

Hope in the Shape of a Simple Glass

Saanvi Jegan

Day 0

I woke up knowing something was wrong, but I didn't know what yet.

The room was too bright, too still. My body felt distant, like I was someone else's passenger. I blinked, confused, but it only made everything blurrier. The first thing I noticed was the weight on my left wrist, heavier than it should've been. I tried to move, to feel my fingers, but all I could sense was a thick, unnatural pressure. I lifted my arm slightly, only to feel the cast shift, the edges of it digging into my skin like an unwanted reminder.

Something twisted in my stomach, but I couldn't place it. I tried to move again, to push myself upright, but it was as if the whole process of getting there had become more complicated than it should be. My muscles felt stiff, too slow, too tired, and when I finally propped myself up on the edge of the bed, my arm wouldn't follow.

I closed my eyes, the weight of the room pressing in. It wasn't just the pain. It was something more. Something I couldn't name. But it was there, lingering, waiting for me to figure it out. For now, though, I had no choice but to stay still and wait for the fog to lift. And somehow, that felt like the hardest part.

Day 4

You don't think about forks until they betray you.

It was my first dinner at the table after surgery. My left wrist was wrapped tightly in gauze and medical tape, resting on a pillow I awkwardly brought from the couch. I felt like I was babysitting my own arm. Everything on the table looked normal: the plate, the food, the fork. I

picked up the fork with my right hand and started eating, thinking it wouldn't be a big deal. I could still stab food. I could chew. I could manage.

Then I tried to cut the chicken.

It wasn't that tough. But I hadn't realized how much I relied on my left hand to just hold things still. I angled the fork with my right hand, pressed down, and tried to use the edge to saw a piece off. The chicken slipped. I tried again. It slid across the plate like it was trying to get away from me. I clenched the fork tighter and pushed harder. Still nothing. I stopped, hand frozen mid-air, the fork shaking slightly between my fingers.

My mom didn't wait. She just reached over quietly and started cutting the food into bite-sized pieces. No eye contact, no "do you need help," just snip, snip, snip, like it was no big deal. And maybe it wasn't. But my face still went hot. I mumbled, "Thanks." She smiled, like it was the easiest thing in the world. And I hated that part, that it was easy for her, and not for me.

Day 7

It was a simple message, or at least it should have been.

I wanted to type, "Sounds good, I'll be there!" but my thumb slipped on the tiny keys, and what showed up was, "Sounds god, I'll be bare." My stomach dropped.

I stared at the screen like it was mocking me, a cruel autocorrect joke at my expense. I backspaced and tried to fix it, but by the time I hit send again, the chat had already moved on, the thread buzzing with plans and laughter I wasn't part of anymore.

My thumb hovered, shaky and uncertain. The phone felt heavier in my hand, like it had turned against me. I wanted to control the conversation, to be part of it, but the words kept escaping, scrambled and half-broken.

Day 10

The shower started as a battle before I even stepped inside.

My left wrist was wrapped in a bulky cast and covered with a trash bag taped tight to keep it dry. The plastic felt suffocating, tight enough that my fingers tingled and my arm felt numb.

I reached out with my right hand to turn the faucet, but the knob spun freely, slick with water and soap. I tried again, gripping tighter, but it wouldn't budge the way it used to.

Water sputtered, cold, then scalding, spraying wildly across the tile. I jumped back, heart racing. My body tensed, struggling to balance. For a second, I stood frozen, wet, vulnerable, and unsteady, grappling with the simplest task that had once been second nature. The trash bag around my arm felt like a cage, squeezing tight as if to remind me that control wasn't mine anymore.

Day 17

The hoodie bunched at the elbow again.

I tugged it down with my right hand, gently, trying not to jolt my left wrist, which throbbed just from being bent the wrong way. The fabric caught on the cast, stretching awkwardly around it like the sleeve didn't want to make room for what I'd become.

I tried again, slower this time, angling my arm just right, but it still didn't fit cleanly. I sat down on the edge of my bed and let out a breath I didn't realize I'd been holding. The hoodie slumped half-on, half-off, like it was giving up too.

Most days, I didn't even try jackets anymore. Zippers were a joke. Buttons may as well have been puzzles. So I stayed in sweatshirts, big ones I could pull over my head and hope for the best. If someone offered to help, I said yes, even though it made my stomach twist.

Day 20

It was 2:00 a.m. The kind of quiet that hums.

I lay on my back, then my side, then back again. The pillow was too hot, the blanket too heavy, and the cast a stone I couldn't put down. The painkillers had stopped working hours ago, or maybe they never really had.

I pictured sheep in my head, happily frolicking back and forth. ... 6, 7, 8, 9 sheep. When they faded, I moved on to my heartbeat—thirty seconds at a time, counting it steadily, trying to convince myself I was still in control. But the pain flared in unpredictable waves, and my breathing stuttered with it. Nothing I did helped. I couldn't think clearly. I couldn't get comfortable. I couldn't stop it.

The house was still. No pings from my phone, no hallway lights. No distractions. Just me and the ache pulsing behind my wrist and somewhere deeper, in a place I couldn't reach. That was the hardest part, the part no one sees. Not the doctor, not my friends.

Just me, awake in the dark, trying to keep it together with a body I couldn't fix and a mind I couldn't calm.

Day 60

I lifted my left wrist to the mirror, the scars catching the light in uneven, jagged lines. They looked like dried cracks in a forgotten painting, familiar but fragile, something I wasn't

sure how to read. I flexed my fingers slowly, feeling the tightness beneath the skin, as if invisible bands were holding them stiff and reluctant.

The cold glass pressed against my cheek as I leaned closer, searching for the part of me that used to move freely without thinking. My eyes flicked over the uneven skin, the slight discoloration, the way the scars dipped and rose like silent marks of an old war. I wanted to touch the marks, to trace the path they carved, but my hand stopped midway, trembling like it wasn't sure if it belonged there. The reflection looked back at me, holding the quiet weight of time passed and time still needed.

Day 82

I reached out slowly, my left hand trembling as it closed around the glass of water.

The cast was gone, but my wrist still felt fragile, unsure. The cool surface pressed against my skin, steady and real, and for a heartbeat, I wasn't sure if I could hold on.

But then, I held it.

The glass felt heavier than I remembered, but it was mine to hold. The water was calm and clear, but it steadied more than just my body. It was a small victory, a quiet reclaiming of control. I took a slow sip.

It was the start of something, hope in the shape of a simple glass.