

What can break and what never will

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What can break and what never will

by [Selenicereus](#)

Summary

Mac gets kidnapped. Jack and the team do everything they can to save him before it's too late.

Notes

I just got a new computer and some of the keys don't like to work so I'm getting a lot more errors in my work then normal. That being said I'm looking for a few people who would be willing to edit for me. If you are interested shoot me a message. And if there are any errors in this first part please let me know so I can edit it.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mac didn't understand it. The science behind it wasn't the problem; on a theoretical level brainwashing was a very interesting topic. Recently doctors have been trying to unlock the secrets of the brain to help the body heal itself faster, better. Going further back in the history there are records as far back as the Korean war pointing to the CIA experimenting in brainwashing.

No theory was all one thing, but actual implementation was something else altogether. In fact, Mac thought it would remain impossible. There should be some things that remain a mystery, otherwise life would be boring.

Yet here he was, trapped in his own head.

About two weeks earlier:

The team was called in and soon on a plane to the Aegean Sea. They all managed to get some sleep on the plane which turned out to be the most relaxing part of the day. They had been on the ground for a few hours, strictly surveillance at that point, when their targets had decided to split up. Riley couldn't track them both so Mac had volunteered to follow one of them. Jack had tried to come with Mac, but they had both agreed that Riley shouldn't be left alone.

So Mac followed Doctor Abir through the streets of Bodrum on foot. Slowly the Doctor made his way towards the edge of the city, stopping at a few shops and vendors along the way. It wasn't until the fourth stop at a street vendor that Mac realized he had been made.

Pulling out his phone he hit speed dial for Jack. Mac looked around and realized the Doctor already had men with him. Mac was trapped.

"What's up?" Jack answered on the second ring.

"I've got trouble." Mac said turning down the nearest street. "The Doctor spotted me, I have... three men on my tail."

"We're on our way." Jack said and Mac could hear the engine turn over in their surveillance van.

"Mac, I got eyes on your location." Riley said, evidently taking the phone so Jack could drive. "Take the next left in eight feet."

Mac saw it and made a dash for the alleyway. Behind him someone shouted.

"We're about fifteen minutes out." Jack called.

“Mac, bad guys are right behind you.” Riley said.

“Yeah, I got that.” Mac ran to the end of the alley and turned right. He was halfway down the street, his pursuers slowly falling behind when everything turned pear shaped.

“Mac stop!” Riley warned, too late.

Two men stepped out of a doorway just ahead of Mac. He slid to a stop and turned but the three men behind him were spreading out to block him in. Turning back to face the men ahead of him Mac noticed that Doctor Abir was the second man. The doctor was smiling, it wasn't a pleasant smile.

“We're almost to you Mac.” Jack called over the phone and Mac could hear tires squealing as the car accelerated.

Mac dropped the phone at that point as the first of his attackers made a swing at him. Mac blocked, using the energy of the man's punch to propel him over Mac's shoulder, then he grabbed a handful of dust and pebbles from the ground to throw in the face of the second attacker. The first man recovered and tried to put Mac in a headlock, earning him an elbow in the gut. That's when one of the men behind Mac got close enough to knock him out with a blow to the back of the head.

Jack swore at the traffic as the phone connection dropped out.

“Riley, get Mac back on the phone.” Jack growled as he swerved through traffic.

“I'm trying but it's not like I can make Mac answer his phone.” Riley was on her computer. “I'm activating his phone's camera to see what's happening.”

“What's it showing?” Jack asked.

“Nothing.” Riley growled slamming her fist down on the arm rest of her chair.

“What do you mean nothing?” Jack yelled.

“The camera is pointed at the ground, I can't see a damn thing.” Riley yelled back.

“Alright, alright, stop yelling at me.” Jack said, turning down another street.

“You're the one yelling at me.” Riley shot back

Jack opened his mouth to respond then shut it. He turned his full attention to the road, and steering through the congested streets, his fists clenched around the wheel so tight his knuckles were white. Counting to ten Jack started again.

“Riley,” he said gently, “How far out are we?”

“Take the next right.” Riley instructed. “We’re still over a mile and a half out.”

“Is there any other way that has less traffic.” Jack started growling.

“This is the fastest way, we’re already on back roads to avoid most of the traffic.” Riley was checking all the roads in the area, making sure they got to Mac as fast as they could.

“This is as bad as LA.” Jack growled as he laid on his horn and drove half on the curve to get around the stand still traffic.

Five minutes later they were on top of Mac’s phone GPS location. Jack was out of the car even before it had come to a complete stop. And Riley followed with her computer a moment later. Following the map on her screen Riley walked down the alley to stand over Mac’s phone. She picked it up as Jack slowly walked up and down the alley, he stared at the ground making a map out of the tracks he could see.

“They had back up waiting with a car. There are drag marks here, they must have knocked Mac out.” Jack walked the scene through backwards. “He knocked down two of them before he went down. There were two teams, the one chasing him and another that cut him off ahead.”

Riley searched the local security cameras trying to find the car Mac was in.

“We’re in a blind spot. The closes video is half a block away.” She started the playback of the feed.

Jack leaned over her shoulder watching the video. The camera was pointed mostly at the store fronts but it gave a view of the street halfway down. Most of the traffic was slow and from what Jack could tell there were no rules of the road in this country. After about forty seconds Jack saw what he was looking for.

“Pause.” Jack instructed. “Zoom in there.”

Riley enhanced the image where Jack was pointing. “What do you see?”

“That van has been parked since you started the video. Two people just got in but look at the shadows here.”

Under the van Riley could just make out shadows. “So someone is getting in on the other side of the van.”

“Is there another video feed you can pull up?” Jack asked.

“Only one that will have an angle of the van.” Riley was already typing, hacking into the video feed and pulling up the right time.

Riley watched the feed. "Shit."

Jack was right, with the new video feed they could clearly see two men dragging Mac between them and got into the back of the van. Even before the van drove out of the camera

range Riley had found the next camera it would pass.

“Let’s go.” Jack ran back to the car, Riley right behind him as she tracked the van through the city.

Chapter End Notes

A few minor edits have been made, just little things like making sure Riley was tracking a 'van' and not a 'can'

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

A big thanks to Dinah for editing! Everyone can thank her that this chapter is getting posted tonight.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Mac woke up stiff and cold. He tried to sit up and realized he couldn't move. Panic filled his chest like fast dry cement, making it heavy and hard to breath. His heart pounded at the coffin his chest had become, screaming for release. That lasted for maybe a minute before mac's training kicked in and he pulled the reins on his panic.

Several deep, slow breaths later his pulse rate was back under control and he spread his focus beyond himself. He was strapped to a metal table (never a good sign), the room completely dark. A sliver of light on the floor had to be the bottom of a door. The light didn't illuminate the room other than a slight shadow of some sort of table between the door and him.

With nothing else to see Mac closed his eyes and focused on what his ears were telling him. An air conditioner was running, keeping him cold to the point of shivering. The rest of the room was silent, but that made it feel big. From the direction of the door Mac could hear voices, but not well enough to make out what was being said.

He tried to filter out the other noises and focus in on the voices. Slowly they became more defined until Mac could make out the words and he realized whoever was talking was coming to his door.

"Vitals are strong." Someone said. "There was a spike when he first woke up, but everything has leveled out now."

