Clawing At The Gates Of Love

by themeaningofjush

Summary

Brian Firkus goes through a swift and awkward break-up. Brian McCook returns from, well, wherever he disappeared to for 11 months just in time to help. But are the skeletons that keep collecting in Katya's closet so serious as to threaten her career and working relationship with Trixie?

Extreme silliness, heartbreak, and slow burn ensues.

Notes

Hieeee this is my first fic :) pls be kind
Shall Mother Fetch The Garden Shears?

On the night that David left him, Brian downed two tabs of trazodone with a bottle of bourbon and called it a night. He hadn't slowed the hustle for a decade straight whether it was with his music, makeup line, or the ten million other things to do with his drag alter-ego Trixie Mattel. An avowed workaholic, Brian could never seem to settle from David's point-of-view.

When David had made his latest “lame” (in Brian's words) attempt to propose to his long-term boyfriend on New Year's Eve of the past year, Firkus laughed it off and asked him what gave him the idea in the first place. Needless to say, his boyfriend was gutted and told himself that if Brian hadn't begun to make sacrifices for him, and soon, it would be over.

Sure enough the summer came and went. It's why on a muggy night in early September, a little under a month after Brian's 32nd birthday, David finally broke it off. Brian even seemed to smugly accept it as well. "Fine,” he told David. Even though Brian's guts felt like they were churning in lava.

Brian cracked, though. When his now ex-boyfriend had finished gathering his things scattered around Chateau Mattel, David tried to console him.

David wanted to hug Brian. After breaking up with him.

“Don't fucking touch me!” Brian spat, eyes glossed over with tears, “You think I want to touch you? You're the one who's giving up over a fucking piece of paper?!”

His ex pleaded with him, mostly for closure, but David knew it wouldn't work. For someone who was so candid about his feelings in drag, while playing an exaggeration of himself, Brian could be a rigid, cold person at the drop of a hat.

“Get the fuck out!”

Once David had finally taken his leave, that's when the pills and potions came out. In hindsight he felt it was a little corny but Brian turned all of the lights out in his apartment, placed a Hank Williams record on the turntable, and opened the blinds so he could watch the neon-washed view of Los Angeles while he attempted to numb himself into oblivion.

He also noticed that the guard rail, wrapped around his apartment balcony, looked pretty attractive to stumble over right about then.

But instead, ever the rational bitch, Brian stripped himself naked in the middle of his sweltering living room and passed out like a bald, overgrown baby on the couch under the framed portrait of the woman he'd invented and, until then, had believed could shield him from any pain.

As Hank's voice faded on the second side of the record, the apartment went quiet too.

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Brian didn't leave the couch until 6 PM the next day. He had allowed his phone to die on the floor and only got up to plug it in to its charger when he had convinced himself he could face the flurry of new emails and the magnetic pull of social media that would soon be blowing up on its screen.

He reeked of sweat and shame (yas!) and stumbled to the bathroom to take a shower while his phone charged up. Under the cool stream of water, Brian began to sob as a chorus of voices in his head began to convince him that noone could truly have the patience to love him, that he wasn't worth
anyone's time. He just had Trixie and an empty apartment. The shower continued for what felt like an hour until all the salt and grime had been washed away.

Brian's stomach clenched noisily from hunger when he stepped from the humidity of the shower but, frankly, he didn't feel very inclined to fix something quick to eat. Instead, he returned immediately to his phone, which was hovering around 23%, and was surprised to discover a barrage of texts from, maybe, the only person he could talk to and pretend everything was okay with at that moment.

Brian tapped on the unread conversation:

11:33 AM: BITCH, I'M BACKK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! HOOOOO!!!!!!

11:33 AM: Hi Bitch, *cough* I mean, Briaaaaan. You around to talk shop, ladyboi?

11:34 AM: Feck!! I'm such a hag... “ladyboy” is a shit term to use in the year of our Lord, 2021, right? Absolutely! Right???????

12:07 PM: Toodles! guess you're busy being boss lady of the planet. We'll talk soon then *pinches ur butt* Xx, Bitch McCook

Bitch McCook. Even for Katya, that was a new one. And for Firkus, he was grateful for it because it actually made him laugh for the first time in what felt like eons.

And finally...

3:36 PM: TEXT ME BACK YOU FIENDD i'm so boreddddd back in LA town. What are you up to tonight? Ur the only poop I wanna see rn. K, bye.

God, he was insufferable, but McCook was probably the only “poop” Firkus wanted to see likewise. The last time they had met up was over the backend of the previous year when McCook sought to take a well deserved break after the 2020 Trixie and Katya book tour and his own non-stop schedule since returning to drag and rekindling his business partnership with Brian a couple of years before.

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They had decided to meet for brunch at a diner around the corner from the younger Brian's apartment. McCook told him that he needed to take another step back from Katya, only this time, not over drugs and his mental health. The truth was that he was utterly exhausted after fifteen years of transforming in and out of the endearingly bonkers Russian hooker-whore and would like to take time off while he was emotionally stable, for once, to travel the world and spend time with his folks and friends in Boston.

From what Firkus could remember from their conversation, though, he understood that there was subtext to his best friend's urgency and desire. While McCook's age had always been a joke between the two, as Trixie and Katya respectively, it was undeniable that the elder queen's fast approaching 40th rotation around the sun was something of an anxiety trigger to him.

What had McCook done for the past twenty years? He kept pressing Firkus with this question as he chomped obscenely on his empire of french toast. Fame? Sure. Fortune? Nah. A gaggle of 14 year old girls shouting “Mom!” in his face and collapsing on the ground almost anywhere he went? Oh, hell yes!

