

## **I'm a sinner and a saint and it's taking its toll**

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/26969095) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/26969095>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">Graphic Depictions Of Violence</a>
Category:	<a href="#">Gen</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Stargirl (TV 2020)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Pat Dugan &amp; Rick Tyler</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Pat Dugan</a> , <a href="#">Rick Tyler</a> , <a href="#">Barbara Whitmore</a> , <a href="#">Michael "Mike" Dugan (DCU)</a> , <a href="#">Courtney Whitmore</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Angst and Hurt/Comfort</a> , <a href="#">Touch-Starved</a> , <a href="#">Implied/Referenced Child Abuse</a> , <a href="#">Implied/Referenced Alcohol Abuse/Alcoholism</a> , <a href="#">Blood and Injury</a> , <a href="#">Vulnerability</a> , <a href="#">Team as Family</a> , <a href="#">Pat Dugan is a Good Dad</a> , <a href="#">Rick Tyler Needs a Hug</a> , <a href="#">Post-Season/Series 01</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2020-10-12 Words: 4,505 Chapters: 1/1

# **I'm a sinner and a saint and it's taking its toll**

by [Multifandom\\_damnation](#)

## Summary

Never in a million years would Pat have expected to be woken in the middle of the night by his phone buzzing incessantly on his nightstand, but he was somehow even more surprised to see Rick's name pop up, his grumpy, scowling face shining up at him as the phone gave him the option to accept or decline. He glanced at the time- 2:45 in the morning.

## Notes

I don't know why I wrote this but I felt compelled to write Pat being woken up by an early morning/late-night phone call from Rick needing him to help patch him up, so you've got this. If anyone knows what to tag that as, let me know, because nothing I type into AO3 is coming up with the right thing. I also don't know why these end up being quite so long, but I just couldn't stop myself. I wasn't going to include Barbra or Mike, but then I chose to include Barbara, and people were saying that Mike is always left out, so I included him too. It's taken me forever to choose the title, and I'm still not totally sure I'm happy with it. It's from a song off an album that I've spoken about in the notes.

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

Never in a million years would Pat have expected to be woken in the middle of the night by his phone buzzing incessantly on his nightstand. He gently detached himself from Barbara and rolled over in their bed to unplug his phone and stare bleary-eyed at the flashing screen, the phone vibrating in his hand.

If he was surprised by the phone call, he was somehow even more surprised to see Rick's name pop up, his grumpy, scowling face shining up at him as the phone gave him the option to accept or decline. He glanced at the time- 2:45 in the morning. It must have been something really serious if Rick was calling him at this time of the night.

Slowly, Pat sat up and let the blankets pool around his lap. The light from the phone stung his eyes, and he was startingly aware of how cold it was. Barbara was bundled up in all the blankets beside him. He stifled a yawn as he answered the phone. "Rick?"

There must have been something in his voice that gave away whatever Rick had been searching for because his first response was a sharp, rattling hiss. "Sorry Pat, I thought you'd be awake. You know, night owl and all. I didn't mean to wake you. I guess I'll-"

Even before Rick had finished speaking, Pat was carefully rising from the bed, pushing the covers back over his place on the mattress so his absence wasn't felt quite as heavily, and slowly tip-toed out to the hallway before closing the door behind him. "No no, don't worry about it. I wasn't sleeping very well anyway," he lied. "Is everything alright? It's pretty late. What are you doing calling me for?"

"Uh," Even though the phone, Pat could sense Rick's hesitance. "I got into a fight tonight, and I, uh, I need someone to help me patch up the parts I can't reach. And I couldn't go to the hospital, and I didn't know who else to ask, so..."

He trailed off, but Pat didn't need him to finish anyway. He was already searching for his slippers with softly prodding feet in the darkness of the upstairs hallway. "How bad is it? Are you bleeding? Is something broken?"

"No, nothing's broken," Rick replied. "I was bleeding a little bit before, but I swiped some bandaids from the service station, so I'm OK. I mostly just hurt all over. And I'm only calling you because I'm worried about there being things still under the skin, is all."