Mac knew they were talking about him, and he realized he could feel where sensors were attached to his arm and chest. If they were keeping an eye on his vitals they probably had a camera in the room as well.

"Then it is time to say hello, no." a second voice responded.

Mac shivered. He knew that second voice was Dr Abir even though he had never actually heard him speak.

Even as Mac finished his thought the door opened and Dr Abir walked in with another man. Lights came on right over Mac and blinded him temporarily.

"You are American spy, yes." Dr Abir asked.

Mac tried to blink the light spots out of his eyes and ignored the question.

The second man moved to stand over Mac, blocking some of the light.

“Answer the doctor, or you will answer me.” The man said.

“Major, calm down, we have only just met. The child is maybe a little shy.” Dr Abir moved to stand on Mac’s other side. “But he will open up to me, given time.”

Mac closed his eyes; he needed to stay calm and he could feel his breath starting to shorten. He needed to stay calm and bide his time until Jack found him. Riley would be tracking him and Jack would be in with back up soon to get him out. In fact, depending on how long Mac had been out, the calvary could be moments from finding him.

The second man, Major, slapped Mac.

“Look at me boy.” Major growled.

“Major please,” Abir chided. “You agreed I could use him for my experiment. I believe I have finally perfected my formula.”

The major stepped back. “You may run your experiment but when you are done I will have a moment alone with him.”

Dr Abir nodded. “If my experiment goes well, there will be no problems when I am finished.”

Jack was pacing the seven steps length of the apartment the team had set up as their safe house for the mission.. It had been three hours since Riley had lost track of Mac, and that had been about twenty minuets after they had tracked him to their last place of contact and driven through the city’s congested streets trying to follow the trail of surveillance cameras.

Riley had managed to track down the van that Mac had been stuffed into. But whoever had taken him had anticipated them and left the van abandoned in a warehouse district. Most of the servaiillance cameras were broken or pointed in the wrong direction to be of any use. And the only one that had caught a glimpse of Mac, just showed him being dragged out of the van and taken out of the camera’s view.

Jack had spent two and a half hours tearing apart every corner of every warehouse looking for any sign of Mac and the best he had found was Mac’s swiss army knife and a handful of change and paperclips that had been abandoned about ten meters from the van. At some point Riley had contacted Thornton to let boss lady know what had happened. Thornton had sent the nearest Phoenix team in to help search the warehouses, not that it had done any good, and when Thornton arrived she had taken one look at Jack and Riley and sent them back to the safe house as she took over the search of the warehouse.

They had only been at the apartment for eight minutes but it felt like it had been hours for Jack. Every step he took was another step wasted. Every time he passed the door he hesitated,

no more than a catch in his stride, and had to resist the urge to bolt back outside and start turning the city over and inside out looking for Mac.

“I think I have something.” Riley said.

Jack jumped and spun around to face the hacker. He had forgotten that she was in the room, even though she had been sitting three feet away on her computer since they had arrived at the apartment. It took Jack another second to process what Riley had said.

“You found Mac?” Jack moved to hover over Riley’s shoulder so he could see her computer screen.

“I haven’t found Mac, but I pulled the faces of everyone else that got in that van with Mac and I’ve been running facial recognition through every camera in the city.” Riley took a deep breath. “One of the guys just showed up at a tea shop on the edge of town. This feed is from fifteen minutes ago, but I pulled up a real time video and...” Riley pointed to the screen where they could both see one of the men who had helped shove Mac in the back of the van.

“What’s the address?” Jack asked as he ran around the room grabbing his coat, car keys and his gun.

“I’ll tell you along the way.” Riley said as she loaded up her computer and grabbed her coat.

“Riley,” Jack needed her to stay here, to stay safe.

“No.” Riley cut him off, knowing what he would say. “We’re a team Jack, I’m not letting you run off by yourself, just like you wouldn’t let me run off.”

“I’m supposed to keep you safe, I can’t do that and hunt this guy down.” Jack tried to argue.

“And if you leave me behind who’s to say that whoever took Mac wont track me down and take me.” Riley was at the door waiting as Jack checked his clip.

“Riley...” Jack tried one more time.

“Besides I have the address and if you leave me behind I’ll just grab a cab and meet you there.” Riley opened the door and walked out.

Jack allowed a small smile to cross his face before he followed her out the door.

Chapter End Notes

I'm still writing, so still in need of editing if anyone else is interested you can find my email on my profile.

Chapter 3

Mac was floating. At least this felt like floating, but he could be drowning, either way if felt peaceful. Everything was warm and tingly, and his mind was surprisingly quiet. He couldn't remember the last time his mind had been this quiet. Everything was quiet.

"Mac, did you hear me?"

Mac turned his head to look at the man standing over him. Frowning, Mac tried to remember this man's name. It wasn't Jack. Jack was younger then this man, and had better fashion sense. White lab coats were not fashionable and Jack wouldn't wear one unless Mac insisted it was necessary for a mission.

"Mr. MacGyver, how are you feeling?" the man asked again and Mac finally figured out who this was.

"Dr. Abir."

"That's right. You're doing very well MacGyver."

Mac frowned, he hadn't meant to say the man's name.

"Can you tell me more about Jack?" Abir asked.

When had Mac mentioned Jack?

"You were just talking about him. You were talking about a mission where you told Jack to wear a lab coat and he had been complaining that they are the least fashionable thing since the eighty's."

Mac bit his lip until he could taste blood. Was he talking without realizing it?

"Now, now, Mr. MacGyver, there is no need to hurt yourself. You have done nothing wrong." Dr. Abir said.

Mac watched the doctor move away and when he came back he was holding a syringe. Mac tried to move away and realized he was tied down. (No, he had known that before.) Closing his eyes, Mac tried to remember how long he had been with Dr Abir, but his thoughts kept slipping away from him.

"Relax Mr. MacGyver." Abir said, and Mac could feel the needle puncture the inside of his elbow. "Everything is fine, you just need to relax."

Mac felt himself drifting again, he felt weightless. Maybe this was how it felt to be in space. Mac had wanted to visit space when he was a child, but he had grown out of that phase when he realized all the rules that would go along with training to be in space. It was much more fun when life didn't have as many rules.

“Yes,” Dr. Abir agreed. “Rules only tie us down and limit us, they are designed to control what we do and how we think.”

Mac nodded along with Dr. Abir’s words.

“I believe we are ready for the next step Mr. MacGyver.” Abir said moving away, out of Mac’s field of vision.

Not sure what Abir was talking about Mac nodded along. Whatever the next step was Mac was sure it couldn’t be bad, everything was so relaxing, nothing could hurt Mac right now.

Moments passed slowly, stretched out beyond time as Mac floated completely free. He wondered if he could stay here forever, in total silence without anything to worry about.

Then Abir was back at his side and the moment was gone.

“I’m afraid this next part isn’t pleasant.” Abir said.

Mac was still trying to process the words when his whole body seized. The pulse of electricity lasted only a second but to Mac it felt like several minutes passed as the electricity coursed through his body. When the pain ended Mac was left gasping and his lungs tried to remember how to draw air into his body. He had almost caught his breath when the pain was back and Mac’s body again was lost in pain.

From the corridor outside Dr. Abir’s Lab Major Shuto watched as the American was shocked over and over again with the cattle prod. It wasn’t often that the Major enjoyed watching as the doctor worked, but this time he relished the torture that the spy was being put through and wished that it was he, himself delivering shock after shock to the helpless boy.

