

The Singer

by Pennywise

This story is a reprint of the original story which was written back in the 20th Century. I have revised the story and corrected punctuation where required, but in essence the story has not changed. This story is rare, and quite likely has not been read by any of you to date. The story is set in the same year that it was written.

Every town has an elm street. These two boys just happened to live in it. One at number 15, and one two houses down - but they didn't know that. They went to the same school, and were both in the same grade - but they didn't know that either. One took the bus home, and the other cycled - so they never managed to bump into each other on the way to or from school. They were approximately the same age, and this was their second year at junior high.

Bastian was a computer nerd. He didn't get out much - most of the time he'd sit on the Internet, or play games. Dungeon Keeper was one of his favourite. Like many teenage boys, he'd find himself in a fantasy world, with goblins and dragons. At school he'd sit in class and dream about being a Knight and fighting dragons every opportunity he could. He'd sometimes sketch his imaginations - and he was a very talented artist.

At lunch breaks he'd sit on the embankment on the North side of school, and read Terry Pratchett books. Most of the time he'd place himself in the book, and be a character - death was his favourite. One particular day, he was sitting on the embankment, and while reading his book, he heard someone singing. He looked up from his book, and listened to find where it was coming from. A verse here, a verse there, but he couldn't exactly pinpoint the source. He looked around at all the other teens to see if one of them was the singer, but he couldn't find him. Bastian got up, brushed the grit off his pants, and walked in the general direction that he thought was the source - but the music stopped when the bell rang.

Back at home, Bastian played games on his computer - as per routine. A memory kept on disturbing him. Over and over again, the tune reverberated in his head, and it was such a nice tune too.

*Riders on the storm
Riders on the storm
Into this house we're born
Into this world we're thrown
Like a dog without a bone
An actor out on loan
Riders on the storm*

The words didn't make much sense to him, but the tune was very nice. He tried singing it to himself, but couldn't quite get it right - something was missing. Later that evening, the memory of the tune sang him to sleep.

"Wake up son! Today's the big day!" Bastian's father leapt into his son's room with his Cowboys shirt on, and mock shoulder pads mounted on his shoulders. Bastian looked at the clock - 11am. "I'm going over to Jefferson's to watch the game - are you coming?"

"Who's Jefferson" grunted Bastian, still half asleep.

"My colleague - don't you ever listen to what I say?"

"Oh yeah - him." Bastian didn't hear much of what dad said - especially when he was preoccupied with his games. "No, its okay, dad - you know I'm not much of a sports fan."

"Suit yourself. Don't burn down the house while I'm gone. I'm at no 15 if you need me."

"Sure, sure. See you later dad."

Two hours later Bastian got out of bed. His father was still out, and Mom was, well, still dead. His mom died of some rare disorder or something when Bastian was born. He was the only child, and he lived alone with his father. His father was really kewl. Never forced him to do things he didn't want to do. He let Bastian pretty much choose his own way of life. Bastian's father's only fear that he had was if his son entered the drug scene. A few hours later, Dad came back home with some Kentucky Fried Chicken - again. The two of them loved the Colonel's wonderful taste.

"Chris says hi" said his father, with his mouth full of breast.

"Who?" asked Bastian as he ate some fries.

"Chris, you know - Jefferson's son?"

"I don't know him."

"For gosh sakes - he goes to the same school as you. He's in your biology class."

"Oh yeah now I remember." Bastian still had absolutely no idea who his dad was referring to.

On the way back from the drugstore that night, Bastian thought he heard that voice again - but ignored it. He had to get back to Draenor to conquer the Orcish Horde.

Sunday was usual the usual shopping day, and Bastian went shopping with his dad every Sunday. They normally went in the morning, but they had to clean the garage that morning - so they went late afternoon instead. At the store, Bastian and his dad bumped into Mr. Jefferson, and of course, they had to talk about the game.

"Hey what a great game" said Bastian's father.

"Yeah - fantastic" said Jim.

"Love the way the quarterback scored that winning touchdown in the last second."

"Absolutely brilliant, he's worth every dollar that kid."

"Hey, you haven't met my son. Jim, this is Bastian, my son. Bastian, this is James Jefferson." Bastian had a blank look on his face.

