just hold on, it won't be long

by blackrose1002

Summary

Mac’s arms were stretched above him with his wrists chained up to the ceiling, his head lolling inertly to the side. He was shirtless, wearing only his jeans and shoes, and if it wasn’t for his chest moving slowly up and down, Jack would have probably had a heart attack right there.

Tiberius Kovacs seeks revenge on Jack and he quickly figures out going after Jack won’t give him that much satisfaction. Going after the most important person in Jack’s life on the other hand... That's a completely different story.

Notes

Hello there!

After watching the last episode, the scene with Jack and Matty looking at the photo of the terrorist Jack supposedly killed made me want to write something about it. Obviously, I started writing this before we got the promo for the next episode, so please, just treat this fic as an AU :)

The title for the fic comes from a song Find You by Ruelle.

Big thanks to Sammy - this fic is for you, as a thank you for putting up with me and cheering
Putting his feet on the table, Jack leaned back in the armchair in the war room, stretching his arms above his head. Riley was sitting cross-legged on the other armchair, typing something on her laptop and Matty was standing next to the screen, preparing the files for their meeting while they waited for Bozer, Leanna and Mac to get there.

Usually it would be Jack picking up both Bozer and Mac from the house and driving them to work, but this time Riley had asked him to meet her at Phoenix early, wanting to squeeze in a short sparring session before the briefing and Jack had happily agreed even though it had meant getting up earlier than he would like. But seeing how much progress Riley had made and how she could hold her own quite well in a fight was worth it, so Jack didn’t complain.

… alright, maybe he did complain, but only a little. Like, a normal amount.

Hearing the sound of footsteps behind him, Jack twisted his neck, frowning when he saw only Bozer and Leanna enter the war room. “Where did you lose our genius golden retriever?” He grinned, years of practice allowing him to keep the casual look on his face and ignore the warm feeling that spread through his chest at the thought of Mac, making it impossible for anyone to tell he was hopelessly in love with his partner.

“Mac left early to check out some parts for that motorcycle he keeps tinkering with.” Bozer shrugged. “He said he’d meet us here.”

Rolling his eyes fondly, Jack reached for his phone when he felt it buzzing in his pocket. Glancing at the screen, he saw he had just gotten a text from Mac and Jack couldn’t stop the small smile from appearing on his lips when he saw a link in the message. Expecting a video of puppies in a chemistry lab or cats teaching astrophysics Jack opened the link, already chuckling under his breath – it was adorable how much of a nerd Mac sometimes (always) was.

Waiting for the link to load, Jack set his feet back on the floor, leaning forward and resting his elbows on his thighs. Expecting to see cute animals in lab coats running around, he frowned when the screen went black and the second the video started playing, he completely froze, his mind going blank.

“Oh, god.” Jack breathed out, gripping the phone tightly when it almost slipped from his fingers. On the screen, there was a dark room without any windows, probably a cell or a basement, but the reason Jack could barely breathe was the lifeless body hanging from the ceiling. Because as much as he tried to deny it, there was no mistaking the blond hair and slim figure of the person in the middle of the room.

Mac’s arms were stretched above him with his wrists chained up to the ceiling, his head lolling inertly to the side. He was shirtless, wearing only his jeans and shoes, and if it wasn’t for his chest moving slowly up and down, Jack would have probably had a heart attack right there.

“Jack?” Riley’s concerned voice sounded right next to him followed by a loud gasp when she presumably glanced on the screen. Still frozen, Jack didn’t protest when Riley snatched the phone
out of his hands and plugged it in, the footage from his phone showing up on the big screen in the war room seconds later.

Jack was aware of Matty, Bozer and Leanna gasping in shock when they realized what they were looking at, but all he could focus was the image in front of him – Mac, chained somewhere, completely alone and on mercy of whoever had dared to kidnap and imprison him.

“Riley.” Matty said, recovering from the initial shock. “Is this-“

“It’s live.” Riley cut her off, already typing on her keyboard. “But whoever set it up, they’re doing a good job of covering their tracks.”

“Riles, please.” Jack suddenly said, finally finding his voice, his eyes never leaving the screen. “Tell me you can trace it. Tell me you can trace it so I can kill whoever is behind this.”

