

too late

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/43524303) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/43524303>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Lifesteal SMP
Relationship:	Ashswag/Reddoons (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	Ashswag (Video Blogging RPF) , Reddoons (Video Blogging RPF) , literally one mention of zam if that's important lol
Additional Tags:	Light Angst , Past Relationship(s) , Hopeful Ending , i forgot how much i hate tagging bear with me , Implied/Referenced Alcohol Abuse/Alcoholism , haha outsiders smp reference (has not watched a single stream or video) , Getting Back Together , it's highly implied i can tag it that , basically just word vomit , sorry if none of it makes sense , love these guys though , shoutout to gay people , Alternate Universe - Modern Setting , Hurt/Comfort , Touch-Starved , characters not ccs of course
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-12-10 Words: 1,684 Chapters: 1/1

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by [treacherouna](#)

Summary

It's a cold winter day when Ash's doorbell rings. It's not an entirely uncommon occurrence, but most of the time he at least knows who it is before he even gets to the door. This time, he's at a loss. It's incredibly late and the only reason he was awake in the first place was because he spent entirely too long staring at his computer screen instead of working. Whoever is at his front door must not bring good fortune.

It's Red. Of course it is.

Notes

i listened to an album some of my friends recommended to me got major brainrot and this was born . enjoy

[also perhaps you will be seeing more of me..... i hope]

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He looks terrible, even worse than the last time he saw him, his face flushed but with cheeks sunken in. The area below his eyes doesn't look any better. It almost seems like he hasn't eaten properly in months and hasn't seen a good night's rest in even longer.

Ash tries very hard to choke out any pity he might feel deep inside of himself. The memory of their last meeting burns bright in his mind, but he finds himself weakening anyway. He never was good at pretending he was unaffected whenever he heard anything new about Red.

Their friends often tried avoiding him as a subject in front of Ash but he would just shrug it off and say he didn't mind. Just because they ended off on a bad note doesn't mean he would complain every time people brought him up. He was perfectly capable of moving on and not being miserable and bitter over his ex-boyfriend, what was he, a teenager? There are much more important things to worry about.

Except, of course, it's all just lies. A front he puts up, as he always does. He doesn't want his friends to see his weakest point, his Achilles heel, how affected he actually is by the mug with the stupid drawing on it gathering dust on his cupboard shelf, the lack of dress shoes and suit jackets in his closet and the empty space in his bed that just seems to get bigger and bigger, despite how many throw pillows he tries putting on it. He resents Red for being the one who moved out, and for leaving him behind the apartment full of memories and used furniture. He's convinced that he can't stare at any space on his walls for too long before remembering how that's exactly where Red said he was going to hang up a painting he commissioned, or some other bullshit that makes him entirely too emotional for just being an empty space on a wall.

So, yes, Reddoons is his weak spot. Even now, months after their break up when he swore he wouldn't even glance at him if they ever met again, he feels his resolve slowly crumbling. He's now realizing he's sensing the sharp smell of alcohol from him, a scent long unfamiliar on Red of all people, and strongly resists the urge to open his door even wider and step aside.

Then Red snuffles. Probably from the cold. And Ash is moving to the side, his arm opening the door on pure muscle memory alone, months and months of opening the door for the same man who's crossing through it right now. He wonders if his arm missed this specific movement for this specific person. Whenever it's one of his friends he's welcoming, he makes a show of opening it, cheerful, big smile and open arms, but with Red it was always different. Opening the door just enough for him to pass through and immediately kiss some part of Ash's head, most often forehead, then starting to talk about his day at work, just what insanity his boss put him up to that day, and Ash smiling in adoration, quickly shutting the door.

He wasn't prepared for the sight of Red in his hallway again. *Their* hallway? Then again, he wasn't prepared for the sight of Red at all, but now that he's seeing him in the space they used to share so deeply, he feels like all of the air from his lungs has been kicked out. While Red is busy shrugging off his jacket (*and putting it into his old spot on the hooks in the hallway, he can't help but notice*), Ash figures the best way to avoid him was rushing to the kitchen to make him some tea. He was visibly shaking, though he couldn't tell if it was from the cold, the alcohol or something else. Nothing a nice warm drink couldn't fix.

