A stitch in time
by azziria

Summary

Danny's never been able to stand needles, but Steve needs him.

Notes

Just indulging a personal kink.

If you're squicked by needles, pass on by.

The cut is serious, a deep slice across Steve's left bicep a fraction of an inch south of the ink. Testimony to the damage an exploding boat can do even when you've already abandoned ship.

"Needs stitches, babe," Danny says, trying to ignore the way Steve pointedly doesn't flinch as Danny's fingers probe the wound for shrapnel. "It's a clean cut, though, shouldn't scar too much."

Steve frowns. "You'll have to do it, Danny."

"Do what?"

"You'll have to stitch it, I can't one-handed, I've tried."

"You've tried?"

"Yeah... there was this time back in..."
And Danny really doesn't want to know about just when exactly Steve's been in a situation where he's had to stitch his own wounds, thank you very much. Danny just wants to be back in Jersey; closes his eyes, tries to pretend, but the smells are wrong, and so are the sounds, and when he opens his eyes everything's still too fucking green and he's still in fucking Hawaii and his partner's still in danger of bleeding out or something if Danny doesn't perform emergency field surgery on him right away.

His life is just so fucking great.

He holds his hand up, "No... just no, OK? Right now I do not need one of your 'back in the day when I was a superhero' stories, right now I just want to know why we can't just wait for Chin and Kono to find us and let some nice highly-trained medic sew your stuffing back in?"

Steve gets that pained and patient 'let's explain the fucking obvious to Danny one more time look on his face, and says "It could be hours until they find us, Danny. And in the meantime this will slow me down, and we ought to be making some sort of plan in case it isn't Chin and Kono who find us first. So I need you to do this, OK?"

And yes, OK, it became disturbingly clear to Danny some time ago that Steve getting what he needs comes pretty high up on Danny's list of priorities. It's just a shame that Steve doesn't seem to realize how much he needs Danny. Not yet, anyway, but Danny's hopeful, because hey, where there's life there's hope, right? Right. You keep telling yourself that, Williams, Danny thinks, then pulls himself together because Now Is Not The Time. He has a job to do, Steve needs him, and he'd better man up and get on with it.

"You got something for me to do this with?"

Steve gestures towards his pack (because of course Steve had the cool-headedness and presence of mind to grab his backpack even as the gunrunners were aiming a grenade launcher at them, and, seriously, is the guy even human?). "Medical kit in my bag. There's a suture kit in it."

Of course there is, Danny thinks as he rummages through the pack. There's at least one badass knife in there, and Danny's not entirely sure he wants to know what else, but eventually he finds the medical pack and digs out the suture kit. "Should be some gloves in there, too, and a syringe," Steve says, "And you'll need this." He pulls a small metal object from one of the pockets of his cargoes and tosses it to Danny. It's some sort of complicated multi-tool. "You can use the pliers as the needle driver."

Needle driver. Danny's obviously not quick enough to hide the expression on his face, because Steve gives him a calculating look and says, more softly, "You done this before, Danny?"

Danny knows it's nerves, can't help his tone. "What? No... no, of course not, where do you think I come from? Back in Jersey, back where it's civilized and people don't go around getting stranded on deserted beaches because gunrunners have blown up their boats with actual grenade launchers, back there we have these things called Emergency Rooms where people with actual training and experience perform any necessary surgical procedures under anesthetic and in sterile conditions, OK? So no, I have not done this before, thank you very much, Superman."

Steve holds up his hands, and this time he does wince when he moves the damaged arm. "OK, OK, I get it. I'll talk you through it, alright?"

Danny swallows. "OK. You do that. So come on, Doctor McGarrett, where do I start?"

"First thing is you need to irrigate the wound - it's pretty clean already, but you'll need to wash out
the blood so you can see what you’re doing. Stream water’s best we can do, saw one a way along
the beach.”

"That clean enough?” Because Danny’s heard about the stuff in these jungle streams, and no way
he’d be drinking that shit unless he had to.

"Probably not, Danny, but it’s all we’ve got – unless you want to piss on it. Aztec physicians used to
use urine to clean wounds...”

Something else Danny really doesn’t need to know right now. “Stream. Beach. I ‘m going.” He
pushes up, jogs along the beach in the direction Steve indicated. The only thing he’s got to carry
water in is a plastic bag from the medical kit, so he fills that, carries it carefully back to where Steve
is sitting. He’s stripped his T-shirt off to give Danny clear access to the wound, and as always Danny
tries not to stare too obviously. He may not have given up hope entirely but he’s a practical man.
This is not the moment to be entertaining the hopelessly optimistic and most probably hopelessly
unrealistic thoughts he has about his partner on a daily basis. He can save those for when he’s back
in his shitty apartment. Alone.

He uses the syringe to wash the wound out, pulls on the gloves and opens up the pliers, picks up the
suture kit.