Before Riley had a chance to reply, a loud groan sounded from the screen, focusing everyone’s attention on the video. Scrambling to his feet, Mac lifted his head, sluggishly blinking his eyes, but Jack was relieved to see the chains were long enough for Mac to actually stand if he was conscious – that meant he wouldn’t have to hang from the ceiling like a puppet until Jack was able to find him. Mac was looking around, probably trying to figure out where he was, and Jack could tell exactly when Mac’s eyes fell on the camera because his entire body stilled and his eyes narrowed. Judging by the look on Mac’s face, Jack was pretty sure Mac was about to say something probably not very nice directed at the camera since he didn’t know who was watching him, but whatever he was about to say was stopped by a loud noise coming from the background – like the sound of the door being opened.

“I see you’re finally awake.” A voice said followed by the sound of footsteps getting closer and Jack tensed because he knew that voice – he couldn’t quite place it, but he was sure he had heard it before. “And I see agent Dalton is watching, perfect.”

Before Jack could dwell on who the voice belonged to, the person stepped in front of the camera, leaning in closer and Jack could feel the blood drain away from his face when he saw who was on the other side of the camera.

“Is that…” Matty started in disbelief, evidently lost for words, something that didn’t happen very often.

“Tiberius Kovacs.” Jack finished for her, literally feeling as if he had just seen a ghost. His mind suddenly flashed back to the op he had been a part of ten years and to the moment when he had pulled the trigger, effectively killing one of the most dangerous Hungarian terrorists.

Or so he had thought.

“Who?” Jack could hear Bozer ask in confusion, but he let Matty do the explaining while he took a few steps closer to the screen, staring at Kovacs who was smirking creepily into the camera.

“You’re probably wondering how I’m alive, aren’t you, agent Dalton.” Kovacs said, taking a few steps back as he began walking around the room, circling Mac whose eyes were following Kovacs closely. “See, there had been a lot of people who… didn’t exactly want me around ten years ago. And after a few attempts on my life, I decided to shake things up a little.” Kovacs smirked. “Body doubles are such an amazing solution. It’s incredible that with enough money you can get another person to look exactly like you.”

“Son of a bitch.” Jack cursed under his breath. “He played us ten years ago.”
“And he had been alive all this time.” Matty added, already reaching for her phone, probably to make a few calls and inform a few important people that the Hungarian terrorist everybody thought was dead was actually very much alive.

“But I was intrigued by you, agent Dalton.” Kovacs continued, the smile on his face making Jack feel sick. “And a while ago I figured that maybe it’s time for you to see what happens if you anger someone like me.”

“Riley, please, tell me you’ve got something.” Jack turned to look at Riley pleadingly, but she only shook her head, typing furiously on the keyboard.

“At first I planned to get you here, so we could get to know each other better, but after I’ve watched you for a while…” Kovacs trailed off, pausing right by Mac’s side. “I realized you were spending quite a lot of time around this pretty blond thing.” He grinned, gesturing at Mac and Jack could feel his stomach drop. “And I couldn’t help but notice that you seem very fond of him.”

“I’m going to kill you.” Jack whispered, his voice low and dangerous, not caring that Kovacs couldn’t hear him. “I’m going to fucking kill you.”

“I have to admit, he was much harder to capture than I anticipated.” Kovacs said, going back to circling Mac. “He actually fought back, I’m impressed. Not just a pretty face, I like it.” Kovacs smirked and Jack had a hard time stopping himself from punching the wall.

“Riley, I’m begging you.” Jack pleaded, having a very bad feeling and not liking the way Kovacs kept looking at Mac every now and then.

“The signal keeps bouncing, I can’t track it.” Riley replied, frustration lacing her voice and Jack felt like screaming. “I also can’t locate Mac’s phone, something is blocking the signal.”

“Maybe tracing a phone call would work?” Matty suddenly asked, making everyone look at her. “If Kovacs still has Mac’s phone, maybe he will answer.”