"Jesus, Rick, who the hell did you piss off?" Pat asked as he found his slippers and carefully toed them on, hissing in sympathy.

"My uncle," Rick said nonchalantly, and Pat nearly tripped on his way down the stairs. As it was, he had to tighten his suddenly slackened grip on his phone before he dropped it. "Is it alright if I come over? I'm not bothering you, am I? I know that I just woke you up, but..."

"No, not bothering me at all. You know that if you need me, you can call me at any time," Pat said. "You can certainly come over. I'll be waiting for you downstairs."

Rick cleared his throat. "That's great because I'm waiting at your front door."

Suprised, Pat nearly tripped on his way down the stairs in his haste to get to the front door, and when he opened it, he saw Rick there exactly as promised, his hair tousled and windswept, his arms dotted with colourful cartoonish bandaids, wearing too little clothing for the bitter chill of the early morning, holding himself at an odd angle. His shirt was peppered with specks of blood, and there was a cut across his cheek, also patched up with a bandaid. He was shivering, though tried not to show it when Pat opened the door.

Without a word, Pat dragged Rick into the house by the elbow and quietly shut the door behind him. "How long have you been out there for?" he demanded in a hushed whisper as he switched on a lamp and scouted for a blanket. He noticed that Rick was barefoot, and he was wearing a pair of pyjama bottoms.

"Outside in general? A couple of hours," Rick tried to joke, but it fell flat with how hard his teeth were clattering. "At your front door? Maybe 15 minutes."

"Why didn't you come in sooner?" Pat hissed as he ushered Rick to the couch. Rick resisted, but Pat didn't care, and he manhandled Rick onto the couch filled with soft cushions and blankets despite his protests. "It's freezing!"

"Yeah, but I was trying to decide if it was worth waking you up for," Rick blinked harshly as Pat turned on another light.

Glancing down, Pat realized that Rick's bare feet were coated in a layer of mud, and he frowned at it as it flaked off onto the floorboards. Not because of the mess, but because he only knew of one place that was perpetually muddy. "Did you really walk all the way here? From West Farms?"

"Well, yeah," Rick grumbled as he allowed Pat to smother him in warmth, rubbing his hand up and down his legs to generate heat and friction, but did so with a curled lip and a raised eyebrow. "How else was I going to get here?"

"You've got the mustang-"

"He would have heard the engine when I tried to leave. It's whatever. I've walked much further," Rick interjected, sitting up and pulling the blankets away from his chin, pushing Pat away. "This was a waste of time-"

Before he could move any further, Pat put his hand on his chest and forced him to lay back down against the couch. "Sit still. I'm going to get some supplies from the kitchen and then I'll have a look at you," he wrapped the blankets higher up around Rick's shoulders and tucked him in so tightly that he hopefully couldn't move too far away. "And you had better still be right there when I come back."

He left him then, hoping that Rick had the common sense to remain on the couch, and went through the house in search of whatever he could find. He grabbed the first-aid kit from the bathroom, filled with bandaids and bandages and gauze. He grabbed the bottle of alcohol rub from the laundry, shaking it to check that there was some liquid in there. He grabbed the special sewing kit in the garage for just these kinds of emergencies. He paused on his way

through the kitchen before he decided to hunt for some sort of snacks or things to keep Rick comfortable while he did whatever he had to do.

When he returned, Rick was thankfully exactly where he had left him, leaning his cheek against the couch cushions, eyes half-lidded. "Oh good, you're back," he said sarcastically. "Does this mean that I can move again?"

"Very funny. You don't have to do anything you don't want to," Pat said as he gingerly stepped around the obstacles in the room and placed his stash on the coffee table. He didn't miss the way that Rick seemed to mentally psych himself up and repace his hard exterior as he sat up from the couch and pulled the blankets away, sitting back with a pained grunt. Pat threw a chocolate bar on his lap. "That's for you," He said to Rick's questioning glance.

