

Bloodwork

MacGyver flicked the page on the old photo album and sighed. Paul Moran's happy face looked back at him, hauntingly real, hauntingly lost now his friend was gone. When he'd taken up Moran's offer of a trip to England, he'd been looking forward to a mini vacation after his Bermuda Triangle adventure, but all Mac had gotten was more mystery, intrigue, and the murder of Moran.

It seemed like only yesterday they'd been climbing the tallest mountains on earth together, and now, now it was all over. MacGyver turned another page and stopped at a picture of them side by side in a nature reserve in Africa. It seemed like all he did was lose friends of late, and in truth, it was making him look at his mortality, his own advancing years. Mac winced at the thought, and was relieved when his apartment door swung open and Sam entered – or rather poked his head around the door to suggest his visit would be fleeting.

“Hey Dad, what's got you looking so glum?” At the apparent sight of his father's expression, Sam moved inside with a look of curiosity and mild concern.

MacGyver closed the album, slid it onto the nearby table and forced a smile. “I'm fine,” he almost lied. “Just looking at some old pictures of friends.”

Sam didn't push it, but that was probably because he knew when his dad was closing up, even if they hadn't known one another long, he was a fast learner. “Oh, okay. Me and Andy were wondering if you'd like to come on over to the cabin tonight.” His face turned slightly sheepish. “We kinda have a big surprise for you!”

MacGyver raised a brow, his melancholy forgotten. “Oh? Gonna give me a clue?”

“Nope!” Sam's eyes said he was teasing now. “But you'll like it, I promise!” He hastened back to the door, and as he retreated out offered. “See you at eight, prompt!” Before Mac could argue, he was gone.

Mac sat up, pondered a moment and then moved to the refrigerator to grab a cold drink. Sam and Andy had been spending a lot of time together of late – heck, they'd been spending a lot of time together since they'd met back on the trail of an old mobster mystery house – *Angelina's Grace*, the house, or rather cabin, that Andy had eventually inherited from her dad.

So why would they want to see me there with a surprise? Mac swallowed down a glass of milk, and then the thought hit him. They've been spending rather a lot of time together...what if..?

Suddenly one of DXS and Phoenix's best operatives felt weak at the knees. What if he was going to be a grandpa, and he hadn't even got used to being a father yet? The idea made the glass in his hand tremble slightly. Never mind the photos with Paul Moran, MacGyver was abruptly aware of his age, and he wasn't sure how to handle it.

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*Angelina's Grace
Corral Canyon Park
California
Later that evening...*

MacGyver pulled his Jeep up next to Sam's bike and killed the ignition. It was evening, and the sky was pockmarked with high clouds that glowed red with the last rays of the evening sun. The air was warm, and the surrounding trees and foliage made him feel like he was far away from the city, even if he was just a short drive from home.

Mac sighed, and wished he could retire to some remote cabin in the hills somewhere, like Harry had. He shook himself, took out the keys and removed his sunglasses, before ambling up the porch and into the cabin.

"Hey, anyone home?" He asked out of politeness, given that Sam's bike had already suggested they were.

"In here, Dad!" Sam's muffled tones greeted him, and he couldn't help but smile. He'd always envisaged a life without kids, and yet when Sam had come along, he suddenly couldn't think of a life without them. *Careful what you wish for!* His mind cautioned, as he remembered why he might be here.

"You're early!" Sam offered warmly as Mac strode into the kitchen and put his keys on the table next to a plate of still-warm cookies.

"PCH was quiet. In fact, it was almost dead. I've never seen it so empty when there isn't a game on." Mac took a chair and picked up a cookie. He could never resist Andy's baking, no matter how many calories it entailed. "Hmnn, good!" He nodded his approval to Andy who was watching for his reaction while stirring something in a pan.

"It's a new recipe," she offered helpfully. "I guess that makes you my guinea pig. They're supposed to be a Christmas cookie!"

Mac smiled. How could he broach the subject of why he'd been asked to come over without sounding rude? *Heck, if I'm going to be a grandpa I need to know...*

Sam appeared to read his mind. "So I guess you're wondering why we asked you over?" The twinkle in his eye said he was going to tease.

"Well, seeing as you two are always usually busy..." Mac sucked down a breath and waited for the inevitable.

"Well..." Sam dragged out the word, but before he could tease anymore, the porch door suddenly burst open.

Everyone looked over in surprise, Mac reacting first as he recognized the prison attire of the man invading his son's home. The orange jump suit was a dead giveaway.

MacGyver leapt to his feet, grabbing a nearby frying pan in an attempt to knock the automatic from the interloper's hand. But the convict deflected the blow, quickly directing the barrel of his weapon towards Andy.

"I'd sit right on down if I was you, unless you want the pretty little lady to eat a bullet?" The man licked his lips under a thin veil of stubble and his eyes flashed with anger.

Behind him, another orange-clad man cringed and pulled back – back as far as the cuffs attached to the first man would let him. This one's eyes flashed too, but not with anger, with fear, a fear Mac sensed was not for himself, but for them.

"Okay..." Mac slowly raised his hands in submission and let the pan drop to the floor. He shot Sam a glare that indicated he should do much the same. Now wasn't a time for heroics, it was for thinking.

The two convicts must have escaped somehow, but as there wasn't a prison nearby, it was either from a vehicle, or a court cell.

"You think you're a smart guy, dontcha?" The first man snarled. "I can tell the type..."

"Lyle, can't you just get the car keys and leave them be?" The second convict was pleading, and as he spoke he tugged backwards, indicating the Jeep keys on the table.

"Not smart, just interested," MacGyver countered. "You escape from a prison bus, Lyle?"

"I didn't want to," the second man spoke again. "But there was an accident, the bus rolled and the bar we were chained to snapped."

"Shut up, Rimmer, nobody asked you!" Lyle pulled at the chains hard, almost yanking his companion onto the floor.

Rimmer yelped and then fell silent.

"You're Jerry Rimmer?" Sam dared Lyle's wrath by asking the question to the second convict. He raised a brow in surprise as he said it, as if he'd expected Rimmer to be different.

Rimmer shot a glance at the man he was tied to, as if evaluating whether to speak or not. Eventually, he did. "Yeah, I'm the guy all over the news. The guy no one believes."

"You were tried and convicted of kidnap and murder, why should anyone believe you? It's the way our system works." Sam was still talking, asking questions, just like the newsman inside wasn't aware he was a hostage. "You took a life just because the rich company board wouldn't pay the ransom fast enough..?"

“I didn’t do it,” Jerry offered in such a low voice he was barely audible. “But I got the death penalty anyway...”

“That’s because you’re a wimp and a coward!” Lyle yanked at the chain that bound them, shutting up the weaker man with his growl. Then he looked pointedly at MacGyver. “Get these cuffs off me. I’m fed up of being attached to this idiot!”

MacGyver took down a breath. There wasn’t exactly anything in the cabin that would saw through chain that was designed “not” to be sawed through. The other option was to pick the locks, but they weren’t exactly made to be escaped from, either. “Sam, do you have any tools up here we could use?”

Sam shook his head. “Andy pays some guy to do maintenance; we’re always too busy with work.” He shrugged and looked to his girlfriend who nodded in agreement. “There’s an axe out back for the logs, but I doubt that would cut it.”

“I guess we’ll have to try working on the locks, then.” Mac looked around and was shocked to see a knitting basket. *Gals having kids knit, don’t they?* He pushed the terrifying thought aside and nodded to the basket. “There might be something in there I can work with.” He raised a brow to get Lyle’s permission, and the other man nodded.

Mac pulled over the basket and rummaged inside until he found some very fine needles. They might work. He gestured for the two men to put their hands on the table so he could investigate the locks. While he began to slowly feel for the mechanism inside, he tried to build a conversation, pulling details from the men that might help with the situation later - the more information, the easier to formulate a plan.

“So Jerry? How come you seem reluctant to escape if you’re gonna die?” MacGyver asked the question casually, hoping the other man wouldn’t clam up. He didn’t.

“Because despite what the kid over there thinks,” he nodded to Sam, “I’m innocent, and innocent people don’t run.”

“Some might,” Mac countered. “They might think being falsely accused and alive is better than innocent and dead?” He was pushing the man, because Mac was a good judge of character, and he was getting a vibe already about Jerry Rimmer.

As he spoke, the cuffs pinged open and Lyle grinned, rubbing at his wrist. Rimmer instantly backed away, apparently not enjoying Lyle’s company one bit.

Lyle grinned, opened his mouth to apparently pass some sarcastic comment, but then stopped dead as a megaphone from outside made his eyes glisten with fear and anger.

The message from beyond the door was precise and clear.

“This is the police. We have you surrounded. Lay down any weapons and come to the door slowly with your hands above your heads, or we *will* open fire.”

Lyle moved suddenly, grabbing Andy's arm and yanking her in front of him like a shield. He pressed the gun in his hand to her neck, and his intentions were clear – she was going to be his leverage, his escape plan.

Before MacGyver could stop him, Sam reacted, diving at the convict like he was making a pro football tackle. Lyle clearly wasn't expecting the move and his eyes widened as the whole group was thrown to the floor with Sam's weight.

Andy rolled away from the two tussling men and grabbed a pan she'd been cooking with, before she could use it, MacGyver had entered the fray, diving on top of Lyle and grabbing at the wrist that held the gun with both hands. He yanked hard to the left, and Lyle's grip loosened a little, but the convict wasn't done yet.

Lyle screamed out angrily, and as MacGyver slammed the weapon to the side again, his trigger finger pulled back, letting off two wild slugs. The bullets tore into timber harmlessly, sending a shower of splinters high in the air.

Two seconds after the weapon's discharge, two officers burst through the front door, knocking the screen off one of its hinges with their momentum. There were no more verbal warnings, and the lead cop fired.

MacGyver yelled out instinctively as he finally pried the gun from Lyle's fingers. "No! Wait, there's no need..!"