By the time he finished making the drink he could hear Red settling down on the couch, though

muffled, as if trying to make as little noise as possible. Drink in hand, he gets to the living room and tries to stop his hand carrying said drink from shaking at the sight in front of him.

It's just Red. But it's him on their couch again after so long, and he realizes that it doesn't matter how much time passes, his life would always be centered around him. He feels fulfilled with him by his side, and life without him feels truly incomplete. Nothing has changed in these past few months, just the presence of the endless void next to him, instead of a person. Like he was perfectly cut out of Ash's life.

He sets the tea down on the coffee table in front of him and tries very hard to ignore Red's stare burning holes into the side of his face.

He then sits down on the couch. As far away from him as possible.

Red takes the cup and starts drinking from it.

The silence is... Suffocating, he has to admit, but not in the way it used to be. This one is drowning with the weight of unspoken words and apologies, unspoken confessions and promises. He doesn't know if it beats the silence of heartbreak, the silence of the aftermath of two hearts and lives shattering, but he knows he's cautious about breaking it. Red seems upset, still, and he doesn't really feel like poking the bear further.

For a while, it's just them, their breathing and Red's quiet drinking. Ash fidgets with his fingers, trying to avoid thinking too much about what was happening right now. He didn't expect to ever see him again, let alone let him into his house. When it comes down to it, however, he knows he made that choice long ago.

At one point he thinks he hears a quiet inhale, followed by more sniffing. Red should have been long warmed up by now, so Ash tries convincing himself he just imagined the noise. Then it keeps going.

With a quick glance to the man sitting next to him, he realizes Red is crying.

He freezes. He can't even take his eyes away from him. He's not sure how exactly he expected tonight's interaction to go but Red crying wasn't even close to what he might have thought. He's stuck with no idea what to do, should he comfort him? Would he even appreciate any comfort from him? Now, after everything?

He wouldn't have come here if he didn't want anything from Ash.

He breaks the silence. It feels like the final nail in the coffin.

"...Are you crying?"

Red puts down the mug and clenches his hands after putting them back on his legs. He's clearly distressed, but Ash has no idea what to do or say to help him.

"God, Ash, I'm so sorry. I'm so fucking sorry."

Out of everything he expected to come out of Red's mouth after his question, an apology wasn't even top five options. Briefly, he's struck speechless. Unknowing of Ash's internal shutdown, Red continues.

"I'm sorry for being so stupid, now and all those months ago. I'm sorry I ever did anything to cause you any pain. I'm sorry for showing up at your door at two in the fucking morning because I knew

I could never take care of myself the way you ta- took care of me."

The slip up doesn't go unnoticed by Ash, but he doesn't have the brainpower to unpack it right now. This is all a lot to take in for so late in the evening, so he just ends up blurting the first thing that comes to mind.

"You're drunk."

"No, no, I'm not, Zam made me drink a ton of water before coming here. I know how much you hate when I drink. I tried to make myself at least a bit coherent and presentable... for you. To apologize, at least."

He says the last part quietly, like he didn't even mean to have the words leave his mouth. For a moment, Ash is left speechless again. He can't stop the baffled expression from showing on his face. No one ever really expects their ex to show up on their doorstep at this time of night, after having clearly consumed a concerning amount of alcohol after not drinking for years, begging for forgiveness and... Actually seeming pretty genuine.

"Look, I'm not... I'm not here to beg for you to take me back or whatever, I just want you to know that I'm really sorry about everything. I can't live with myself knowing you hate me."

"I don't *hate* you. It's just... Y'know."

"Still, I'm really, truly sorry Ash."

When Red looks at him like that, tears in his eyes, making it impossible for him to look away, there's not much he can do except surrender.

He sighs, moving closer to Red, wrapping himself around his side and throwing his arm over his shoulder. His head finds its place on his other one. Red gently lays his head on top of his. Ash suddenly feels very tired.

Red places his hand out, palm facing upwards. He takes it and intertwines their fingers. He can feel Red's exhale of amusement more than hear it. It makes him smile, too.

Ash doesn't know how the events of this evening will turn out for them in the long run, but he knows an olive branch when he sees one.

"Do you wanna spend the night?"

"...Yeah. Thanks."

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