The better part of those years McCook had been spent in a state of being haunted by the repercussions of his failed tenures on Drag Race which, naturally, resulted in a fanbase who clung to
Katya with cult-like adoration. This was all in addition to her and Trixie's entangled fates and ventures, of course. For the worse, he had spent his twenties and thirties in an upward and downward spiral of recovery and relapse as he fought to confront his rampant addiction to speed and the reality of his deteriorating mental health if he should continue to use. Much of this also boiled down to McCook's desire for something he couldn't have, something that up until a few hours ago, in real-time, Firkus had thought he was so privileged to be able to enjoy: a love that was worth the work, complete trust.

They parted, for once, on the best of terms as the best of squirrel friends and ride or die sidekicks for as long as they both should be entertainers. Firkus told him that he would be there for him whenever he needed and that he better damn text him even if the long distance charges were bogus.

“Bri, who the fuck doesn't have a free long-distance plan these days? What is this, 2005?”

“Oh shut up, bitch! Bitch, I was sixteen and too poor to have a goddamn Nokia brick in 2005. Sit the fuck down!” Firkus joked.

“Duly noted.” McCook nodded profusely as he tried not to crack up in the booth and flaunt his bizarre laugh for the every guest in the diner to hear.

Of course, the bitch never texted or returned Brian's calls. He had completely shut down his socials, too. For all Brian knew, McCook was in Paris or Barcelona or Moscow or Tokyo. When Brian did the once-in-a-awhile call or text to tell McCook about the wardrobe and set malfunctions at her solo shows all he got was the voicemail and, after around the tenth call and not getting through, Brian couldn't help but hang on, teary-eyed and frustrated, just to hear his friend's voice on the 30-second “leave a message!” bit, Maureen ad-libs and all.

Brian couldn't respond to, or even understand, why his chest seized when he listened to McCook's voice, when he pulled up old, mundane videos of them bored and hungover at airports all over the world just to get his fix. He just wanted to know that his friend was okay, wherever he was.

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All of this and more was why Brian was so happy to hear that he was back in Los Angeles. Hell, there were even nights when the younger man lay wide awake for hours trying to get David to convince him that this wasn't in fact a sick and elaborate plan of McCook's to disappear for good.

“He's an eccentric, not an idiot.” David had said.

Brian silently cursed his boyfriend. Sure, his friend was maybe the single most intelligent, thoughtful, and quick-witted person he'd ever gotten close to but McCook being an eccentric didn't necessarily mean that he lacked the ability to do something horrendously stupid if left unchecked for too long. Besides, Firkus had literally been there with his friend already: watched him collapse and say things that a healthy and sane Brian McCook/Katya would never say. It scared him like hell to imagine his friend going back to that point.

It didn't take another second for Brian to decide that he had to, needed to, see McCook that night. His thumb hovered over the send button before he was sure about tapping it.

6:57 PM: OH BITCH!!!! Sorry I've been sleeping, like, all day. But I'm down!! Come by my place whenever?

He threw his phone on the glass coffee table and slumped back down on the couch in his cold and damp pastel-pink bathrobe. Not even a minute later his phone began to vibrate and ring. It was him.
A gravelly, posh-accented English voice began speaking almost immediately upon pickup: “Oh might I say, is this the Brian Trixibelle Mattel residence? I was hoping to order some delicious hemorrhoid creams and chapsticks for my grandson.... Hauhahaha! Bitch!”

“Haha bitch?! You're the fucking bitch, Maureen! Why haven't you returned any of my calls?”

“Listen, listen, I was, like, travelling the plains of the Moroccan Plateau, probably–”

“Wait, you went to fucking Morocco without me?” Trixie did her pitch-perfect whine like Cher from Clueless. “You are a bitch!”

“No, yes, listen! And my phone, my beloved phone, was stolen by these punk ass child laboring pickpocketers in Marrakech and–”

“Punk ass child pocket pickers?! Oh, what the fuck??”

“Right?! And so it took me, like, forever to get a new phone that wasn't sketch out the ass and I don't know, like, anyone's goddamn number by memory–”

“No! Who the fuck does, though?”

“Yeah, right? So I literally waited til I could, like, get back to my fucking laptop here at my place and, like, the first thing I did, even before taking a stupid long bath, was go buy a new fucking iPhone and try to find your number on Facebook or whatever. Bitch! I fucking missed youuuuu!”

“HA-HAH!!! You found my number on fucking FB? Oh bitch, I didn't even know that was still on there?!”

“Ohhh bitch! I already posted it on my first Instagram story since getting back. The kids have been going insane but I changed the number so now it's the little Italian pizza shop like four blocks from where I live! For the record I tried Grindr, first, but then I remembered, like, you have David and I felt like a fucking idiot for forgetting your fucking boyfriend. Sorry, haha, I feel like I must've lost a few braincells in the heat in Cairo or something!! Fucking climate change.”

Brian shifted awkwardly on the couch at the mention of David's name and, even through the phone, McCook sensed something in the silence.

“Dude, you still there?”

“Yeeah.” Brian was unable to mask a sniffle and, before he knew it, his guard had fallen for his friend to hear. “Yeah, sorry, it's just...”

“Bri? I'm coming over just hold on for, like, twenty minutes, okay?” The older Brian's voice had returned to a serious rasp which represented decades of chainsmoking cigs and joints, “I'm coming! Maybe take, like, a bath with some of those nice salts I totally didn't consider trying to huff the last time I was over? I'll be there before you know it!”

Brian bit his lip and tried to smile at the Katya-isms he would usually be on the floor cackling from but he just couldn't. “I need to see you.”

“I know. I'm coming, I promise. In twenty minutes you can tell me who I need to kill. Unlock the door for me! Bye.” He hung up.

