

## The Distance

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/79933421) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/79933421>.

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| Rating:          | <a href="#">Explicit</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Archive Warning: | <a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Category:        | <a href="#">M/M</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Fandom:          | <a href="#">Heated Rivalry (TV)</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Relationship:    | <a href="#">Kip Grady/Scott Hunter</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Characters:      | <a href="#">Scott Hunter (Game Changers)</a> , <a href="#">Kip Grady</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Additional Tags: | <a href="#">POV Kip Grady</a> , <a href="#">Canon Compliant</a> , <a href="#">Episode: s01e02 Olympians (Heated Rivalry)</a> , <a href="#">Episode: s01e03 Hunter (Heated Rivalry)</a> , <a href="#">Complicated Relationships</a> , <a href="#">Coming Out</a> , <a href="#">Explicit Sexual Content</a> , <a href="#">Kip is a fleshed out human being</a> , <a href="#">Scott is very needy</a> , <a href="#">Yearning</a> , <a href="#">Mutual Pining</a> , <a href="#">Texting</a> , <a href="#">basically a study of the three years between scott and kip getting together and kissing at the cup final</a> |
| Language:        | English                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Series:          | Part 1 of <a href="#">The Distance</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Stats:           | Published: 2026-02-20 Words: 3,706 Chapters: 1/1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

# The Distance

by [destielpasta](#)

## Summary

The text reads:

*I'm not being fair to you*

*None of this has ever been fair to you*

~

There's no clean break for Kip. Takes place in the stretch of time between the Sochi Olympics to the 2017 Cup Final.

## Notes

Takes place entirely in the show canon, because whether he likes it or not, Jacob Tierney made Kip wait for Scott to come out from 2014-2017, unlike in book canon. I couldn't help but be curious about what went on with their relationship in those three years. Are they together? Estranged? Somewhere in-between? This is my take on somewhere in-between.

Gifted to [mtothedestiel](#) for reading this as I typed it in blue font on my phone, getting horny about it in real time, adding a few great sentences and one baller paragraph, and correcting my stupid typos.

Title taken from "The Distance," by CAKE. Such a Heated Rivalry song in so many ways. Someone more talented than me please make an edit.

Part 2 will be Shane and Ilya trapped in a crucible of their own design after the Sochi Olympics, exploring the universal themes of ~\*yearning\*~ and the merits of sexting.

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

Kip goes home. He has dinner with his father. Chicken with some kind of Mediterranean marinade. Showers with his own body wash that smells like pine, instead of Scott's sandalwood. He puts in his two week's notice at Straw+Berry and prepares to be a student again for the first time in four years.

He and Scott don't talk directly about the charity dinner or their conversation after, but there are indirect follow-ups. Of course there are. Neither of them could pull off an honest New York City ghosting, they don't possess the right level of coldness *or* willpower. Scott is too earnest to succumb to his pride, and Kip isn't strong enough to even muster up the self-respect to ignore Scott's calls.

"I don't want to disappear from your life," Scott says over the phone. He's in an airport. Colorado, Kip thinks, based on his dad's DVR schedule.

"It's ok if that's what needs to happen, Scott," Kip says back, his voice echoing oddly in the downstairs bathroom in the middle of the night.

Scott doesn't properly respond until the next time they see each other.

Over text:

*I want to see you*

*I'm only home tonight before we go back on the road*

*Is it unfair of me to even ask you?*

Kip leaves the Kingfisher after making an excuse about an early meeting with his grad advisor.

"This can't be ok. I'm miserable without you," Scott says, his hands hard on Kip's face. Drawing him in, drawing him back.

"It might be more miserable to do things by halves," Kip says even as he allows himself to be kissed, stripped, and led into Scott's bedroom.

He'd never had a one night stand with Scott, but after that conversation Kip is reminded that it's not too late for firsts. It's never too late to fuck the guy you love and leave in the middle of the night. They are experiencing all of this out of order, after all, and now in every direction.

He sleeps at Elena's that night, in spite of Scott being Scott. He asks Kip to stay, but this time leaving is the only power Kip has.