The tea shop was crowded as Jack and Riley walking in. Every seat and table were filled and many more people were standing around talking. Forcing his way through the crowd Jack stumbled into a table, spilling the drink that was sitting mostly full, onto the patron’s lap.

The man jerked away cursing at Jack as he wiped up the tea.

“Oh man,” Jack drawled in his thickest western accent. “I’m so sorry pal. Here let me help you.”

Jack moved to clean up the spilled tea as Riley snuck up behind the man and pickpocketed his wallet. Riley quickly flicked through the contents of the wallet as the man spit curses at Jack who was fumbling with napkins trying to clean up the spill.

After a moment Riley gave a slight nod and Jack abandoned the ruse.

“So *pal*, you want to tell me where you took the guy you kidnapped this morning?” Jack asked, his drawl replaced by a deadly serious tone.

The man blanched and turned to run, only to face Riley who delivered a jab to the man's windpipe. As the man gasped for air, Jack grabbed him by the collar. A few patrons had turned to see what was going on and Riley quietly made excuses as Jack pulled the man out the back door into an alley.

Still gasping, the man was shoved against a wall and Jack pinned him there with an arm across his neck. Riley exited the tea shop a moment later and started fiddling with her laptop.

"Yael Kalb, wanted for aggravated assault, theft, kidnapping, and suspected of murder." Riley read.

Jack applied a little more pressure on the last word and Yael's struggles to get out of the strangle hold became more desperate.

"Now if you don't want the police to get a GPS location of your every move and all the evidence I can gather in the next twenty-four hours, I'd suggest you start talking." Riley turned her computer around so that Yael could see the screen. "This is you four hours ago kidnapping my friend. We tracked you to the warehouse where you dumped the van and then we tracked you here. So, what we need to know is where you were between the warehouse and here."

Yael looked at the computer screen, his eyes wide as it played through him shoving Mac's unconscious body into the back the van.

"I don't know who he is." Yael said.

Jack shoved Yael's head against the wall. "Did we ask you who he was?" Jack growled. "We need to know where you took him."

Yael blinked trying to clear the spots that had formed in his eyes from the knock to the head.

"Where did you go from the warehouse?" Riley asked again.

"Out of the city." Yael said. "there is a house where the doctor runs his experiments."

"Doctor Abir." Jack asked, "what kind of experiments is he running?"

"I know nothing about his experiments. They pay me to guard, that is all."

"Guard what?" Jack asked.

"I don't know." Yael said.

"How do you *not* know?" Jack growled, shoving Yael against the wall again.

"I never go inside. I guard outside, that is all, I swear."

"Why do bad guys always say they swear as if their promises means anything to us." Jack looked at Riley, then his gaze shifted to behind her.

Standing at the mouth of the alley waiting was Patricia Thornton, arms crossed and foot tapping.

“That doesn’t look good.” Jack sighed, making Riley turn around to see their boss.

Phoenix agents were blocking off either end of the alley and from a signal from Thornton they moved forward and apprehended Yael as Jack backed off.

“Wait, stop.” Yael tried to shake off the agents as he turned to Riley. “You said I would not be arrested if I talked.”

“No,” Riley countered, “I said I wouldn’t send information to the police. They aren’t police and she’s my boss so she can do whatever she wants with you.”

Yael was still protesting and shouting curses as he was taken away by the agents. Soon Thornton, Jack, and Riley were standing alone in the alley.

“Hey Patty what’s up?” Jack asked, knowing they were in trouble. “You find anything else at the warehouse?”

“You would know that if you answered your phone or if you were at the safe house where I told you to be.” Thornton replied crisply.

Jack nearly flinched at the tone. Not that Thornton raised her voice or even looked any more stern than normal, but he had worked with her long enough to know that she was on the verge of shouting at them right there in the alley, and Patty hated yelling at her agents where others might see, she preferred to yell at them in the privacy of the office or a safe house.

“We had a lead on one of the men that took Mac and we didn’t want to risk letting him get away.” Riley said.

“I’m sure your reasons were perfectly reasonable.” Patty turned to glare at Riley who shrunk a little under the gaze. “But that doesn’t excuse either of you from calling me to tell me what you were doing or answering your phones when I tried to call you.” Patty took a deep breath and sighed. “But since you went off anyway, why don’t you tell me what you found out.”

“They took Mac to a house outside the city.” Riley said. “We don’t know where exactly but now that we have Yael we should be able to get an address out of him.”

Patty nodded. “Alright, then let’s find out exactly what Yael knows.”

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Mac has a mind palace and he's retreated into it.

Perception is a fickle thing. If a crowd is standing in front of an abstract painting one person may see a face while another sees a woman sitting with her child, and still another would see only the colors.

Mac wondered if his perception was skewed. Maybe he was only seeing the color and missing the picture.

Time was slipping around him, but he didn't know how much. First it felt like it took hours for a minute to pass, now he wasn't sure if it had been a minute or days. To take his mind off time flow Mac looked around the room. It was the living room at his house, but at the same time it wasn't. the space was right but there was nothing in the room, just like when Mac and Boz had first bought the house. The fire place, the windows and the doors to the porch they all had the potential to be something, but right now that's all they were. Unachieved potential.

Mac sat in the center of the room. He'd tried to stand up a few times, but his body felt oddly heavy, and his legs collapsed under him every time he tried. So now he was waiting. He knew something would happen but he didn't know what or when.

Time slipped, like wind through a screen, and nothing changed. The light filtering through the window at the same angle, and Mac watched dust motes that drifted in and out of the light and shadows. Slowly, or maybe quickly, Mac started to feel tired. He resisted sleep as long as he could, fighting off yawns and the weight of his eyelids. Something wasn't right, he couldn't pinpoint what but he knew he had to stay awake. But time was against him, or rather, the lack of perceptible time. Eventually Mac lost the battle and sleep overtook him.

Dr. Abir was very pleased with his latest tests. The subject, Angus MacGyver, was completely passive. It had taken only eight days for MacGyver to shut down, which was longer than his previous test subjects, but everyone was different. He had begun phase two, which typically took several weeks, but programming a brain was much harder than getting it to retreat unto itself. When a person chooses to close out the real world and escape into the relative safety of their subconscious it is a protective measure, like pulling the safety cord on a parachute. But when that person is told to do something that is against their nature, even while they are hidden away in their mind, they fight against the programming.

Years of research and endless failures had only served to refine his methods, he had yet to perfect them. But he knew each test took him one step closer, just as Edison had hundreds of failures before he perfected the light bulb. And just as the light bulb had changed the world, so his research would on the human brain. Finally unlocking the codes to program the brain would change the course of history.

“Doctor are we ready to move on?”

Dr. Abir looked up, pulled out of his thoughts by Major Shuto. Taking a moment to compose his thoughts he put his files to rest and looked up at the Major.

“We can begin the programming, yes.” Abir answered.

“I need him programmed in a week. Operation Scorpion is already in play.”

Abir looked up sharply. “A week? Programming is unstable; it takes three weeks for simple commands. This agent took twice as long to regress and the regression is not stable. I need to reinforce the regression as we program him. It will take two weeks for him to be programmed to do the simplest of tasks. I cannot make him go completely against his nature in one week. Two months, ten weeks at most to program him for operation Scorpion.”

“Nine days is the most we can afford.” Major Shuto said. “Nine days to prove your program works.”

