What Lay Beneath by Cindy

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A long pull on his cigarette and he dropped it into the snow, the burning ember hissing faintly in protest before casting the backyard into silence once again.

With frozen fingers he fumbled in his jacket pocket, triumphantly locating another cigarette, and lit it clumsily between his hands. Another pull, the toxic warmth blooming in his lungs and he felt calmer. Briefly he wondered if he stayed outside, in the white and frozen backyard long enough, would his entire body become as numb as his fingers. He toyed with the idea for a second longer then banished it with another drag of his cigarette, watching intently as the billowing clouds rose up from his lips.

His eyes cast over the backyard as he shifted from foot to foot, feeling the cold seeping into his boots. They'd had a heavy dose of snow over the past twenty-four hours, a generous heaping of ice and wind trailing alongside it, but in its wake the temperature had risen slightly, the sun peeking through the clouds, trying desperately to brighten whatever was left of the day.

Brian snorted, thinking it had done a piss poor job of it as far as he was concerned.

A familiar creek of the backdoor signaled that he was no longer alone, and the shiver up his spine let him know exactly who it was.

"Hey."

"Hey," he echoed back.

Justin sighed, a heaping mixture of trepidation, anxiety and longing brewing in his gut.

"How's it goin'?"

Brian shrugged. "Good."

A sharp twist and he knew that anxiety was now in the lead, but he refused to back down.

"Aren't you cold?" he tried, pulling his jacket tighter around his own body.

Brian ignored the question, deciding on one of his own. "So, how long has it been? Three, four years?"

Justin felt a wave of icy fear trickle through his veins. So that's how it was gonna be. Well fuck it.

"Brian, my plane wasn't that late."

"Sure felt like it," Brian practically whined, if he did that sorta thing.

"Brian," Justin admonished, taking a hesitant step forward.

"Fucking New York weather," Brian cursed, and Justin smiled, not bothering to share the fact that it had been the Pittsburgh weather that had caused the delay.

"Brian," Justin tried again, smiling brightly as Brian turned, arms open in invitation. Without a second thought Justin rushed forward, sighing happily as Brian's long, comforting arms enclosed him.

"I fucking missed you," Brian whispered into the top of Justin's golden head.

"I missed you, too. So much."

The warmth that spread thought Brian's body, reviving his toes and fingers and every other inch of him had nothing to do with the cigarette, now forgotten as it joined its clan, sizzling down into the frozen snow.

It was all Justin.

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"Would you two get your asses back the fuck inside?" Debbie yelled through the open door.

With one final embrace Brian pulled back, smiling down at Justin. "Merry fucking Christmas," he said with a raised brow.

Justin laughed, wrapping his gloved hand around the back of Brian's neck, guiding his face downward as he pressed his cold lips against Brian's softly and whispered, "It certainly is."

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"You'd think you haven't seen each other in forever," Deb admonished as they made their way back inside, dropping their coats by the front door.

"It feels like fucking forever," Brian mumbled, toeing off his frozen boots, catching the sharp turn of Justin's head as he heard him.

"Well, I'm happy to be back," Justin offered, tossing his second boot off and tugging up his hanging socks. "There's no place like home."

"Oooh, is this the part where you don your ruby slippers and click your heels together three times?" Emmett asked with a smile.

Justin laughed.

Brian gave him the finger.

"We're so glad to have you home, honey. Christmas is no time to be all alone."

"Thanks, Em," Justin smiled, glancing at Brian who seemed to be intently engrossed in his bottle of beer. He knew they were both thinking the same thing. It was never a good time to be all alone.

"So, now that everyone's finally here, how 'bout we sit down to eat, before my fucking dinner's ruined," Deb bellowed and everyone made their way to the table.

"How's New York?" Ted asked, trying to break the tension wafting over the room.

"It's, uh, great. I just got asked to participate in another show. And this time it'll only be me and one other artist."

"That's great, honey!" Lindsay cheered.

"Yeah, that's wonderful news. You know we'll all be there, of course," Melanie added, hoping that it didn't conflict with any cases she had coming to trial. Now that they'd moved back to the Pitts, her practice had been busier than ever. She silently thanked the fact that they'd come to their senses early on in their hasty flee to Toronto and hadn't screwed up things too badly. With a smile she rested her hand on Lindsay's knee, warmed as her wife covered it with her own.

"When is it?" Brian questioned, rather pissed at not having been privy to the information before he'd shared it with the rest of the family.

Sensing his mood, Justin turned toward his partner. "I just found out this morning. That's why I didn't tell you first."

Brian nodded, slightly mollified. "So when is it?" he repeated.

"The first of February."

"That's not too far off. You'll be ready?" Emmett asked.

"I'll be ready," Justin replied with certainty. He was ready for lots of things.

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"But Dad, I wanna open 'em now," Gus complained.

"Tomorrow morning, Sonny Boy." Brian was more than eager to give in, let his son open every fucking present right then and there, but he was trying to be the adult. Set the example.

"Dad!" Gus whined.