The cop either didn't hear, or didn't care, and fired again – not at Lyle, but at Rimmer.

Rimmer looked shocked as the bullets tore into his chest and he fell backwards onto Sam's favorite rug, blood splattering the pile and chair beyond. He hit the wooden flooring hard, knocking what little air he had left from his lungs.

Finally, the cop stopped shooting, shrugged and raced over to Lyle with a pair of cuffs, ignoring the man he'd injured completely.

MacGyver and Sam both clambered to their feet and hurried to Rimmer. He was gasping, as if he couldn't suck down enough air, and both hands clutched at his chest as he tried in vain to plug the leaks the officer had caused.

"I...I didn't even have...a weapon," Jerry coughed, his eyes looking beseechingly into Sam's. "Why me?"

Sam put a hand under Jerry's head gently. "I don't know..." he looked over to the cop, whose uniform indicated he was in fact, a sheriff. "Why, he wasn't threatening anyone?" He commanded angrily.

The sheriff looked, but didn't answer as he dragged Lyle outside.

MacGyver grabbed a towel from Andy and pressed it hard over Jerry's wounds. Rimmer gritted his teeth then stammered. "I'm dying...you know that...please don't let it end like this..."

“Like what?” Mac soothed.

“I don’t want to go down in history as a killer.” Jerry paused, his face turning a white. “I...I really didn’t do it...” His eyes fluttered, and then softly rolled upwards under their lids. His chest rose painfully slowly, and stopped.

MacGyver closed his own eyes, composing himself before pulling the towel he’d been using over Jerry’s face. He wasn’t sure if the man had been innocent, but he certainly hadn’t deserved being shot down without cause.

He pushed up off the floor just as the sheriff re-entered, a broad grin on his face. Mac wasn’t happy, but he checked his emotions just enough. “Why use deadly force on the man that *didn’t* have the gun?”

The cop shrugged, his slightly portly frame bobbing as he spoke. “What does it matter? Rimmer was a dead man anyway with his sentence. I just did him a favor. Besides, don’t forget he was a murderer, why should I cut him any slack?” He popped in a stick of gum, and chewed a little too heartily. “I just saved the taxpayer a whole chunk of money by keeping his ass outta jail for the next few years.”

MacGyver was about to retort, but Sam had moved to his side, and gently squeezed his arm. Mac turned, and Sam nodded to the door, indicating they should take it outside where Andy had been led by the second cop.

Mac followed him obediently.

“Dad, I think there’s a story here,” Sam whispered as they moved off the porch. “Something about the way those cops burst in was way off the mark.”

MacGyver nodded. “I know, I don’t know why, but I believed Jerry too. Something inside me is convinced an innocent man just lost his life, even if the courts said otherwise.”

“So what are you two going to do about it?” Andy chimed in, her apparent super hearing picking up on their conversation.

Mac smiled, Andy’s blessing suddenly made him feel like with Sam’s help, they could make a difference and exonerate someone, even if Jerry would never know it. “We’re gonna have a dang good try at proving it, right Sam?”

Sam grinned. “Oh heck yeah, I’m up for showing those big tabloids sensationalism isn’t better than the printing the truth.” He patted his dad on the back and then winced as the sheriff’s deputy began cordoning of *Angelina’s Grace* as a crime scene. “That is, if I can get my camera back...”

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MacGyver’s Apartment
Later that day...

MacGyver sat forward on the couch, twiddling his thumbs impatiently as he waited for the phone to ring. Across from him, on the second couch, Sam was trying to look busy with the new camera he'd bought, but it wasn't working. He was clearly impatient too.

After the sheriff had given the all clear to leave the cabin, Mac had quickly put a call in to Pete for any information that wasn't public about Rimmer's case. It was a long shot, but maybe they could spot something amiss.

Mac sighed, moved to stand up, but then quickly dropped back down as the phone finally began to ring. He snatched up the receiver just before Sam's hand got there. "Tell me you got something, Pete?"

"I have plenty," Pete informed, "but I doubt you're going to like it. None of it looks good for your man Rimmer."

"I know he was accused of kidnapping and murdering Rebecca Dunlevy," MacGyver sighed; he'd not expected this to be easy. "I also know she was rich, so the perfect target, but that's about it." He chided himself internally for spending more time in the wilderness than in reality – but then, he found it was way safer there.

"Rebecca wasn't just rich," Pete offered down the line, "she owned her own company. One day she simply went to the hairdresser she always used and vanished on the way home. A ransom note was issued, her company paid up, even though the move put them vulnerable for a takeover, but Rebecca wasn't returned."

"So how did this all lead to Jerry? I think I recall something about evidence on the news?" MacGyver was scratching his head and wishing Sam was in on the conversation – he was the news hound. Then he remembered the "on speaker" function, rolled his eyes and hit it.

Pete, oblivious to the move carried one. "There was an anonymous tip that led the cops to Jerry's house. They didn't find a body, but there was a chest freezer in the garage and tests showed a large amount of blood – too much for the person to survive..."

Sam nodded and filled in as Pete paused. "The D.N.A. results showed it was Rebecca's blood. To the judge and jury it was an open and shut case. How else could it have gotten there unless Jerry was the kidnapper, and he'd killed her after collecting the cash?"

"How else indeed," Pete concluded. "You have to face it guys, Rimmer has to be guilty."

MacGyver shook his head. "There's something missing. Why did he choose Rebecca? She's not the only rich woman in California. Where's the connection?"

"Apparently, he worked at the gas station where Rebecca always filled up on the way into her office. That means he had the means, and the motive – poor guy has to fill rich businesswoman's Mercedes up every day, and starts to think he deserves a piece

of the pie, and of course, the final nail in the coffin, the blood.” Pete sounded like he was saddened, but convinced.

Mac, however, still wasn’t buying it. “Pete, if you’d met him, if he’d died in your arms, you’d understand!”

Pete sighed. “I know that tone of voice. You’re not gonna let this go, are you?” He paused, sighed, and then there was a shuffling on the line as he moved the Braille paperwork around on his desk. “Where do you want my secretary to send the files?”

Mac smiled. “Can you send them over to Andy’s once the cops say we go back in?”

“Consider it done,” Pete promised. “Oh, and Mac? Good hunting you two...”

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Angelina’s Grace
Corral Canyon Park
California
Later that evening...

Mac and Sam sat on a bench outside the cabin as Andy brought them all iced, homemade lemonade. Sam was reading through the files Andy had printed off that Pete had sent over, and every now and again he would shake his head without speaking.

After setting the tray down and picking up a glass for herself, Andy peeked over his shoulder and he looked up. She offered Sam her glass, and he took a sip from it as Andy picked up another and passed it over to MacGyver, who took it gratefully.

“Mind if I join in the hunt?” Andy asked, finally taking a petite sip of the last glass of lemonade.

Sam shrugged, leaned back and stretched as if his shoulders were aching. “Be our guest, me and dad have been over these files six times, and I think my eyeballs are going to explode.” He looked to Mac. “How about you, Dad?”

Mac yawned. The fresh air in the park and the late hours he kept often caught up with him these days. *Yeah I feel like a grandpa already...* “Fine by me,” he confirmed. “But Pete was right, the evidence is damning.”

Andy frowned and started sifting through paperwork without answering. Ten minutes later, when everyone’s lemonade was a distant memory, she finally looked up. “You know, there is one thing here that worries me?”

“Oh?” Mac sat forwards. Andy was smart, and if she’d noticed something, it would be worth listening to.

“The sheriff who shot Jerry? His name was Hank O’Leary, right?” Andy pushed the report from the incident at *Angelina’s Grace* across the bench top, along with a second, older file. “Don’t you think it’s far too big a coincidence he was the original arresting officer in the Dunlevy case?”

Mac and Sam looked at one another. “That’s no coincidence,” they chimed unanimously.

Part Two

Altadena Sheriff’s Station The next Morning...

Altadena station was a one story building that belonged to the L.A. County Sheriff’s Department. It was a pleasant building, but as MacGyver pulled his Jeep up outside, he couldn’t help but expect a less than pleasant person to greet him. Their meeting had been brief at Andy’s cabin, but Mac would never forget the look of pleasure on the sheriff’s face as he’d gunned down Rimmer.

“You don’t like this guy already, do you?” Sam asked as they both climbed from the 4x4.

“Not one bit,” Mac agreed slipping on his sunglasses in the December sun. “He enjoys hurting people just a little too much for my liking.”

They stepped inside and headed for the door marked Sheriff Al Keenan. Mac pushed in first, and slid his glasses back off to address a young black deputy whose nametag read Jessica Yates. She was sitting at a desk, apparently manning the radio.

“Morning,” MacGyver offered politely, “Names, MacGyver, I’m looking for Sheriff Keenan?”

The deputy let out a slight huff, looked like she was about to say something derogatory, and then bit it back. “The sheriff isn’t in yet,” she offered instead.

Sam stepped forwards next to his dad. “Is he normally in at this time?” He looked up at the bright red wall clock adorning the far office divider. It was 10.35am, so not exactly early.

Deputy Yates winced. “No sir, he’s normally much earlier.” Her tone said his tardiness was unexpected, and an annoyance. “He’s scheduled for a meeting this morning with the County clerk at 11am.”

MacGyver stole a glance to Sam, and then looked back at Jessica, trying to keep the conversation light. It was too early to let the cat out of the bag what they were here for. “What’s the sheriff like to work for? I’ve heard he’s pretty laid-back?”

Yates huffed, seemed to ponder if she should answer, and then shrugged. “If you call using photographs of actual townsfolk he doesn’t like out on the shooting rang to aim

at, laid-back, then I guess he is.” She leaned forwards, looked around as if there was actually someone else that might hear her, and then continued. “Look, I’m leaving at the end of the month, so it doesn’t matter. Keenan is a bully and he doesn’t care who he hurts. I don’t know how he ever got this job with his attitude.”