Grabbing his phone from Riley, Jack was already picking the right number and seconds later they all heard the ringtone Mac had picked for Jack coming from the screen. Taking the phone out of his pocket, Kovacs smirked before accepting the call. “Agent Dalton. What a pleasure.”

“Tiberius, hey, Tibby, my man.” Jack started, his voice falsely cheerful. “How’s it going, dude? It’s been a while.” Kovacs didn’t reply, he was just looking into the camera, so Jack kept talking. “Look, I get it that you’re pissed because I kinda was tryin’ to kill ya, I really get that, I don’t like guys runnin’ after me either. But that beef you got, that’s with me, so how about a trade, huh?” Jack offered, his eyes tracing back to Mac who had been quiet so far, probably trying to figure out how to get out of the chains. “You let him go and I take his place, no tricks, no nothin’. You let him go and I’ll happily let you chain me to that ceiling, what do you say?”

“I say it’s a tempting offer, agent Dalton.” Kovacs replied with a grin. “But you see, as much as I would enjoy having you here… The fun thing about pain is that there are so many way to inflict it.” He said and without a warning, he punched Mac, fast and hard, causing him to stumble a little. “And while I would love to cause you some physical pain… I think I’m going to love hurting this one even more while you watch, agent Dalton.”

“You’re going to pay for this.” Jack growled, his hand that wasn’t holding the phone clenched in a tight fist. “This time I’ll make sure you fucking stay dead.”

On the screen, Jack could see Kovacs grin before he disconnected the call and tossed the phone on
the ground, smashing it with his boot. One look at Riley told Jack that she hadn’t managed to trace
the call and he didn’t care about the technical explanations, all he cared about was Mac. Mac who
was staring at Kovac’s with a fuck you expression written all over his face, blood dripping from his
busted lip, not flinching when Kovacs once again walked up closer to him with a wide smile on his
face.

“Now, how about we get started, pretty boy.”

Receiving yet another hard kick into his abdomen, Mac doubled over as much as the chains let him,
trying to catch his breath. They had been going like this for a while now, Kovacs punching and
kicking him repeatedly, all while talking non-stop at the camera, probably to piss off Jack even more.
Mac didn’t know the history between these two, but from what he gathered, Jack had tried to kill
Kovacs ten years ago, but apparently he had taken out a wrong person, a body double judging by
what Kovacs said – and now, ten years later, Kovacs decided to get his revenge. No wonder his
name didn’t ring a bell – the name that Mac knew only because Kovacs introduced himself right
before knocking Mac out – Mac had still been at MIT back in 2009, so his knowledge of world’s
most dangerous terrorists had been pretty much nonexistent back then.

Mac was brought back from his thoughts in a rather violent way, by a fist hitting his jaw again. Not
making much of a sound, Mac only spit the blood out and looked at Kovacs defiantly, making
Kovacs grin gleefully in return before turning to face the camera.

“I have to admit, agent Dalton, I’m very impressed by your… friend.” Kovacs said. “He’s taking it
so well, he’s barely making any sounds. And the look in his eyes…” Kovacs trailed off, glancing at
Mac with a smile. “He’s a feisty thing, I’ll give you that, Dalton. Exactly your type, isn’t it?”

Annoyed by being called a “thing” again, Mac almost missed the comment about being Jack’s type,
but the moment it registered in his brain, Mac couldn’t help but frown. Almost instantly he schooled
his features back to the neutral expression, but the confusion inside of him remained. Jack’s type
of… what exactly? Mac did his best to ignore to sudden twinge in his heart and he quickly put out
the small flame of hope that always lightened up in him whenever Jack’s arms lingered around him
for a second longer than usually or Jack making a joking comment about wanting to kiss him after
Mac managed to save their lives. That’s what you get for falling in love with your partner, a snide
voice whispered in his head, but Mac ignored it just like he always did – he knew Jack would never
return his feelings and he had learned to live with that fact a long time ago.

“I was thinking about making things a bit more interesting.” Kovacs’ voice made Mac focus back on
what was happening in the room. “You’re going to love that one, agent Dalton.”