Firkus threw his phone back down on the coffee table and went to the bedroom for the first time since last night when David left, wiping tears away and hating to look at the messy, empty bed. He
went to the dresser, which had been haphazardly rifled through, and pulled out a pair of briefs, socks, and slacks. In his equally miserable looking closet he took out a button-down western shirt, one of the favourites in his collection for its simplicity and comfort, that was a navy blue with red trim and accents.

After that he returned to the kitchen and took a peek in the fridge for something quick to stuff in his mouth before his stomach turned inside out from hunger pangs. He settled on an avocado-spread sandwich that tasted like sand and limey-tasting goo in his dry mouth but he crushed the whole thing, crust and all.

By the time he settled back down on the couch in the living room to catch up on the first few emails and orders of business for the day, there was a frantic knock on the door.

What a faggy knock. God. Brian thought, trying to muster up a smile. When he unlatched the door, he swung it open to see McCook looking exactly how he did the last time he returned to the surface. Brian was relieved.

“I didn't know if you ate so I brought a bag of Funyuns and a fucking 7-11 latte which I'm actually scared for you to drink.” McCook smiled, showing off his perfect whites (but when was he not?). His head was completely shaved again, likely to hide where his greys were now seriously starting to come in. He had the full beard, which was also pocked lightly with salt grey hair. He looked good and healthy, like he'd just had the best sex or yoga sesh of his life, and that was all that the both of them could ask for.

Brian moved out of the way to let his friend in. McCook put the 7-11 bag and latte on the ornate dressing table in the hall and put his arms out, “Can I hug you?”

The younger Brian nodded and tried to avert his gaze because his head was overwhelmed with “I should have’s” and he fucking detested crying in front of people. Even his best friend. He nodded and whispered, “Duh.”

“Just asking, that's all, before Mother touches you. Don't you dare stain this jacket I'm wearing!”

Brian chuckled and kept his hands straight at his sides as McCook, who was a few inches shorter than him, buried himself in the hug. He inhaled deeply and caught every scent of fresh cologne and cigarettes on McCook's shoulder. “I don't know if I can even stoop that low!”

“Dude! It's not a joke!” McCook erupted in giggles right back. “Shall Mother fetch the garden shears and cut off a little man's penis, eh?” Maureen again, always when Firkus needed to hear her most.

“It's Dave. He walked out.” Brian's voice cracked and he let out a heavy sob and squirmed out of McCook's grip. “You look like a fucking Survivorman, by the way, you witch.”

“Oh, that fucking sucks balls. Wow.” McCook let Brian stroll past him and plop back down on the couch. “What, uh, happened?”

Brian scratched his scalp and placed his other hand on his knee while his friend sat on the loveseat opposite the couch. “I don't really want to talk about it? Um.”

“It's okay, it's okay!” McCook said, “Can I take a guess?”

Brian rolled his eyes and leaned back with his arms behind his head on the couch, “You're a psychopath.”
“Well, thank you. Thank you very much! Haven’t heard that one before, good chum.” He raised his brow. “At least you can, like, write a kickass, sadfuck country album about it.”

“Oh my god!” Brian almost gagged and sat up, “Fuck, can we, like, get out of this apartment? I feel like I’m suffocating.”

“Of course, bitch. No offence but the place reeks of a sadsack and his florid nocturnal emissions. Where do you wanna go?”

Brian stood up and popped the cricks in his back, “I dunno. Fuck. Anywhere!”

“I know a place.” McCook smirked, “But you’re not going out in that are you?”
Lovesick Blues

Chapter Summary

The two Brians go to a bar to catch up but McCook doesn't actually get to say what he needs to tell Firkus. Chaos ensues and my hand slipped towards the end but, enjoy it, cuz it'll be awhile before these two get the hots again.

Chapter Notes

I'm overwhelmed by the lovely comments on the first chapter! Here's part 2 right away :) See the end of the chapter for more notes.

They left Brian's apartment and walked a couple of blocks to a place called The Last Chance Saloon in WeHo. Brian didn't even realize it was a Tuesday night and, for that matter, realizing it was September 21st, began to understand the error of his ways: his and David's anniversary had been the day before yesterday, and Brian had completely forgotten. Like, it had completely slipped his mind and now it made perfect sense why David was so depressed and angry the night before.

Anyway, Brian shook it off after relaying this to McCook, who just chuckled and said “oh bitch!” and “that's an eighth grade life lesson you should've learned there!” It being Tuesday, McCook initially sensed that the bar wouldn't be that busy but nevertheless, it was, and they found themselves watching a man in assless chaps grinding into a person in the alley beside the bar while McCook lit up a joint on the street.

“Isn't that magical?” McCook said, offering the joint to Brian, who declined the toke. “I missed LA.” “Sure is.” Brian blinked, a sour look on his face before the pair headed into the bar.

They found a booth towards the back of the saloon. It was a hick bar, of course, and Brian got vibes that it was far from being a queer-friendly spot, judging by the group of pugfaced clientele sitting along the rail. But nonetheless, a George Jones tune was blaring over the speakers and the two Brians could pass for two bald construction workers who found themselves at The Last Chance to drink and complain about their wives.

“So where all did you go, man? You mentioned Marrakech and Cairo. You don't look like you just came back from there so–”

McCook nodded as he slid into the booth with his Diet Coke. “Yeah, Northern Africa was in January of this year, when I had to get the hell out of Mass.”

“And then?” Brian sipped his dastardly-looking Tequila Sunrise. “Did you catch any Arabic for your lexicon?”

“Yeah, yeah. A little standard and a little Darija here and there. Yeah.” He coughed. “But yeah, then
I had to go back home again. And then I... what's that Eminem song? Cobwebs In My Closet?"

Brian screeched. “HAAA!!! Cleaning Out My Closet? Oh wow!”