"OK,” Steve says, “Open it at the corner, where you can see the needle. The thread’s already
attached, so when you pull the needle out it’ll come out too. You need to use the pliers, grip the
needle about two thirds of the way down and pull it out.”

The needle comes out, the suture thread attached to it. The needle is short, curved and sharp, and
glints wickedly in the sun, and Danny's gut gives a funny lurch when he looks at it. He's really going
to have to do this.

The thing is, Danny's never been all that sure about needles. He's always looked away when he had
to get shots, let Rachel take Gracie for all her childhood inoculations. So now the prospect of actually
taking that needle and sticking it into his partner's flesh is... disturbing. He just hopes he doesn’t puke.
Or faint. Because how manly would that be?

Steve’s voice cuts through his thoughts. “You OK, Danny?”

"Yeah... I’m OK.”

"You need to put the first stitch in the middle. See the width of the nose of the pliers? That’s how far
you need to be from the edge of the wound when you drive the needle in. Then you bring the needle
up in the wound, pick it up again with the needle driver and push the needle through and out about
the same distance from the cut on the other side. You got that?” And how the fuck can Steve be so
matter-of-fact about this, when a complete amateur is about to stick a needle through his arm? A
complete amateur who can’t stand needles and will probably fuck the whole thing up spectacularly...

Danny derails that train of thought, mentally gets his act together and nods. “Pliers-width from the
cut, push through into the wound, then pick it up and do the other side. Got that.”

There’s a long pause. “Well, go on then. We can’t afford to hang around, Danny, they might be
looking for us.” Steve’s got his arm braced, he’s looking expectantly at Danny, he needs Danny to
do this, and Danny can’t back out now.

Danny takes a deep breath, places the point of the needle against Steve’s skin, and pushes. The skin
resists for a moment, then gives, the needle passing smoothly through and curving up into the
wound. Danny tastes bile in this throat, thinks for one horrible moment that he might actually be sick, but he manages to swallow it down. He glances at Steve’s face, but Steve’s not watching him, Steve’s... gone, somewhere else, breath held, neck muscles stark and teeth set in his lower lip, and of course Steve’s no stranger to the needle, the amount of ink he carries is testament to that, and Danny flashes on Steve in the chair, eyes closed and lip bitten as the tattooist works the ink into his skin.

Danny pulls himself back to the job in hand, grips the needle with the pliers again and drives it through to the other side of the wound. “OK,” he says, and he knows his voice is shaky, just hopes his hands aren’t. “How do I tie it off?”

He hears Steve huff a breath, come back to him. “Put the pliers against the wound, between the two ends of the thread. You need to wrap the end with the needle on it round the pliers twice, then grip the other end with the pliers and pull it through to make the knot. And don’t pull it too tight, or it’ll cut through, OK?”

Danny nods, leans in and focuses. It’s tricky, fiddly, he curses having goofy fingers as well as goofy thumbs, and it takes four goes before he finally gets it.

”You need to do that four more times, man. Just one turn not two this time, though. Then cut the thread with the razor blade.”

Danny pushes his hair out of his eyes with his arm, careful not to get the sweat from his forehead on the gloves, then bends back to his task. It gets easier with practice, but it’s still taking too damn long. At least concentrating is making him forget about feeling sick.

The second stitch goes in easier, Danny’s less shaky now. Steve’s gone quiet, is actually looking a bit pale, but Danny doesn’t let that rush him, works methodically through stitches three, four and five, focuses down on the mechanics of the task and doesn’t let himself think about what he’s actually doing. Finally he’s done, and leans back to look at his handiwork. It’s a neat job, not bad for a complete beginner, and it suddenly hits Danny that he did this, he put five stitches into Steve’s flesh, he’s left his mark on Steve and Steve will think of him every time he looks at the scar. And suddenly his gut churns, he needs to throw up, pushes up and doubles over and puking onto the sand.

He’s aware of Steve behind him, Steve’s hand firm and warm on his back, Steve’s voice, concerned and reassuring. “It’s OK, Danny, man, I got you.”

Danny straightens up, looks out to sea so that he doesn’t have to look at Steve. His skin feels pale and clammy with sweat, and he knows he doesn’t look too good right now. “I’m alright. It’s just...” he tries to laugh it off, “It’s just I can’t stand needles, OK? Fucking hate them...”

He hears Steve give a soft laugh. “Did wonder. Wasn’t sure if it was the needle or the thought of sticking it into me that was bothering you.” His tone is... odd, and just for a moment Danny thinks he hears something there, thinks maybe, and what if...

”Come on,” Steve says, and the moment’s gone. “We need to get off the beach, out of sight. You good?”

In a heartbeat things are back to normal, or as normal as they can be when you’ve just been marooned on a deserted beach and had to perform emergency field surgery on your partner because a bunch of gunrunners with a grenade launcher blew up your boat.

”Yeah, I’m good,” Danny says, and follows Steve up the beach. Just another day in Paradise, he thinks. Just another day in his life in goddamned fucking Paradise.
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