“This is not a light switch that can be turned on with a click of a button. It is science, it takes time to do it right, and if you try to rush it you will end up with a mess on your hands.”

“I don’t care if you have to break him. You have nine days, or I will personally terminate your program.” Major Shuto turned and left with that statement.

Abir fumed silently for a few moments then picked up his phone. After a few rings someone answered.

“Yes, sir?” a man answered.

“Move the patient to the exam room. We’re beginning phase two now.”

“Yes sir.” The man said again and hung up.

“I’m working with a bunch of robots.” Abir grumbled as he grabbed a few things from his desk and made his way out of the office.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Everyone is hurting, and they all show it in different ways.

Jack yelled in pure rage and punched the nearest wall. Luckily the wall was drywall and he had managed to hit between the support beams so instead of ending up with a broken hand he ended up with a hole in the wall.

Patty, who was leading the conference Jack was disrupting managed to keep her mouth shut. She would have to make a reminder to tell Jack that the repairs for the wall were coming out of his paycheck when he was less likely to explode.

“We’re all upset Dalton.” Thornton said as calmly as she could in hope that she wouldn’t rile him u further.

“Upset? *You’re* upset!?” Jack turned and took a few steps towards her before he stopped himself. “Mac has been missing for weeks and *you’re* upset?”

“Thirteen days, two hours, forty-eight minuets and counting.” Riley said.

She had set up a timer on her computer that was a constant reminder to her. Like most of the team she had been working on minimal sleep and was barely eating. Three computers were set up to run facial recognition on every camera in the world trying to find Mac, and she was tracking down anyone that might have been in the area when he was kidnapped and seen something. She was running out of ideas to find Mac, but wouldn’t allow herself to admit defeat.

Bozer was sitting next to Riley. The newest member of the team had been hopefully optimistic for the first few days, but now he had almost completely shut down. He wouldn’t talk unless addressed, and he wouldn’t eat unless the food was placed in front of him and someone badgered him until he was finished.

Although Jack was angry he was handling the situation the best. He still held out hope that Mac would be found, or escape at any moment and come walking through the door. Jack knew every statistic about kidnappings, but none of them mattered because no statistic ever applied to Mac. As a soldier he had seen men come back from suicide missions and beat the odds a thousand times over, if anyone could come back from this it was Mac.

“As I was saying,” Patty picked up where she had left off before Jack decided to attack the wall. “Our latest intel shows activity in the Boston area. Agents are gathering intel to pinpoint a location. When they do, a small team will raid the sight.”

“All our intel up until now has been out dated or straight out wrong. Why should this be any different?” Bozer mumbled without looking up from where he was tracing the lines of his hand with a pen.

“Our original intel came from captured agents. The enemy knew that their men had been compromised and had acted accordingly. This intel is coming from our own people and they have taken every precaution so as not to tip off the enemy.” Thornton said slowly.

“I still say we should have shot Yael.” Jack growled.

The information Yael had given them had lead into a trap, and although they had managed to survive it was obvious that it had been planned to set them even further back and give more time for the doctor to slip away with Mac. Even now Yael was sitting in a cell being drilled for information that would be worthless to them.

“I’ll be leading the team on the raid and will keep all of you updated.” Thornton said, concluding the meeting.

As she stood up Jack moved to block her exit. Riley, with Bozer in tow, paused on her way out the door but left after Thornton gave her a brief nod.

“I’m going on the raid.” Jack said.

He had been on every operation that had even the slightest chance of finding Mac. But he had also had less sleep than Riley and Bozer combined. Thornton had been tracking each of the team members habits so she could access their readiness and well-being in case she needed to step in. Jack had been catching an hours nap every day or so the last two weeks except for one day four nights ago when Thornton had slipped something into each team member’s food so they had gotten a full eight hours of sleep. Jack had been furious about the missing time that he said should have been spent finding Mac, and he had refused to eat anything other than protein bars since.

“If you even think about saying no, I’ll steal a plane and go by myself.” Jack warned when Thornton was taking too long to answer.

“You can come so long as you eat a full meal and sleep the whole flight to Boston.” Thornton said. “Otherwise I will have you tased and locked in a room for the mission.”

Jack thought it over. “Deal.” He finally conceded.

Thornton nodded. “We leave in thirty, get your gear and meet me in the cafeteria. I’m going to personally see that you hold up your end of the bargain.”

Jack rolled his eyes but followed Thornton out of the conference room.

**

Major Shuto paced outside of the lab, occasionally stopping to look through the windows to check on Dr. Abir. They were five days into phase two, and progress was not where it should be. They needed the spy programed so they could use him in Operation Scorpion. When they

had originally captured the spy it had seemed like bad luck. They had pulled up roots at their base and move to a secondary location. So far they had managed to keep the location secure, but it wasn't meant for extended use, sooner or later they would draw unwanted attention here and have to pull up and move out.

But that bad luck had turned out to be a stroke of good luck when Dr. Abir had uncovered who the spy was. The organization had been keeping tabs on MacGyver, and now that he was in their reach, he would prove the perfect double agent for them. That is so long as Dr. Abir would finish brainwashing the boy so they knew they had complete control of him.

"Major," one of his men stood at attention at the end of the hallway.

Shuto, pulled out of his thoughts, turned to the soldier. The boy was hardly old enough to have facial hair, much like the boy they held captive. Other than his youth, he was just another soldier probably sent with a message for the Major.

"Report." Shuto said impatiently.

"Proximity alarms in the east sector are going off again." The boy shuffled his feet.

Shuto waited, the perimeter alarms on the east sector had been faulty because they were on the edge of a forest preserve. Every rabbit that walked through set off the alarms. After four days Shuto had ordered that all alarms in the sector be recalibrated, which had only lead to more problems. If a messenger was being sent then there has been a development.

"The team sent to check it out haven't reported back in."

"Evacuate the compound." Major Shuto was already moving, opening the door to the lab.

"Doctor, we have to leave now."

Dr. Abir looked confused. "He is not ready, he needs more programming."

"Leave him, we're evacuating the house." Major Shuto grabbed Dr. Abir's arm and started dragging him from the room. "Grab your notes, only what is essential. There will be a team at your office to ensure you make it out."

Shuto shoved the doctor into the hall as an alarm started going off.

"The boy, I am so close." Dr. Abir turned around and tried to push past Shuto. "We can bring him, I know I can finish the programming."

Shuto took a step into the hallway, forcing the doctor to take a step back. "Get your research from your office, I will deal with the boy."

Dr. Abir blanched slightly, taking another step away from Major Shuto before he turned around and started down the hall towards his office. Major Shuto watched the doctor until he turned a corner at the end of the hall. Above the sound of the alarm he could just hear gunfire and shouting. Whoever had breached the perimeter had made it to the house.

No matter. His men were trained. A team would be at Dr. Abir's office and see him out safely through a hidden passage. Anyone else would hold their ground for as long as they could. As for the Major...

He turned back to the lab, crossing over to where the American spy was strapped to a table. Machines were monitoring his heart rate, his breathing, and anything else the doctor had needed for his experiments. No doubt it was more American's coming to save their agent, even though they always said they would leave their men out in the cold, disavow them, not deal with terrorists, they were still like the cowboys from their old movies, coming to the rescue of a single man at the cost of many.

Pulling his gun, checking the clip.