"Me?" Rick asked with a frown as he tentatively picked it up from his lap and turned it over in his hands, almost afraid that it would blow up in his face.

"Yes you," Pat said patiently as he opened the first-aid kit on the coffee table. "Now, tell me what you need me to look at."

Sending one last glance at the bar of chocolate, Rick slowly but surely began to lift himself up from the couch, sitting forward while trying to suppress a pained wince, biting his lip to stop any abrupt sounds from escaping. Pat helped him lift up his shirt when he struggled with it, and he pulled it off his shoulder until it hung loosely around the elbow of the opposite arm. "Just- here."

Pat had expected to find a couple of bruises, maybe a sprain or a cut or something. He hadn't expected all of Rick's back to be red-raw and covered in bloodied scrapes. His left shoulder was mangled and cut, bleeding sluggishly from innumerable gashes that almost glittered under the lamplight.

"Christ, Rick," Pat resisted the urge to shout, gently turning Rick this way and that so he could get a good look at him. "What the hell happened? You got into a fight with a moving semi-truck or something?"

Rick huffed out a laugh and winced when the motion made him ache. "It's a long story."

"I think we've got the time," Pat scoffed as he gently prodded at Rick's side and the slowly blooming bruise. Rick hissed and swatted him away. "Sorry, I just need to check if your ribs are broken."

"I know what broken ribs feel like, and I already told you, nothing's broken," Rick grumbled as Pat finally pulled away.

"What happened?" Pat demanded again as he dug through the first-aid kit for the bottle of disinfectant.

It took a moment before Rick spoke, and when Pat glanced up at him from where he was pouring a liberal amount of brass-coloured alcohol scrub, he saw Rick gnawing at his lip. "I got into a fight with my uncle. He... he tried to take dad's stuff. The hourglass, and the

journal. They were sitting on my nightstand, and he said I didn't deserve them, so he tried to take them. Probably to sell them. Who the hell knows."

He sounded bitter, and Pat couldn't blame him. He was glad that he had things in his hands to stop him from clenching them. He sat up on his knees and gently began wiping the cotton pad over the grazes, holding his arm for stability. "And what did you do?"

Despite the pain making his teeth clench, Rick managed a small yet genuine chuckle. "I punched him in the face."

"Of course you did," Pat snorted. "I'm not surprised in the slightest."

Even with the dim lighting, even with him turned the opposite direction, even held in the position he was, Pat could almost feel Rick's grin. It was strange. Only in the dark did Rick let himself smile openly. "Well, I wasn't just going to let him take it," Rick said. "Besides, he deserved it. I wish I could have done more than just punching him in the face."

"And then what happened?" Pat asked as he took a closer look at the angry marks across most of Rick's back. He had cleared away most of the gritty blood, and his skin was coated in a deep orange tint from the antiseptic scrub. "You look like you took quite a beating."

"I wouldn't call it a beating," Rick said. "He shoved me and I fell onto the counter, and then he dragged me outside and threw me down the driveway. I forgot how often you have to sweep away the gravel," he gave a dry chuckle. "When I tried to get back inside the house, he smashed a bottle over my shoulder. I managed to get a shirt on my way out, but he locked the doors and I didn't know where else I should go."

Pat didn't answer for a long moment. Rick seemed totally nonchalant about the whole thing as if they were discussing the weather and not a terrible and unjust beating of a child. "I wish I could get my hands on that uncle of yours," Pat grumbled. "Give him a taste of his own medicine."

"I'd pay good money to see that," Rick chuckled. "But don't worry too much. He'll probably be asleep by now, and I'll sneak back into the house, and it'll be like nothing ever happened in the morning. He'll forget all about it. He usually does."

There were countless things that Pat wanted to say, but he thought that it was best for him not to comment on it. He knew that Rick was already trusting him a lot to talk to him so freely about the topic, though that may have something to do with the cold and the pain and the long bare-foot walk and the fact that it was close to three in the morning. Instead, he placed a gentle hand on Rick's hip and tapped him a few times. "Shift this way for me. Let me get a better look of this shoulder."

