

Summer Nights Gone By

Gift for Furi/Fighting-Wolf-Fist

A Shane (Stardew Valley) TF/MC/WG/AP story

By Ponky Kong

Wolf wasn't having the best of days today, to say the least.

It was just his luck- he'd gotten on the wrong bus going the wrong direction to where he'd wanted, and didn't even realize until his only choice was to get off at the worst possible stop. Some tiny little town out in the country he'd never even heard of, where according to the timeboard at the bus stop there wouldn't be another bus coming until the next day, and in *just* the right spot in the middle of nowhere for his cell service to be shot.

No Uber, no way to look up hotels or even Airbnb nearby... the best Wolf could do was just stumble through whatever town he'd landed in and hope to find a solution before night fell and he was stuck just sleeping out in the streets somewhere.

Well, for better or for worse, his wanderings did lead him stepping through the creaking door of a tavern here- the so-called 'Stardrop Saloon.'

Given how late it was in the day and how small the town was, it occurred to Wolf that it hadn't been much of a surprise that he ended up here- most of the other facilities around town seemed to be closed at this hour, anyway. Wolf didn't consider himself someone who drank away his troubles much, but there was that little desperate appeal in doing so that his eye couldn't help but linger on... surrendering control to the drink, so he wouldn't be so liable for his own wellbeing anymore.

If he collapsed on the bar floor and fell asleep, to either be left alone there for the night or let whoever else would volunteer to set him down somewhere safe take care of it for him instead, then so be it, right? One way or another, the problem would be solved.

Wolf tried his best to avoid the suspicious side eye the bartender gave him as he slunk inside, sliding into one of the barstool seats up close to the bar without a word. He couldn't blame the guy, really- not only did Wolf probably look miserable as shit, but being as small as a town as it was, the bartender could pretty likely tell from just a glance that he wasn't from around here.

A beat paused, the silence between the two of them stretching even louder than the old-timey jukebox music and chatter of other residents in the background. And then, a gruff, neutral, "What can I get you, sir?"

Wolf shook his head to clear it- well, he had to start somewhere.

"A beer, please. It, uh... it doesn't have to be good." Wolf shifted under the portly man's face, fishing out a few bills from his wallet and sliding them across the bar to him.

The man gave an odd look to money for a moment, taking them hesitantly before slipping them in the old-timey cash register and turning to a standing cask on the bar nearby. Wolf watched as the bartender snatched up a thick plastic mug from a cabinet and placed it under the spigot, filling it up with the rich, frothy gold of light beer.

Wolf tried not to bite his lip in regret, having forgotten to specify he wanted something stronger. He considered mustering up the courage to interrupt and ask for something different- but the bartender had already finished, setting the mug of beer down on a coaster in front of Wolf that he hadn't noticed.

"Here you are, sir." The bartender stepped back to wipe down his empty glasses with a rag he had, not making any attempt to hide the side eye he was still giving.

Wolf clamped his jaw shut, complaints withering in his mouth before he could speak them aloud. He lifted the mug to his mouth sullenly, instinctively slurping up the foam as softly as he could before tipping it upwards to sip from.

The next instant, however, Wolf's eyes flew open in shock- the taste wasn't like anything he'd ever tried before.

He hadn't tried that many different drinks before when it came to trips to the bar, so he knew already he'd be hard pressed to think of one he'd had that tasted better. The silky, foamy texture on the first sip carried a twinge of bitterness that quickly gave way to the brew's rich, spiced flavor, with just a hint of summer orange as he swallowed it down smoothly.

Wolf set the mug down gently, taking care not to spill, and looked up at the bartender in surprise. "This is... really, *really* good. Probably the best drink I've ever had."

Wolf didn't expect the man to react much, but to his surprise, the bartender relaxed at the compliment. The hard side eye cast his way since Wolf walked in melted into a genuine smile- mostly hidden by the man's thick, curling mustache, but the lift in his expression was clear.