The gunfire had diminished, most likely because the Americans were overpowering his men. His men were trained, but the American's were experienced. Shuto had no doubt that he would lose this battle. But that didn't mean he had to be the only one to lose something today.

He pointed his gun at the boy, the American spy.

If the Americans were so concerned with getting their agent back, then it would be to Shuto's and more importantly, his employer's best interest if the boy died.

Shuto took a moment to study the blond agent's face. The doctor had programmed the boy enough that he wasn't aware of the danger he was in, or if he was he didn't care. The American's eyes were dull, staring off into some middle distance, not really seeing anything. His body relaxed, unprepared to defend himself. Shuto usually enjoyed seeing the fear in a victim's eyes, that moment when they knew they couldn't stop what was about to happen, that moment when Shuto held all the power or life itself and he took it away.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

The chapter you've all been waiting for. What will Jack find?

Jack hated to admit it but after sleeping on the plane he felt much better. So when they raided the compound he was on his A game. They breached the compound and made it to the house, quickly dispatching the few men that were supposed to be guards. The teams split up, clearing each room in search of any more resistance, but more importantly in search of Mac.

Jack had cleared four rooms and knew from radio chatter that most of the house had been cleared. He didn't want to admit it but this could be just another wild goose chase. As soon as the thought crossed his mind Jack growled at himself. He wasn't giving up, not on Mac, the kid always pulled off the impossible.

The last room in the hall way was set apart from the other doors. If the map he had constructed in his mind as they made with way through the house was correct, and given his training he was sure it was, then this was the last room on this side of the house. With the two agents Thornton had assigned to his temporary team, Jack moved into position to breach the door.

There was a window set in the door at eye level, which was letting out a little light from the room. Peeking through the window Jack's heart leapt to his throat. There was no time to hesitate or signal his team. Jack kicked in the door, raised his gun and took the shot.

Two shots sounded. The first shot was Jack hitting center mass of the man standing over Mac. The second shot sounded a moment after Jack's. Moving in, his sight trained on the enemy, Jack radioed the rest of the team.

"Alfa team found package." Jack called. "Repeat, Alfa team has found the package. Send Band-Aid for package."

The two agents with Jack secured the man he had shot so Jack turned to Mac. The second shot had gone over the kid's shoulder, leaving a hole in the metal chair but thankfully missing Mac. The kid was strapped to a chair, his eyes were unfocused, set on a middle ground beyond Jack. There were a few old bruises that Jack could see, but otherwise the kid looked okay. An IV or some such was attached to Mac's hand, that was the first thing Jack removed.

"Hey kid, are you alright?" Jack asked, he started untying the straps holding his friend down.

Mac took a moment, his eyes focused on Jack for a second before drifting off again. "I'm alright."

“Yeah,” Jack muttered. “I’m sure you are, that’s why you’re so focused right now.”

Jack had finished undoing the bindings, but Mac hadn’t made a move to get up. More agents arrived, one of them came over with a medical kit came over to Mac. The medic checked Mac’s pulse and used a pen light with Mac’s eyes.

“We need to clear out.” Thornton’s voice came over the radios. “Can the package be moved?”

Jack exchanged a look with the medic.

“Package is shaken,” The medic said into the radio, “But can be shipped with care.”

“You sure he’s okay?” Jack asked.

“He’s stunned, they probably gave him something. Blood tests need to be run and probably a CT scan to make sure he doesn’t have a concussion. He’ll need a full work up and blood test but we can move him without causing any distress.” The medic said.

Jack wasn’t happy about it but also knew that it wasn’t safe to stay. Mac had been quiet which was the most worrying part. The kid should be trying to convince them that he was okay, or he should be fiddling with whatever was on hand. But the kid was still and silent. Resigning himself to hold off on worrying, Jack helped the medic lift Mac. Between them they ushered Mac out of the house.

**

Riley watched as Bozer paced the waiting room. It had been over an hour since Mac was found and they were still waiting for the doctor to finish checking on Mac. Jack was by the window staring out at the sunny LA sky and as far as Riley could tell he hadn’t moved since she had gotten there. She wasn’t even sure if Jack knew anyone else was in the room he appeared to be lost in thought (not something Riley ever expected Jack capable of).

Phoenix’s private medical wing was set apart from the main building, so there was no foot traffic in the halls, and the only noise was the air conditioner turning on and Bozer’s squeaky tennis shoes. Riley was getting frustrated at the squeaky shoes and was about to tell Boz to sit down when the door opened.

Jack was on his feet and across the room as fast as it took Boz to stop pacing and Riley to put her laptop aside and stand up.

“How’s he?” Jack asked.

Dr. Woodman smiled at Mac’s team. “He’s resting. They had been giving him a sedative, probably to keep him under control.”

“I’m sure they had their hands full keeping Mac under control.” Jack growled, knowing that Mac had probably infuriated his captors.

“But,” Woodman continued, ignoring Jack’s comment. “after a bit of rest he will be fine.”

Bozer sighed audibly. “Thanks goodness.”

“Can we see him?” Riley asked.

“Of course,” Woodman turned to her, “I’ll take you to his room.”

Even with the doctor’s reassurance that Mac would be fine Riley still didn’t relax until she was in the room and could see Mac sleeping on the bed. the blond was still, so still Riley held her breath until she could see Mac’s chest rise and fall. Mac was in a hospital gown, a blanket pulled up over his shoulders, so that the only thing they could see was his face. A bruise along Mac’s jaw was yellow and green from age and there were a few cuts on the left side of the kid’s face that looked fresh.

The color of pain. Riley thought, noting how pale Mac looked compared to the scarlet scratches and fading bruise. She also realized his hair looked dull, as if his time in captivity had literally pulled the light out of the kid.

Bozer and Jack had moved into the room, each taking a side of Mac’s bed to stand over. Jack held Mac’s right hand as Bozer talked at his best friend, as if Mac could somehow hear him.

“Man, as soon as you are out of here I’m throwing you a party. I’ll have a cook out and we can watch all your favorite movies, even though all you like is westerns, and they are basically the same plot line over and over again.” Boz stopped for breath.

“I think Mac needs his rest.” Thornton said from the doorway. “You can plan his party later.”

Everyone turned to the director, they hadn’t heard her come in.

“I’m staying.” Jack said, sitting in the room’s only chair to emphasize his point.

“Me too.” Bozer said, his hand moving to rest on Mac’s shoulder.

Riley leaned against the nearest wall and crossed her arms. When Thornton turned to look at the hacker Riley raised one eyebrow in challenge.

Instead of appearing mad Thornton nodded. “I thought you would feel that way. I’ve had the next room set up with a few beds. You can take turns keeping an eye on him.” She looked at Jack as she said the next part. “But I know all of you need your rest as well, and Mac wont appreciate you losing sleep just to watch him sleep.”

With that Thornton left, letting the trio decide how to set up their vigil.

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Mac may be back at Phoenix but he's not out of the woods yet.

Bozer was on his phone playing a game when he noticed Mac started to wake up. His friend shifted in his sleep for a few minutes before finally opening his eyes.

“Hey Mac.” Bozer said, drawing his friend’s attention. “Man, you had us all worried.”

Mac’s eyes settled on Boz for a moment before then wandered around the room.

“We’re at Phoenix, in one of the rooms in the Medical wing.” Bozer explained as Mac looked around.

Bozer waited a minute for Mac to say something, but his friend just gazed around the room, his eyes finally stopping at the door.

