Through Glass Panes by Cindy



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“Justin, let’s go home, I wanna fuck.”

“Brian,” the blond admonished, a blush slowly creeping up his neck and coloring his cheeks.

“Come on, I’m horny,” Brian whispered again into his lover’s ear and tightened his hold, pushing his body further against the smaller man’s, his erection pressing into his full, firm ass.

Justin shifted unconsciously, trying to lessen the pressure of his jeans as they tightened around his straining cock. He looked out over the crowded room trying to ignore Brian, but finding it rather difficult as the man began to grind against him.

“Baby, please.”

Gasping softly at his lover’s sweet words followed by the gentle nip at the tender flesh just below his ear, he smiled and nodded as one of their friends approached. “Be good, Brian and later, I promise, I’ll return the favor.”

Sighing loudly, not caring who the hell heard him, Brian released his grip slightly and stood a little taller, resting his chin on top of his lover’s soft, golden head.

“Hey guys,” Michael said with a smile, oblivious to the hard stare that Brian was sending his way.

“Michael…Ben…how’s it going?” Justin asked, NOT oblivious to his lover’s sudden change as the tall body tensed behind him. Instantly he wondered just what the hell Michael had done to Brian now.

“Good,” Ben answered, also catching the way Brian was looking at Michael and inwardly wondering if just once, the fucking Michael and Brian show would give it a rest. He knew, sadly, that it wouldn’t. Not if Michael had his way.

“So, have you guys checked out all the artwork yet?” Michael beamed, thrilled that FINALLY his work was getting some recognition. Okay, so technically it was Justin’s work, since he was the artist and the show was all about art. But it was their comic and with Rage being on display, it was his show as well…sort of…technically.

“Yes, we’ve seen it,” came Brian’s terse response.

“Oh, well, I think that Rage is pretty much the best thing here. Don’t you, Brian?”

Sensing Brian’s displeasure and wondering just how the hell Michael could miss it, Ben decided to jump in. “I saw some of your pieces, Justin and they’re fantastic. I love the way you’ve been working the colors differently. So vibrant and bold…they really catch your eye and hold it. Make you think about what you’re seeing as you try to take a piece of it away with you.”

Justin was amazed at the depth of which Ben had studied his work. He smiled, pleased with the praise and thrilled that the man had got it. Really got what he was going for. “Thanks, Ben. It means a lot that you thought about it that much. Really, it does.”

Nodding, Ben smiled, feeling a little shy about the attention, but nonetheless enjoying the way the beautiful blond looked at him…the way his deep-blue eyes locked on and held him captive…the way…

“Ben!”

Shaking his head, instantly turning toward the sound of the harsh voice, Ben found himself locked in a gaze with Brian…and the penetrating hazel eyes weren’t soft and friendly…they were cold and held warning that reached down into his soul…sending only one message, loud and clear…MINE!

Ben smiled and took a step back as Michael started in. “Well, I think that while you’re talented and all, there’s lot of pretty pictures here with nice colors. But Rage, my…I mean our comic seems to stand out. Don’t you think? Brian?”

Justin wondered, for about the zillionth time, just how fucking stupid one man could be. Did he really think that Brian was going to put down HIS work…any of his work?

“I think that it’s time to go. Justin.”

“Brian, come on, don’t go yet. Let’s go check out the art.” Michael wanted his best friend there for him. For HIS big night. God, Brian could be alone with Justin and fuck him anytime. Scowling, he thought that that’s all the two probably ever did anyways.

Justin turned, his eyes pleading with his lover to play nice, his fingers brushing across the man’s still hard groin, reminding him of his promise about later. “Fine,” Brian conceded, taking Justin’s hand as he led the men toward his most favorite piece in the room.

“But…I thought we’d go check out the Rage part. Come on, I want to see it again,” Michael whined when he found himself standing in front of Justin’s pieces. He had to admit, at least to himself, that they were good. Damn good. But he wouldn’t give Justin the satisfaction of hearing him say it. The blond’s head was big enough as it was.