McCook rolled his neck dramatically and batted his eyes at Firkus, “Yeaaaah. That's the one, kid. Was always more of a D12 fan than a fan of Eminem on his own.”

“Bitch! You only know, like, the two big songs by them.”

“Yes! Purple Pills! And what was the other one?”

“Uh,” Brian squeezed his eyes shut and tried to recall the other D12 song. “My Band! My Band!”

“Yes!!!” He pointed both of his fingers at Firkus, gunslinger style. “Cause once I blow they know that I'll be the man! Unh! Unh! All because I'm the lead singer of my band! Man, that shit was formative.”

“Didn't you tell me a long time ago that, like, kids used to call you Marshall in high school?!”

“Oh totally! But that was in college, actually!” McCook giggled. “I had a terrible bleach job. Less Marshall, a little more marsh.”

“Fuck! Oh my god, I was, like, fourteen or fifteen when that song was huge.”

McCook leaned in and looked out among the Tuesday night barflies, “Think they know that the fags have descended upon this fine establishment?!?”

“We're discussing Eminem in a saloon, honey.”

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“You know, you could've called.”

“I lost my phone!”

“So? There's wifi in Thailand or wherever the fuck you were.” Brian said, stirring his fourth Tequila Sunrise absentmindedly with the straw. “I was so worried about you.”

“Come on, don't say that.” McCook pouted, leaning forward. “I really don't need to be made to feel bad right now. I'm very stoned.”

Brian almost snorted tequila through his nose. “I can tell!”

“Bitch.” McCook fell back, hard, against the back of the wooden booth. “I was feeling so good until you told me you missed me!” He pretended to sob.

“You'll live.” Brian took a bitchy sip. “Did you end up going to your hometown?”

He nodded very slowly and looked at a spot on the ceiling before leaning forward again with his elbow on the table and his chin resting adorably on the palm of his hand.

“You take any druuuugs?” Brian asked quietly. Inside he was sick to his stomach at the thought of his friend falling into another relapse. “In Marlborough.”
“Hell no, honey.” He dropped his elbows so that his hands could grip Brian's wrists, squeezing gently. “If I did, believe me. I'd be dead asleep right now after a night of pulling the padge for twenty-two hours straight.”

Brian smiled, his eyes were glossed over from the alcohol in his system. It had been awhile since he'd just let go and enjoyed a drink with someone one on one. “I'm proud of you, Brian.”

McCook grinned right back. “Guess I'm not as bad off as I thought I was?”

“Like really proud of you, bitch.”

“Thank you again, but well, I have been smoking the marijuewana.” He giggled maniacally. “You don't look so bad yourself after just getting dumped. Want me to suck your cock off in the little girls' room?”

God, Brian didn't know what he'd do without her. Him, he meant, him. Still, Brian never could tell if McCook was still infatuated with Trixie Mattel and big brother to Brian Firkus or vice versa. Probably the former, though, because that didn't sound as dirty as the other way around. It wasn't as if they were that band, the White Stripes, where they pretended to be siblings but were really fucking, was it? Was it?

If this had been an episode of UNHhhh, Katya would have surely toppled off of her seat, vibrating with laughter, if Trixie had confessed this to her on camera.

“You wanna...”

Playing along, Brian ran a tongue over his lips, and shook her head like Trixie.

“... get out of here, cowboy?”

They burst out laughing instantaneously, with the older man wheezing like a strange bird. They were magic together. Perfectly quick at riffing off each other like the tightest of comedy duos except, honestly, how many of those icons were as insanely queer or looked as good as they did while doing so.

“No for real!” Brian slurred.

“No, you don't.” McCook leaned forward and slapped him gently, wagging a finger close to his face, and pecking him on the cheek before Brian could even hope to hit him back. “Remember?”

This sort of banter tripped Brian out to the max given that he was now very, very drunk. He looked down and noticed he was still stroking his friend's hands, lacing McCook's slack fingers between his.

Nevertheless, they both collapsed into wild fits of laughter again which probably sounded about as devastating as the sound of children screaming under tires to all the burly men in the bar.

“I fucking missed you!” Brian said, shaking his head. “Like, every fucking day.”

“I know.” McCook said, his eyebrows creasing. “I'm sorry I was gone for so long. You won't even believe what– I just, like, wasn't feeling good–”

“About what?” Brian squinted, interrupting McCook like always.

McCook shrugged. “I don't really know. I guess about the future and stuff. I don't even know where to start. So much has happened.” For someone who had literally opened his heart and unleashed his
sexual frustrations on Brian countless times over the years, McCook could really scare him when he turned inward so quickly.

“Like what?” Brian narrowed his eyes and then leaned forward, aghast by a thought that slipped through his mind. “Oh my god! Were you suicidal?”

The older man paused and then pretended to be doing an equation in his head, “Weeeeell, when you say it like that... hahaha. No, it's okay. I'm good. It just helped to get away from this place for awhile.”

“I swear on RuPaul's life!” Brian said seriously before his friend began to uproariously laugh again.

“Stop!!” McCook wheezed, slapping his friend's hands. “Fuckin' bitch!!”

“Oh my god!” Brian clapped. “There! She! Is!”

“Man, we gotta get the band back together, don't we?” McCook deadpanned.

“Yeah. Pretty much. You know what? I can call Pete tomorrow if you want?”

“No, he already knows!” McCook said. “I kind of broke into his house; pissed, took a shit in his bathroom last night. They wouldn't let me in at the gas station on Pico and I was desperate.”

“Ohhhhh!” Brian leaned back. “Woooow.”

“Yeah, no, I'm just fucking with you!” McCook said grabbing Brian's hand again. “Listen, I'm back and I want to do this just... well, it's just...”

“Juuuust?” Brian asked quizzically.