“Hey Mac, you feeling alright?” Bozer asked, “Should I go get the doctor? It’s a little late, or maybe it’s just really early at this point, but I have her number, just in case. And I think there’s a nurse on shift.”

Mac didn’t answer, didn’t even turn to look at his friend and that worried Bozer.

“I’m going to get the nurse.” Bozer said, standing up.

He hesitated at the door and turned back to look at Mac. The kid had moved so that he was sitting on the edge of the bed, his feet hanging over the edge.

“Just wait here, I’ll be right back.” Bozer said.

Still no response.

Bozer left the room and ran down the hall to the nurse’s station. There was one woman at the desk typing on the computer. She looked up, one hand sneaking under the counter, as Bozer ran towards her station.

“Hey, Mac’s awake, but there’s something wrong.” Bozer said already turning to look back to where Mac’s room was.

“Is he in pain?” the nurse asked as she stood up and grabbed a few items from the counter.

“No, well I don’t think so.” Bozer said, leading the way back down the hall. “He’s just... He’s not himself.” Bozer finally finished weakly.

Bozer knew Mac, had seen him sick and hurt before. The kid hated being in bed and forced to stay still and take medicine. He would always wake up and ask for something, usually water to try and flush any drugs out of his system as fast as he could. Then as you were out of the room he’d try to sneak off and fiddle with something, anything.

“Crap.” Bozer said, seeing Mac’s door ajar.

Please tell me you didn’t run off. Bozer thought as he pushed the door fully open and stepped in.

Mac was pulling on his shirt. He’s pulled out the IV and taken the monitors off. As Boz watched Mac sat on the edge of the bed and started pulling on shoes.

“And just where do you think you’re going?” The nurse asked.

Mac looked up at them and smiled. “I’m fine. I’m going now.”

Bozer frowned and stepped closer to his friend. “Hey man, maybe you should stay a bit longer and rest. It’s early, there’s nowhere to be right now.”

Mac turned to Bozer still smiling. “I’m fine.”

The hairs on the back of Bozer’s neck stood on end. “No you’re not.”

There was something really wrong with Mac and Bozer couldn’t place what it was. Bozer took a step back and studied his friend and a few things jumped out at him. First was that although Mac was smiling, none of the light his friend usually emanated was there. His lips were upturned but his eyes were still dull, not all there.

Second was that Mac’s hands were resting on his lap. He’d finished pulling on his shoes and now he was just sitting there, waiting for Bozer and the Nurse to let him go. He wasn’t fiddling with anything, not the blanket’s frill or the paperclips Bozer had left on the side table.

Go where? Bozer wondered.

The nurse was talking and Bozer tuned back in on what she was saying.

“Dr. Woodman will be in in a few hours, once she signs off you’re free to go, until then you need to stay here. I’d like to reattach your IV as well.”

“I don’t need it.” Mac said, pulling his arm out of reach when the nurse moved.

“Alright.” The nurse conceded, “But if I don’t put the IV back in you have to drink a full glass of water between now and when Dr. Woodman arrives. Deal?”

“Deal.” Mac agreed.

“Okay I’ll be right back.” The nurse said turning to leave.

Bozer followed the nurse into the hall, pulling the door shut behind him. “Nurse, hold on a moment.”

The nurse stopped where she was a few feet down the hall and turned. Bozer, glanced at the door then closed the distance between them.

“Did you notice anything... I don’t know, off about Mac.” Bozer asked.

“No,” The nurse said frowning. “But I’ve only dealt with MacGyver once before. You would know him better then I.”

“I think...”Bozer shuffled. “I don’t know what exactly, but there’s just something wrong.”

“I’m not sure what I can do unless you can tell me what exactly is off, but I could have a blood test run to see if there is anything left in his system. Dr. Woodman will have to sign off on it, but I know she was planning on running the test herself when she got in this morning.”

“Could you run it now?” Bozer asked.

The nurse considered for a moment then nodded. “I’ll call Dr. Woodman and she can give me the go ahead. It’ll take just a few minutes to set it up then I’ll be right back. You should stay with him until then.”

Nodding Bozer turned back to Mac’s room. Opening the door Bozer froze.

“Nurse!” Bozer yelled running into the room.

The nurse was at the door a moment later and Bozer turned to her from where he stood across the room by the open window.

“He’s gone.” Bozer said.

“What do you mean gone?” Riley asked.

Bozer had burst into the room where Riley and Jack were sleeping and woken them up as he yelled about Mac being missing. It had taken a few minutes for Riley and Jack to get Boz to slow down and explain what was going on. By the time Boz had finished explaining what had happened Jack had stormed into Mac’s empty room, looking for any clue as to where Mac had gone. When he wasn’t able to find anything, Jack had left in a huff and was now leading the trio as they made their way to the war room.

“I mean he pulled a MacGyver and jumped out the window.” Bozer said.

“I guess that’s what we get for giving Mac a room on the ground floor.” Riley said.

“When we find him.” Jack growled. “I’m going to sit on him so he can’t run off again.”

They made it to the war room then, where Thornton was waiting. The monitors were up and there were surveillance feeds of Phoenix on several screens as well as a map of the area. Thornton was talking with a few people whom she quickly dismissed when Jack walked in.

“After he jumped out the window Mac went to the lab and checked out some gear.” Thornton started. “Then he left the grounds. That was five minutes ago, we’re tracking him with surveillance cameras and we have a team on the out looking for him.”

“I’m going.” Jack turned to leave.

“There’s one more thing.” Thornton said. “On his way out Mac ran into security.”

“And they just let him pass?” Boz asked. “I mean everyone knows Mac but...”

“No,” Thornton interrupted him. “Mac took down both guards. They’ve been transferred to medical with third degree burns.”

“Mac would never do that.” Jack growled.

Thornton just turned to the screen and played the video. The team watched the surveillance tape of Mac get intercepted by security only to turn the tables on the men and cause an explosion. The camera cut out in the fire and Patty switched to another feed of the front gate. This one showed Mac running through the gate as people were running to investigate the fire. Patty paused the video on a close up of Mac’s face as he left the gates.

“No,” Bozer said. “This isn’t Mac.”

“But it is.” Patty said. “You can see it’s him. The proof is right there. I’m not happy about it either but I can’t deny this evidence.”

“Maybe something happened when he was captured.” Riley offered, but she didn’t sound confident.

“That’s it.” Bozer said, jumping on the idea. “Mac’s been brainwashed or something. They’re controlling him. He’d never do something like that if he knew what was going on.”

Thornton gave Bozer a look that said she wasn’t buying the idea of brainwashing, but before she could comment Jack spoke up.

“He wasn’t acting like himself when we found him.” Jack said thoughtfully. “He didn’t put up any kind of fuss, or gross about having a medic look at him.”

Thornton raised an eyebrow. It was a well-known fact in Phoenix that Mac would talk himself blue before allowing a doctor to look at him. They had records of tricks they had used to get Mac medical attention, each ranked with what had worked well and what had failed miserably. If Mac had allowed medical care without a fight he was either concussed beyond understanding or something else was seriously wrong.

“Yeah,” Bozer said, practically jumping to make his point. “And when he woke up he wasn’t talking much either, no putting up a fight. He didn’t even fiddle with the paperclips I’d left

for him. I know Mac and he's not acting like himself."