Mac took down a breath. It was pretty much what he’d expected. But why hadn’t Keenan turned in this morning? And so soon after shooting Rimmer? It might be something innocent, like a flat tire or a stomach bug, but MacGyver sensed something more.

“I hate to ask, and I know it might get you into hot water, but do you have Sheriff Keenan’s home address?”

Jessica thought about it, and she cocked her left brow. “This is about that incident yesterday, isn’t it? The sheriff came back here with that prisoner, and boy was he in a state, I’ve never seen him flustered before, but he looked real upset. Left early and all. Are you some kind of Internal Affairs?”

MacGyver decided to come clean. “No, miss, we work for something called the Phoenix Foundation.” He slipped a hand into his pocket and offered up his I.D. “We’re not here officially in any capacity, though. The cabin your sheriff burst into? We were there, and Keenan didn’t exactly do things by the book.”

“That’s putting it mildly, Dad,” Sam added, then looked at the girl. “He shot Jerry Rimmer down in cold blood.”

The deputy shivered then grabbed up her purse, pushing away from the desk. “I’m resigning right now. I want no part of this.” She looked genuinely horrified. “I took this job to help people, not murder them.” Slinging her bag over her shoulder, she took up a pen, and scribbled down a note, offering it to Mac. “You might find Keenan there, but after how he was yesterday, he might already be halfway to Mexico.” She nodded, and then scurried out, leaving the radio crackling behind her.

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Sunset Ridge Road, Altadena Sheriff Keenan’s House...

Sam pulled the Jeep up a few houses from the sheriff’s and pulled on the parking brake. He killed the engine, and then looked at his dad. “There’s a Chevy Blazer over there with the tailgate wide open, and the trunk is full of cases?” he raised a brow and pointed, but Mac had already noticed.

“He’s running alright.” MacGyver dropped out from the Jeep and began to carefully pick his way over to the 4x4, his eyes dancing from the truck, to Keenan’s home. The sheriff was a wild card, and he could come out guns blazing if he realized they were onto him.

Sam brought up the rear, his camera in one hand, ready for the ultimate shoot – but with film, not bullets.

A kid breezed by on a BMX bike, shot them a bemused look and then pedaled faster, as if he sensed something was going down.

Mac licked his lips, ran a hand through his hair, and paused outside Keenan's one story property. It was clean, but he'd bet a hundred dollar bill there was no Mrs. Keenan – the place had no soul – maybe his apartment gave off the same vibe.

“Dad, the door's open...” Sam nodded as the front shutter flapped lazily in the afternoon breeze. “Think he knows we're here?” He instinctively lowered his voice.

MacGyver shook his head, unsure of the answer. “I don't know, but there's only one sure way to find out.” He took tentative steps towards the front of the building, getting faster when no one challenged him.

When he reached the door, he paused and gently knocked on the shutter as it blew to and fro. No one answered, and MacGyver chanced stepping inside. Sam joined him. The place was a mess, like Keenan had been throwing things around in a hurry. Another open case lay on the couch, half-filled with clothes and personal items.

“Why would he kill Jerry and then run?” Sam asked no one in particular.

MacGyver didn't answer, instead moving into the kitchen. Halfway across the room, he stopped dead and winced as he spotted something unsavory on the floor in front of the cooker. It was Keenan, but he wouldn't be running anywhere soon.

The sheriff's body was lying on his side, his head leaning against a unit, eyes staring blankly at the ceiling. A kitchen knife protruded from his back, pushed in almost to the hilt. Blood pooled around him, soaking a nearby rug crimson.

Mac kneeled beside the dead man, careful not to disturb the crime scene.

“I've heard of an eye for an eye, but someone really wanted this guy dead, and I don't think it was because of what he did to Jerry.” Sam was leaning over the body, but he made no attempt to take a photo. He might be a journalist, but he didn't behave like the typical glory hound.

MacGyver stood back up. “He's been silenced, but why? This has to do with Rimmer's case. If the good sheriff here framed Jerry, I'd guess it wasn't for himself, and that usually only leaves one motive.”

“Money.” Sam nodded. “And that means the real killer is still on the loose!”

“Call the police,” Mac asked quietly. “I'll take a look around until they get here.” He moved into the lounge and spotted a bureau. Moving deftly over another rug – this one blood-free, he tried the handle on the top drawer using a hanky from his pocket. It was locked, and that probably meant there were things inside Keenan hadn't wanted just anyone seeing.

MacGyver pulled his knife out, chose a small blade and placed it in the lock. He put his hand over the main body, and gave it a small whack. There was no precision work required here, it was a crude mechanism, and a cheap bureau, like its owner.

The drawer popped open, and Mac slid it out further. There was a bank book inside and a few receipts. He picked up the book, flipped it open to the latest page and read down the entries using his forefinger as a guide.

There was a large payment in, and after a quick calculation, MacGyver realized it had been paid the week of the kidnapping and murder. *Why? Why pay a cop to frame someone?* The real perp had obviously gotten away with the crime anyway?

Sam returned breaking his dad's mind from further questions.

"Um, dad?" He squirmed uneasily. "Can you smell anything?"

MacGyver looked up from the bank book. He'd been so engrossed in Keenan's finances, his other senses appeared to have gone into sleep mode. Now that Sam mentioned it, he did smell something – gas.

And there was a faint hissing sound too, barely audible, but there.

"Sam! Run!" Mac stuffed the bank book into his jacket as his legs kicked into the fastest sprint he could muster. Sam took point barreling out the door so hard the shutter almost hit his dad in the face as he brought up the rear.

Sam's sneakers hit the garden path and he skidded, almost falling flat on his face. Hands from behind, steadied him, and without looking back he regained balance and lurched forwards.

Just as the gate was close enough to touch, something happened.

The shockwave hit first, knocking both men forwards into one another as the building exploded outwards in a ball of fire and timber, then the sound followed, almost deafening everyone on the street and in the nearby houses.

MacGyver rolled as if he was landing from a parachute jump, then threw his arms in front of his face as he felt pieces of smoldering wood raining down on him. The sky above through his fingers looked black and angry with smoke. "Sam!" he heard himself yell.

"I'm okay, Dad!"

A hand roughly dragged Mac to his feet, and he realized it was Sam. Sam's face was covered in soot, or maybe it was just dirt from the nearby flower bed, Mac wasn't sure. He took the steadying hand that was offered, then stumbled out onto the sidewalk, away from further blasts as the gas main erupted again.

Sam mopped his brow, and then offered Mac a hanky. “Dad, I sure hope you found something in there before it blew, otherwise we just lost any evidence, and I don’t think those guys are gonna be very happy about it.” He jerked a thumb as a black and white cruiser pulled up, shortly followed by a fire department rig, sirens blazing.

Mac patted his pocket. “I got something,” he admitted. “But I’m not sure yet where it will lead us...”

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***Phoenix Foundation Headquarters
L.A. Division***

MacGyver sat on the couch opposite Pete Thornton’s desk, fiddling with a pencil while his boss finished up a call. At his side, Sam mirrored his father – except he was fiddling with the new camera he’d been forced to buy when Keenan hadn’t allowed him back into *Angelina’s Grace*.

After several minutes, Pete finally put the handset down and took a long breath. “It looks like you were right, Mac, someone definitely paid the sheriff to kill Rimmer, the question now is why? I’m betting we have a killer still out there...”

MacGyver sat forward, all interest in the pencil lost. “What’d you find, Pete?”

“It seems the bank payment came from another country – Saudi Arabia, to be exact.” Pete expression said he was baffled. “Why on earth would anyone over there want to frame Jerry Rimmer?”

“Whoa,” Sam agreed. “I didn’t see that coming! I had this all figured out that some local crime lord was probably behind the whole thing and paid Keenan off to get rid of the evidence, burying Jerry in the process.”

Mac ticked up a brow. “Never assume anything, Sam, that’s how mistakes get made.” He pinched the bridge of his nose. “I gotta admit, it’s not what I expected either, though. Do we have a name on the account that paid out?”

Pete shook his head. “Everything was done through shell accounts, fake names, and fake addresses. It took all the pulling power Phoenix has to get a location. And don’t forget, even if we did have a name, Saudi is a none-extradition country right now – we can’t do anything officially.”

“How about unofficially?” Sam pondered, waving his camera in front of his dad. “I mean, I am a journalist and a dang good photographer to boot, I’m sure I can come up with a reason to be over there?”

Mac nodded, then looked to Pete. “Maybe Phoenix can invent us an assignment about camels and their uses in modern society,” he chuckled.

Pete smiled in agreement. “That sounds like a perfect use of Foundation funds to me...”

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Unnamed Villa
Khamees Moshait
Saudi Arabia

MacGyver hunkered down outside the metal fencing that surrounded the villa. It had taken a few days to get the appropriate visas to get out here, even with Phoenix’s connections, and a further two days to find the villa.

Sam had visited earlier in the day, taking seemingly innocent photographs, which were actually intel for their return nighttime visit.

Dusk had long come and gone, and the pair were now casing out security – and it was high. Along with a complete perimeter fence, the villa had numerous armed guards garbed in black suits and a plethora of high grade cameras and motion sensor devices. If that wasn’t enough, Mac had also heard the familiar yelp of security dogs that hadn’t been fed.

“This place is locked down tighter than Fort Knox,” Sam commented, taking a few shots with his night lens. “Why would some rich Arab want to kidnap Becca, or frame Jerry?”

Mac pulled a black hood on to match his entirely black garb and shrugged. “We know Rebecca owned her own company, maybe it has to do with a buyout? Didn’t the files say paying the ransom put her company at risk?”

Sam nodded. “Yeah, but on the grand scale of things, her company wasn’t exactly a global entity. Big yes, but big enough to kill someone to buy out?”

