



A Hard Lesson Learned

Kelly Rice (Corntest Travels)



Kelly, with short brown hair, and Dan, with long brown hair, stand before a towering pallet piled high with colorful, cartoonish garbage bags and boxes. They exchange a mischievous glance, a subtle twinkle in Dan's eye as he gestures towards the huge industrial bin in the distance. The sun shines brightly on the bustling warehouse exterior, hinting at a big idea forming.



Dan, with an exaggerated grin, skillfully operates a bright yellow forklift, its powerful prongs carefully lifting the heavy pallet of garbage. Kelly stands nearby, arms crossed, a confident smirk on his face as he watches the pallet ascend, ready for their clever shortcut. The background shows a whimsical, slightly tilted warehouse wall.



The forklift holds the pallet suspended over the massive bin, but the garbage stubbornly clings to the pallet. Kelly, with a determined expression, points a finger upwards, suggesting his daring plan to push it off. Dan looks a bit unsure, his long hair slightly askew, as they both ponder the uncooperative trash.



Kelly, agile and determined, begins to climb the sturdy frame of the forklift, his hands gripping the metal. Just as he starts to ascend towards the pallet, their boss, Dave, a stout figure with a clipboard, emerges from the warehouse door, his silhouette framed against the bright light. His expression is one of mild surprise.



Dave, with a casual wave, instructs Dan to lower the pallet. Dan, focused on the controls, begins to descend the forks. Kelly's hand, unfortunately, is in the path of the whirring chain mechanism, causing a quick, sharp jolt of pain to cross Kelly's face as his eyes widen in shock, while Dan remains unaware, looking at Dave.



Kelly quickly pulls his hand away, clutching his injured right index finger. His face is pale but surprisingly calm, a single tear welling in his eye. Dan's face, however, is a mask of horror and disbelief, his jaw dropped wide open as he sees the extent of the injury, depicted in a simplified, impactful cartoon style.



Dan, frantic and wide-eyed, speeds his bright red truck down a cartoonishly winding road, sweat beading on his brow. Kelly sits beside him, remarkably composed, his injured hand wrapped in a thick ball of paper towel that is already beginning to turn a vibrant red hue. The speed lines behind the truck emphasize Dan's urgency.



Inside the brightly lit emergency room, a kind-faced doctor with exaggerated spectacles carefully cleans Kelly's finger with a small wire brush, her expression focused and professional. Kelly, still remarkably stoic, watches intently, his other hand resting calmly on his lap. The scene is clean and reassuring, despite the procedure.



The doctor, now with a tiny needle and thread, meticulously stitches Kelly's finger, her brow furrowed in concentration. Kelly looks on, a mix of mild discomfort and quiet resolve on his face. The stitches are depicted as neat, cartoon squiggles closing the wound, emphasizing the detailed medical care.



Six months later, Kelly, now sporting a cheerful, colorful bandage on his finger, stands confidently beside Dan. His hand is slightly shorter, signaling the change, but his smile is bright and resilient. He and Dan share a look of quiet understanding and enduring friendship, having navigated a difficult journey together. The background shows a new, brighter day.