“It's just,” McCook closed his eyes and took a quick breath, “I need a little more time.”

“Wait, what?” Brian shook his head, “But you were just saying we~”

“I know, I know. I'm sorry. I just... well, maybe you need some time off, too, since you got dumpedddd – in a ditch, bitch. Corpse in a ditch!”

“No, I get it.” Brian sighed and tried, in vain, to not slur his speech so much. “I get it. Katya takes a lot out of you. I get it.”

“No, that's not true. It's not true,” McCook leaned forward, trying to look his friend dead in the eye. “Look... when I was gone. I went home because shit happened. Went all over Northern Africa, where I could go. Went to Australia for a while to clear my head...”

Brian sniffled, his voice was deep and hollow under the steady soundtrack of hillbilly music. “I know. That's the only time I saw you, knew you were okay...”

“What?”

“Insta, stupid. I followed all the dumb tags just to see if I could find you, somewhere. And sure
enough, there you were, at a terminal in Sydney. But that was the only sighting I could find, you elusive slut.”

“Okay, gotcha Tracy. Shit, you're really drunk. But listen, I'm not sure if you know, or someone told you but I just wanted to tell you that—”

All of a sudden, it hit Brian. A wave of premonition so strong he mistook it for nausea.

“Shut the fuck up.” Brian stuttered.

McCook just looked confused, he had yet to even come close to saying what he wanted to say. “Uh, pardon?”

“My god, shut the fuck up, Katya!”

“I'm!” McCook gestured to himself. “I'm not even Katya!” But they both knew he absolutely was, it was just that Firkus didn't like to think about McCook catching feelings again.

“I'm not stupid,” Brian tried to say as seriously and intentionally as he could, “I know where you're going with this.”

His friend had already given up. “Sure, you tell me, asshole. Where am I going?”

Brian Firkus was already clambering out of the booth and heading towards the front of the bar when McCook veered him in the other direction. “Bathroom's the other way, sis.” He stumbled to the back of the bar and breezed into the John (Wayne) as opposed to the Annie (Oakley) restroom and found himself sweating in the stall. He felt like throwing up but was too repulsed at the thought of that avocado sandwich coming back up that he tried his best to steady himself with his head against the cool tile.

A few heavy breaths later, Brian heard a gentle knock on the door. “It's me. Can I come in?”

Brian sniffled and tried to stand up straight. The door opened behind him. McCook was mildly unnerved to find him crying again for reasons unknown other than the most obvious: that his friend was devastated by his breakup and should probably not have been drinking as a method for coping.

“C'mon, let's get you home.” McCook soothed, rubbing Brian's back. Welcome back, he reminded himself.

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The thing that sucked most about Firkus being so drunk out of his mind was for just how shrill he got. Trixie loved to whine in that bitchy white girl dialect of hers but Brian absolutely took the cake for the most dramatic moan in all of Herstory.

Brian whimpered and sobbed onto Brian McCook's favorite jean jacket all the way on the short Uber ride back to the apartment, so much so that McCook apologized to the driver and gave them a 20% tip. Getting him to stand up in the elevator was a whole new kind of nightmare for McCook, too. When the door opened on the right floor, he had to practically drag Firkus out of the elevator. It was such a hassle that the doors closed on Brian's legs in the middle of the ordeal.

McCook was near furious at the door of Brian's apartment. “Where are your keys?”

“They're in my...” Firkus leaned back against the wall and reached into the pocket of his shirt and the set of keys were fumbled onto the floor. “Pocket.”
“Let me get them.” McCook let out a frustrated sigh and opened up Brian's apartment.

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“Can I ask you something?” Brian asked, his head dangerously close to McCook's in the narrow hallway.

McCook had propped his friend's broad body up against the wall for balance while he kicked off his shoes.

“What?”

Brian's breath reeked of tequila and imminent bad decision-making. “I would like to ask you something...”

“What then?” The expression on McCook's face made it seem like he was so over this night and only ready to deal with Brian again when he was stone-cold sober.

The younger man bit his lip, right above where his 5 o'clock shadow had been sprouting on his chin and underlip, testing the words on his tongue. “Do you still want to fuck me?”

McCook's brow flew up and he blinked before leaning in, “Come again?!”

“C'mon, bitch, do you still want to have sex with me or not? I wanna know.”

McCook hissed with laughter before fixing him with a serious stare again. “Fuck! I am too high for this right now.”

“Just answer my goddamn question!” Brian snapped, leaning his head back against the wall so that McCook was blinking up at him. “Do you,” he grasped McCook's hand, “or don't you,” guided the hand low and cupped it against the bulge in the crotch of his slacks, “want that?”

McCook's breath hitched as he felt Brian grow harder under his hand. “Like now or in 2015 when you were barely twenty-five and I was a dirty old woman?” He was equally horrified and aroused when Firkus groaned at his touch. “I'm not computing?”

Brian snickered and pursed his lips, “Like, now.”

The blond man swallowed and looked over Brian's shoulder at the door, “I don't know. Do you still not want to have sex with me?”

“I thought about it and I don't care anymore. I mean,” he almost trailed off, “I'm drunk and I was just broken up with in a shit way so I'm kind of willing to try anything right now.”

McCook looked stunned and looked down at his hands. “Well, that doesn't sound like a bad idea...” He said, sarcastically. It was if the all-consuming fear he had been running from for the past year was suddenly right there in front of him. “Do you remember what you said to me right before I went away last year?”

Brian shook his head, “No?”

Fuck it. Before McCook's better sense could defeat the throbbing in his own jeans, his lips were on Brian's and they were moaning softly into each other's mouths as he pressed himself in between the younger man's legs.

“This still doesn't tell me anything about what I said.” Brian snarked, pulling back and breaking the
“What does this tell you, then?” McCook teased, rubbing his forming erection against Brian's through the fabric of their clothes.

