the band had all been quick to accept it. But with Brian, they'd likely call professional help, which was the last thing he wanted. The band was just starting to make it big. He couldn't risk having anyone find out his disgusting secret.

Roger leaned across the island, "Mate, are you alright?"

There it was again. Mate. Brian pulled his hair tighter and clenched his eyes shut. A small whimper escaped from through his gritted teeth.

Freddie, the mother hen he was, wasted no time in rushing over and pressing the back of his hand against Brian's forehead. "Oh, dear, you've gone all flushed. Is everything okay?"

"Do you still feel ill from last night?" Roger asked.

"You felt ill? Darling, why didn't you tell us?" Freddie crouched down to come face-to-face with Brian, who was still sitting down. His voice was kind and gentle. Brian didn't think he was ever more appreciative of his friend's pet names and caring nature.

"I'm not ill. Well, I just—um," he stumbled over his tongue, biting down hard on his cheek to avoid screaming in frustration.

"It's alright, take your time," John said in a tone similar to Freddie's. It was so stupid. Brian was a grown man for fucks sake. He shouldn't have to have his friends comfort him like an unstable toddler.

Finally, he gathered up enough of himself to open his eyes again, immediately greeted to the sight of a concerned looking Freddie. He concentrated on his brown eyes, trying to string together a sentence in his jumbled head.

"Fred, when did you know?" he whispered. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Roger's eyebrows furrow in confusion, but Freddie immediately understood.

Freddie took ahold of Brian's upper arm, rubbing it gently with his thumb. Brian felt himself lean into the touch. "Is that what this is about? Did you realize something?"

"Um, I-I—not like that. Ignore me, I'm being fucking stupid," he said with a shaky laugh. How desperately he suddenly wanted to spill his guts to his best friends, the only people in the world he knew he could trust. But no, he was right before. Telling them anything would risk the future of the band. It's not like he could ever do anything, anyways. There was no such thing as a rockstar who was—

Brian could've slapped himself for almost thinking himself as one of them. A new wave of dread washed over him from the inside of his head, overflowing in the form of fresh, salty tears.

Roger and John looked shocked, but not surprised as he sniffled into his sleeve. Brian generally liked to think of himself as someone who had their emotions relatively under control. He'd never broken
It took him a moment to realize Freddie was speaking, "—get you cleaned up and back into bed. It's still early enough for you to catch an hour or two. Come on." Brian felt a pair of hands hook underneath his armpits and flinched, knowing Freddie was feeling his chest. The way the pads of his fingertips pressed directly against his bone felt unnatural. He couldn't even find it in himself to scold his mind for thinking that way.

Freddie led him down the hall, to the bathroom where he could wash off his face and blow his nose. Brian managed to make it pretty far without looking into a mirror, but he snuck a glance out of reflex after splashing himself with water. A shudder ripped through his body.

He felt his friend's hands on him again, "Hey, we're away from Roger and Deaky now. Tell me what's wrong."

"Y-you won't understand. Shit, I d-d-don't understand," his entire body was shaking with nerves and a new round of tears threatening to fall.

"Are you gay?" Freddie asked, in a way that was blunt but not rude.

"No!" replied Brian. Then, he began to think. If he liked women, but he was—no. "No, I'm not gay."

He hummed, "A shame, I wouldn't mind someone to talk about boys with."

Brian cracked a smile, but quickly hid it and turned his attention back towards the mirror, forcing himself to look at his reflection. To really look. He saw himself, of course, with blotchy cheeks and red eyes from crying. He saw his tangled dark hair surround his face in wild knots. But the version of him outside the mirror was different. That version had narrower eyes, a protruding, crooked nose and a sharp, narrow chin. Freddie looked at him in the mirror as well, standing behind his shoulder.

"What do you see?" Brian asked. "In the mirror, I mean."

Freddie quirked an eyebrow, "Well, I see me, looking like a right mess. And I see you, also looking like a right mess but a handsomer one."

His lips twitched upwards, but being called handsome twisted his gut. "Do you want to know what I see?"

Freddie nodded.

Brian took a deep breath, mentally preparing himself for the looks, the insults, the phone calls to the closest psychiatrist. "I see myself look pretty."

"That's because you are, Bri. I thought I just said that."

He shook his head, "No. You said I look handsome. I said I look pretty."

The mental gears in Freddie's head began spinning so quickly steam was practically pouring from his ears. It look him a moment or two before he finally connected the dots. Brian silently thanked god for having a friend who had half a wit about these sort of things.

"Oh. You mean..."

"Yeah. But this doesn't change anything," Brian continued. "I'm—I'm still Mister Brian May. To the
world, and even to myself. And it's going to stay that way, alright?"

Freddie nodded, he understood. He'd had friends before he met his bandmates. Ones who'd bruise their ribs with bandages to flatten their chest. Ones who'd be too afraid to go outside alone without being killed. Ones who'd kill themselves. They saw no other escape from their own personal prison. He knew the struggles that they faced.

"Let's get you to your room, yeah? You need to take a nap, I have something I want to give you."

Brian looked confused, but allowed himself to be pulled into his bedroom. Freddie left to his own room for a moment, but returned shortly with something in hand.

"What's that?" Brian asked.

"A scarf."

The mattress dipped as Freddie sat down next to him. He took the long fabric and tied it around Brian's neck.

Freddie giggled a bit when he saw that Brian's long hair had gotten tucked underneath the flower patterned scarf. He gently pulled it out, running his fingers through the tangles.

"Please don't cut your hair," he said.

Brian closed his eyes, enjoying the sensation of having his hair played with, "I won't."

"Promise?"

He held out his pinky finger for Freddie to link, which seemed to satisfy the man. They stayed silent as Freddie continued to comb through the gnarls, which would've been simpler if he'd just used a brush, but Brian looked at peace for the first time that morning and he wouldn't have broken the moment for anything.

At last, he was finished. He patted down the last of Brian's hair and styled some of it in front of his shoulders, draping it over the scarf.

"You look very pretty," Freddie leaned back, admiring his work.

Brian's eyes lit up, "Yeah?"

"Beautiful, even."

"Oh, now you're just flattering me."

Freddie carefully unwrapped the scarf from Brian's thin neck, placing it on the bedside table, "We wouldn't want you getting strangled in your sleep."

He stood up, and Brian immediately missed the weight of another person on the mattress. It wasn't until Freddie was at the door did he speak up.

"Thank you," Brian whispered, already tucked beneath the covers. "For not thinking I'm some kind of mental crackpot."

Freddie's entire body appeared to soften, "I wouldn't dream of it. You're the most intelligent person I've met. I admire you a lot, you know. You were very brave to tell me all these things."
"Smart, admirable, and brave? Please, don't hesitate to go on."

Brian only received a warm smile. "I'll boost that ego of yours more when you wake up. Sleep tight."

He rolled over onto his side as soon as the door closed, getting the best rest he'd had all week.

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