Feeling like a prop in a show, Mac refrained from rolling his eyes. Kovacs took a few steps to grab a
bucket standing by the wall and before Mac realized what was going on, Kovacs took a big swing
and poured the absolutely freezing water that was in the bucket all over him. As the water dripped
from his body, Mac couldn’t help but shiver uncontrollably – it was cold in the room, it had been
since the beginning and him being shirtless definitely didn’t help. His teeth clattering, Mac shook his
head to get the water and wet hair out of his eyes, and his body instantly tensed when he saw the
item in Kovacs’ hand. The terrorist was smirking at him, holding an electric cattle prod, and Mac
cursed internally – he hated electroshocks.

As Kovacs started slowly walking towards him, extending the prod in front of him, the last thing
Mac managed to think about was if the prod was set right in the terms of current and voltage or if it
would kill him instantly.

And then the prod touched his skin. And this time Mac wasn’t able to hold back a scream.
“SON OF A BITCH!” Jack yelled at the screen as Kovacs electrocuted Mac for the umpteenth time, the electric prod connecting with Mac’s bare chest making his body shake violently. Laughing loudly, Kovacs took a few steps back, but Jack’s eyes were focused on Mac whose body was hanging limply for a few seconds before Mac slowly found his footing again and lifted his head, a hard, challenging look still present in his eyes.

Hating feeling so helpless, Jack paced around the war room. He had changed and put on his tac gear almost immediately after the video started streaming, and he knew the tac team was ready to go – all they needed was a signal from Riley or any other agent telling them they managed to locate Mac.

In the corner of his eye, Jack could see Kovacs put the prod away and while it should make him breath out in relief, Jack tensed, knowing that the only reason Kovacs would stop electrocuting Mac was that he had something else planned for him.

“You know, Dalton, all of this is such a basic torture.” Kovacs said, gesturing around with a bored look on his face. “So I was thinking about taking it to the next level.”

As Kovacs strolled around the room, Jack was suddenly hit with a very bad feeling, his gut telling him that Kovacs had something truly evil planned out. “See, Dalton, while I was planning this, I’ve been watching you for a long time.” Kovacs started, stopping in the middle of the room and staring right into the camera. “And I couldn’t help but notice how you look at him.” He smirked, gesturing at Mac. “Not that I can blame you, he’s such a pretty blond thing.”

Feeling his heart drop, Jack froze, not even daring to breathe. “Even despite the blood and bruises, he is still so cute, don’t you think, agent Dalton?” Kovacs said with a lewd smile that made Jack feel sick. “Maybe he and I could have some fun.”

“No.” Jack breathed out and his heart broke in a million pieces when he saw the look on Mac’s face. To anyone else the look on Mac’s face was neutral and completely expressionless, but Jack could see right through the calm mask Mac was putting on. He could see the anxiety seeping through, but the worst thing were Mac’s eyes – despite the defiant looks and shooting daggers before, for the first time that day Mac’s eyes were full of fear. It was very well concealed and Jack was sure no one else would be able to spot it, but he could – it didn’t happen very often, but Jack had seen that look enough times for it to haunt him in his nightmares every now and then.

“Riley, please, tell me you’re getting close to finding him.” Jack pleaded, not even bothering to hide the fact that the tears were streaming down his face.

“I just need a bit more time.” Riley replied, her voice frantic and tense.

“He doesn’t have time, Ri!” Logically, Jack knew she was doing her best while being worried about Mac, but he they were really running out of time and Jack didn’t even want to think about what would happen to Mac if they didn’t find him right now.

“You know what, Dalton? I bet he’s quite a screamer.” Kovacs wiggled his eyebrows and Jack’s knees almost gave out. “How about we find out?”

“No, no, no…” Jack chanted under his breath as Kovacs walked up closer to Mac, whimpering when he reached for Mac’s belt. But in that moment Mac’s self-preservation instincts must have prevailed over wanting to keep his emotions in check, and using probably all the strength he had left, Mac kicked Kovacs with as much force as he could muster, sending Kovacs stumbling backwards, but before Jack even had time to be happy about it, Kovacs collided with the camera, knocking it off and seconds later the live stream was cut off.
“NO!” Jack yelled, jumping closer to the screen because they just lost their only connection to Mac and now they didn’t know what was happening to him, and Kovacs was probably pissed off and god knows what he would do to Mac now, and Jack felt like he couldn’t breathe.