"Uh - pleased to meet you, sir."

"I'm Chris's dad."

"Yes, I know" lied Bastian, and gave a reassuring smile. He still had no idea who this Chris person was, but got a rough idea when another teenager put cereal in their shopping cart.

"Hiya Chris" said Bastian, hoping they didn't have two sons.

"Hi."

"And this must be Bastian" said the woman who joined the Jefferson's. "I've heard so much about you."

"This is my wife, Martha" said Jim.

"Hello - pleased to meet you, ma'am."

At school the next day, Bastian had a look for Chris, and sure enough, he was in the same Biology class. They decided to sit next to each other.

"The epidermis is full of pores, and in these pores are hair follicles which blah blah blah." The biology teacher was as interesting as ever, and instead of going into his usual sleep mode, Bastian made a caricature of the biology teacher getting all excited over a pot plant.

"Hey, that's pretty good" whispered Chris as he chuckled at the completed drawing. He picked it up, and examined it much closer. "Man that is flipping excellent. It's amazing how many shades of black you can get from just one ball point pen. Can you draw people?"

"Yeah."

"Can you draw me?"

"Sure - after school."

Chris was excited - he'd never been the subject of a drawing before. He sat down, as indicated, against the wall in the sun, and watched Bastian sketch. Bastian used a variety of pencils this time. It was only half an hour before it was complete. Chris studied the sketch carefully - he really liked to look at art, and not just glance over it. Bastian had used his sketch pad, which had a whole bunch of letter sized drawings.

"Can I look through your sketches?" asked Chris.

"Sure."

"Who's that?"

"My mom - about 16 years ago."

"Oh, ah and that's your dad."

"Yup - say, speaking of my dad, has he really told you a lot about me?"

"Nah - not that much - but when he does speak of you, he speaks very highly of you."

"Oh." Bastian sat and thought while Chris flipped through the sketches of Dragons, Castles, people and things.

"I notice you don't have any sporting pictures. Don't you like sport?"

"I hate sport."

"Oh good. We might even become friends" said Chris. Bastian smiled.

Bastian saw Chris again on Tuesday. They decided to sit next to each other for assembly. The school had to sing the Star Spangled Banner during the assembly.

*Oh say, can you see
By the dawn's early light
What so proudly we've*

Bastian stopped singing. He listened carefully to hear the odd melody that was being sung by one lone student. He looked around him to see if he could pinpoint the source.

"Can you hear that?" he asked Chris.

"What?" asked Chris now just as confused as Bastian was.

"That voice - wait no it's stopped now."

"I hear lots of voices. You'll need to be more specific" said Chris with a grin on his face. The rest of the school finished the song and then all the students sat down. Bastian realised that it could have been Chris he heard. He looked at Chris, who looked back with another confused look, and decided that it wasn't him.

Bastian walked alongside Chris as he cycled home, but he wished he hadn't. They were only halfway after two miles, and he was exhausted.

"Lets rest for a while" said Bastian.

"Sure."

"I'm going to get a soda - want one?"

"OK." Bastian went into the store and got 2 cokes. He came back out, and Chris was sitting facing away from him, singing.

*Here I go, out to sea again
Sunshine fills my hair,
and dream I'm getting there
No need to run, and hide
it's a wonderful, wonderful life*

Chris turned around, and found Bastian standing speechless and mesmerized behind him.

"It was you all the time" said Bastian.

"Me what?"

"Singing. It's been you who's been singing."

"What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing - nothing at all. Its just sounds so - beautiful."

Chris's face went red. He wasn't good at receiving compliments. He took his coke, and silently sipped away. The two continued on with their journey and went to their homes, with only saying goodbyes.

Bastian went over to number 15 later on in the afternoon. Chris was the only person home.

"I'm sorry if I upset you earlier" said Bastian.

"When?"

"At the store."

"No, its okay. I just don't hear people say nice things like that. Come on in." Chris led Bastian to his room. The room was filled with posters of all kinds. There was a large variety of artists. Jim Morrison, Bryan Adams, Jon Bon Jovi, John Lennon, Simon and Garfunkle, Oasis - and many more.

"Wow - you have an awesome collection of posters."