Thornton agreed with her team, but she was still director of Phoenix and had to act accordingly. "None the less. Agents are going to bring Mac in and until we have this all figured out he'll be put in holding. We can't risk him hurting anyone else and we can't risk him getting away with our gear."

"Fine, agreed." Jack said. "But let us go and bring him in. Mac knows us. It'll be safer for everyone if we're the ones to bring him in."

Thornton wanted to say no. She wanted to keep the team here where they wouldn't have to choose between helping their friend or bringing him in to custody. But at the same time, she wanted to see Mac brought in safe and she knew that the best people to do that were his team.

"Alright go, but you report every move you make to me first." She said.

The three friends practically ran out the door on the tail end of her words. Bozer paused at the door and turned to Thornton he felt like he should say something but words failed him in that moment, so he turned and ran to catch up with Jack and Riley.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

The team finds Mac, again.

Lots of emotions running rampant in this clip.

Chapter Notes

This got a little confusing as I was writing it, trying to keep all the voices straight, so let me explain a little. If something appears withing a quote "like so" then it's someone speaking out loud (pretty straight forward.) If it's in italics then it's an internal voice, but not Mac's internal voice. Finally if it's in apostrophes 'like so' then it is Mac's internal voice. Hopefully the way I wrote made all of that clear but if not I hope this helps.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“What’s the plan?” Riley asked.

She was in the back seat of a company car as Jack drove. Her laptop was running all surveillance in the area to track Mac. It felt like they were back in Bodrum, she was tracking Mac who was running for his life, and Jack was driving like a crazy person. But now instead of trying to safe Mac from a terrorist cell they were trying to save him from himself.

“I can tell you one thing.” Bozer said from the passenger seat. “I’m not happy with handing Mac over to Phoenix once we find him. I know Thornton’s is only doing her job but she wants to lock Mac up.”

“That’s why when we find him we’re not going back to Phoenix.” Jack said.

Bozer opened his mouth to ask the obvious question but Riley spoke up first.

“I found him! He’s at the Griffith Observatory.” Riley paused, rereading the information on her screen. “And I think I figured out exactly what’s wrong with Mac.”

The tires squealed as Jack took turn and floored the gas.

**

Mac was confused. He’d been running but he wasn’t sure why. Somehow, he’d managed to find one of his jogging trails and had followed it to the Observatory. Now he didn’t know

where to go. He sat on a bench to catch his breath, putting his backpack next to him.

‘Backpack?’ Mac wondered. He never ran with a pack, and he didn’t even recognize this one.

Opening the backpack Mac pulled out the first item he found. It was a prototype stun gun he’d been developing for Phoenix, only it was still in development because he was having trouble with sustaining a current. He set it aside and reached in the bag again. What he pulled out he didn’t recognize immediately. At first it just looked like a black box, of course that was the point. This was a project Riley had been helping with. It was supposed to find and unlock any device with a protection. Anything from key cards to computers. But like the stun gun it wasn’t finished. Both of these items should have been back at Phoenix.

He reached in the bag once more, there was something heavy at the bottom. But when his fingers touched the item he froze, a chill running up his spine.

Don’t worry about it.

Mac closed his eyes when he heard the voice. He knew it wasn’t a good voice. It wasn’t his voice.

There’s nothing wrong. Just relax and forget.

‘Forget?’

Yes, that’s it, relax and forget, let everything fade away.

Mac could just forget and everything would be fine because nothing would matter.

Let your mind separate from your body. Your body knows what needs to be done, so why trouble the mind with thought. It’s easy I’ll teach you. Create a place in your mind where you can go. Somewhere you’re safe.

‘Home.’ The first real home he’d had in a long time. He’d found the house with Bozer and it had fit, it was safe.

Now whenever you’re scared or hurt you can access that place in your mind. You can stay there as long as you want, you can stay there forever.

‘Forever?’

Yes, just stay in that safe place, your body will take care of itself. You won’t have to worry about anything anymore.

‘No worry? That would be easy.’ Mac opened the door to the house. ‘But there’s no one here I’m all alone.’

“Mac!”

That voice wasn’t in his head.

Don't worry. Just step inside and close the door, close the world off behind you.

“Mac wait!”

Mac turned from the door way. He could see Jack, Bozer, and Riley. But they were far away at the Observatory, how could he see them?

“Mac just listen to me.” Jack said. “I know what happened. I know what’s wrong.”

Nothing is wrong, just relax.

Mac looked down, he couldn’t stand to look at Jack, so he looked at his hands. He was holding something but he didn’t recognize it. It felt cold and heavy in his hand. It felt wrong.

Let your body move on its own. It knows what must be done.

“It’s okay to be afraid Mac, I know you’re confused. Just hear me out.”

You only hear my voice. Only listen to my voice.

Jack was walking closer and with each step Mac felt his chest tighten. ‘Stay away Jack.’ He wanted to yell, but his voice was trapped, locked away. Something was wrong but he didn’t know what. And he was scared, scared because he knew he would hurt Jack, but he didn’t know how.

“They had you for weeks.” Jack said. “For weeks that crazy doctor tortured you, got into your head, made you feel like you were defenseless, unable to fight back.”

Jack had stopped a few feet away and Mac could see his eyes, they were red as if he’d been crying but Mac didn’t know why. ‘What’s wrong?’

“But you did fight Mac.” Jack continued. “Every command, every so-called lesson, you fought. You fought until he beat you unconscious and you kept fighting. They tried to break you and you refused to bend.

Relax, there’s no need to fight. The voice in Mac’s head was faint, far away.

“That’s why I know you can hear me. Because you’re still fighting.” Jack growled. “That bastard’s voice is still in your head and you’re still fighting him.”

Mac could feel himself shaking. His breath was rasping in and out of his lungs so fast it hurt, and his hands shook from holding the gun.

‘Gun!?’ Mac looked at the gun in his hands and felt sick. He swore he’d never hold a gun ever again, yet here he was pointing a gun at his best friend and he couldn’t move. His body was frozen even as his mind shouted for him to drop the damned thing.

Jack was still talking. “But what that doctor didn’t realize, as he tried to break you, to train your body to do his killing, the problem he kept facing was that you’re MacGyver. You make nothing into something, you see possibilities where others see trash. You see hope where

others only see darkness. That's why that doctor never broke you. No one can ever break you Mac, because what breaks other people only makes you stronger."

Mac dropped the gun. His hands shook and he couldn't breathe right. "Jack."

Jack closed the distance between them and caught Mac as his legs started to give out under him.

"I'm right here." Jack said. "I've got you."

"Jack." He said again, he could feel his body trembling as his friend held him in an iron grip. Mac sensed more people around him and he looked up to see Bozer and Riley standing over him.

"We're all here for you Mac." Bozer said and Riley nodded her agreement.

Chapter End Notes

We're almost to the end, just one more chapter, an epilogue really, then it is fini. Thank you to everyone who has commented and or left kudos, they helped keep this story alive.

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

The team can finally get some rest.

Chapter Notes

This was the hardest chapter for me to write. I have three different copies of this scene with different viewpoints and out comes, but I settled on this once because it best sums up this story and how each of the characters is feeling at the end of this journey.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Jack drove with a white knuckle grip. Driving was pulling his focus off of Mac when all Jack wanted to do was make sure the kid was safe. Checking his mirror to change lanes Jack caught a glimpse of the blond. Mac had been sandwiched between Bozer and Riley in the back seat, partly because they didn't want him sitting where he could reach for a door and partly because he looked like he'd fall over without their support. The kid looked gaunt and pale between his friends, not that he hadn't looked bad laying a the hospital bed, but somehow Jack imagined that Mac would look normal again once they found him.