With some effort, Rick adjusted his position on the couch as he finally dug up the courage to open up the chocolate bar. Pat was glad that his smile was unnoticeable in the darkness.

The whole of Rick's left shoulder was slick with dried and slightly-tacky blood, peppered with darker nicks and divots from where the glass had impacted and slid deeper into the flesh. Now Pat understood what Rick had said about worrying that there were pieces still

inside him. He could tell that Rick had previously tried to claw the shards out with his bare hands before realizing that he couldn't reach and instead decided to make the long trek to the Whitmore-Dugan residence.

"This doesn't look too great, Rick," Pat mused as he looked him over. "Hang on a minute. I'm going to get a better light."

"Sure," Rick replied, mouth full of chocolate.

Biting his lip to hold back his laughter, Pat went hunting for a torch in the many drawers filled with miscellaneous objects and things, and after a quick pit-stop in the kitchen for a small bowl, he returned to Rick with one held triumphantly in his hand. "I knew we had one around here somewhere," he said as he returned to his position on the floor and dropped the extra batteries on the coffee table beside the other supplies.

Rick hummed in answer as he idly broke off another section of the chocolate bar and placed it in his mouth. Pat used the torch to assess the damage under a new light and could see the clear way something glittered occasionally under the surface, lodged between shredded skin and imbedded in the bleeding wound.

"Here's what I'm going to do now, Rick," Pat explained gently as he reached for some supplies from the pile building on the table. "I'm going to clean you up a little bit, and then I'm going to use the tweezers to try and get this glass out. It might sting slightly, but I'll try and be careful, alright?"

Pat could feel Rick shrugging under his hand and the way his shoulder twinged with the movement. "Alright, whatever. Don't stress too much. Just try your best."

"Well, I'm going to get all the glass out at least," Pat said. "I don't know how well I can deal with those cuts, but I'll bandage it before you go."

He received another affirmative hum, and Pat took that as permission to continue, and he dug through his not-so-secret emergency kit that he had kept close by since the first Justice Society would leave and come back covered in various wounds, and he searched for the long set of tweezers that he kept beside the suture kit. He gently dabbed the jaw into the bottle of antiseptic, swirling it around a bit to make sure the liquid coated all the metal, before putting it back down on the table and preparing himself. He suspected that he was more concerned than Rick was, even though he was the one with the damage and the glass in his skin while Pat was merely watching and trying to clean him up.

Holding his breath, Pat placed his hand on Rick's shoulder to warn him and steady him at the same time before he placed the tweezers against the first, gaping cut. Rick hissed as the antiseptic rub touched his open wound, but he didn't give any other sign that he even felt it. Pat took that as a good sign, and slowly and carefully began searching through the wound for the piece of glass.

Gradually, meticulously, Pat plucked pieces of glass from Rick's shoulder and deposited them in the small bowl resting on the coffee table. Rick made no noise of protest, no sounds of

pain, no move of discomfort. He just sat there, stiff and tense and silent as he grit his teeth and Pat dug through his skin for the shards

He would have been impressed by Rick's stubbornness if he wasn't so worried about his welfare.

It felt like forever when Pat finally pulled the final shard from Rick's skin, held triumphantly between the tweezers, and dropped it into the bowl with a satisfying *clink!* "There, I think that's all of it," Pat said. Rick's entire being seemed to relax finally under his hand. "I can't feel any more in there, but you let me know if there's anything I've missed."

Rick shook out his shoulder, rolling it back and forth. "Thanks, Pat."

"You just stay there and relax while I go and get cleaned up," Pat said, resting what he hoped to be a comforting hand on Rick's unharmed shoulder as he rose from his place on the couch. His entire body ached from the position. "You're more than welcome to stay here tonight. We've got the room."

"No thanks," Rick shook his head, sending his hair falling further into his eyes. "I best be getting out of your way, anyhow."

Pat didn't like it, but he knew that there was no point arguing. They wouldn't get anywhere other than Rick losing his temper and leaving, and he really didn't want that.