"Yeah. Over there is my most favourite - Jim Morrison during his photo session - the one where he has his arms extended in a crucifix fashion"

"I've seen that one before."

"Au contraire - that one hasn't been cropped. Most of them have been cropped to size, but that one is full original size, just much larger.

"Kewl." Bastian looked around the room and noticed that every one of his posters had a male singer - not one female.

"What's your favourite song?"

"Light my Fire."

"Don't think I've heard that. Can't remember."

"Come on" said Chris, and lead Bastian to another room in the house. The walls were padded with funny shaped Styrofoam cartons. He picked up a CD from a rack of about 800, and turned out on the hi-fi that monopolised the room.

*You know that it would be untrue
You know that I would be a liar
If I was to say to you
Girl we couldn't get much higher
Come on baby, light my fire
Come on baby, light my fire*

Try to set the night on fire

By this time, Chris was dancing around the room, singing along with Jim Morrison. He was amazing - the way he strutted around like his mentor, and his voice was just as melodically. He also had that same kind of baritone voice that Jim Morrison had. It was a warm day, and after the ten minute song, of which Chris took physically part, he ended up really hot and bothered. Chris took off his shirt, and lay on the carpet, arms spread out, and closed his eyes for a moment. He slowly opened them, to find Bastian looking down at him with a big grin on his face.

"That was a real nice song."

"There's much more to hear, but not now."

"I need to go anyway. I've something I need to do." Chris saw Bastian out and watched him walk home before closing the door.

At school the next day, Bastian gave Chris a page from his larger sketchpad. Using pen, he had drawn Chris, in exactly the same pose as Jim Morrison in the famous photo shoot. He even got as far down as it was on the uncut version - showing in perfect detail Chris's nipples. Every fine detail was drawn, even to the mass of underarm hair, which wasn't very much.

"Wow" was all that Chris could manage. He couldn't believe the detail involved. "You must have an excellent memory. You're an excellent artist."

"You are too."

"Huh?"

"Singing is an art, and you're excellent at that." Chris smiled.

"Bastian, our company wants to send two representatives to London for the big annual general meeting. As Jefferson is the financial director, and I'm the marketing director, they want to send us."

"How long will you be gone, Dad?"

"Two weeks."

"Nice. First class?"

"Concorde."

"Wow, you're so lucky."

"But son, I've never left you alone for so long before, but I trust you. Would you like to stay here, all by yourself, or would you want somebody to come and look after you? Oh, and there is a third option - Jefferson suggested that you stay with Chris and his mom. In fact, they asked that you stay there."

"Really?"

"Yup. It seems that you've made quite an impression on them."

"Okay - I'll stay there."

"Fine - that's settled. You'll move in Friday afternoon. I'll give Martha your allowance and extra emergency money."

The boys couldn't wait for Friday. It was a new adventure for Bastian - he'd never stayed with somebody before. Chris has never had somebody his age take so much interest in him before, so he was really keen on the weekend. During school, they made a whole bunch of plans of things to do, and very soon, Friday was upon them.

After Bastian had moved in, the boys went down to the mall to Cybercity, and played games on the virtual reality machines. Although Chris was inexperienced, he put on a good fight, but lost anyway. They watched the movie *Spawn*, and finally got home at 1 am the next morning. Chris had a double bunk, and Bastian was to sleep

in the top bunk. Bastian sat down on the bottom bunk, and flipped through a comic he found.

"I feel dirty - I'm going to have a quick shower. Feel free to listen to some music, but use the headphones" said Chris. Bastian put the personal stereo on, and picked a random track.

*People are strange, when you're a stranger
Faces look ugly, when you're alone
Women seem wicked, when you're unwanted
Things are uneven, when you're down.*

Fifteen minutes later, Chris came out of the bathroom with his sleeping trunks on, but found Bastian fast asleep on his bed. He didn't have the heart to wake him up, so he decided to leave him there, and use the top bunk instead. He removed Bastian's shoes, socks, and shirt easily, but the Levi's were a bit difficult.

"Oops" he said, as he realised that Bastian's boxer shorts came down as well. He hurriedly pulled them back up, in fear of his friend waking und suspecting things. While doing this, he found this uncanny urge to stare. He was almost tempted to touch, but decided against it. He managed to get the jeans off, and laid the sleeping body straight on the bed.