Stupid, he told himself. The kid had been recovering for less than a day and Jack's mind was trying to get back to a sense of normality.

Jack took the turn onto Mac street and saw the kid perk up.

"Why aren't we going to Phoenix?" Mac asked.

"Because you hate doctors." Jack says.

"Yeah," Bozer chimes in. "And we all know you won't really sleep in a hospital bed, you'll just close your eyes and pretend your sleeping when someone's around. Besides it's always easier to sleep in your own bed."

Jack pulled into the driveway and parked behind a silver sedan.

"Oh crap." Jack muttered.

"Is that Thornton's car?" Bozer asked sticking his head between the front seats.

"Yep." Riley says. "We're screwed."

Mac looks between his three friends, and Jack can see the question on the tip of his tongue.

“Why don’t you wait here a beat.” Jack says opening the car door. “I’ll go see what Patty wants.”

He tries to glare at Bozer so he gets the message to not tell Mac what’s going on, but he’s not sure it comes across. Then he shuts the door and walks up the steps to the front door.

Before he can reach for the handle Thornton opens the door.

“Patty!” Jack grins at her. “I didn’t expect to find you here. What’s up.”

“You found Mac and instead of bringing him back to Phoenix as you were told you brought him home to hide him away from me.” Thornton said.

“What.” Jack tried to play it off “Why would you think that?”

“Maybe because I’m standing behind you.” Mac said.

Jack spun around to see Mac who was standing in front of Bozer and Riley. Riley just shrugged and Bozer had the decency to look embarrassed.

“He said he wouldn’t wait in the car.” Bozer started explaining.

“Because I knew you’d do something stupid.” Mac finished. “Besides, it’s hot out here and the car is an oven.”

Mac stepped up next to Jack and looked at Thornton. The two of them seemed to assess the other for a moment then Thornton stepped back to let Mac into the house. Jack put an arm around Mac’s shoulder as they walked into the house. He wasn’t going to let Thornton take the kid back to Phoenix, so he was going to play body guard until he knew that was off the table.

Jack lead the way to the living room but had to stop when Mac halted in the archway. Looking at the kid Jack though Mac’s eyes were seeing something that wasn’t there. It made Jack’s heart ache and he wondered, not for the first time, what that evil scientist had done to Mac.

“You okay Mac?” Bozer asked.

Mac snapped out of whatever trance he had been in and looked over his shoulder at Boz.

“I’m fine.” Mac said.

Jack stiffened.

“I will be fine.” Mac amended. “I’m just a little dazed.”

“Let’s sit down.” Jack offered, already pulling Mac into the room towards the couch.

Mac let Jack pull him along and practically fell into the couch as Jack tried to lower him. Frowning Jack turned towards the kitchen intending to get a cup of water for Mac, but Riley beat him to it.

“Drink this.” Riley said, handing Mac a water bottle.

So Jack moved on to the next problem.

“Hey Patty, what do you say we talk outside.” Jack gave his best smile.

“Sit down Dalton.” Thornton glowers at him until he takes a seat next to Mac.

Riley promptly sits on Mac’s other side and Bozer settles next to her. The couch is barely big enough to hold them all but none of them say anything.

Mac looks at his friends, taking a moment to make eye contact with each of them, before turning to Thornton.

“You can take me in for questioning.” Mac says mater-o-factly.

Jack is out of his seat like a shot. “No way! You’re not taking him to some cell to debrief for hours. He needs to rest.”

There’s a cacophony of sound as Bozer and Riley voice similar opinions. Jack loses what he says next even though he knows what he’s thinking he can no longer hear his words to be sure if they’re coming out.

“Be quiet Jack.” Thornton says without raising her voice.

Jack snaps his trap shut and notices that Ri and Boz have also gone quiet.

After a beat, Thornton turns to Mac. “I’m not bringing you in.”

“Good, that’s settled -“ Jack starts.

“Dalton sit down and let me finish.” Thornton glares at him till he complies.

“I’m not bringing Mac in,” Thornton continues. “Because Riley uncovered Dr. Abir’s logs from his laptop and emailed them to me.” Thornton took a moment for that to sink in. “I came here to retrieve the gear Mac took and to tell you that each of you is on leave for the next week.” Looking at Mac she added. “Or longer.”

“Cool, I could use a vacation.” Bozer said.

“Good with me.” Riley chimed in.

“Also,” Thornton drew their attention again. “None of you are returning to work until you pass a physical evaluation. That goes double for you Mac. I want you talking with a psychiatrist twice a week until you’re cleared for work.”

Mac sighs but nods. Jack, surprised that Mac doesn't try to put up a fight, looks and sees that Mac is leaning heavily on Riley's shoulder. Everyone else grumbles but agree, they're all starting to feel weariness creep in to their bones, and don't want to fight Thornton on the point.

"Jack, I need the pack Mac took." Thornton says and Jack stands.

"I'll be back in a minute." Jack tells Mac.

Then Jack leads the way back out to the car. The bag with the Phoenix tech and gun are under the passenger seat. He hands it over and Thornton catches his eye.

"Let me know if he needs anything." She says seriously.

Something in Jack relaxes and he grins at her, "You got it boss."

Thornton rolls her eyes and get into her car. Jack walks back to the house and finds Bozer and Riley in the kitchen talking softly.

"I'm going to run a grab a few things from my place so I can crash here for a bit, until Mac's feeling better." Riley says as Jack comes to stand next to them.

"Yeah, and I'm driving you." Bozer says and before Riley can protest he adds. "We're both tired. We can keep each other awake for the drive."

Jack nods. "Guess that leaves me in charge of kid genius."

"He fell asleep once Thornton left." Bozer said.

Jack nodded and walked into the living room. Mac looked like he had simply leaned over until his head was resting on the arm of the couch. His feet were still on the floor and Jack knew that it couldn't be a comfortable position to sleep in.

Once he heard the front door close behind Bozer and Riley, Jack moved to pick up Mac. He had one hand around Mac's shoulder and was trying to get his second hand under his knees when the kid opened his eyes blearily and looked at Jack.

"Wha?" he mumbled.

"Just going move you to the bed room so you can sleep." Jack said.

"I can walk." Mac says, making to get up.

Jack manages to hook his arm under Mac's legs and lifts the kid up. Mac tenses, his eyes opening to show the white all around them.

"I got you." Jack tells him, shifting Mac so the kid can rest his head on Jack's shoulder.

"I can walk." Mac says again, but it's quieter and he's resting his head on Jack.

“Or you could just shut up and sleep.” Jack walks towards Mac’s room.

Mac mumbles something Jack doesn’t quite catch then goes quiet. The kid’s asleep again when Jack gets to the room and lays him down on the bed. grabbing an extra blanket Jack tucks Mac in, then takes up the seat in the corner.

When Bozer and Riley return fifteen minutes later they find Mac curled up in a tangle of blankets and Jack asleep in the chair snoring softly.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you everyone for sticking with me. I hope you enjoyed this story.

As you may have noticed I made this story part of a series a few chapters ago. I will be writing more on Mac's brainwashing and recovery.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!