When they meet, the sex falls into one or two patterns. Scott goes to his knees so easy now, forgoing the bedroom and the undressing and the romance. It's not cheap, it's needy. Kip barely has his coat off before he's pressed against the door, a hard palm pressed to his hip and his pants halfway to the floor. Then Scott swallows him down like mandatory pre-workout.

"Come in my mouth?" Scott asks, his lips red and thick like he'd taken a punch.

He'd never asked before. Never felt undeserving.

"Yeah, yeah—" Kip whispers now, reverent, guilty with power. "Whatever you need, baby."

Scott shudders at the endearment, swallowing him down like he's the one getting the grades. Like he has to give Kip a reason to come back.

Sometimes it feels like failing. Kip wonders who they're failing, when they make up rules that only they know about, and then break them in almost the same breath.

"I shouldn't come to games anymore," Kip says from the bed the first time he stays over in months. It's the early morning, and Scott is already in motion.

Scott tries to put his sneakers on standing up. It's a thankless endeavor. He ties the laces too tight and then slips them off without undoing them, leaving himself the struggle for the next time he goes out. He does it every time.

"You like hockey, Kip. I can leave you tickets."

Scott finally surrenders, sitting on the side of the bed and untying the laces. The whole ritual leaves him bizarrely out of breath. Kip lays on hand on the middle of Scott's spine, feeling each expansion of his ribs as he catches it.

Is Scott failing the MLH? Is it enough to just hide? Shouldn't he make an effort to go back to a more perfect facade?

Kip goes to one more game and leaves before the final period. He hadn't asked Elena to come with him. Scott doesn't look for him in the stands this time. He learns that the Admirals win on the train home.

*Good game*, Kip texts, because he can't just leave it. *Good goal*, he adds, because he can't let it die.

Scott doesn't respond until the middle of the night. Diary texts, Kip and Elena call them. Texts that are more for you than the person receiving them.

*Am I asking too much of you?* Scott texts after. *Am I being unfair?*

For the first time, Kip leaves it. He turns off his read receipts.

Kip starts grad school in the Spring semester. Not ideal, but he's not a kid. But you feel like a kid when everyone has already developed relationships with the professors and everyone has

seminar friends and you've been out of school for years feeling desperately, desperately underqualified to be there.

"I want to hear about it," Scott says, his voice loud in Kip's ear from some backroom of the Admirals' training rink. Kip recognizes it by now. It sounds like a room with carpet. "Are they treating you right?"

Kip laughs. He leans against the bathroom sink, checking his watch as the seconds tick closer to his class time. But Scott had a minute and Scott had texted the question...

*I want to hear your voice*

Not the question. Just a typical Scott Hunter statement of desire.

*Can you talk?*

Did Kip really have a choice?

"They're treating me fine. But I'll let you know for sure after a couple weeks."

They start talking more again. More and more they talk about nothing. Kip tells him about school drama and the way his advisor gets snippy whenever he asks a question relating to course requirements. Scott tells him about the ankle injury he's been nursing for months and the disagreements he has with his coach. Small talk had never been their language once they'd exhausted dumb smoothie puns, but Kip can do anything with enough study.

Before Scott goes to the Olympics, he makes Kip dinner. Steaks seared in a pan, asparagus roasted in the oven with potatoes. Something you might get in a restaurant. It feels like a date. Another first for them.

Kip drinks a little too much white wine.

"To team USA, or whatever," he toasts.

Scott nods with a laugh. "Convincing."

Kip shrugs, swirling a tough end of asparagus in the oil left on his plate. "I'll be cheering you on. Even though you have enough fans."

Kip is really too tipsy to have sex with anyone, but he does anyway because they can't waste time. It's like the dermatologist appointment that's impossible to reschedule. Scott opens him up slow with his tongue but fucks him fast, like he's also cognizant of the time.

And he stays the night. And one more after that. He goes home while Scott tries to bring home the gold. Kip barely watches, his days a mash of classes and studying and doing the thing he's dreamed of doing for years and riding the train. He can't stop his world to watch a hockey game playing at 3pm. He checks the score but only when he has wifi.

*I'm home*, Scott texts when it's over. Canada has the gold but now Scott has the world's respect.

Kip is in class and has never felt farther from the one sliver of happiness he'd thought he found.