"What fool wears jeans anyway, when it is so hot" he muttered to himself. He climbed into bed, and had difficulty in going to sleep. He was thinking some weird things. Like, why had he looked - why had he been so fascinated, and why was he hard?

Martha woke the boys up early the next morning - 11am. She left the boys to get dressed, and ready for the new day. Bastian had a concerned look on his face. He knew that he had fallen asleep completely dressed, and now he was only in his boxer shorts. He also realised that Chris was avoiding eye contact.

"What's up?" Asked Bastian

"Nothing."

"Don't feel embarrassed."

"About?"

"Undressing me." Chris went red in the face again.

The boys had brunch, and afterwards decided to go to the park. Bastian wanted to sketch a building in the park, and Chris wanted to watch him work. Bastian sat cross legged on the grass, and scribbled away, and Chris watched very closely. After a while, Bastian got the feeling Chris wasn't paying much attention to what he was doing anymore. He took a quick look at Chris, and found that Chris was staring right at him, and had been for quite a while.

"What are you looking at?" asked Bastian.

"I'm trying to read your mind."

"Is it working?"

"No." Chris told a bald faced lie - he was actually looking at Bastian in an affectionate way - but was too shy to admit it - too confused to admit it to himself too. He decided not to look at Bastian, and instead, sang quietly to himself.

*I'm a spy, in the house of love
I know the dreams that you're dreaming of
I know the words that you long to hear
I know your deepest secret fears*

Chris looked back at Bastian, who was now watching him intently. He didn't discourage him - instead he just watched back.

"I love it when you sing" admitted Bastian.

"Can you dance?"

"Dance?"

"Yeah - come on, my mom should be out now. Let's party." The boys ran back home, and into the hi-fi room. On entering the room, Bastian noticed a change - in the centre of the wall opposite the window stood the picture that Bastian drew of Chris. The light from the window shone on it and made it look angelic. Chris ran up to the shelf, and grabbed a bunch of CD's, and put them all in the CD Juke Box. He switched the hi-fi on to random mode, and the music was put up so loud you would have thought the soundproofing couldn't possibly work. The first track was a dance track, and Chris immediately went into ape mode, flailing his arms about and stepping to the rhythm. He was naturally good at it too, and Bastian joined the rhythm. The next track was also dance, and the two danced some more. The third featured some provocative type music, and Chris strutted around the room, holding his body, and twisting his hips. He even took his shirt off, in a striptease manner.

"Wow, you're not shy" shouted Bastian, a bit surprised at his friends' behaviour.

"Music makes me mental" shouted Chris over the volume of the music.

The fourth track featured some classical waltz, and as a joke, the boys held each other in a waltz position, and attempted to waltz, as if they were in a ball room.

"No, you fool put your arm over my shoulder and mine goes around your waist" commanded Chris, who obviously had some kind of practice before. "You're not stepping correctly" scolded Chris again, and glanced up at Bastian who was no longer smiling - no longer laughing - he had a serious look on his face, and still continued to dance. Chris said nothing, but glanced back, looking carefully into his dancing partners' eyes, with fascination and interest growing stronger and stronger. Bastian felt Chris's arm close tighter around his waist. With that cue, he held Chris a bit closer too. Their eyes became so close together it was difficult for them to focus.

The fifth song was one from the Doors - a slow melodious song. It required a slow dance, so Chris wrapped his other arm around Bastian's waist, and Bastian placed his free hand onto Chris' shoulder, and placed his chin on the other shoulder.

"Sing to me" whispered Bastian, and Chris sang to the song that was being played. The song finished, and Chris switched the hi-fi off. Bastian came up behind Chris, held him from behind, and kissed him on the neck.

"I'm sorry" he said, "but your singing makes me do things I can't explain." Chris turned around and smiled.

"If this is a ploy to make me stop singing, I don't think its going to work."

"Why not?"

"Because I think I just enjoyed everything that just happened."

"I hope this doesn't ruin our friendship" said Bastian, with concern in his voice.

"I think this has just improved it" said Chris, with a smile.

The ♥ End