There was a sound from the stairs and they both turned, Rick twisting around on the couch, to see Barbara on the stairs, rubbing at her eyes and running a hand through her hair, not looking particularly bothered but not too thrilled to be up at this time either. "Pat?" she called quietly, her voice thick with sleep. "Are you down here? I woke up and you weren't there, but I heard you talking and- oh." her eyes went wide when she saw Rick seated on the couch, looking shy and sheepish and like he wanted to go hide in a corner somewhere, and her eyes rested on the bloodied mess of his back and shoulder. "Rick? Oh my god, are you alright? What the hell *happened* to you?"

"Uh," Rick managed. "Hey, Barbara."

As Barbara made her way down the stairs, Pat was suddenly aware that she was going to pester the both of them until they gave her an excuse as to why Rick was in their loungeroom at 3:30 in the morning covered in his own blood, and one that was hopefully better than falling down the basement stairs. But Pat also knew with a pang of deep sadness that Rick would never tell her what happened and would rather carry it with him to his grave, and the fact that he even told Pat was more of a sleep-deprived and pain-induced slip up than anything else. But he also knew from experience how hard it was to lie to Barbara.

"He fell through a window, got glass in his skin that he needed help taking out," Pat interjected before Barbara could push, and both she and Rick looked up to him. He was not surprised that Rick looked grateful and relieved. "I was just going to wash my hands and then wrap up his shoulder-"



He didn't even get to finish speaking before Barbara was seated on the couch opposite Rick and was waving Pat away. "Go, go," she said as she plucked a roll of bandage from the first-aid kit. "I've got this. You go get cleaned up, and bring me some towels from the closet in the hall."

"Yes ma'am," Pat had to stifle his laugh by turning his back, and he went to wash his hands of Rick's dried blood and gather the things she had asked of him.

When he returned back to the room with his hands clean and a stack of soft towels folded over his arm, he was not at all surprised to see that Barbara was seated on the couch in front of Rick and had started her second roll of bandage, though he was a little surprised to see how well it was done. It was almost something you would expect to see from a hospital. At Pat's questioning glance, she stopped what she was doing to send him an indignant look. "What?" she demanded. "I took a first aid course in high school. This was one of the first things we learnt."

"Good to know," Pat chuckled as he handed her the towels.

Rick was looking anywhere but at them, staring down at the ground or over their shoulders as he pursed his lips and a faint blush dusted his cheeks. "I uh, I really appreciate you guys doing this and helping me out."

"Of course," Barbara said as she stood and began wiping down Rick's bloodied back with the clean towels. "You're part of the family now."

Instantly, Rick stiffened as he slid off of the couch and turned his back to Barbara, forcing a smile as he started to back up towards the front door, grabbing his shirt from where it lay discarded on the floor on his way out. "I should head off. Get out of your hair and all. Thanks for all your help, and uh, sorry for waking you."

"You're going to *walk*?" Barbara demanded, aghast. "Rick-"

"I'm fine," Rick insisted. "I really am. I've been making this walk all my life, and if it all goes to shit, I haven't flipped my hourglass all day, so I've got that as a backup. I'll be fine, Barbara, really."

"At least let us drive you a little closer to West Farms," Barbara pleaded.

As the two of them argued in the background, Pat made the split-second decision to slip past them and hastily made his way up the stairs, his slippers silencing his footfalls.

He was surprised by Mike on the landing, leaning over the banister with his hands folded and Max curled up at his legs. He looked tiredly at his dad as he stopped at the top of the stairs. "Who's here?"

"Rick," Pat tried to put on his stern dad voice despite everything going on. "What are you doing up?"

“Max woke me. He was growling at the window, and I thought that I should go check, just in case,” Mike ran a hand down his face. Glancing down, Pat finally took notice of the baseball bat leaning against the wall. “But then I heard you, and there wasn’t any fighting or arguing, so I didn’t think we were in danger.”

