

## carry me to tomorrow

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## carry me to tomorrow

by Anonymous

### Summary

Ash chooses to trust himself to the unwavering night.

### Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Ash ran as if scrambling over endless piles of his own corpse. The rain battered him from above and sent chills through his body, clothes sticking to his skin and pierced with brambles and bark. Mud seeped into his shoes. He heard only the heaving of his own chest and the crashing of the sky around him. His world shrank to the cold night and the sharp pain in his heart, hammering with sheer panic and adrenaline yet bitterly resigned, as if he'd known for a long time that this had always been inevitable.

A car roared past him, beating through the deep water on the asphalt, dumping it onto Ash. As if he wasn't there, as if he was just another part of the road's pavement. Ash decided in that moment that he needed to leave again, to get out of wherever he was right now. He pushed himself haphazardly off the side of the road, into the weeds and brambles, tumbling through thorns and mud. His shoes were wrecked, but he didn't have anything with him to use in their place.

Ash found a dry rock under a tree large enough to shelter from the raging rain. He pulled from his left pant pocket his ziploc bag containing his phone, charger, and portable battery. As expected, his hands were too cold and soaked to register on the touchscreen through the plastic. Taking a

shuddering exhale, Ash dug into his other pocket for a tissue, wiping his fingertips and breathing onto them to warm them enough to slide open the emergency contact button.

He feels detached from his own actions, aware that at each moment he has no idea what his body is going to do next, running on pure survival and desperation.

Red picks up on the third ring. “Ash, what the fuck?”

Ash wheezes a sudden thing, half-laugh half-sob and a bit of cough, struck with the absurdity of how fast the situation had progressed, like it had been happening to someone else. For a few seconds, he laughs deliriously around the painful rasp in his throat.

When he brings the phone back to his ear, Red is speaking. “What’s happening, Ash, where- are you outside? Are you- what’s going on?”

Ash decides to say whatever falls out of his mouth, knowing that if he doesn’t communicate this now, he’ll probably never be able to say it again, losing the memory of the past few hours and of the sensations he’s feeling to the foggy protective abyss resting in the back of his brain.

“I don’t know, I don’t know what happened, I- Red. You’re Red, right, you’re Red, are you?”

A pang of fear courses through his body, but Ash doesn’t know what he’s saying, of course this is Red, he called Red’s number.

“Yes, I’m Red. I’m Red, and you are Ash.”

Red’s answer comes quick and solid, like he’s grasping onto something familiar and easy to provide within a devastating hurricane.

Ash finds that no words are rising to his throat, but Red interrupts.

“Ash, how do you feel? Are you cold? Are you hungry? Uhh, uhhh, are you thirsty? Are you...”

“I’m scared.”

Red says nothing for a moment, so Ash barrels through.

“I’m so so scared, I don’t know what to do. I have nowhere to go, I won’t- I won’t have anything anymore, I didn’t bring my laptop, I don’t even- have my documents, no way I can get them. I can’t work anymore. I don’t have anything to wear, I’m going to die. I’m going to die, Red, I don’t want to go back. I...”

Ash stops for a few seconds. Red starts talking, with room laid between his words, like he wants Ash to interrupt at any point he’d like.

“I will do anything for you, and I’m not going to leave. Where are you right now? Do you see any landmarks you recognize? Are you under a shelter? I’ll come to get you. I’ll be in my car. We’ll think about everything later, once you are safe. Are you cold? Are you injured?”

Ash realizes that Red has already guessed that something happened with his parents. He feels a settled relief from the familiarity of having a person who knows the details of his life and has never left his side. And yet, Ash knows that it will take years for Red to understand the full extent of what happened today. He feels a dull despair.

Ash tries to recall Red’s questions. “I’m under a tree. I’m by the road. It’s in the neighborhood. A

street light... fuck, I don't... wait, I'll try the map. It's- I got it." Ash recites the name of the street from the map app on his phone.

Red pauses for a moment, then, hesitatingly, "Repeat that last part?"

Ash does so easily, listening to the sounds of shuffling on the phone.

"Okay, keep yourself on the line, unless you have low battery- does that work? I'll come to get you. I've got... a towel, and water, and granola bars, and a first aid kit. I'll bring you clothes too."

Ash laughs in response. He doesn't say anything, struck with the giddy, pounding need to end the phone call, to move from his spot and run somewhere far away, so that Red won't be able to give him anything, won't see him like this. He feels his head splitting in extreme directions and feels sick to his gut. He wants to throw up.

Ash grips the moss nestled on the large root of the tree, squeezing it between his hands like a stress ball. He picks apart the individual lobes until they're scattered all over his hands, then claps them off onto the ground.

From his side, below the rock, he picks up a branch of pine needles and plucks each leaf until it's bare, then folds the stick into halves until the pieces are too small to bend. Ash does this again with five more dried branches.

The power on his phone is quickly dropping in the cold. Ash plugs his phone into the charged portable battery and arranges them neatly inside his ziploc bag. He belatedly presses the speaker button through the plastic so that he can hear whatever Red might have been saying.

Red is narrating each of his movements to Ash, like he's been rattling them off for a while now without necessarily expecting any response.

"I'm turning left. This street light looks kinda broken. The light's red. I'm pulling up now. The wipers aren't fast enough. I'm at the light, I'll adjust their speed. I'm waiting. There's a bunny, it's so small, is it even- Oh, green light, I'm going ahead."

Ash listens, and his body registers the feeling of discomfort from his feet, socks soaked in the mud inside his waterlogged shoes. He's shivering, and notes he would rather take off his shirt than keep its cold water on his body, but the effort is too much. His arms hurt, they're cut and scraped from thorns and the fresh booming bruises. The sound of rain is pulsing painfully in his head.

With a loud tearing through water, Red's car turns onto the street. His voice runs tinny through the speaker on Ash's lap, "Ash, which street light are you nearby? I'm past the fourth one. I don't see you, are you under a pine tree or a leafy tree?"

Ash closes his eyes and breathes out slowly. He opens his eyes and strains his vision. "A pine tree. I see you. You're close. A few lights."

Red's car stops a few meters away from Ash's position. Ash wants to move toward him, or hide away, but feels unwilling to lift himself up.

A narrow beam of light slides by the ground in front of Ash.

Ash says nothing.

An umbrella's canopy bobs forward, and the flashlight finds Ash's face.

Ash closes his eyes and feels his muscles automatically tense, ready to attack or to push up and run.

“Ash, I’m here. The car’s waiting, you can lay down in the back seats.”

“...”

“...Ash, can I lift you up? Can I hold onto your hand?”

Ash quietly ducks his head and raises his right arm.

The firmness of Red’s grip surprises him. Ash breathes out, and in, and out. Red waits.

In one go, Ash leans the full force of his body onto Red’s hand. Red lurches forward, then steadies his weight. Still closing his eyes, Ash pulls himself up, and stumbles, legs feeling like creaking ice. Red shifts to meet him, rotating to steady Ash’s weight on his warm shoulder.

The steps to the car are filled with labored breathing. Ash tiredly opens the back door and falls onto the row of seats. Red adjusts Ash’s foot, closes the door, and appears at the front seat. The car starts moving with a gentle bob, rocking Ash back and forth.

Ash lets himself go with the knowledge that he is going to survive, his life is going to change, and he will have Red by his side.

## End Notes

i wrote this in one go and don't feel like making edits  
reading comments makes me happy, please let me know how you feel!  
i'm at cutthesky on tumblr as well

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