Brian looked around the room, noticing that everyone else seemed to be otherwise occupied, so he leaned down toward his son sulking on the floor and whispered conspiratorially, "How about…"

"No," Lindsay scolded, sneaking up on them. "Tomorrow." With a smile she turned away, biting her lip to keep from laughing out loud at the identical frowns plastered across both father and son's faces.

"Dad," Gus tried one more time, softly, keeping an eye out for his mothers.

"Sorry, son," Brian shrugged defeatedly, knowing when he was beat.

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"So we'll meet you at the house at six…"

"Nine…"

"Seven…"

"Fucking eight," Brian tried.

With a sigh and a groan, Lindsay and Melanie agreed. "Fine, eight," then wondered how the hell they were gonna keep Gus and JR from attacking the presents before Brian and Justin arrived.

Brian smiled triumphantly before realizing that he'd have to be up at an ungodly hour nonetheless. "You'd better have some fucking coffee ready, and not that decaffeinated shit you like."

"Don't worry, we'll be prepared. I know what a bear you can be in the morning," Lindsay laughed.

"I'm \*never\* a fucking bear, \*never\* will be," Brian grinned.

Lindsay just grumbled something unintelligible as she tossed the last bag of presents into the trunk then quietly pushed it shut, not wanting to wake either of the kids. She had other plans for the night once they got them into bed, she thought with a blush. Other plans indeed.

"Night. Merry Christmas," Justin sing-songed quietly.

"Merry Christmas to you, too, baby," Melanie smiled before they mindfully drove away down the snow-covered road.

"So, I think it's time I got you home too. Santa doesn't visit the homes of little boys that aren't tucked snuggly into their beds sound asleep," Brian whispered with Justin pulled tightly against his body.

"Mmm, I agree with the bed part, but the sleeping, not so much," Justin replied before attacking Brian's mouth.

"Hmm," Brian continued, licking his lips as they separated, desperate for another taste. "Well then we'd better hurry up. Wouldn't want Santa to pass you by."

With a smile, Justin nodded and let Brian lead him to the car.

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Brian unlocked the door, slid the heavy metal open and stepped inside, tugging Justin's suitcase along with him. "What the fuck do you have in here?" he grumbled, turning off the alarm. "It weighs a fucking ton."

"Just my stuff," Justin said, dropping the bag of presents they'd taken from Deb's down beside him, just a few steps inside the loft. He looked around with a smile. Everything looked perfect.

"Shut the door," Brian ordered and Justin turned around, happy for the familiar scraping sound.

"What's with the huge fuckin grin?" Brian asked, taking Justin in his arms.

"Nothing. Just happy, that's all."

Brian nodded. "Okay. Well, I can think of a thing or two that might make you even happier."

Justin's brows rose to match Brian's as he allowed himself to be stripped of his coat, then boots, then the remainder of his clothes as they headed up toward the bedroom, leaving a trail of jeans, shirts and socks in their wake.

"So now that you've got me here, what do you plan to do with me?" Justin asked, spread out invitingly on his back against the warmth and comfort of the large bed.

Brian stared down at his partner, roaming eyes taking in every inch of beautiful, pale skin and he smiled, softly, intimately. "Everything."

Feeling himself grow even harder, his leaking dick straining against his stomach, Justin took a deep breath in and smiled. He couldn't think of a better offer. "C'mere."

Brian edged onto the bed, sliding up the length of Justin's body, moaning slightly as their heated skin pressed together.

"Mmm, you feel so good," Justin breathed, wrapping his arms and legs around Brian, his feet urging gently against his ass.

"I need you," Brian said, and Justin gasped at the urgent honesty in his words.

"Me too. Right now," Justin rasped, lifting his hips, their cocks brushing against each other.

"This one's gonna be quick," Brian warned, pulling back slightly, reaching for a condom and the lube, preparing himself.

"Okay, okay, just hurry," Justin panted as Brian's long finger pushed against his hole, slipping inside as the lube eased its way.

"Ready?" Brian asked, his eyes locked on Justin's, so bright and blue.

"Fuck, Brian, please. God, please…"

Justin's cry of pleasure and pain echoed in the silence of the loft as Brian pushed forward, his dick ramming home in one swift move.

"Okay?" Brian huffed.

"Give me…a minute." Justin's tightly shut eyes opened slowly, the discomfort he felt visibly melting away leaving an overall buzz coursing through his body. "Okay," he sighed, his face turning feral. "Fuck me."

With a loud growl Brian did.

As promised, it was hard and fast and so fucking good.

It'd been too long since they'd last been together, and Brian couldn't help the loop spinning in his brain, reminding him that soon they'd be apart again.

"Missed you. Missed this so much," Justin gasped, his hips rising sharply off the bed to meet Brian.

"Me too. Fuck. Me too," Brian moaned, his head tucked tightly against Justin's shoulder, teeth nipping sharply at the overheated flesh.

"So close. Brian, so close."

With a sense of desperation Brian shifted slightly, his hips angling from memory and…

"Fuck!" Justin cried out, his prostate humming with every direct hit.

"Like that?" Brian whispered, but Justin was too fucking gone to reply.