A quick flit in Wolf's heart almost convinced him that it was given to make him feel welcome.

"You think so? Glad you city slickers still have good taste these days," The man chuckled, letting out a breath through his wide nose so invisible Wolf could have missed it if he weren't looking right at him.

Wolf wondered if the bartender had been expecting to hear something else.

"All brewed from local sources, of course- we'd just got a new shipment come in a few days ago, from the farm just west of here. Farmer there grows all the wheat and brews all the beer himself, ain't that just something?" The bartender added, an almost visible glow of pride coloring his description that he just couldn't keep in, Wolf noticed.

"Really? That *is* real impressive..." Wolf murmured, taking another drink before looking back down at the foam peeling away from his mug. The sentiment was genuine, but he just didn't have the energy to emphasize with his face, or his voice.

The bartender looked him up and down a bit more closely, his apprehensive expression shifting to a much friendlier one of concern. "Something the matter, bud? You don't look so hot this evening, you need anything?" He asked, raising an eyebrow.

Wolf sighed into his drink, resigning himself to just answering honestly. If he was going to get more drunk like he'd halfheartedly planned to, he'd probably spill the beans sooner or later, anyway. "Unless you know of any spots around with reception where I can call for a ride home, or any motels nearby I can spend the night in, I don't think there'd be much you could do to help." Wolf murmured through another long sip of his drink, glum.

The heavyset man's other bushy eyebrow shot up to meet the first, and he whistled aloud. "Phhhew, you're pretty outta luck on that front, yep. Just about all of Stardew Valley's in one big dead zone for cell reception, unless you got the one provider that catches it. Just about all the big ones don't." He shook his head when Wolf reached down to check his phone, confirming his bad luck. "No motels or

anything, either, really- even the folks who work at the Jojamart down the road are either local or commute."

Wolf dragged a hand down his face, wishing a meteor would come and strike him down right then and there. "I don't suppose you'd be fine with some poor sap conking out somewhere on the floor of your, uh, very nice bar?" He tried, his expression sheepish, with a shrug to lighten the load of his ask- not that he figured it'd help much.

The bartender snorted. "Unless you're alright with being swept up and dumped out with the trash after closing time at midnight, then that's a hard pass, bucko."

Keeping the sag out of his shoulders couldn't have been more impossible, and it took all of Wolf's willpower to save face by not groaning aloud from the rejection. He set down the mug again and just buried his face in his other hand, trying to sort out what his options were now- coming up with a blank. He really was out of luck, wasn't he?

Wolf felt set to wallow in his despair for what felt like hours, before a little *tink* sounded not too far to his left- the bartender had set down the glass he'd been absently polishing.

"That isn't to say, though, that I'll stand turning away someone in need... city slicker or no."

Wolf had to swallow the big gulp of beer he'd taken hard, clapping a hand to his face so he wouldn't sputter out the drink and make a mess. He watched the bartender intently with wide eyes as he went on.

"Well, while I don't think you'll find a room *indoors* to spend the night in, unless one of the locals lets you borrow one of theirs for the night... but there *is* always the great outdoors to camp out in instead," he considered, musing to himself while he dragged his rag over the bar counter. "There isn't a lot of predator wildlife sticking around the forest in the south east, especially not around this time of year- or at least, not unless you go really deep in, they say. And it isn't too chilly out, summer nights in the Valley get pretty warm. So, camping out in the woods could work out a lot easier than you might think."

That... did put some of Wolf's fears at ease, he would admit. He wasn't one for camping much, but it sounded better than collapsing out in some alley in a town full of strangers.

"I, uh, don't have any gear on me, is there anywhere...?" He started lamely, as though he probably wasn't going to follow the man's suggestion anyway.

The bartender nodded, thankfully. "Yeah, I can get ahold of Pierre for you, he's got some camping supplies I'm sure you could borrow- sleeping bag at least, and a tent if there's one in stock. If he tries to make you pay for them, too, you just give me a holler and I'll come take care of it." He shook his head and picked up another glass to polish as he grumbled. "Honestly, it's like I don't even know the guy some days..."