“Good job. He’s just leaving, so don’t worry,” Pat placed a hand on his shoulder as he passed. “Back to bed, both of you.”

He waited until Mike’s door had firmly closed before he made his silent trek across the landing to Courtney’s door before he opened it as quietly as he could, tip-toed across the room and shook her gently. “Courtney?”

After a moment, she woke with a groan and reached up to push her hair out of her face, blinking blearily up at Pat in the darkness. In its crate, the staff rattled. “Pat?” she asked as she sat up. “Is everything alright? Are we under attack?”

“No, no, nothing like that,” Pat apologised as he crouched down beside her bed. “I’m sorry for waking you. I just need you to do me a favour.”

“What time is it?” Courtney asked as she sat against the headboard.

“Nearly four o’clock.”

“What kind of favour could you need from me at four in the morning?”

The question was a good one, and Pat found himself unable to come up with an acceptable answer. He decided it was best if he just jumped right in. “Rick’s downstairs,” he said. “He doesn’t want us to drive him, so I was wondering if you could walk him home.”

All of a sudden, Courtney was immediately awake. “Wait, Rick’s downstairs? Why? Has something happened? Is he OK?”

While everything in Pat was screaming at him to be honest with her and dissuade her panic, he also knew that it wasn’t his story to tell and that if Rick wanted her to know, he would tell her on the walk. “I think so. As far as I know, he fell through a window. He came over to help me bandage him up,”

“Why doesn’t he stay the night?” Courtney frowned.

“You know Rick,” Pat said. “He doesn’t want to impose.”

Courtney was already swinging her legs out of bed and reaching for her shoes. “Yeah, I’ll walk with him. An escort, I guess, but if he ever heard me say that, he’ll probably break my legs.”

This time, Pat couldn’t help but laugh. “Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

“Will I need to put on my uniform?”

“I don’t think so. You won’t be gone long, and Rick isn’t wearing his. I don’t think you’ll run into anyone on the way to West Farms.”

Nodding, Courtney brushed her hair out of her face and yawned as she bent down and removed the staff from its crate. It shimmered the moment she touched it, like happily greeting an old friend. “Alright. I’ll head down and see him now. I promise I’ll be safe. I don’t think I’ll be gone too long. I’ll just fly home when I drop Rick off.”

“Don’t worry,” Pat said as the two of them stood. “I’ll stay up and wait for you to come home.”

She knew that there was no talking him out of it, so she merely smiled a tired yet happy smile before she and the staff left the room and bounded down the stairs. A moment later, there was a joyful conversation between two friends, before the front door opened and shut and the house was swallowed by silence.

Pat watched out Courtney’s bedroom window as she and Rick walked down the street towards West Farms, both in their pyjamas, the staff illuminating their way. They spoke like old friends and laughed in the darkness, and Pat watched until they were out of sight and he could no longer see the light from the staff before he finally allowed himself to relax.

He knew that Barbara had returned to their room by now, no doubt waiting for him in bed, and Pat allowed himself to turn from the window and go to her, knowing that two of his kids were safest in each others company, despite the cold and foggy night.

## End Notes

Also, if anyone wants to hear my opinion/recommendation, the album "Carry On" by The Score is a very good album for Stargirl, any of the songs can be attributed to the characters, but I find that a lot of them fit well for Rick?? Anyway, this is the one that makes me think of him the most, and I think of him every time I listen to it (which has been a lot recently).

It's 'The Champion' from the album, and here are some of the reasons why:

"I'm a savage, I'm a fighter  
Making noise in these streets  
Haymakers like a fire  
Throwing hooks to a beat

Got my finger on my pulse, it's steady  
I was built for the speed  
Automatic, shift gears, I'm ready  
Headstrong I believe

When I close my eyes and count to ten  
All I feel's the adrenaline  
And when the pain begins to set  
All I hear is

Long live the champion~"

Here are the lyrics if you want to know the rest:

<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/score/thechampion.html>

And here is the song for those of you who want to listen and get what I mean:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5AMl3t817o>

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