“No, THIS is the best piece in the room and I want to look at it again,” Brian stated, pulling Justin in front of him, draping his long arms around the man’s shoulders and pulling him tightly against him.

“Yeah, okay, it’s good, but…”

“Fuck, Mikey, it’s not just good…it’s amazing. Look at the way the color outlines the subjects but you have to really look to find them. And the way the red follows the curves and lines of the two bodies, making you feel like you’re really seeing them move. And the shadows that hang behind them, casting a glow on them…letting you see what they see…what they feel. Fuck, it’s amazing.” Brian spoke as if he were in a trance. The awe and wonder flowing out of him…making you see what HE saw…feel what HE felt when he looked at the piece.

Justin’s head was spinning. Brian’s words seeped into him and filled him completely. His heart beat rapidly in his chest as his emotions floated close to the surface.

“I don’t know, Brian. I just…I don’t see it that way,” Michael stated, a little miffed by all the attention that Brian seemed to be doting on Justin’s picture. Sure, it was pretty and colorful, but fuck, who cared?

Turning with pitying eyes, wondering just how Michael didn’t get it, Brian caught site of Ben and the look on the man’s face made him smile. Ben saw it…he knew he did. Turning back to Michael, he said, “Ben understands. Maybe he can explain it to you.”

But before Ben could speak, Justin began. “Michael, don’t you see it. It’s me and Brian…in our bed…making love.” His voice was low and soft, not accusing or impending or bragging in any way.

Michael looked at the painting again. His eyes cast toward Ben, looking for guidance but the man just shrugged and nodded toward the painting, forcing Michael to turn back. Still not getting it, he turned to Brian, noticing for the first time that evening the man’s attitude toward him as his eyes flashed a silent message of displeasure. Knowing why it was there, Michael turned away, again, focusing back on the painting.

And then, suddenly, as if a light had gone off inside the man’s seemingly empty head, he got it. Michael finally got it and he gasped and covered his mouth as he was given a glimpse at the life that he’d dreamed of…the desires that he most coveted…the place that he longed the most to be…in the arms of Brian…making love…being made love to.

“See, Michael? Do you see it now?” Brian asked, his voice a little softer as he took in the appearance of his friend’s flushed face.

Nodding, not trusting his voice, Michael’s watery eyes turned toward his friend…his best friend…and he smiled, weakly.

Sighing, not wanting to put Michael through the torture but knowing that he finally had to make him understand, Brian said, “That’s how I feel…what he means to me.”

Justin’s smile could have lit up the room as he beamed with love and immeasurable pride at his partner. He wanted to jump up and down…take Brian in his arms and give the room a live performance of the painting right there. But instead, Justin turned in his lover’s embrace and kissed him sweetly, softly, letting his lips linger slightly on Brian’s, his eyes connecting with the man’s as they did.

“That’s how I feel when I make love to you,” Brian continued in a whisper.

Justin tried to speak, but his voice just wouldn’t work. He was too overwhelmed, so instead he just nodded, his smile beaming brightly and he knew that Brian understood his actions. The man always did.

“God, Brian, I’m sorry. So fucking sorry. I…I just didn’t know.”

To Justin and Ben, they thought that Michael was just apologizing for the way he seemed to belittle and trivialize Brian and Justin’s relationship. But to Brian and Michael it was much more. They both knew the truth. The one that had led to all the angry stares and harsh words.

But finally, Michael’s apology had calmed something deep inside Brian…something that he’d been waiting for…for far too long. For Michael’s understanding that Justin was important…the most important part of his life, and that while he was his best friend, Justin was more…so much more.

“Brian, what’s going on?” Justin asked, sensing that something more was happening there than Brian or Michael was letting on to.

“Yeah, I get the feeling that there’s more to say,” Ben added, getting the same weird vibe as Justin.

Knowing he had to come clean, and wanting to be the one to say it, Michael began. “I…God, Justin, I’m so sorry, but I tried to get them to not let your artwork be in the show tonight.”