“Sam, people kill over a buck these days, never mind a few million.” MacGyver sighed as he said it. Life was so precious, so fleeting, how could anyone take it over any amount of money?

But it happened, not rarely, but every dang day.

“Okay, so let’s say Mr. Big who lives here was behind it all, how do we get inside to prove it?” Sam pulled on his own hood, but the way his eyes danced with curiosity through the holes suggested he had no clue what they were going to do next.

Mac’s lips curled into a smile and he retrieved his knife from his pocket. “Oh, y’know, with this as usual!” He tossed it up and then caught it teasingly.

“You’re gonna get through the gate, or over the fence, and distract all those guards, dogs and sensors with just your knife? C’mon, Dad...”

Mac winked. "Watch and learn!" Before Sam could argue, he scooted down a small embankment and carefully came to rest behind a bush at the side of the main entrance. Then, he simply waited, with Sam watching from above.

Eventually, headlights approached from the distance, growing ever-closer until a sleek black Mercedes SL came to a stop next to a state of the art card reader. While the driver swiped their I.D. MacGyver rolled under the car and deftly stuck the large blade of his knife into the fuel tank and gently twisted, widening the hole just enough for a steady trickle of gas to splash out.

The driver's brow furrowed, as if he'd heard something, and from his vantage point, Sam held his breath as Mac rolled back stealthily into the bush unseen.

The driver shrugged, the gate opened, and he rolled the Mercedes into a parking spot, then entered the villa.

Sam finally joined his dad. "So some rich dude has a gas leak, how does that help?"

Mac again slid his hand into his pocket, this time bringing out a match.

"Oh boy!" Finally Sam got the picture. "You're gonna blow the empty car?"

"Security will be all over it, leaving the rest of the grounds relatively uncovered. And just look what's next to where the car is parked." Mac pointed to a small shack. The door was slightly ajar, and inside there were banks of cameras. "I doubt the guy in there will be looking at security footage when the Mercedes goes up!"

Sam still wasn't convinced. "That's great, but how do we get in?"

MacGyver paused, thinking on the hoof was great, but it also left a lot of variables you couldn't always deal with. He hoped tonight wasn't one such occasion. He quickly looked around, noting a tree of some sort overhanging the fencing a few meters past the entrance.

If they could get up to it, it might work.

Sam noted his gaze. "Hey, that would be great, except its on the wrong side of the fencing."

Mac wasn't listening. He'd heard the distant sound of an air horn, and was looking down the sand-covered highway that led past the villa. On the horizon, there were headlights, and they growing closer with every passing second. "I'm betting that's a tanker from the refinery down the road," he mused.

"Yeah, how will that help?" Sam wasn't getting it.

"Because the tanker is high enough up for us to use our belts and snag that tree with them, then up and over the fence with the momentum!" MacGyver was on a roll, and began to carefully jog to the opposite side of the road as if he intended hitching a ride on the approaching Peterbilt.

“Dad...have you seen how fast that thing is moving?” Sam waved his camera at the truck, but then had to quickly let his neck strap take the weight of it as Mac tossed him a match and grinned.

“Light the fuel from the Mercedes, then get over here fast! That driver will slow down, maybe even stop when he sees the explosion. Trust me, it’s human nature!”

MacGyver hunkered down just a little, like a runner at the start line as he waited for his ride.

Sam’s eyes widened as he finally got the picture and he scooted back across the highway, just in front of the villa entrance. Two guards prowled back and forth behind the six foot gate, but they didn’t see him as his gloved hand struck the match, then curled back out of sight.

The trail of gas hissed, then ignited, within seconds arching back to the Mercedes and finding its way up into the punctured fuel tank. As the gallons of gas caught fire, the rear end of the sports car lifted off the ground, its metallic frame bursting outwards in a shower of sparks, flames and twisted metal.

As the guards ran in shock and surprise, Sam rejoined his father, and waited for the tanker.

The truck took another two minutes to arrive, but as predicted, as it approached the billowing wreckage, it slowed to a crawl.

MacGyver didn’t waste a moment and grabbed onto a rail on the trailer, quickly climbing up onto the top of the tanker as the villa security men waved the truck onwards, as if they didn’t want anyone reporting what had happened.

Why?

Sam breathlessly joined his dad as the Peterbilt began to gather speed again. Ahead of them, the tree loomed just seconds away. Without speaking, Mac tore off his belt, watching to make sure Sam did the same.

Then, as the tanker roared back into life down the road, Mac dived at the tree he’d pointed out, hooking the loop of his belt around an outstretched branch and then swinging his body up and over the security fence.

He slammed into the bark of the tree the other side, then slithered down to a lower branch, winded and dazed.

Above, he heard a grunt as Sam did much the same, except hitting even harder. “Can we not do that again, like ever?” The younger man complained, shaking his hand where it had been yanked backwards on impact. “Oh, and the explosion might distract security men and truck drivers, but I doubt it works on dogs. What do we do about that little problem?” He dropped from his perch onto the sandy ground below, brushing himself off as MacGyver followed.

Mac shrugged, but didn't waste time dusting himself. "Um, we kinda run...as in real fast!" And to prove a point, he dived straight into a sprint across the artificially-lawned perimeter to the nearest wall.

Sam's eyes widened, then the bark of a Doberman in the distance seemed to make his legs inexplicably move even faster than his father's.

By the time Sam reached the wall, MacGyver was already unwinding an extra-strong cord from under his shirt. He used it like a lasso, snagging the end around a banister on the balcony above. He tugged on it, testing its hold, then quickly began to climb as the guard dogs barking became more insistent as they grew closer.

As soon as MacGyver vanished from sight, Sam grabbed the cord and followed, stopping to catch his breath halfway up. At the top, his dad gave him a helping hand over, then removed the cord from view, while leaving it attached in case of a quick retreat.

"That was fun – not," Sam offered, wiping a hand over his brow. "Remind me why we do this again? Whoever lives here has obviously enough money to make us disappear if we're caught, you know that right?"

MacGyver nodded, heading for what appeared to be the main bedroom anyway. "I know that," he affirmed. "But I also know Jerry Rimmer was innocent, and whoever lives here helped frame him. We have to know why, and we have to find a way to get justice."

Sam shrugged. Apparently he didn't have any arguments on those counts. He pulled out his camera instead, taking random shots of anything that looked interesting.

Mac paused at the bedroom door, surprised by what was inside. This was a woman's bedroom. There was a dressing table with a huge mirror and lots of makeup. So much makeup, it could have belonged to a Hollywood actress. There were even wigs.

Sam whistled quietly when he got the same view as his father. "Whoa, this place belongs to a *woman*? Could this whole thing be over a man? Maybe Rebecca made someone jealous?!"

Mac swallowed. The sex of the perpetrator didn't make them any less guilty, they had to remember that. If this person had framed Jerry, being female shouldn't change a thing. Whatever her reasons, murder was murder.

"Take a look around, we need proof this person, whoever she is, killed Becca, or had Becca killed, or at least a motive..." Mac moved around the room, taking everything in, no matter how small.

Sam put on some gloves and opened up a wardrobe. It was full of very expensive dresses and the shoe rack that was to die for – to most women, at any rate. But there was nothing here to even suggest the villa owner's name, let alone why they'd kill someone a continent away.

A noise from the adjoining corridor made MacGyver pause mid-step, and he was about to dive for cover when a double sliding door to the room skated open.

There was no time to hide, no time to escape.

Mac sucked down a breath, and apparently sensing their joined fate, Sam stepped up beside him. If the security man entering had a gun, he had every excuse in the book to gun them down, and in this country, he just might get away with it – burglars here still sometimes had appendages chopped off in the market square, and that was on a good day. MacGyver hoped Sam wasn't aware of that fact.

“Well, well... I don't often find two handsome men in my bedroom, but then, I doubt you're here to bring me flowers and announce your undying love.”

MacGyver had expected a burly Arab guard, but instead he was standing face to face with a gorgeous blonde that reminded him of Marilyn Monroe, but with more sass.

This was the mysterious villa owner, but could she really have framed Jerry?

Part Three

The stocky guards Mac had expected first filtered into the room behind their mistress. Both wore sunglasses even though it was nighttime, possibly for intimidation purposes, although given their size, they didn't need it.

The woman smiled as if she was looking at two potential lovers, her eyes dancing with something even MacGyver couldn't quite place. Her words didn't match her apparent demeanor. “Get rid of them,” she cooed. “And then we'll talk about how they got in here in the first place...” Without saying more, she breezed back out of the door and vanished.

Both guards stepped forwards, but the elder man pulled a .45 from under his jacket and pointed it at MacGyver and Sam. His face wrinkled into a snarl as he spoke, not to them, but to his companion. “Tie them, I don't want any funny business on the way out.” He had an accent, but it didn't sound Arabic – more southern U.S.A. although with his deep tan and the glasses, it was hard to tell.

The other man did as he was told, magically producing a reel of cord as if he tied people up on a daily basis, but then, maybe he did. He grabbed Mac's wrists, yanking them hard behind his back and fastening them together. He moved to Sam, doing much the same.

“Your boss is a very pretty lady,” MacGyver said quietly as he and Sam were led from the bedroom and down a long flight of stairs. “Mind telling me her name, so I know who just signed my death warrant?”

The elder guard chuckled. “Now who said anything about killing you? The boss said get rid, and that's just what we're doing. We'll leave the rest to nature...” He opened a side door obviously used for the kitchen staff and almost dragged MacGyver

through it, then Sam. There was a black van waiting on the driveway, the side door open inviting them inside. The guard gestured with his automatic. “In you go, time to get a tour of the desert...”

MacGyver frowned then pulled back. He’d seen enough of deserts in his younger days, and he didn’t want Sam stranded in one. Maybe he could cause enough trouble for Sam to make a run for it? Without thinking, he barged forwards, head butting the guard in the stomach and sending him reeling backwards.