*I need some space*, Kip texts when he finally gets outside, breathing the cold winter air. *That sounds bad. But I just need some time. Can we take some time?*

The response is instant.

*You're the boss.*

Kip sets his phone down before he can throw it. He's never been one for anger. He's handled all of this so well, so rationally. He's been fair to himself and fair to Scott. He's hollowed himself out with the benefit of the doubt.

And he's tired. Tired from the commute. Tired of his grad assistant work as a glorified receptionist helping undergrads navigate inane curricular issues and act as a poverty wage social media manager. He hates that his food service background makes him more qualified for this than anything to do with art history.

The semester ends and Kip gets accepted into a summer program in Portland, Maine. It's good museum experience, and busy enough and near enough to a clean beach to freshen his mind. He likes the sunny little efficiency apartment he gets to stay in. It feels enough like a beach motel that he can pretend it's a vacation. Like a novel where the hero has to get away to figure out what's really important.

Elena visits for a weekend, and he gets to show off their dynamic friendship to his temporary friends. He has genuine fun, but does someone who is genuinely happy text their ex in the middle of the night?

*I hope you're enjoying your summer*, Kip says, breaking the most painful silence of his life with the generic platitude. Less novel, more Hallmark movie. *I was just thinking of you, thought I would reach out.*

Kip puts his phone on silent and goes back to bed. In the morning, Scott's reply waits without teeth.

*Yeah, things have been good*

*Saw your pictures, the beach looks great*

Kip waits until he's at the museum to reply.

*It's been a great experience*

*Nice to get away from the city*

There's no reply, and if Kip can get Elena tipsy enough she might convince him to block Scott's number. He feels like clay, his least favorite medium when he started as an art major in undergrad, but it's malleable, like his heart. Without Scott around maybe Kip could pretend it had all just been a dream.

He's certainly open to ideas.

Elena never offers the advice, and Kip doesn't block Scott's number. The summer ends, but the city is still sweltering when he gets back, like it's hanging onto the heat. The air conditioning in the art history building is spotty, so he spends late August and most of September accepting that he was never going to not feel sweaty in class or on the train, and then October hits and his father starts playing regular season games on the TV. He doesn't know that an Admirals game on a Tuesday night could set off a panic attack in his son. How could he know? Kip's never told him anything.

Mid-October, there's a department event the same night as an Admirals game. Kip stays late in one of the galleries, helping to clean up after donors had pilfered the free wine and cheese. Someone had the game going on their phone. Someone thinks it's funny and cute to be an artist *and* a hockey fan, as if Kip hadn't already cornered the market a year ago.

The train is late when he gets Scott's texts. Kip should already be halfway home. But he isn't, and he's so tired.

The texts arrive in three rounds.

*Come over.*

*Sorry*

*Please come over, if you can*

*And just stay*

*For a couple days?*

*I have a few days off*

And then:

*Jesus*

*I swear I'm not rdunk*

*That typo isn't convincing, is it?*

Kip laughs without smiling. He's so relieved. He's so in love. But Scott's final set of messages come with a caveat:

*I'm not being fair to you*

*None of this has ever been fair to you*

He only texts back when he's at Scott's building. All the codes have changed, and he can't get in.

*I'm down here,* Kip says.

Scott sends him the codes but he also meets him halfway in the hall.

"Hey," he says, not drunk but certainly not sober.

"Hi," Kip says stupidly, because after months he'd forgotten that it was a little larger than life, this whole thing with Scott.

An older couple passes them while they walk back to Scott's apartment. They're dressed well, a night on the town. Their eyes barely glaze over Scott and him. But still, they see them.

"You didn't have to walk me up," Kip says as soon as the door is shut behind them.

"It's nothing." Scott clasps his hands behind his head, covering his ears with his arms. He paces while Kip takes off his shoes and coat.

"Is everything ok?" Kip asks.

"Yeah, fine." Scott drops his arms. "Are you ok?"

Kip furrows his brow. "Yes? Is this why you asked me here? Just to check in?"

Scott laughs nervously. "Yeah, actually."

It's not a lie. Kip hadn't fallen in love with a monster. He hadn't even fallen in love with a jerk hockey player.

