Summary

Tim loses contact with his family when he gets sick for a week, causing Dick to come and check in on him.

Notes

Written for Day 4 of Batfam Week, Hurt/Comfort! As I’ve said on my Tumblr I’ve never written hurt/comfort before and I’m not sure if this is what was expected. So here, have sick Tim and big brother Dick.

Tim blamed his lack of spleen for these situations. With a weakened immune system he needed to take special care with his health, including a mix of vitamins and medications with his morning coffee. He visited the family doctor once a month to ensure that the balance was correct and to evaluate his blood work for any red flags. Sometimes though that wasn’t possible. Like right now.

He’d been curled up in bed for about a week, moving only to go to the bathroom and get himself a
glass of water from the tap there. He had set his phone down on his nightstand without plugging it in to charge. That first day he ignored its incessant buzzing until Tim assumed the phone died as the buzzes had finally stopped. That first morning he hadn’t wanted to move. Aching all over and drenched with sweat, despite having kicked his sheets and comforter to the floor.

Now he forced himself to his feet, shuffling towards the kitchen and having to stop halfway. Sliding down the wall in the hallway Tim leaned his head back. This was the most movement he’d done in days and he felt like he wanted to puke. He knew that this was a gnarly case of the flu but he felt too bad to even call the doc, even though not doing so was only worsening it. Pushing himself to his feet Tim managed to make it as far as the island, where he bent to press his hot cheek against the cool counter. Taking a few breaths to steady himself Tim made a last push to the cabinet where he kept a stockpile of saltines.

Grabbing a box he stumbled to the couch that he then collapsed on. Tim made the executive decision that after so much work he earned a nap. Setting the box on the floor for later he rolled onto his side and promptly fell asleep.

Tim awoke to an earthquake with a jackhammer working on a slab in his temple. With a groan he opened his eyes to see Dick’s worried face swimming in front of him. The earthquake suddenly stopped as relief flooded Dick’s features. Tim realized that the shaking was just Dick trying to wake him but the construction crew in his skull was making it hard to think straight.

“Tim? Timmy? You with me little bro?” Dick asked, kneeling beside the couch.

Tim groaned as he wiped a hand down his face before using it to push his hair back. “Yeah,” he croaked.

“You eat anything?” Dick picked up the box of saltines and examined it.

“Nnnhnn. No. Headache.”

Dick gently pushed Tim’s hand off his forehead to feel it with the back of his own. “You’re burning up. How long have you been like this? Have you taken your meds? I know you missed your appointment the other day.”

Tim waved his hand vaguely at his brother. “Shhhh.” He closed his eyes and took in a deep shuddering breath. Trying to fight off the growing pain in his head. Tim laid like that for a few minutes, the only sound in the apartment was the hum of appliances and Tim and Dick’s breathing. Dick was combing his fingers through Tim’s grease and sweat streaked hair. Tim knew his brother wanted answers but he needed a minute to reorient himself.

“Can you get me a drink?” he finally asked.

“Sure thing,” Dick replied. Tim heard him stand and make his way to the kitchen. Opening the fridge and riffling around in it before closing the door and coming back to his post next to the couch. “Here,” Dick handed him a bottle of sports drink that Tim vaguely recalled buying.

Pushing himself up on the cushions he reached for the plastic bottle. Carefully unscrewing the top he took a sip, which turned into a swallow, and soon he was gulping down mouthfuls of the orange liquid.

“Better?” Dick asked with a small smile. He had perched himself on Tim’s cluttered coffee table. “Think you can handle some crackers?”

The hunger that had driven Tim from his room originally gnawed at him once again. He reached a
hand out for the box. Dick popped open the cardboard seal and cut the plastic wrapping with a pocket knife that Tim had left laying among his paperwork on the table. Tim grabbed the crackers from him and started shoving saltines into his mouth.

“Whoa now, can’t have you choking.” Dick’s eyes had gone wide and he had made a move to take the box from Tim.

Tim responded with a face and slowed his chewing. He washed it down with another swig of drink before picking a single cracker out of the box and eyeing Dick over top of it.

His brother just laughed at him. “I’m sorry Tim, you look pitiful and you’re glaring at me. It’s cute.”

Tim wrinkled his nose and began nibbling his cracker.

“So? How long have you been on this couch? Cause you haven’t been answering your phone all week.”

Tim shook his head, then stopped because that made the headache that was starting to subside come back. “I was in bed. I came out here earlier to get food and couldn’t make it back.”

Dick’s eyes held pity. Tim hated being pitied but right now he felt too awful to care. “So you haven’t been taking your meds?” Dick pressed.

Tim gave a noncommittal grumble and now Dick just looked disappointed. Tim hated disappointing people even more than he hated being pitied. “I got home from work and was really tired and so I took a nap and woke up the next morning feeling even worse. This is the furthest I’ve moved from my bed.”

Dick nodded, not happy but at least understanding. “Do you have a thermometer around here?” he asked as he got up.

“In the bathroom, above the sink somewhere.” Dick left to get it and Tim collapsed against the couch. He nursed his saltines and drink until his brother came back with the thermometer in one hand and his phone in the other.

“Yeah B. I am. Look, I got this. Ok, I will.” Dick told the person on the other end before turning his attention back to Tim. “Bruce says he wants you to feel better and that when you’re up for moving that you’re welcome to stay at the manor. He went on that business trip this morning since we couldn’t get ahold of you and you missed your appointment yesterday.”

Tim groaned. He knew that there was something he had to do but the days had bled together into a mix of sleep, haze, and aches. “I’m sorry,” he muttered as Dick passed him the thermometer.