The plan should have worked, but a third security man appeared from nowhere. He didn’t waste time joining the fray, but instead whirled the gun in his hand until he held the barrel and the handgrip served as his weapon. With one swift flick of his wrist, he knocked Mac out cold, and without waiting for Sam to fight or protest, he did much the same again, hitting the younger man just hard enough to knock him down.

Both men lay slumped at his feet, hands still tied, and he smiled as if that made him the happiest man alive.

* * * *

MacGyver woke with a headache from hell – but still not the worst headache he’d ever had. He blinked, realizing the sun was straight in his eyes. Sun – the memory of the previous night’s events came back to him, and he suddenly opened his eyes wider to realize he’d been staked out in the sand – no in the desert, to be precise. He looked like a stranded starfish on the beach, ready to be baked alive.

He looked over quickly to his left, then right, hoping to find Sam with him, because dire as the situation was that meant Sam was still alive, at least for now.

Sam was to his right, and also neatly staked out, his wrists and ankles bound to four wooden poles hammered deep into the sand. From their age, and the abundance of dried blood on them, they’d been used often already.

“Dad, is it too early to ask for breakfast?” Sam wearily joked, his voice already sounding hoarse from the lack of water. “A nice ice cold milk would be great right now.”

A black silhouette hovered momentarily over Mac’s face and then was gone. It was the fleeting shadow of a carrion bird, already checking them out – maybe it was used to visiting here for easy pickings. “If we don’t figure out a way off these stakes, the only thing getting breakfast around here will be the ravens.”

“Ugh huh,” Sam agreed with a grunt as he stretched to check out their surroundings. “So what are you waiting for? Saw through the cord with your teeth or something! You’re the one who improvises!”

MacGyver’s lips curled into a half-smile at the tone of his son’s voice. As it happened, he did have something that might help – a little souvenir from the mystery woman’s

bedroom. It had been a painful addition to his motto of picking something up along the way, but right now, he was glad he'd had the idea.

Carefully spinning his wrist in the cord that bound him, Mac maneuvered his hand until he could touch his palm with his fingers. Now was the tricky part. He'd picked up a small pin from the woman's dressing table and deftly pressed it under his skin the night before, as the guards had bounded in the room. Now, he needed to use his fingertips to slowly remove the pin by pulling on the tiny head, and then use the sharp tip to pick laboriously at the cord he was tied with, attacking each fiber over and over until it snapped.

Sam craned his neck, amazed as his father worked, first drawing blood as the pin came from its hiding place beneath his flesh, then yanking on the cord after two hours of gentle persuasion with the pin, until it snapped.

"How the heck did you know you'd need that?" Sam asked incredulous as MacGyver untied his feet, then jumped up to untie his son, sweat dripping from his brow.

"I didn't," Mac admitted. "I never know what I might use anything for when I take it. I usually just work that out as I go."

Sam chuckled and rubbed at his chaffed wrists as he stood up. "That's taking making it up as you go along to a new level."

"No," Mac corrected. "That's surviving – and that's something we still have to do out here, and it's gonna be harder than it sounds." He spun around on the spot, taking in the never ending vista of sand and dunes. He shaded his eyes, but it didn't make their predicament look any better. "I think we're in the Rub-Al-Khali," he explained.

Sam raised a brow as if he understood, then sucked down a breath. "Exactly what is that? It's sounds straight out of a Kipling novel."

"It means 'empty quarter' and it's not called that for nothing." MacGyver winced. "It can get up to fifty-one degrees out here, and as we have no provisions, no shelter, no idea where we are..."

Sam smiled despite what he was being told. "You'll figure it. You always do. Can't we navigate with the sun, or the moon and stars or something?" He pondered, wiping his brow with his forearm.

"Maybe," Mac conceded, and we really should travel at night when it's cool, but I don't think we have the time." He gestured in his best guess at the right direction. "C'mon, I would say race you, but not in this heat."

Sam moved off first. "Yeah, that's because you know I'd win, you being an old man and all!"

Mac moved into step beside him. "Yeah, but age and speed isn't going to save us," he countered with a small smile. "I'll take my brains over your youth any day."

Sam smiled back. “Actually, so would I...”

* * * *

The afternoon sun burned hot, so hot MacGyver could feel its intensity on the sand through his sneaker soles. Some people said you could fry an egg out here some days, and right now, he wouldn't dispute it.

Every muscle ached with the effort of walking without fresh water for hydration. He'd used his shirt to make them both impromptu Arabian style kuffiyas, but it was little help in the situation.

“I wonder how long before we start seeing things, you know like a mirage or something,” Sam pondered blearily as he dragged his feet through the sand, each step getting slower. “Because you know, right now, I swear I see a big old pickup on the horizon.” He pointed for effect, but his timbre suggested he wasn't convinced.

MacGyver followed his son's gaze and realized he was also staring at a truck – a red Chevy Blazer to be precise – or at least what was left of one. Its carcass looked like it had long been attacked by the scavengers of time itself. The tires were gone, slithers of perished rubber stretching out behind the rusting wheels, and most of the glass had been shattered.

The red paintwork had dulled to an almost pink hue, and in places it had succumbed to the sun completely, peeling back like necrotic skin on a metal skeleton.

Mac looked at his watch. It would be dark soon. There was just time to check the truck for anything useful, and then they'd make camp here. He had a few ideas for food and water, and the truck might actually help.

“Okay, we'll take a break by the Chevy, it will be sundown soon,” MacGyver instructed. “I'll check out the truck, then we'll see what we can camp with.”

Sam grimaced. “I hope you find something in the truck, or it will be a dang sparse camp...”

Mac broke into a jog, reaching the truck in just two minutes. He reached out to pull the door handle, then recoiled when he realized how hot the metal was. That was a good thing. Cold nights here in the empty quarter followed by heat the next morning would be fruitful. He took off his homemade headdress, wrapped it around his hand and tried again.

The inside of the Blazer was a faded and worn as the exterior. The plush seats were holed and threadbare. MacGyver ignored the state of the trim and picked up a piece of broken glass from the windshield. Using it, he cut the remaining material from the seats and tossed it outside. The truck was old, old enough he hoped not to have fire retarded standards in place.

When the temperature dropped, anything he could scavenge would be good to burn and keep them comfortable. A lizard slithered from under the passenger seat as he

worked and he paused – it had been a long time since he'd been forced to harm anything to eat, the last time he'd cooked lizard, it had been with a very pretty photographer. Mac smiled, then felt just a little saddened when he looked back at the lizard, but sometimes sacrifices had to be made, and he had Sam to think about now.

Two hours later, darkness had covered the arid landscape except for the small fire MacGyver had mustered from some pieces of wood from the truck's dash and the seat coverings. A stick over the fire held the carefully prepared lizard – well, as careful as anyone could be with just a fragment of glass as their impromptu knife.

Sam watched the flames as his father cooked. "I never ate lizard before," he offered, his face screwing into a frown. "I guess it's my punishment for not packing Twinkies." He sighed. "I'm sure it will taste great, but I really need a drink..." He licked his lips and the skin was so dry it cracked and bled slightly.

MacGyver knew the feeling, his lips were much the same, and he even felt a little lightheaded. Real dehydration would set in soon, but of, course he had a plan. He offered up a chunk of meat. "We'll drink in the morning," he said cryptically.

* * * *

Sam awoke just as the sun was peeking over the horizon. He yawned, stretched his arms and realized they ached more than he'd care to admit. He rubbed at his gritty eyes and looked around when he noted his dad was already up.

MacGyver looked to be cleaning the ancient pickup's hood, which made no sense at all. Sam craned his neck, and when he still couldn't see what was going on, he drew himself up and stood.

Mac smiled and offered up a very wet t-shirt. "Squeeze this into your mouth. Not exactly a full-on drink, but it will wet your lips."

"Condensation formed on the hood, and you mopped it off with a cloth we can squeeze back out!" Sam grinned. "Nice one, Dad, but it won't exactly keep us alive." He took the offered t-shirt and squeezed anyway, the cold liquid felt like ambrosia to his lips.

Mac did much the same with another piece of t-shirt, then began examining the truck's mirrors. One was hanging off, but the glass wasn't broken. He seemed to fixate on that one.

"Now what?" Sam asked, wiping his forehead with the drained cloth in his hand. It still felt cool and calming.

"Mirrors can be great tools," Mac said almost cryptically.

"I know they're good for making fire," Sam agreed, "But that's hardly helpful out here."

Mac ignored him, wrenched out the last bolt and looked over the mirror like it was gold. “C’mon, we better get moving...”

“What, no breakfast again?” Sam tried to sound cheerful, but inside he felt hollow, and not just from the lack of food. Some deep, dark part of him believed they would die out here and be fodder for the birds and insect life, and no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t shake it.

They walked on in silence for awhile, both men apparently thinking the same thing, but not wanting say it out loud. Footsteps, turned from precise moves to dragging limbs after just half an hour, and Sam felt like every breath was breathing in superheated air.

He sucked down a lungful anyway, and then exhaled so loud MacGyver stopped in his tracks.

Sam instantly regretted the slip, but then quickly realized his father’s sudden coming to a halt had nothing to do with his weary body after all.

MacGyver was shading his eyes and looking into the distance at a large dune slightly to their east.

“I thought I saw a reflection off something,” MacGyver explained helpfully.

“Out here?” Sam squinted, but he didn’t see anything.

“It could be a local tribesman,” Mac countered. “They’re mostly the only people that venture into the Empty Quarter all that often.” He flipped the mirror he’d scavenged over in his hand, then began to flash it to and fro in the direction of the dune.

“You’re using it to signal!” Sam realized with a grin. “Do you think they’d see us this far? Would they even realize?”

“Trust me, they’ll see us. Nothing much gets past those guys out here.” Mac continued to move the mirror around until two minutes later something flashed back. It repeated rhythmically letting them know it wasn’t just a fluke.

