

Just a flicker

A modded Stardew Fanfiction

Von Calyses

Kapitel 9: Harvey

"It' s broken", the brown haired man with the moustache and glasses said, while looking at the X-ray. He adjusted his glasses slightly and turned to Elliott and Sam.

"What do you mean broken? It can not be. It must not be. I need my hand." Elliott answered

Harvey looked apologetic as he repeated:

"Your wrist is broken. Nothing's gonna change it. You won't be able to use your hand for at least 6 weeks. And you are lucky you don't need an operation. The fracture is clean and smooth, so a cast will do."

Sam swallowed hard. She could see the defiance in Elliott slowly vanish as the words reached him and the realizations of what they meant dawned on him.

"Six weeks..."

"I'm sorry, I couldn't tell you anything more positive."

"No, no. It is fine. I am fine. I will see the time as vacation."

He got up and walked around the room.

"Can I do something for you?" Sam asked cautiously.

Elliott turned to look at her. She froze. The expression in his eyes frightened her. She shrunk into the bed she was sitting on.

"No", he said in a quiet and dangerously calm tone. That simple word expressed so much anger and pain, it hurt more than any yelling could ever do.

Harvey watched both of them and made a decision.

"Miss Vaughn, would you please wait here, while we move to the next room for the

cast. I'll be right back, after I've taken care of his arm."

Sam was caught off guard and wanted to object at first, but the firm look on Harvey's face let her change her mind and she obliged.

After they had arrived in the privacy of the other room, Harvey addressed Elliott again.

"So, what's the story here? You haven't told me everything, have you?"

With a sigh Elliott began to tell Harvey some details they had left out prior, while the doctor prepared and fitted the cast.

"So all of this could have been prevented, if that girl hadn't acted so impulsively. Now she's in shambles and you're mad at her."

"Yes and no. I am mad at myself. I do not know. I just do not know what to do..."

"You will figure something out. You are a smart guy and quite crafty." Harvey tried to reassure him.

"Easier said than done." Elliott replied. He looked down at his hand. "It does not hurt that bad. How could it be broken?"

"You're still in shock and under a light effect of poisoning from the slimes. Believe me, the pain will be there. And the x-ray doesn't lie."

"You are a natural in giving your patients hope."

"I won't lie to you to make you feel better."

"Fair, but not very uplifting."

"I'm your doctor after all. I provide you with healing as far as it's within my possibilities, but I can't do magic. What I can do is to make it easier on you with a few pieces of advice... and you should follow them."

Elliott nodded.

"How's your nausea by the way? When what you told me is right, she'd taken most of the hits during your encounter?"

"She put herself in front of me, so yes, the things did not get me that often. I feel a bit fuzzy and my head hurts, but I can walk in a straight line."

"I've some medicine against the effects of the slimes. Drink it right away and there are some painkillers for later. Take them when you need to and keep the hand rested high

to prevent it from swelling more. Rest a lot. Trying to rush things won't do you any good. When the swelling has gone back we can fit you a new cast."

Elliott nodded. He wasn't in the mood to say much more. And he had a lot to think about. So he took his leave after a few more minutes. He heard some sniffing, so he stopped and tried to peek into the other room while passing, but couldn't see anything.

Sam had tried to wait patiently, but as soon as the shock subsided even slightly, the tears welled up. Sam had rolled on her side, facing the wall. Her thoughts raced. She had done it again. Again someone was hurt because of her. Would she never learn?

Her hands searched for something to hold on. She grabbed the blanket hard with both hands until her knuckles went white and bit into it, to muffle her crying. It would be Clearwater all over again.

She didn't know how long she had been laying there till her tears started to dry up. Nearing footsteps echoed through the hallway, stopped for a bit and continued away soon after. Not long after Harvey entered the room.

"Miss Vaughn, is everything okay?" He asked

"Nothing... is okay!" Sam answered him with a broken voice. She turned to him, her face botched, the eyes red from crying. Light lines showed where the tears had been running down her still dirty face.

"I see, there's more to heal, than just scrapes and the poisoning. You can tell me, if you want. I'm a doctor. Everything you tell me here is confidential. How about starting with what happened in the woods from your perspective. I've got the feeling you left out some important details the first time."