Wolf nodded slowly, his gaze drifting away as his head struggled to catch up with the words. The offer was unbelievably kind- was he really giving him a solution to his problem, no questions asked?

"I- thank you so much, er, Mr...?" He fumbled out, just to say something, *anything*.

"Just Gus is fine," the bartender shrugged, his nonchalance belying the great kindness he'd offered this stranger who'd just stumbled into town.

All the stress and anxiety of how Wolf would make it through the night, trapped in this town in the middle of nowhere with no way home, and the solution to absolve it all coming from a fairly personable guy with a funny mustache named Gus. Just thinking about it made his head spin.

Wolf let out an involuntary *burp*, coming back to his senses to realize his vision was actually swimming.

"I- I need some air, sorry," Wolf stammered out as he slid himself off the barstool, the half full mug in his knuckle-white grip sloshing at the motion.

The bartender's eyes snapped back over to him, his eyebrows lifting in open concern. "Oy, jeez- yeah, best you get some air, you're looking like you need it." He nodded back towards the saloon door for emphasis. "You just swing back here later tonight, I'll have Pierre and the camping gear handled myself by then. Bring back the mug when you're finished."

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It was a nice evening out, all things considered.

A bit humid, and warm like Gus had told him- but when the valley breeze came as the sun set beyond the treeline and licked away the budding drops of his sweat, the

summer night air settled from uncomfortably warm to *just* enough to be refreshing. The prospect of camping out in the woods for the night seemed a bit more plausible now, Wolf would admit.

He wandered down the cobbled stone road, not paying much attention to where he went- just taking in the fresh air and letting whatever odd country magic it was that made his head feel better. Wolf took another long sip of his mug as he strolled past a farmhouse with some chickens and livestock heading back into their barn as the evening passed into night, and didn't realize he'd left town until he'd heard the crinkle and crunch of leaves underfoot.

The buzz of alcohol had long since begun to sink in- Wolf musing for a moment that it must've been stronger than he'd thought- but the realization was enough to give him pause for a moment, looking back to the road that had ended some ways away. Wolf had left town, now, having definitely strayed past the bounds that separated it and the forest, but... something about it, he just couldn't bring himself to worry. The town was still in sight, albeit distant, and Gus had assured him there wasn't much danger in the wildlife this time of year to worry about, so what was the harm in wandering a little further?

The forest sounds, the even more astonishingly clean air ambient in the forest as he walked further- it felt *alive*, like the forest itself lived and breathed as much as any owl or squirrel or croaking frog settling down to sleep within it did. Fireflies danced through the darkening brush, almost as though lighting his way as Wolf went on, and stopped in his tracks as a few lights broke through the thick of the trees to bob out over a wide, flat expanse.

A lake.

The serene, peaceful sight captivated Wolf as he gazed... so much so, that he didn't notice himself moving until he heard the *clomp* of his boots walking across the wood dock that'd been to his right and sat down, dangling his feet over the edge.

Wolf nursed his beer as he breathed in the fresh, clean forest air, the natural sounds of bugs and frogs and leaves rustling in the summer breeze sounding distant yet omnipresent. Perfect company for mulling things over.

That'd been a real stroke of luck, finding someone who could help him against all odds when it seemed as though he'd been stranded without a chance to help himself. Maybe these far-country little towns weren't so bad after all, if they were full of kind folks like these, and around beautiful nature like this... just breathing in

the air felt revitalizing in a way that didn't drive away the drowsiness creeping in. Nothing like Wolf had ever felt living in the city.

A small, close community that fostered hospitality and generosity even to strangers stumbling in that'd be out the next day, without even asking for anything in return. Wolf let his gaze drop to the beautiful, impossibly clear sky reflected in the lake water, before lifting it up to gaze at the real deal.