“For what? Looking like a zombie?”

“I’ve been to the bathroom, I know what I look like and it’s way worse than I’ve ever seen Jason.”

Dick let out a short laugh at that. “Ok, so you can’t be that sick.”

Tim stuck the thermometer in his mouth and shrugged. When it beeped he passed it to Dick without even bothering to look at it, knowing his brother was going to demand it anyway. Tim leaned his head back and closed his eyes, his headache and hunger had disappeared but now he just hurt and was getting suddenly cold. He pulled a blanket toward himself, getting an assist with it from Dick.

The older boy must have called someone else but Tim was tired again and didn’t really care. He let
“Hello? Yes, this is Dick Grayson I’m Timothy Drake-Wayne’s older brother, Yes, I spoke to him this morning about Tim and I’m actually with him now. Could you? Thanks.” There was a pause as Tim assumed the call was transferred. “Hey, it’s Dick. I got into Tim’s apartment and he’s a mess. Yeah. Fever of 100.7. He said he’s pretty much been sleeping all week. Um, aches, headache, I’m guessing chills cause he just burittoed himself in a blanket and he’s got a crazy fever. No he hasn’t, he says this is the first he’s left his room. Yeah. Some sports drink and crackers. I think just water. I mean, it looks like he’s asleep again…” Tim rolled his head back and forth, indicating that he was not asleep. “Up, nope he’s awake, just has his eyes closed. Yeah, I can do that. Ok. Thanks, man.”

Tim squinted at his brother as he sat down on the couch beside him. “Am I going to the hospital?” he mumbled halfheartedly.

“You are not going anywhere. Eat more and then I’m going to have you take some aspirin to try and break the fever. After that you’re getting a shower, you stink.” Dick grinned and Tim meant to swat at his brother but instead ended up leaning against him.

“Ok,” he sighed as Dick tucked another blanket around him. “Can I nap after taking the aspirin and before taking the shower though?”

Dick chuckled. “Of course. Now do you think you can hold down some soup?”

Tim gave a shrug that just loosened his mummy like blanket wrappings. He frowned as he made an attempt to fix them. “I can try. Bring a garbage can though just in case. The place is a mess as is.” Tim leaned his head on his brother’s shoulder, feeling the other man’s frame shake with laughter.

“I will. And speaking of mess, if you’re going to nap I’m going to wash your sheets.”

“Why?” Tim lifted his head to look at Dick, his brows knitted together.

“Because, if you’ve been living in them all week and this is the state you’re in? Hoo boy. Also, I’m charging your phone. You can’t just drop off the face of the earth like this.” Dick pushed himself to his feet, presumably to start the chores he had tasked for himself.

Tim grumbled at his brother’s last comment.

Dick turned to him with a tight expression. “No. Don’t even. Tim, you’ve been pulling this kind of crap on us for a while now but ever since you lost your spleen it’s become serious. By not keeping in contact you put yourself at a serious health risk! Not to mention the emotional stress you put the rest of us through. I thought that we were on better terms now, I know that they’re not what they where and I wish they would be but you’ve gotta let me in for that to happen Tim. I realize this was an accident, that you didn’t mean to get horribly ill and for your phone to die. I’m not mad and especially not about that. I just… I dunno. Next time call? Text? Answer your phone? Tell me where you are or will be and if and when you’ll be dropping off the map? That way I can get to you sooner.” His flare of anger dissipated as he ran his hands through his hair. “You’re my little brother and I honestly don’t know what I’d do if I ever lost you.”

Tim opened his mouth but when no words came he closed it and bit his lower lip instead. He nodded slowly and began wiggling loose of the blanket pile. Carefully getting to his feet Tim shuffled the two steps closer to Dick and wrapped his older brother in a hug. After a second Dick’s arms rose to hug Tim back.

“I’m sorry,” he said into Dick’s shoulder. “I didn’t think. I’m sorry.”
Dick squeezed him tighter. “I know and it’s ok. I’m here now and we’re going to get you better and that’s all that matters.”

They stood like that for another minute before Tim’s stomach growled and broke the silence. Dick laughed as he let go and ruffled Tim’s dirty hair. Tim smirked and returned to his position on the couch.

“I’m guessing you can handle some soup,” Dick said with a smirk.

Tim smiled back. “I guess.”

While Dick wasn’t known for having good culinary skills he could still make a can of chicken noodle soup which Tim eagerly slurped up and managed to hold down. Tim took the aspirin Dick had found before settling in for a nap, when he awoke the apartment had been visibly straightened up. His papers were neatly stacked rather than scattered piles. The mound of dishes in the sink had been washed and put away. Tim could hear the sound of the vacuum in his bedroom.

Getting up, he wrapped the blankets around himself and headed that way. Standing in the doorway he could see Dick vacuuming the carpet of his bedroom, his bed freshly made.

“Did you do all this?” he asked once Dick had turned the vacuum off.

His brother turned to him with a smile. “Yeah, you’ve been out a good two hours Timbo. Now go, shower. Those blankets are the next things to be washed. You can’t get better with germs still hanging around.

“You sound like Alfred.”

Dick shrugged. “What can I say, I learned from the best. How are you feeling?”

Tim smiled. “Much better actually.”

“Good! Now shoo. And when you’re done we’re working out a plan so this doesn’t happen again.”

“Agreed. But, can you still drop by and clean my apartment? For someone who never cleans their own you do a decent job.”

Dick laughed. “You just answered your own question. Now go, I wasn’t kidding when I said you stink.”

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