“Aw man, we’re saved...” Sam frowned as his vivid imagination kicked in. “These guys don’t go around with big knives slitting their enemies’ throats, right?”

“Sometimes,” MacGyver replied, and then grinned. “But as I don’t think we’re anyone’s enemy except the mystery woman, I think we’ll be okay.”

“Yeah? Knowing our luck, she’ll be one of the tribesmen’s sisters,” Sam grumbled, then crumpled down onto the sand and waited for their rescuers to arrive. He only hoped they had a spare camel, because he wasn’t sure he could walk any further.

* * * *

MacGyver watched as the desert passed him by dune after dune in almost the blink of an eye – at least, that was how it felt after traveling on foot for over a day. Across from him, Sam sat in the rear bed of the bouncing Jeep and still looked incredulous.

When Mac had signaled the Bedouin tribesmen with the mirror, Sam had expected them to turn up clad in robes and riding camels. Instead, the three locals had driven up in a somewhat battered '77 Jeep and offered up a semi-comfortable ride, at least compared to what they would have gotten on a dromedary.

“I still can’t believe we’re in a Jeep!” Sam grinned from ear to ear. “I need to come out here with a camera and do an article on these guys, they’re amazing!”

“You’re young, you’ve a lot to still learn about people, with or without your camera.” Mac smiled back, looking at the teenage Arab driving them. It was obvious that in his culture responsibility was given at a much younger age, and this kid had accepted it comfortably. He had saved them from the desert with no questions, offering up a ride to the nearest settlement of Sharurah like they’d been hitching a ride on Route 66 instead of in the middle of the Najran Province’s emptiest sector.

“My cultural naivety aside, now what do we do?” Sam asked with a sigh. “The U.S. has no treaty with this country for extradition, even if we could prove the mystery woman is the bad guy – and just who is she anyway? A jealous lover? Something more?” He looked across the lonely terrain as they moved, thinking, his face a masque of bitterness as if he had been the one accused.

“First up, we need a name. We need to identify her, and then the reasoning might just fall into place,” MacGyver pointed out, rubbing a hand through his semi-matted mullet. “But if Pete couldn’t put a name to her, just an address, I think this gonna be a tough one...”

“Sam grinned again suddenly as the Jeep bounced over a rut. “Maybe not,” he grunted out with rough the motion. “I found this in her bedroom, just before she came in!” He slid a hand into the side pocket of his jeans and pulled out a cigarette butt. There was lipstick on it, suggesting it was the woman’s.

MacGyver nodded, seeing where his son was going. “Your thinking D.N.A. testing can pick up something off that? And Phoenix has several top experts in that field! They were actually trained by Alec Jeffreys!”

Sam exhaled like their excitement wasn’t fair and Mac understood. Jerry had died because of all this.

“Maybe it’s ironic that it was D.N.A. tests on blood that got Jerry convicted, and now that same testing might exonerate him – even if it is too late.” Sam put the butt in his shirt pocket and patted it. “How much longer before we can get to Sharurah and contact Pete?”

Mac looked at the horizon and the slowly setting sun. “Too long,” He admitted.

* * * *

*Phoenix Central office
Riyadh
Saudi Arabia
Sometime later...*

MacGyver hated waiting, but this time, he'd had to – the D.N.A. fingerprinting procedure was still pretty new, and it took time. Mistakes could not be made, or a killer may be left to roam free.

While everyone had been on tenterhooks for the lab technicians to get a result, Pete Thornton had flown over to supervise things personally. He was now sitting opposite Mac and Sam with an expression that said he was just as annoyed as they were about sitting around, while the mystery woman carried on living the life of an apparent millionaire.

Pete let his fingers stroke his Braille watch for the seventh time and then began tapping on the table with a pencil he'd managed to find.

"Sheesh, Pete, I thought I was the one that tinkered with things when I got restless!" MacGyver teased.

"Yeah, well it's hot in here!" Pete grumbled, loosening his tie. "Maybe the air conditioning isn't working..."

"Maybe you're just as all fired up about this case as we are, more likely," Mac countered. "Technology is a wonderful thing – until you have to wait for it."

A knock at the door silenced them all and Pete's temporary secretary breezed in with an envelope. She offered it up. "This just came in from the lab, Mr. Thornton." She nodded, pressed it gently into Pete's palm and then retreated as he thanked her.

Like the watch, the envelope writing and what was inside had been prepared especially for him in Braille as well as ordinary typeface.

Pete took down a breath and carefully tore it open to pull out the report. He let his fingertips glide over the embossed writing not once, but three times, his eyebrows rising in both shock and surprise. "This can't be right," he murmured. "Either I'm reading this wrong or the lab made a mistake..."

MacGyver stood up, quickly moved behind the desk and read the report over Pete's shoulder. His brow rose almost as rapidly as his boss's.

"Well will you two put me out my misery!" Sam complained. "What can it say that has got both of you so all wound up!"

Pete dropped the paper on the table. "It says the woman who smoked that cigarette was Rebecca Dunlevy..."

Sam blinked. “But that’s the woman Jerry was supposed to have killed! I thought Phoenix had the best scientists in the world?”

“We do,” Pete insisted. “That’s why when this result came in they redid the test – it still says the same.”

MacGyver ran a hand through his hair, this puzzle had just taken a turn even he hadn’t seen coming, and now somehow, they had to make sure justice was done by getting Dunlevy back to the U.S. The question was, how?”

Part Four

MacGyver took a moment to digest what was going on. He turned and walked to the office window, looking outside to the panoramic view of the capital. Tall buildings filled the skyline, ruining the stereotypical mind’s image of a Middle Eastern country. The heavens, though, were what everyone expected out here – a perfect unmarked crystal blue.

He turned back to Pete and Sam, a small smile creeping back onto his features. “Y’know, the perfect way to deal with someone like this is to give them a taste of their own medicine?”

Pete frowned, closely followed by Sam. “I don’t understand?” He admitted.

Mac moved back to his old friend’s’ huge desk and leaned on it. “Can you get me any files on Rebecca Dunlevy? Personal stuff?”

Pete still looked bewildered, but pressed a button on his phone and asked his secretary to bring up any information she could on Phoenix’s computer system and print it. Twenty minutes later, she knocked on the door, entered and placed a small manila folder in front of Pete before retreating.

It had been hastily prepared, and wasn’t in Braille.

Pete passed it over to MacGyver. “This is your idea, whatever it is, care to do the honors?”

Mac read the first couple of pages silently and stopped. “This will work,” he said nodding his head. “But I’m going to need a partner in crime to deal with things this end, while I go talk to Dunlevy...”

“Partner in crime for what?” Both Pete and Sam chimed.

“Oh, just kidnapping Rebecca’s teenage son and holding him for a ransom she has to pay personally, on American soil.” Mac shrugged. “I’m guessing she won’t like a taste of her own medicine, but seeing as he’s at an expensive school in Boston she won’t have much choice. From her file, he’s the only thing she’s ever cared about.”

Pete's face twisted into despair, and he rubbed at his brow. "Mac, you know the penalty for kidnapping, even if it is to catch a killer. I can't let you do this!" He rubbed at his forehead as he shook it, but MacGyver was adamant.

"Trust me, Pete, have I ever done anything you wouldn't do?" Mac waited patiently for an answer.

Pete winced. "Do you really want me to answer that?"

* * * *

One week later
Rebecca Dunlevy's' Villa
Main Gate

MacGyver pulled the hire car to a stop and quickly glanced at himself in the rearview mirror. The image that glared back at him wore glasses, and dressed like a geek – a somewhat older version of Dexter Fillmore, but it was still recognizable as the man that had been here before. He wanted Dunlevy to remember him from that night, and remember sending him to the desert to die.

Not that MacGyver intended revenge, but he needed Rebecca to think otherwise.

A guard stepped up to the car and tapped on his window. MacGyver lowered it. "I believe your boss is expecting me. It's about Harry."

The security man's complexion seemed to pale and he waved for a second man to open the gate. They directed MacGyver to a parking spot, and then moved into step beside him to enter the villa.

Once inside, MacGyver found himself being frisked with a metal detector before finally being ushered into a huge air conditioned lounge.

Dunlevy was waiting, her face expressionless, even though Mac knew she was probably terrified inside – terrified of what he would do to her son, Harry James Dunlevy if she didn't follow his direct instructions.

"What do you want?" Rebecca asked, her voice cracking just a touch as she spoke.

"I think you know what I'm here for." MacGyver chose his words carefully. "I assume you've watched the video?"

Rebecca picked up a remote and pressed a button. A huge screen magically appeared from the edge of the couch she was sitting across from and images and sound blurred from it with a crackle, like the footage had been homemade and the sound was not quite right.

Sam appeared first, and then he seemed to drag another man into the frame. On closer inspection, the second person appeared no more than a teenager, and his smile seemed false.

“Mom...I need you to come out here. I need you to bring four million dollars in person or I’m going to have a big problem. As in BIG problem. I hope you understand, it has to be you, and it has to be four million...” Harry’s voice quivered and he looked over to Sam as if he was being prompted.

Sam stepped forwards, taking up the whole of the screen. “That’s right Mrs. Dunlevy...we really need you here, or else...”

The screen went blank and Rebecca switched off the video recorder. “I could just pay you now, and you set him free,” she cooed. “Why do I need to go in person?”

MacGyver smiled and pulled off his glasses. “We know who you are – and that means we also know what you’re capable of. You already framed a man, and probably had at least one other removed. Let’s just say we’d feel safer if you were there in person. Anyone tries anything like what happened to the sheriff, and you go with us...”

Dunlevy’s face reddened, not in embarrassment, but in apparent anger. “You can’t tell me what to do, and you certainly can’t tell anyone about me – not after what you’ve done. You know the penalty for kidnapping as well as I do.”

“Only if we get caught,” MacGyver pointed out calmly. “And that’s not going to happen. You try and turn us in, and Harry will end up just like the Sheriff, or maybe we’ll just frame him like you did poor Jerry Rimmer.”