He'd never seen the night sky like this before, Wolf realized. Nor had he been treated like this by a total stranger before. Even though they'd never met before and probably wouldn't meet again after, it didn't matter then. What a day for a lot of firsts, Wolf drew in a deep breath.

The breath that rushed back out, though, to his surprise- breaking the serene atmosphere around him, came a loud, satisfying *BURP*.

Wolf reeled at the motion, tasting his own hot, beer-smelling breath in the air and letting out a wet, raspy chuckle. Breathing in that scent felt much more familiar, though much more often did it not come from himself. He could almost imagine the hands, the contact, feeling up the illustrious shape of another man while he did the same to Wolf as tensions rose higher.

He gripped tighter at the gut he could feel, feeling it swell and push against his hand with all the soft, rolling fat of a seasoned beer belly. Wolf's breath hitched as he felt it up generously, exploring that might, that girth he imagined snaking a hand up the man's shirt riding up his belly to follow that impeccable, divine outline of the man's enormous gut, and finding two big lumps of mass sagging overtop it like buried treasure. A pair of thick, huge *moobs* to feel, carpeted in a layer of tantalizing, coarse chest hairs, and *squeeze* to his own heart's desire and the man's pleasure at once- Wolf could even hear the man he imagined moaning out loud at the groping.

His voice sounded grainy, rugged. Definitely belonging to a gruff, older man, Wolf distantly identified.

Wolf needed to know more about him- needed to *feel* more of him. Withdrawing his hands from underneath the man's worn nylon shirt, he found his older, slumping shoulders and felt down the older man's arms, feeling more hairy and bulging in fat and long-fading muscle the longer he rubbed. Wolf gave a light hitch as he reached the end of the man's arms, finding his hands and feeling him lace his thick, coarse fingers together with Wolf's, feeling as though he'd be dwarfed by the sheer size of them, before he gripped tighter and everything fit just right.

The man brought the two of their laced hands up to his mouth and kissed them gently, the taste of alcohol on his own breath fogging up Wolf's mind, making it hard to think- only *feel*, only *experience* the entirety of this new, alluring man in his midst.

He let their hands fall away, and snuck his hands down underneath to grope at the fine ass he could only imagine his companion kept for himself- giving a gasp when he felt weathered, rugged hands do the same in return. They squeezed in tandem, so relishing in the feel of the other as his rear behind him swelled with mass, soft fat so tantalizing and luscious in his grip as it pushed out against the worn denim of his shorts.

Trailing his hands down to grip and squeeze at his thighs and legs below him, he couldn't help a rough, sharp inhale as the deep, hot breaths drew close again at the contact. So close, he couldn't stop *breathing*, breathing in that taste of beer, that old, nostalgic stink wafting up from the man's cozy, worn-to-fraying jacket sitting loose on his shoulders, that handsome, masculine musk from *inside* it clouding his head even further- oh, he couldn't take it anymore.

His large, weathered hands reached up to cup the man's handsome, older face as his companion did the same in return, so ready to pull him into a tender, passionate kiss. He rubbed at his face so hungrily, so eager to drink up the sensation of the older man's thick neck, his wide nose, his broad face and thick eyebrows and rich purple hair and imagine what it'd feel like to feel the man's rough, bristly five o'clock shadow over his face and chin rubbing against his own.

He wanted to experience *everything* about this man in his imagination who seemed to want him just as much as he did, wanted to know about his gridball days and his passion for chickens and peppers and his taste for beer and alcohol despite how it'd led him to some of the lowest points of his life. He wanted to know how the man had first realized he liked men and how he came to live in Stardew Valley and how he'd fallen in love despite the hard place he had felt stuck in. He wanted to know him better than anyone else he'd ever met- and maybe, just maybe, if he kissed him like how the man so clearly *wanted* him to- it would all come pouring in, and they could be together and know each other so carnally for the rest of their lives, farmer be damned!

He opened his mouth just enough to pucker his lips, leaned close, and

Shane's eyes flew open. There was no one there.