Kip closes his eyes when Scott closes the distance between them. Scott's hands are warm on Kip's face, his thumbs tracing under his eyes.

"You look tired," Scott says. "And good. It's really good to see you."

Kip shudders like a bad cliché when Scott's lips replace his thumbs on his cheeks. A kiss under the left eye, hard, rushed, like Scott's expecting Kip to shrink away from him, followed by a kiss under the right eye, soft and slow when he realizes Kip isn't going anywhere.

There isn't time for anything else except Kip pushing Scott down on the couch and straddling his thighs. Scott's shirt goes up to make room for Kip's mouth, their pants go down so that he can take them both in hand. It's good. Scott gasps into his mouth and sinks his hands beneath Kip's waistband to hug him closer. It would be better with a palm-full of lube. There isn't time.

Scott comes from Kip's hand. Chest painted like a work of modern art only Kip understands, he gets Kip to straddle his clavicle and push the head of his cock into his mouth. Scott's hands on his ass set the pace, wordlessly asking for Kip to fuck his mouth. Stating the desire but leaving the choice up to Kip.

*Classic Scott Hunter*, Kip thinks, as he jerks one foot to the ground to get better leverage. *Make me make the hard decisions*. It's not Kip's preferred way to come, never one for watching his partner choke but what can you do when the man you love is trying to fit your cock in his larynx? Say yes. Let him take it because it's all you can give.

It's not a great thought to have mid-orgasm. But he does come, loud and hard, pulling out a little to let Scott suck him clean.

They sleep on the couch for an hour or so. Kip wakes up in the middle of the night with a neck ache that reminds him that his mother had children by the time she was his age. Youth

gives you strength and age gives you wisdom, and one could really use the other but they never cross.

“Are you ok?” Scott asks behind him, his arm slung around Kip’s middle.

“That was a lot,” Kip says into the dark. “Fine, but a lot. And I’m not doing great.”

He hears Scott swallow. “No?”

“Nope. Is that ok to say?”

“I asked the question.”

Kip rolls his eyes and sits up on the edge of the couch. He wishes he’d taken up smoking like everyone else in art school instead of a compulsive gym habit and cheap beer. He doesn’t have either now.

“I’m exhausted. Going to grad school didn’t fix everything, and created several new problems to contend with.”

Scott sits up behind him, pressing the inside of his right thigh to Kip’s hip.

“Like what?”

*Commuting. Money. Time. You.*

“I’m just tired.”

“We can sleep.”

“Not, like, *now*. Fuck, Scott, does everything just have an immediate answer to you?”

“I can only solve the problem in front of me. I never claimed to have your intelligence. I’m a hockey player.”

Kip shot to his feet, leaving behind the warm cocoon of Scott’s body. He’d fallen asleep with his pants unbuttoned, he does them up while anger seeps into his voice.

“So that’s your excuse? Too many concussions means you can’t take responsibility for anything?”

“I— I’ve been honest with you from the beginning. I would *still* give you everything I can give, if you’d let me.”

“Give me what? What can you grant me so magnanimously?” Kip dares him.

Scott looks at him for a beat. He sighs. “Don’t commute every day.”

A muscle jumps in Kip’s jaw. “What?”

“You’re tired because you commute every day.”

“Well, I have to, so the point is moot.”

“Just stay here.”

“Scott—“

Scott holds out an open hand. “It’s practical. I have a place you can stay and get more rest. I have back to back road trips coming up. I’m barely here as it is. “

Practical.

“What do we do when you are home?” Kip gestures to both of their half-naked bodies. “Just be roommates?”

Scott shakes his head. “I don’t know. It won’t be like before. I won’t ask you for anything you don’t want. Go home whenever you want, do whatever you want, fuck whoever you want—“

Kip cuts him off with a laugh. “Sure, yeah Scott I’m gonna bring guys here—“

“Not, *here*, but I wouldn’t control you—“

Kip lets out an ugly, frustrated sound, dragging his hands over his face. It turns into a weird laugh, one he doesn’t recognize as coming from himself.

“What if *you* want to bring someone else here?”

Scott looks at him like he’s insane. “You don’t have to worry about that.”