Sam looked at Harvey and began to talk. The doctor listened closely to catch anything that differed from Elliott's version. Sometimes he nodded. Sometimes it seemed like he was taking mental notes.

By the time Sam came to the end of her story she was in tears again:

"I didn't want that to happen. I hurt someone...again. It should have been me..." the words became mumbling and barely audible.

Harvey stayed silent for a while. He'd learned long ago that listening was the best he could do in times like that. He had put some extra stress on her, but he felt like having the full picture of the accident now and "again" hadn't escaped him, he must tread cautious, though. He let Sam calm down a bit before talking himself:

"I see. You had good intentions, but you have to consider the consequences of your actions. Especially if they can affect others. You haven't done that in the heat of the moment and something went wrong. It may sounds like a worn out, empty phrase, but sometimes these things happen. Don't bury yourself in guilt. It won't help either of you. Take away the right lessons from the incident. Learn from it. Take precautions for the next time or simply listen when someone speaks their concerns."

Sam looked shaken. Harvey wasn't sure, his words had reached her. He waited for her to say something.

"But it's my fault and now I've lost the first friend I've found here. I must do something. I must apologize. I must..."

"Stop! Hold it right there. First of all you have to get better. Make sure you'll be okay. You've got beaten up quite hard and it affects your perception and your thinking. It's a miracle you were able to stand straight, let alone walk and it had taken a huge toll on you to make it here all the way from the Cindersap.

How does your body feel? The antidote must have taken effect by now." Harvey had decided to not ask further on the incident right now, to not further upset her, but he made a mental note to provide council anytime she might need it.

Sam was glad he had changed the subject. She was not ready to face her past.

"Not as nauseous any more. And the legs are less wobbly." She replied.

"That's good. I've some more medicine for you just in case. Slimes shouldn't be underestimated and the effects of a direct hit lasts a while. They are poisonous to touch and their mucus soaks through fabric. So, next time, take off your clothes if possible and wash them before putting them on again. With the symptoms you show I'd say three units will do."

He produced a box of vials filled with a pinkish liquid and handed three over to Sam.

"One now, the other two tomorrow and the day after. Drink it. You'll feel better soon."

Sam did as she was told and put away the rest.

"When you're healed up and rested everything will look better. Have a little faith.

And for Elliott. He said he doesn't want to talk and doesn't want to see you, right? But he stayed with you all the way to the clinic. Give him time. He will get over it. He's strong and reasonable. He forgets that at times, though. And six weeks may seem long, but they are not the end of the world and it could have been a lot worse..."

Six weeks...

That was half the time. He desperately needed something to show for, when he had his next appointment in Zuzu City.

Elliott lay in bed and was either staring at his cast or the ceiling. A rough weekend lay almost behind him. His wrist was swollen and hurting like hell and he could barely move his fingertips. There was no thinking of writing anything. He had tried. Worst of all, when he had calmed down after the events the ideas came rushing in. His thoughts circled on how to go on.

He had been furious. Furious with Sam for dragging him into that mess, Furious with himself for not stopping her and going along with her dangerous nonsense. When the anger had subsided a good deal, he thought about what had happened that day. At least they were able to save that thing. But what good had that done him?

How should he make his deadline now? The throwback could literally mean the end of his career. The end of the life he dreamed of. With that thought the misery came and lingered. It overpowered every other thought and emotion till it was anything that was left inside him.

And then the messages from Sam came. They were simple and straightforward:

"Hey, how are you? Is there anything you need help with?" and "I'm worried."

How could he tell her, she'd almost certainly ruined his life? He almost had done so at the clinic. Now he was glad, he hadn't acted on that impulse. It wouldn't have been fair to put all the blame solely on her, since he just could have stayed back.

He liked Sam, but her recklessness meant trouble.

At least she had the decency to apologize. If she hadn't, he wouldn't even consider talking to her again. But every word she'd said was sincere. He knew the difference between an honest apology and a phony one all too well.

Well, but as honest as an apology could be, it wouldn't help with his problem.

He took his phone and opened the calendar. He'd marked the day in bright red. Three months from now, fate would decide if he could make it. Or was it decided already? Maybe he should call his editor and tell them he couldn't make the deadline. That would mean a breach of contract though.

He opened the messenger app and tipped on a contact. Typing the short text took an eternity with only one hand:

"Are you at home? I need you. Could you come over?"