Shane pulled back from the awkward position of his spine and dropped his hands from where they brushed up against his scratchy five o'clock shadow, his face heating up a bit in embarrassment.

Leaning forward as though he were trying to- *kiss* someone? Out into open empty space? Jeez, he was glad no one was around to have seen.

Shane glanced up at the sprawling, starry sky, absently scratching at his beard. It was getting pretty late out, he'd best be off-

"*Buh...*" came a surprise burp up from his round, sagging gut. Shane blinked, caught off guard and a little dizzy from the force, before he chuckled, rolling on his plump behind and maneuvering the mass of his thick belly to pick himself up.

Shane strolled off from his little resting spot at the lake, off to head home- not to Aunt Marnie's ranch to the east, but rather the much larger plot of land just north of it. His boyfriend's farm, of course.

Pelican Town didn't see many new faces often, and the Farmer had to have been the most recent of which- inherited the place from his late grandfather, last Shane had heard. He never asked about it himself, anyway, he knew better than to poke around sensitive subjects that were preferred to be kept private.

But the Farmer had sure taken the town by storm- the plot of land he'd inherited flourishing to wild success, starring in Pelican Town's largest festivals all year, running around town charming its citizens left and right, and even heading a community service restoration project for a place Shane could hardly remember seeing in working shape before that Farmer got their hands on it. He might act a bit odd sometimes, and often stay out really late, sure, but even Shane could tell he meant well. And to Shane... oh, that Farmer..

Shane felt his throat tighten a bit, wandering through the carefully laid out crops and decorations nearby the big, beautiful chicken coop on the way back to the farmhouse, feeling awfully sentimental all of a sudden. It really did feel like- well, with his seemingly endless well of charm and charisma, the Farmer could have had his pick out of anyone he wanted from here Pelican Town when it came to eligible partners, and he'd picked... Shane.

Grubby, overweight asshole Shane, the guy who nearly *lived* at the saloon to drink away his troubles, the guy who was so, so far away from picking himself up out of the mess he'd let his life become out of his own neglect- and the Farmer had helped

him. Given him the space to get up, to recover, and maybe even make something for himself out of whatever he had left. Hell, he'd even invited Shane to move in, let him rely on the Farmer's income from his own exports rather than working his dead end, 9 to 5 job at the Jojalmart.

That Farmer really did fit in with the community they had, there in Pelican Town, it struck Shane as he trudged up the steps to the farmhouse front door.

Maybe even better than he did himself, even though Shane had lived there longer.

Shane set down the empty beer mug on the counter inside- whoops, he must've been out and about after swinging by the saloon earlier and forgot to return that to Gus. He gave a glance to the line of washed and cleaned identical mugs laid out on a towel by the sink, and slid the new mug he accidentally brought home a bit closer. He'd... just return them later, was all.

Rubbing at his soft, gurgling gut, Shane briefly considered getting some leftovers out of the fridge to eat. There was still a whole pizza in there that his boyfriend had left him, that he knew he could polish off without issue... but it was *real* late out, by now, and his drowsiness got the better of him.

Shane let out one last loud, satisfying "*Buh,*" and kicked off his shoes, climbing into bed. He didn't bother changing out of his clothes, since he was probably just going to wear the same thing the next day- these were the most comfortable clothes he owned, after all. He knew the farmer never complained about it, and if that was true when they slept in the same bed, then surely Shane didn't think there was any harm to...

Shane scratched at his behind, rolling over and settling in for bed. Maybe he should get up early and do something nice for his boyfriend, even though he liked sleeping in... the Farmer would surely be exhausted by the time he got back tonight, he'd probably appreciate the help. And it was the least Shane could do, for how much his boyfriend put up with and did so much for him.

The Farmer really had found his place in Pelican Town, in the community, almost like he was meant to be there all along. His kindness, his generosity, his comradery and friendships with the residents already here, were all the more proof of that.

Shane could only wish that whatever poor sap blew into town next would have luck in finding their own place in town, too.