“He was a means to an end, nothing more, nothing less.” Dunlevy poured herself a scotch but didn’t offer MacGyver one. “You can’t prove I did anything. All you know is that I’m still alive.”

Mac nodded. “Just how did you pull off all that blood in the freezer? D.N.A. matched it to you one hundred percent, and there was too much of it...”

Rebecca smiled. “People like me, people with money, we have our own blood stored in case of an accident. That way there’s no risk of getting someone else’s diseases from it.” She shrugged smarmily. “I suppose someone must have gotten their hands on mine and used it, and you’ll have a hard time proving who that was.”

“Because you killed them,” MacGyver replied quietly.

“That’s just your opinion.”

MacGyver paused a moment in thought then continued. “You know, blood doesn’t keep long enough for you to have stored that amount, and you can’t give more than a pint or so at a time. How did you pull that one off?”

Rebecca slugged the scotch and poured another. “You forget I am the boss of a huge pharmaceutical company. We have a wonderful research lab. There are new ways of freezing blood, let’s just say we’re on the edge of that technology.”

“You *had* a company,” MacGyver corrected. “You lost all that when you died.”

“Really?” Dunlevy cooed again, shifting her position like she was an ancient queen on her throne of power. “My husband Lyle *almost* lost it me is what you mean. He let too many of my shares out in the open market. He wanted to cash in without me knowing. It was almost too late when I found out, we were about to have a hostile takeover bid, until I...apparently died. Wouldn’t you know, the shares crashed after my kidnapping, and once I was set up here I was able to get them all back, and at a great price. So you see, I’m the still the boss, just call me...a silent shareholder. And those shares are already picking up again.”

MacGyver shook his head. “How many people have you killed for your seat of power?”

Rebecca smiled again, her face feigning innocent shock. “But I’ve already told you, I haven’t hurt anyone. All I did was leave my husband Lyle. How was I to know all these miles away that there had been a kidnapping threat? I think Jerry must have overheard me at the gas station talking on my cell about leaving my husband, and he must have come up with the ridiculous kidnapping lie to get money, and it backfired on him. That’s my story, if this ever comes out. But it won’t, will it, because you’re no better than me...”

MacGyver squirmed at the accusation, but for Jerry’s sake, he had to continue with the ploy. “Just be at the old mine I told you about in our telephone conversation, three days from now, and there won’t be any problems.”

“Not for me at least,” Rebecca almost snarled, leaving MacGyver with a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach.

* * * *

Abandoned Mine
Just outside Mission City
Minnesota
Three days later...

MacGyver wasn’t sure how he felt about bringing Sam to his childhood haunt, but at the end of the day it was somewhere secluded, and yet familiar – a place Rebecca and any of her goons wouldn’t know the layout of.

He looked across in the semi-darkness with just two lamps illuminating the scene to see his son looking nervously down the shaft that led to the outside world. It was evening, but here the last rays of sun had no meaning.

“Do you think she’ll show?” Sam whispered, trying not to let his words echo off the rocky subterranean cavern.

MacGyver nodded. “She’ll come,” he confirmed. “Just about the only thing she loves more than herself is that kid...”

“You’re right...” A voice so quiet they almost didn’t hear it seeped down the tunnel and bounced around the mine. The voice was followed by the barrel of a pistol emerging from the gloom, pointed in their direction. “The problem is, I don’t see Harry anywhere...you better not have hurt him, or you’ll die here.” Dunlevy paused, “Actually, you just might die here anyway. Now where is my son?”

MacGyver stepped forwards, putting his body between Rebecca’s weapon and Sam. “Your son is in school, right where you left him.”

Rebecca’s brow furrowed. “I don’t understand?”

“I’m not a kidnapper, Rebecca, and neither is my son, Sam. We’re here to get justice for Jerry Rimmer, and the only way to do that was to get you back on U.S. soil. When we told your son, Harry the truth about what you did, he was only too happy to help us make that video – he couldn’t believe it at first, but we showed him the evidence...”

“Harry wouldn’t trust you – not against his own mother!” Rebecca’s tone had changed from cocky to furious in a heartbeat.

“Then how do you explain it?” MacGyver kept his voice low and neutral.

Rebecca took a moment, her hand flexing on the trigger of her gun. She pursed her lips, and then finally spoke. “If you don’t have Harry, you don’t need the money, and you certainly don’t get to live to tell anyone about my D.N.A.” She gestured her head, and two goons appeared as if by magic. They moved into position at her side. “Take care of them, and this time, do it right.”

Both men nodded and moved forwards as Rebecca vanished into the shadows, her footfalls deep and rumbling on the hard ground as she escaped the mine.

MacGyver shrugged and looked at the men. “You know, if you shoot us, you could bring the mine down on top of you too. This place is pretty insecure.” He gestured to a cave-in he remembered all-too well after an encounter with a deadly scarecrow. “Not to mention, bullets mean murder, and you taking the fall for a boss that really doesn’t care about you. Rebecca will let you fry, you know that right? Just like she did Jerry Rimmer?”

The goons looked at one another. After a tense moment, the tallest of the two took another step until his nose was almost touching Mac’s. He smiled. “Who said we were going to shoot you?” He looked back at his partner. “In fact, a little cave in might just be what we need right now – except we’ll be on the right side of it.” He nodded and pulled out a Remington six shooter, his cohort pulled out a much larger Desert Eagle.

They both pointed the weapons at Mac and Sam, but made no attempt to shoot. Instead, they backed up, heading to the only way out that wasn’t blocked by ancient debris.

MacGyver didn’t attempt to follow, and held a hand back, signaling to Sam not to move either.

When the men seeped away into the darkness, MacGyver dived backwards, taking Sam with him. Seconds later, gunfire filled the mine, but it wasn't aimed at anyone, but rather the rotting ceiling beams and timbers that made the shaft viable.

Smoke, dirt and thousands of slithers of wood erupted into the already dusty atmosphere, and seconds later a thundering crack indicated the demise of a huge section of the roof area. Earth, timber and tiny fragments of rock rained down on Mac and Sam, almost burying them in rubble.

Another crack, and more of the shaft gave way in front of them, sealing off the already dangerous entrance forever.

Darkness and silence filled the mine and for a moment nothing stirred. Then a small pocket of debris exploded skywards as MacGyver moved. "Well that went well," he grumbled, unearthing himself from the carnage.

"Almost like clockwork," Sam agreed, pushing up and dusting his clothes off while assessing himself for damage. "You okay, Dad?"

"Been here, done this before," Mac answered with a grunt as he flicked on a small pocket light. "And got the bruises all over again," he confirmed. "I'd love to know what kept the cavalry from storming in, though..." He looked around assessing the situation now he had light. "Neil is usually a lot more punctual than this..."

Sam squirmed. "You don't think Rebecca's goons got to him first?"

Mac shook his head. "What, and the hundred and one feds he brought for back up? Nope, I think Becca got in here unannounced somehow. I just hope Neil and the rest of the posse got them on the way out."

"Speaking of way out," Sam squirmed again. "Seeing as this is your old playground, I don't suppose you know of another exit?"

"Are you kidding?" MacGyver answered honestly. "I had to blow that thing open last time I was here." He pointed to the sealed over shaft that led to the outside. "And before you ask, nope, I don't have any more explosives. I almost blew myself up moving the last lot here to get out."

Sam blew out air in exasperation. "Yeah, you'll have to tell me all about the scarecrow thing sometime. But for now, any of those bright ideas coming into your head?"

MacGyver ran a hand through his mullet, knocking out plumes of dust and wood chips. "I was kinda hoping you would take up the family tradition and save the day this time. There are a few open shafts down here, but none that lead outside – at least none that I know of. I guess we could search a few, but the batteries in this thing will only last so long."

“But Neil and the feds will come looking for us once they pick up Dunlevy, right?” Sam pulled out a pocket knife like his dad’s. “Somehow, the usefulness of this thing in this situation escapes me...tell me why I bought one with me again?” He grinned mischievously.

“Because you’re a sentimentalist, not a survivalist?” Mac teased back as he headed off down a narrow passage with walls that oozed water. “Which isn’t actually very helpful right now, like the knife.” He paused as a small blast of air hit him in the face.

“What is it, Dad?”

“Fresh air.” Mac fumbled in his pocket, drew out a match and lit it on his boot. The flame billowed as air rushed down past it, not from the side, but from above. He dropped the match as it started to burn his fingers and then lit another.

Sam looked upwards as MacGyver pointed his flashlight in that direction. There was a shaft above them – probably put in by the miners to help with airflow. There was no light from topside, however, meaning the opening might be very small after many years of the mine being abandoned. There was also not enough light to tell how high up the shaft went.

“Okay...I don’t suppose you know where that leads?” Sam said with a tinge of hope in his voice.

“Not a clue,” MacGyver admitted. “To be honest I didn’t even know there were any shafts like that. Something that was lost on us as kids, I guess.” He moved closer to the sides of the mine, touching and feeling each one in turn to get an idea of the surface and how hard it would be to climb. There was no ladder and probably never had been, so they would need hand and footholds.

And there were no safety ropes down here, and limited light. One mistake if the shaft was high, and they were dead. On the other hand, there was no real way to tell if Neil Ryder and the feds that should have burst in to arrest Rebecca would ever find them, either.

At least not in time.

Sam seemed to sense his father’s thoughts. “You’re going to suggest we try climbing up there, right?” he shuddered, not from the chill of the mine, but from the idea.

MacGyver nodded. “I’m experienced at this kind of thing, I’ll go first. There’s no point in both of us risking it if there’s no way out up there.” Before Sam could argue, he slipped the mini light into his mouth, grabbed a nearby beam and used it as leverage to push up to the nearest foothold.