Kip nods about a hundred times. “Right, right, I don’t have to worry about anything. Because you keep begging me to come back but only if I want to, right? Only if it feels good for me. You think I don’t notice? How you keep putting it all on me? It’s my choice to answer the phone, my choice to come here, my choice to make some space—“

“I’m aware of my power here, Kip.”

“Be less aware. Be less mature about all of this. Because I’m *dying* here, Scott.”

Scott clenches his jaw and stands. “What do you want from me?”

Kip shakes his head, nostrils flaring, anger like a burnt husk behind his sternum. “Stop asking me these things Scott so help me *God*—“

Scott takes him by the shoulders and walks him to the bookcase, presses him into it. It’s the most New York thing about Scott’s otherwise ridiculously lavish apartment. A bookcase to separate the entry from the rest of the house. An efficient use of space.

Scott’s first kiss lands off-center. He doesn’t let Kip chase it, his hands still hard on his shoulders.

“Then just fucking stay, Kip.”

Another kiss, more a bite to Kip’s jaw.

“I never asked you to go. I told you what I can give, and it was good for a while, until it just *wasn’t* and that was on you.”

A real kiss, an inhalation that sucks Kip’s lower lip into Scott’s mouth. His lips get dry in the winter, it stings. Scott’s breath is hot against his spit-slick skin because he’s *still* talking.

“Can’t you just let this happen? If you want to know what I want, it’s that I want you. And I want you to accept what I can give. Can’t we just love each other and let the damn time pass?”

It is too intense. For once it is, and Kip should push him away, but he’d asked for it. The full Scott Hunter experience.

Scott carries Kip to the bedroom but when they’re there he asks Kip to fuck him. Scott barely has enough lube and clearly hasn’t done this since the last time, well before the Sochi Olympics, well before the sting and smart of all the little wounds they’d made in each other; when Kip was still operating under the illusion that Scott’s closet was big enough for the both of them.

He takes Kip inside anyway. Scott shudders into it, like it’s a relief, like this last year has been a terrible nightmare that he’s waking up from thanks to Kip’s dick splitting him open.

And this is the problem. It’s—*god*—as long as he stays here he can have as much of Scott as he wants. Scott is not capable of being casual. He will cut himself to pieces making Kip feel loved, a bottomless outpouring of desire powered by the engine behind one of the top hockey franchises in the country.

Then it’s back out in the cold, all at once. It doesn’t matter where he lives, it will never be enough. Never be forever.

But Kip lets it happen. Scott had asked him to just let it happen. Scott had been right about the danger in his own directness.

Not all at once, because he has pride and Elena’s voice in his ear and his brain. He brings a bag to stay for the week Scott is away. He doesn’t get there until Scott’s gone and intends to leave before he gets back. It’s nice to wake up an hour later and walk to NYU for a couple days, but then the Admirals win every game on their road trip and Scott bursts through the door in his suit still smelling like a charter plane looking for Kip with a desperate hunger.

“You’re still here,” he all but growls, like it’s part of the victory tour.

Kip allows the possession, like Scott had asked. Allows himself to be taken on the kitchen floor after Scott sucks his rim and gets three fingers inside him. His moans are broken little punches of sound pressed into the granite-topped kitchen island. It’s not the color Kip would have chosen.

Even worse, he lets Scott hold him after and give him an old hoodie to wear when Kip shivers.

“Fuck this winter,” Scott mutters while he arranges the hoodie strings over Kip’s chest. “It goes on forever.”

Scott presses his face to the back of Kip’s neck and it’s his breath seeping through the cotton that finally makes him warm. Sex is one thing. It’s only one thing.

## End Notes

Comments are love! I should have the next part up in the next couple of days.

Edit from Pasta of the Future: Part two ended up spiraling out of control and becoming its own thing, so I decided to post it as a separate fic. But I just published what was originally the Shane/Ilya chapter of this fic, called [Sweet Inside](#). Even though it doesn't really belong here, it still contains the central theme of yearning. It's just, AHEM, a little filthier than I originally planned.

I'm [ilyapasta](#) on tumblr if you would like to connect there! Or just come watch as I reblog the same heated rivalry gifs over and over and over again.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!