“That you've been waiting all day for this. After running away from me.”

“Wrong!” McCook rasped, bleary eyed.

“You ran off and left me! For almost a year! No calls! No texts—”

“Why are you doing this, Brian?”

“You're my bestfuckingfriend and you weren't even there when my boyfriend proposed to me!”

McCook was sick of this, too old for this new, terrifying addition to the thirty-something broken hearts club. He was gone.

“And you don't have the goddamn audacity to prove to me that you missed me. No, you just dodge my questions and won't touch me by your own accord like you used to!”

“Would you shut the fuck up?” McCook laughed, incredulously. “Just shut your whore mouth for one minute, would you? You're still wrong.”

Brian lashed right back, running his hands over McCook's furry face. “Then how long, hooker? Give me an ETA.”

“Don't ruin it.” McCook had been waiting years for this. “Don't you dare ruin this for me.”

Before he could be chided for his behavior again, he pressed his forehead to McCook's and breathed him in. “Ugh. Please, just kiss me. Kiss me how you've always wanted to kiss me.”

How could something he had always been told was wrong, feel so right? McCook’s mind wandered to this as he explored Brian with his senses like he never had before.

“Do you want me?” Brian pried again.

“Yeah,” he rasped between kisses. “So?”

“So tell me,” Brian smiled, his lips were already sore, for chrissakes. “I wanna know how you feel...”

“Okay,” McCook slowed the pace and trailed kisses, scraping his beard, along Brian's jaw until his lips were at his ear, “I think I... I wanna put my dick in you.”

“Fuck!” Brian gasped, placing his hands on McCook's toned ass and pulling his hips towards his. “Fuck. Tell me more...”

T(ruth) be told, McCook wasn't one for pillow talk. He was the kind of sexual partner who just wanted to get it in, or on, and be over and done with it already. Thanks. Goodbye. Next. This, however, felt different, foreign even. It was like learning a new language, as awfully cheesy and weak as that sounded in McCook's head.

He also, admittedly, didn't think the last thing he said warranted the positive reaction he got out of Brian so he thought of the filthiest thing Katya could say and then doubled down on it: “I want to be inside of you,” he latched on the younger man's ear, "wanna fuck you til you can't remember your
name and mine. Ours. Oh! And for the record, honey, I hate foreplay.”

Brian hissed as his slacks were tugged aggressively down around his knees without the button or zipper being undone first. The action left red marks around his thighs. “That's good cuz I hate your beard. Makes you look your age.”

A low, devilish chuckle rumbled from the back of McCook's throat. His blues were unusually dark and intoxicating in the dim of the apartment. Without loosening his control over Brian's pleasure, McCook poked his stiff erection into his until the younger man's legs finally spread slightly to accommodate the, what, seven years of suppressed lust and experience between them. McCook could hardly fathom it: he was rubbing his dick against Brian's and he was loving it.

No, actually, he was begging for it. And, god, was he hard.

“Gawwwwd, your beard suuuucks!” Brian whined, jokingly, stroking McCook's head. He maneuvered them around so Brian's lower back was pressing into the table in the hall.

“Shut up,” McCook smiled into the kiss, lifting Brian up with ease despite their difference in stature, until the younger man was sitting on the table, “I could go shave it off right now if you need me to.”

“No, fuck, no, no, no!” Brian gasped, shifting his weight so he could hook a leg around McCook's waist. “Don't you fucking stop! If you do, I'll call the cops!”

“Gross! Now why would you do a thing like that?”

“Because...” Brian slurred. “Maybe I'm quaking just thinking about it?”

McCook whistled through his teeth. “You're a monster, Trixie Mattel.”

And you're a bad, bad thing, Miss Thing. Brian thought. Some things he had to keep to himself. The thought of Brian/Katya wanting him, craving him for seven years was almost too much to handle.

And it was because moments, no, seconds later Brian ended their fun when he had to turn and suddenly throw up all over his plush carpeted hallway and sent the entirely neglected 7-11 latte tumbling to the floor all over the mess, too.

“Oh sweetieheart,” McCook consoled.

“Fuck!!!” Brian swore, covering his face.

“No, it's okay! It's okay! Ummmmm,” McCook peeked his head into the kitchen for some paper towels to clean up the mess. When he returned with some he could see that Brian was beet red, even in the dark.

It was over. Dead in the gutter. Just like that.

And maybe even for the best.

There was McCook, bent over and still half-erect, cleaning up his friend's tequila-soaked avocado latte puke off the floor while Brian mourned his carpet, also half-erect in his briefs and as wasted as a dead Grand Theft Auto character.

If that was love, well, they didn't know it at the time.
Tbc!!!! And I wonder: what's Katya's secret?

Tysm for reading :) :)

Chapter End Notes
Bachelor #1

Chapter Summary

Brian wakes up, recalls the ghastly memories of the night before, and Katya makes breakfast for him. Also, who tf was Katya talking about?! (Ppl might end up hating this story going forward! I'm Sorry!)

Chapter Notes

Title is from the iconic trixya trainwreck, the Shequel™: be$ties for cash!!

Deuces :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

After being sick all over the new carpet, Brian was way too faded and tired to protest McCook taking him back to that godforsaken bedroom. His friend stripped the covers for Brian and recovered a fresh set from the dryer so that the essence of David wouldn't be omnipresent in his bed for now.

Tucking Brian into the nest of blankets was the easiest thing McCook had to do that night and he was about to let the idiot be when he heard a murmur from under the covers.

“Yeah?” McCook answered softly. It took a few tries for him to register what Brian had been mumbling.

“Stay with me,” he said. Over and over again, flitting between the dark gap of half-consciousness and sleep.