Instantly, he realized it was going to be a difficult climb. The walls were wet and slimy, making any ascent a slippery one. His right hand fell away from the wall and he quickly swung around, using his weight for momentum to grab another jutting rock edge.

Below, he heard Sam catch his breath. At least once he got further up Sam wouldn't be able to see his near misses. If that's what they were, he chided himself.

"Dad?" Sam's voice echoed off the walls, and his questioning tone meant Mac was already out of sight.

"I'm alright," Mac answered breathlessly as his already numb fingertips perched precariously on a ledge. He took a moment to breathe and to spin his head around, letting his tiny light give him a three hundred sixty degree view of his surroundings.

There was an outcrop jutting from the wall here, not quite large enough to hold a man, but large enough to mean Mac didn't have much room to push through into the space above. He sighed, maybe he was getting that middle age spread everyone talked about. *Not if you're gonna be a grandpa, remember that, and get your butt down to the gym a little more often...*

Mac smiled at his own thought and reached up for a new hold, letting his hands search out something suitable when his eyes couldn't find anything. He touched a sharp jutting edge, and grabbed it, sliding himself past the outcrop and up into the space beyond.

He paused again, caught his breath and then closed his eyes as his head brushed through a mass of spider webs and long-dead insects the owners had consumed. Beyond that, the shaft opened up, and finally he saw a glimmer of light. The sight gave him more confidence, and he covered the last few feet more quickly until his legs rested on a ledge, leaving his skull just inches from rotting timbers that covered the top of the shaft.

A cockroach dropped down through his hair and onto his jacket, but he ignored it. "I'm at the top!" He shouted down to Sam.

"And..?"

"I'm working on it." MacGyver held on with just one hand and his weight on tentative footholds as he used his light to survey the opening.

As it was, there was no way through – blackened and soaked timbers blocked the exit except for tiny gaps made by termites and weathering.

The wood did look decayed in several sections, and Mac wondered if he could yank it down with a little brute force. He used his free hand to slip into his pocket and retrieve his knife. He flicked open the blade and poked at the beams. It was very soft in some areas.

Retracting the blade back, he popped the corkscrew. Maybe he could "drill" into the soft wood with it enough to wrench it down with a good tug. He used all the strength in his upper arms and forced the corkscrew in as far as it would go, and there was surprising resistance once he'd gotten through the first layer of the timber. That probably wasn't a good sign.

“You might want to move away from the shaft,” Mac warned Sam. “Something might be coming your way...”

When a muffled “okay” filtered up the tunnel, MacGyver tugged on the knife handle with everything he had. The wood creaked and groaned, and for a second seemed to bow in the middle, but it refused to collapse as he’d hoped.

“Well that was a none-event!” Sam shouted up seconds later. “What are you doing?”

“Failing miserably?” Mac quipped as he re-assessed his next move.

The only thing in their way was the blackened beam – the only way to budge said beam was more weight, and more weight meant MacGyver letting go his tenuous hold altogether and swinging on the knife handle. Of course, it was too small to grip for long, but he hoped the yanking motion would be enough to shatter the weakened wood.

He also hoped the ledge he’d had to squeeze past earlier would either be a good landing spot, or at least would break an otherwise long fall.

Mac pursed his lips. The shaft was lined with lots of old tree roots and vines. Maybe he could cut some free and drop them down onto the shelf to cushion his landing? He retrieved his knife from the beam and began to slice quickly through the natural padding on offer, tossing it rapidly into the abyss below while his feet still had tenure on the rock face.

Some of the spoils apparently fell too far.

“Say, Dad? I hate to ask, but are you gardening up there?”

Mac had to smile. “Yeah, I know,” he answered. “There’s a first for everything, right?” He tossed the last vestiges of anything useful and dug the corkscrew quickly back into the central section of the beam. “You might want to get out of the way again, Son...”

Sam seemed to detect the urgency in his father’s voice. “Son? You never call me that...”

Mac wrapped his grimy, sweat-covered fingers around the handle of the knife, took a long gulp of air, and closed his eyes as he pushed his feet away from the shaft wall into nothing.

There was a jarring motion that left his fingers, knuckles and shoulder feeling wrenched and sore for all of a nanosecond, then MacGyver felt himself falling in the darkness. For a moment, he wondered if this was how it felt for Murdoc when he fell from the mountain that time. Then, the thought was lost as his ribs impacted with sharp rock through his bed of roots and the air rushed from his lungs.

Everything would have gone black for a minute, maybe two, but down here it was black anyway, like an unending wormhole in space.

“Dad? DAD!” Sam was screaming into the shaft, and MacGyver thought he heard scratching, like Sam was trying to climb up after him.

“Sam, no! I’m okay...I think...” Mac blinked, opened his eyes and realized he was looking up at daylight. The beam had broken and they had a way out. He blinked again, noting his hand was clutching something so tightly his bloodied knuckles were white.

It was the Swiss Army knife that had ultimately saved their lives. *And that, Sam, is why I brought one with me!* MacGyver’s lips curled into an ear to ear grin, even if the moment was lost on his son, and his earlier comment.

* * * *

Angelina’s Grace
Corral Canyon Park
California
A few days later...

“So let me get this straight,” Andy asked as she hung a bauble on the recently cut Christmas tree, “you guys lured Rebecca to the mine with the white lie that you’d kidnapped her son, because you actually *wanted* her to try and kill you?”

Sam passed over another glass decoration that had a frosty white coating like snow. “Yeah, we really weren’t sure we could prove she killed anyone, or set up her fake kidnapping – after all, she could have just run away and left her life behind and Jerry could have used it to get money. We needed something we could really pin on her, like our attempted murders, except Neil and the feds were supposed to burst in and save the day...”

“And they didn’t,” MacGyver finished for him, munching on a stick of celery. “Well, at least not right away, trust Neil to be late! They arrested Rebecca and her goons before they could get back onto the highway, but it took them another hour to start digging out the mine.”

“By which time we’d already made good our escape!” Sam grinned, then sauntered over and hugged Andy.

She forgot the tree and kissed him lightly on the lips. “Next time, I think I better come along and make sure you men know exactly what you’re getting into. I don’t want to be alone this holiday, yah know?” She winked, and then pulled free. “So what happens to Rebecca now? Prison?”

“Hopefully,” MacGyver tossed the end of the celery in the trash can and picked up the star for the top of the tree. Using a chair for height, he popped it in place and then stood back, arms folded to admire his handiwork. “Ultimately, she got an even worse punishment, though.”

Andy raised a brow. “Oh?”

“Yep, her son Harry has disowned her,” Sam plugged in the festive lights as he spoke, there was a fizz, a pop, and the whole room went dark.

Andy giggled. “Jeez, aren’t the MacGyver clan supposed to fix things, not break them?” She sighed, and then padded into the kitchen area to the breakers. After a minute, the light returned and so did Andy. “So is Jerry exonerated? Or did you just get her on the attempted murder charges?”

“Pete’s working on clearing Jerry’s name,” Mac confirmed, examining the lights for the cause of the outage. “He’s pretty sure they can clear Jerry, but it will take time, and until then, Dunlevy is behind bars on the other charges.”

Andy smiled, then wrapped an arm around Sam’s waist. “I love happy endings,” she cooed.

MacGyver cleared his throat. It was now or never. “Speaking of which, didn’t you guys originally ask me here to tell me something?”

Sam and Andy looked at one another and smiled. “Do you want to tell him?” Sam asked cryptically.

MacGyver caught his breath as Andy stepped forwards.

“Well...you know how I’m more with the words, and Sam is the picture guy?”

Mac frowned. This wasn’t going where he expected. “Yeah...”

“I’m quitting the paper and the freelance stuff, Dad, and we’re going into partnership together. I think we’ll make a great team!” Sam clasped Andy’s hand and squeezed, and she looked up at him dreamily.

The pair seemed caught in one another’s gaze for an eternity before Sam noticed the strange look on MacGyver’s, it was almost like he’d zoned out.

And the great Angus MacGyver never zoned out.

“Dad, are you okay..?” There was a brief silence.

Then Mac answered. “I err...that wasn’t what I was expecting!” He blushed slightly and realization dawned on Sam’s face.

“Oh Dad, you thought you were going to be the next Grandpa Harry?” He choked out a laugh and then fell down onto the couch chuckling as his father looked positively mortified.

Andy blinked. “Well, y’know, that might not be such a bad idea, one day...”

Mac smiled. “Just not yet, okay, I haven’t got being a dad down pat yet, and look!” He pulled at several strands of his hair. “Neil was right, I’m going grey with this parenting stuff!”

Andy joined Sam in more laughter as she dropped down beside him. “I think you should finish off the decorations as punishment,” she said to MacGyver with a mischievous smile.

Mac grinned back. “I guess I’m not going to MacGyver my way out of this one, huh?”

“Nope,” Sam agreed. “In fact, it might even cost you an extra Christmas present. You know, I’ve always fancied a pick up truck as well as my bike? Say, maybe a Dodge Ram with extra chrome and some air horns?”

“Sounds like you’re looking for something bigger to put kids in to me,” MacGyver teased back as he hung a glittering lantern from the ceiling. “Don’t worry, you can always borrow the Jeep!” He winked as Sam groaned.

“You’re cheap you know that, Dad?”

MacGyver’s eyes twinkled. “It’s called recycling! Now who’s for some of my home made eggnog? Speaking of grandpas, Harry helped me perfect the recipe...” He moved to the refrigerator where he’d already prepared an abundance of the beverage. “You know,” he glanced over to Sam and Andy, “someday, I really would love a little mini MacGyver to invent things with? I guess I’m just a little...”

Sam nodded. “Scared? Don’t worry, I get it. And hey, who knows maybe this time next year you’ll get your wish!”

Andy threw a pillow over his face. “Oh really?” She questioned mockingly.

“I wouldn’t push your luck, Sam,” Mac agreed playfully as he handed out drinks. “Not even at Christmas...”

The End