Brian felt Justin's heels dig impossibly further into his ass, barely giving him room to pull out, so he rammed forward on every thrust, his balls slapping madly at Justin's ass until he felt the unmistakable constriction around his pulsing dick and couldn't hold out one second longer.

Together, in one perfect motion they came, Justin spurting warm and thick between them and Brian deep inside his partner's ass.

Wasted and boneless Brian slumped down against Justin, and Justin smiled, his arms wrapping tighter around his lover's spent body. "I've got you," he breathed, littering Brian's hair with gentle kisses, so sweet and loving. "I've got you."

And as they drifted off to sleep, Brian's softening dick still lodged inside Justin's ass, Brian couldn't help the nagging thought tickling his brain, 'But for how long?'

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"Wake up, sleepy head."

"Mmm, it's dark out."

Brian laughed as Justin snuggled further into the blankets. When he'd awoken, having dozed off after their fuck, he was thankful to find the condom still firmly covering his dick. He knew that falling asleep while still inside Justin was never a good idea, but sometimes he couldn't help himself. For some reason he always seemed to feel that way around Justin.

"Come on, get up," Brian whispered, his fingers brushing gently along Justin's cheek.

"Don't wanna. Tired. Sleeping."

Brian laughed. "I promise it'll be worth it."

Forcing one eye open, then the other, Justin stretched with a loud yawn. He was more tired than he thought. He figured that it all had finally hit him. Remembering that he had something to share with Brian he sat up, the covers dipping tantalizingly low on his hips.

Brian looked at the newly exposed skin and licked his lips, his hand slipping lower and lower....

Justin smiled. "Nope…"

"No?" Brian asked, astonished by the rejection.

"Not right now. You said you had something for me."

"I said I'd make it worth your while, and I will," Brian grinned, smarmily.

"Brian, come on, give me my present," Justin laughed, playfully batting his over-eager partner's hands away from his dick.

Brian stopped abruptly, his face incredulous. "Present? What fucking present?"

Justin hesitated for only a fraction of a second with uncertainty before realizing just how far they'd come in the past few years and smiled. He eyed the clock, making sure it was well after midnight. "Where's my Christmas present?"

Brian straightened. "What makes you so sure I got you one?" he asked, brows raised.

Justin's smile grew brighter. "'Cause I know you."

"You do, huh?"

"Mm-hm," Justin confirmed. "I do."

Brian grew warm at Justin's certainty. "If you know me so well, then where's \*my\* present?"

Without hesitation Justin replied, "Oh, it's here."

Brian was taken aback. He'd only been kidding. There wasn't anything material he wanted that Justin could get him. There was only one thing he longed for and it was lying in his bed. Softly, he asked, "What is it?"

With an air of confidence Justin climbed out of bed, his beautiful body now fully exposed, making the gesture that much more honest and sincere. Brian's eyes followed his every move, watching wordlessly as he stood next to the tall dresser, confused hazel ones meeting unwavering blue as Justin lowered slightly, pulling the bottom drawer open.

"What the fuck?" Brian whispered.

Silently Justin moved over to the closet, sliding the door open.

Brian gasped.

With effortless motion Justin glided down the bedroom steps, Brian following right along, and turned when he got to his desk, the one he'd left behind when he'd relocated.

Brian stood open-mouthed, staring down at Justin's computer. The one he'd taken with him to New York.

Again, with swiftness, Justin rushed to the kitchen, opening cupboard after cupboard, revealing a menagerie of sugar laden cereals and chips and cookies, the likes of which Brian would \*never\* willingly purchase himself.

His head was spinning. He had to grab onto the kitchen counter to keep upright. "Justin, I don't understand."

With a blinding smile and teary eyes, Justin moved forward, taking a confused Brian in his arms and said, "I told you I know you. I knew exactly what you wanted. I'm home. Merry Christmas."

"What the fuck?" Brian was stunned. He glanced around the loft, realizing that in his haste to get Justin into bed, he'd missed so many signs.

Justin's running shoes were by the front door.

Justin's art book was sitting in the middle of the coffee table.

Justin's favorite chair, the one that he'd bought his first month in New York, the one that Brian loved to tease him about… "That is one fucking ugly piece of shit,"… was now sitting in the middle of his living room, and he had to admit that it fit in fucking perfectly with all the other furniture.

The clothes, the computer, the food, everything. It was all there.

"But how?" Brian asked, astonished.

Justin shrugged. "I had some elves help me. That's why I was late getting to Debbie's. Well, that and the shitty Pittsburgh weather."

Brian smiled, warm and happy, and never before so fucking grateful for anything in his entire life. "So you're home."

It wasn't a question. He couldn't bring himself to ask it. It was a wish. A fucking Christmas wish.

With a promising kiss placed against the smooth, perfect skin of Brian's chest, directly above his heart, Justin smiled. "I'm home."

And if a faint, "Ho, ho, ho," echoed in the late night air outside the loft, neither man seemed to notice.

The only thing on their minds was each other.

Well, that, and Justin wondering just what the hell Brian had really gotten him.