McCook fidgeted and looked at the shape of the man under the covers. How good it would have felt to be next to him, molding his body around Brian's. Blissfully naked and in love.

But that was just a fantasy: a trigger of Brian McCook's foolish heart, brain, and, yep, penis that he just couldn't seem to shake. Maybe reaching your thirties was an affliction of those areas, too, in his sleeping friend's case.

“Uh, I'm just gonna go have a smoke and then I'll be back, okay?” McCook said.

But the second part of that sentence was a lie.

Brian snored softly from the comforter paradise. “Kuh.”

“Y'know, you pissed me right the fuck off tonight but,” McCook whispered to sleeping ears, “but you're... uh...”

A couple of nice words – cute, pretty – drifted through McCook's THC-clouded mind but he decided against putting that out into the ether again just yet. He had already cleaned up enough projectile vomit for one night.
Turning one last time, he closed the door and left the princess to get her much needed rest in the land of dreams.

***

On the apartment balcony, McCook sucked long drags off his eleventh cigarette of the day. He reminded himself of that achievement as he watched Hollywood glow in the early hours of the morning down below. First, he began at a pack a day; that meant twenty. Then he'd cut boldly down to fourteen after that, then thirteen, then twelve, slowly and surely.

Reminded so soon, he looked down at his crotch and haphazardly tugged at the ever-so present bump in his sweatpants. He closed his eyes and thought of Brian's dark, smiling face, pulling his baseball cap down low over his brow as he finished the cigarette.

Fuck it, he had another.

During this cig, his phone began to vibrate on the small patio chair. Its screen was lit up with a number he recognized in an instant judging by the area code.

“Hello?” McCook chimed, smiling ever so slightly.

“Hey, Brian?” A distinct, silky Bostonian accent reverberated through the static.

“Jennifer, hey! Oh my god!” It was 4 AM in Los Angeles. That meant it was just after 7 in the morning in Greater Boston. “How are you?”

“We're good, McCook. We're good. I'm just callin' because I got a letter on my desk from the police department and it says that you're clean.”

“Clean?!”

“Squeaky.”

“Holy shit,” he grinned. “So, uh, what's next?”

“Well, I guess this means that the end is in sight, Brian. If all goes well and all of the other paperwork is good, then we're peachy.”

“Oh, uh, that's fantastic. Hey— thank you! Is he, uh, is he doing good?” McCook asked, lowering his voice.

“Matty? Oh yeah. He's great. Misses you a lot.”

“Yeah?” McCook chuckled and lifted his baseball cap up to wipe his forehead with the back of his hand. “Would you, um, would you, um, maybe mind telling him that I miss him, too?”

“No problem!” She drawled. “Be in touch.”

“Yeah, thanks Jen! I've, uh, got a couple of viewings lined up here over the next few days but I should be back in town before the weekend.”

“Sure, Brian. See ya then.” Click.

McCook quit pacing on the balcony and took a deep breath as he stuffed his phone in the pocket of his sweatpants. Finally. After nearly a year of paperwork, back and forth, evaluations, and the like – he was nearly through. Before heading back inside to crash on Brian's couch, he snapped a picture of
the LA skyline to show his family, and especially Matty, back in Boston.

***

Brian Firkus awoke the next morning with a tempest in his guts. The aroma of fried food coming from the kitchen was enough to make him almost lose it in the bed. He'd never felt like such a bag of abused human meat before. He also quietly crossed himself, pledging that he would not drink that much again for a long, long time.

After pissing out, seemingly, all 60% of the water in his body, Brian padded to the kitchen in the same state he was in last night except his pants were gone and his shirt had been undone all the way down to the last two buttons.

McCook was in similar condition: dressed in an oversized white t-shirt that contrasted his black tattoos and briefs. He was at the stove, making oats and frying eggs for Brian. His beard was dishevelled and perhaps the longest Brian had ever seen it. Brian longed to touch the soft skin that was under there but he had to admit that at a certain time of day, under the right lighting, the beard was kind of hot. That didn't mean that Brian didn't totally despise it, still.

“I'm surprised you're moving around this early.”

Brian winced and slumped down on one of the retro eggshell chairs at the kitchenette table. “Ew, what i>happened last night?”

“Yeah? You tell me.” McCook smirked, looking over his shoulder at Brian. He looked like absolute shit and the older man was loving it.

“Hey,” Brian slapped a hand down on the table, “look at me.”

McCook couldn't help but laugh and turned down the heat. “Got any more questions?”

“Bitch.” Brian groaned and let his head fall onto the crook of his arm on the table. “Could you pour corrosive acid down my throat?”

“I can't hear you.” McCook sang like the pirate from Spongebob.

Brian’s head popped up again. He stifled a laugh and tried to avoid his friend's persistent eye contact. It all came flooding back in an instant. Did they really kiss for longer than a few seconds? Did he seriously encourage Brian fucking McCook to talk dirty to him? He was blushing with embarrassment.

“Is it all coming back? All coming back to you nowwww?”

“Okay, Celine.” Brian rolled his eyes. The man couldn't even hold a tune to save his life.

“Listen though– ”

McCook waved him off. “I know, I know. You were out of your goddamn mind. I got it.”

“I'm sorry. It's just–”

“No! Save it, dude. Seriously.” McCook insisted. “Maybe you'll have a little more empathy for me from now on.”

“For real,” Brian chuckled, rubbing his temples. “I am sorry, though. I shouldn't have acted like such a baby last night.”
“It's okay,” McCook sighed, piling eggs on a plate for his friend. “I'm sorry, too.”

“At least we've done and said worse things to each other, right?”

“Yeah. Oh, for sure.” But McCook didn't sound so convinced. Like calling me 'your brother' in interviews and on live television. “I hope you can eat this.”