“What?!” came Justin’s shocked reply.

Hanging his head slightly, Michael continued. “I…I thought that since Rage was going to be on display, well, you really didn’t need to have anything else here.” Michael looked up to Brian, needing to see the man’s expression before he went on. Taking a deep breath and slowly releasing it, he said, “Brian knew. He heard me trying to convince Jack when he came to drop off the posters for the show.”

“Brian, why didn’t you tell me?” Justin asked, saddened that once again Brian had put Michael before him. He pulled back out of their embrace, waiting for an answer.

“Because I didn’t want to upset you, Justin. I know how much this show meant to you. After leaving school and all…and I heard Jack tell him no, so I figured there was really no reason to tell you. Besides, Rage is good, but this,” Brian waved his hand toward Justin’s paintings, “this is ART.”

“Hey, Rage is fucking art too,” Michael sputtered, but immediately shut up as Brian’s warning gaze came down upon him.

“So it’s okay for me to draw Rage for you, Michael, but fuck my other stuff. My REAL work…is that it?”

Michael felt himself caught between a battle of glares shooting at him from Brian and Justin. And he had to admit that Justin’s was more frightening. Those angelic features sure could turn into a bone-chilling stare when he wanted them to. Clearing his throat, he answered, “No, no, that’s not it, Justin. It’s just that, well, you have all this talent, and I, well, I have just one…and I was so tired of always being shown up. So I figured that if I could get them to just feature Rage, I wouldn’t have to compete…for the attention…from Brian.” By the time Michael finished his admittance, his words were at a whisper and the three other men had to strain their ears to hear it.

And none of them liked what they heard.

Ben was first to speak. “Michael, God, this is getting so old. When the hell are you going to grow up and realize the he’s never going to love you…never gonna fuck you. When it’s too late and I’m gone? Because I’ll tell you, Michael…I’m just about there…just about ready to walk out the door and not look back. I won’t be second best, Michael. Not now…not ever.”

And with that Ben left the gallery, having heard enough, his tortured heart not willing to deal with anything else.

“Ben,” Michael called out, but his lover ignored him, and he watched through the glass panes of the front windows as he walked away. Feeling his heart drop slightly, Michael shook his head, knowing that he’d find the man at home, waiting for him…just like he always was.

“Michael.”

Michael turned to Brian, his eyes pleading with him to just let it go, but what he found staring back at him let him know that it wasn’t going to happen. Sighing he prepared himself, and…

“I’m not gonna say that what you did is okay. I told you that it was a low-down shitty thing right from the start. But tonight, with all the rest of the crap that you’ve loaded on top of it, well, Mikey, I fucking don’t even know what to say…except that I feel sorry for you. You’re wasting your life on a dream that is NEVER going to happen…never gonna come true. I love Justin, Mikey. He’s what I want. What I need. You have to let go of me. I’m not yours and I never will be.”

The harshness of Brian’s words cut Michael like a knife through the heart…so much deeper than Ben’s had…almost lethally. He didn’t think that he’d ever recover…but…he knew that the man was just telling him the truth…the truth that he’d refused to see all along.

Knowing his punishment wasn’t over just yet, Michael turned toward Justin, preparing himself for the final blow and knowing by the look on the man’s face that it was going to be the worst.

Justin looked at the selfish and gutless little man and pitied him. He wasn’t angry or upset…no, those feelings eluded him. He knew that the man would go through his mundane life, wishing and hoping that Brian was his…and the truth was…he never would be…because he was Justin’s…and that knowledge dissipated all the negative feelings that he had towards the pathetic man. Because he KNEW what Michael was missing.

“Come on, Brian…let’s go home. I think I owe you payment on that promise,” Justin said, turning away from Michael and toward his lover. He took Brian’s hand in his and pulled him out the front door, grinning back at the stunned man watching them through the glass panes.

Justin smiled a satisfied smile, thinking that that was the way that life would always be. Him and Brian together, hand in hand and Michael watching from a distance…jealousy and envy clouding his vision.

Just what the man deserved.