Brian shrugged. “Eh, it looks and smells about as appetizing as roadkill to me but if I puke again, at least I know I might feel better. And…”

“And?” McCook's face lit up with a creeper smile as he placed a tall glass of tomato juice next to Brian's plate.

“And no one makes hangover cures like you do,” Brian sighed, “but, I swear to Sister Mary Clarence, if you say that 'cook' is your name, I'm kicking you out.”

***

Brian had picked at his food and drank most of the tomato juice before his stomach decided to reject everything again. He had already told himself it was bound to happen but surprisingly it didn't make him feel any better.

That was one of the things about having hangovers in your thirties, McCook warned him. It was just one of many reasons why the older man didn't like to drink anyhow.

Maybe Brian didn't get sick as often as he did when overdoing it with booze in his twenties but it was the general sluggishness, light sensitivity, and tiredness that felt amplified now. He ended up going back to the safe cocoon of his bed to rest while McCook graciously cleaned the dishes and pans and doused the carpet stain with another round of soap and vinegar.

Unable to drift back asleep for the pounding in his skull, Brian felt for his phone on the nightstand and brought it up to his face under the covers. Not unusually there was a slew of unread emails and texts waiting for him. One message, however, made him freeze in the moment and filled him with disillusionment.

It was David.

Tuesday, 10:57 PM: Can we talk?

10:59 PM: It's who you think it is btw. In case you deleted my number haha.

Wednesday, 2:23 AM: Brian honey, please? I know you must have seen my other msgs by now. Call me.

Brian thought for a moment about what he could, or should, say but the bad feelings were still too raw for him to decide. From under the covers, he hollered for McCook.

Sure enough, he soon heard the cadences of Maureen on the other side of the door. “Yes, master? Are you decent?”

“Come in, you skank.” Brian mumbled. “Dave texted me last night. He wants to talk but I... don't... want to?”

“Then don't.” McCook said flopping down at the foot of his friend's expensive mattress.

Brian whined and threw the covers back from over his head. “I know but—”
“Don't,” his friend cautioned. “Give it another day or so. You don't owe him anything right now.”

“He called me 'honey', though.”

“So?” McCook raised a sharp eyebrow. “Is that all it takes for you to get excited in your panties?”

“No!” Brian scoffed. “Maybe.” He threw his phone onto the nightstand and turned his attention to the intruder on his bed. McCook was stretched flat on his back with his densely tattooed arms folded neatly under his head. Lower, Brian's eyes travelled down to where his friend's shirt was riding up to reveal his toned stomach. The part of Brian that wasn't totalled after his boozy night wanted to pounce on McCook and drag his mouth lazily along the faint line of hair that circled his navel and ran further down, beneath the waistband of his sweats. Like a creature retreating into his shell, Brian ducked under the covers once again to fight the intrusive thoughts.

“Since when are you the sage of relationship advice, though, huh?”

“Since you asked me for help?” McCook replied, sounding annoyed, while responding to a short burst of notifications on his phone. “Shit. I hate to do this.”

“What?” Brian asked, resurfacing one last time. “You hate to do what?”

McCook scoffed and typed frantically on the screen. “I've gotta go. Something's going on at my place... I think a pipe burst or something.”

“Katya...” Brian whined.

“I'm serious,” McCook said. Firkus was doubled over. “No way, dude! You just got here!”

“That's not true.” McCook smirked.

“I just mean,” Brian started. “Pete is gonna know that you're back by now and if he finds out that I was able to reach you and we didn't talk about business or filming dates, I'll never hear the end of it.”

McCook's face fell. It was if it was perfectly clear to him, in that moment, as to one of the reasons why David had left Brian. Work. The conversation always turned back to work. Making a point about this to his friend might have sounded like a good entry to give Firkus some tough love but it just wasn't the time. For either of them.

“I promise I'll call you tomorrow,” McCook said sliding off the bed and onto his feet. “I've just gotta deal with this and, more importantly, catch some z's.”

“Oh fuck, did you sleep at all last night?”

“Hell no, hunny. I ended up watching Swamp Murders and then all of a sudden the sun was up. You know how it be.”

“No, do I?” Brian chuckled, shaking his head. “Alright then. Scram!”

McCook turned back and saw that Brian was gonna follow him to the door. “No, don't worry, girl, I can let myself out. You need rest, too.”

“Relax. I have to lock the door, idiot.” Firkus winced.

“Oh yeah cause there's a bunch of crazies camping out in the alley waiting to catch glimpse of Tracy
“Shut up.” Brian taking the door handle. “Promise you'll call me first thing tomorrow?”

“Whatever, boss lady. After yoga and,” McCook sighed and put his snapback on, “and after I wank. Promise.”

Brian smiled adorably, blinking his dark puppy dog eyes a few times. “You're a cunt.”

“Alright, give me a hug. Good to see you!” McCook reeled him in for a parting hug. “Be good today.”

“Yeah, no more tequila and downers. I'd rather die than look outside, honey.”

Brian ended up hanging onto the embrace a little longer than McCook liked. He almost called him out for it. *Dude, what's gotten into you?* But Brian realized that it would be even stranger to be called out, in turn, for calling McCook out for not touching him inappropriately.

“I'm gonna call David,” Brian hexed.

“Or don't.”

“Shave that thing off!”

McCook hated these standoffs. They bickered like a married couple in their golden years.

“Talk to you tomorrow.”

“Deuces!” Brian transformed back into his oddball self again and cartwheeled into a somersault along the sticky hallway.

Brian was relieved. The panic he had experienced as a result of Katya's disappearance for months had somewhat lifted.

He felt lucky to have her back.

Chapter End Notes

Tysm for reading, loves :3

To be continued...

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