“I think I know where he is!” Riley suddenly exclaimed, pulling Jack out of his panic attack almost instantly. “There’s this warehouse only ten minutes away from here, I think I found some records proving that Kovacs used to own it before—“

“I don’t care about that, how sure are you?” Jack asked, his voice desperate as he looked at Riley intently.

“Ninety percent.” She eventually said and Jack was already by the door before she even finished talking. He would have headed to that damn warehouse even if Riley hadn’t been sure at all, it was the only lead they had and Jack was praying to any deity he could think of for Mac to actually be there.

Riley might have said the warehouse was ten minutes away, but Jack managed to cut the that time to seven minutes and he jumped out of the van before that car even fully stopped. Not caring about anything and trusting the tac team to have his back, Jack broke into a run, running faster than he had ever remembered himself running. Bursting into the building, he immediately headed for the stairs leading down – Jack had seen no windows on the video which meant Mac was probably being held in some kind of a basement.

As he ran down the stairs, Jack headed into the direction of the only door he could see, and the moment he burst inside, he became aware of a few things at the same time.

One, Mac’s body was limply hanging from the ceiling, no longer standing on his feet.

Two, Mac’s belt was lying discarded on the floor.

Three, the button of Mac’s jeans was open.

Four, Tiberius Kovacs was standing right next to him, his hand barely an inch away from Mac’s bare chest.

All of that registered in Jack’s brain in a split of a second.

And Jack saw red.

Drawing his gun, Jack pointed it at Kovacs and fired without hesitation, pulling the trigger relentlessly until the quiet click told him he put all of the bullets from the magazine into Kovacs body that was lying slumped down on the floor in the pool of his own blood. Jack didn’t even bother checking if the man was still alive, he was pretty sure a bullet to his head and a dozen more he put into him did the job just fine.

His heart pounding, Jack rushed to Mac’s side. Without thinking, he grabbed Mac’s hips and pulled him closer, wanting to lift him up to relieve the pressure on his wrists, but the second his hands touched Mac, his partner whimpered and scrambled back, his head snapping up, and Jack was faced with Mac’s blue eyes wide with fear.

“Hey, hey, Mac, it’s me.” Jack immediately took his hands away, cursing himself internally. “It’s okay, it’s just me, it’s Jack, you’re safe.”

“Jack.” Mac breathed out after a few seconds and it seemed all of the strength left his body as he sagged forward, Jack wrapping his arms around him to protect his wrists.
“I got ya, I got ya, buddy.” Jack muttered into his hair, his vision blurring with tears. Hearing the tac team behind him, Jack turned his head, calling out to the closest member of the team. “Hey, Ford, see if you can find the key to these chains.”

Putting all of Mac’s weight on himself, Jack waited, muttering words of reassurance into Mac’s hair as Ford searched Kovacs’ pockets, eventually finding a set of keys with a quiet triumphant sound. Holding Mac securely in his arms, the moment Ford unlocked the chains and Mac’s wrists slipped out of them, Jack lowered them both gently on the ground.

“God, I’m so sorry, Mac.” Jack whispered, holding Mac tightly as he shivered, careful not to put too much pressure on the bruises and Mac’s ribs that were probably hurting like a bitch. “I’m so sorry.”

“It’s not… your fault.” Mac muttered quietly, his hands clutching Jack’s bulletproof vest tightly. “You… found me.”

“I should have found you sooner.” Jack replied, his voice tight with guilt. “God, I should have never let him fool us ten years ago, I’m so sor-”

“Jack.” Mac raised his head to look at him and even though his voice was weak, his eyes were clear, so blue and beautiful that Jack felt like crying. “I knew you would save me. And it’s not your fault.” Resting his head on Jack’s shoulder, Mac closed his eyes. “Whatever would have happened… it wouldn’t have been your fault.”

“Mac, please tell me he didn’t…” Jack asked, trailing off as he suddenly remembered with dread the last thing he had seen before the stream had cut off.

“No.” Mac whispered, clinging even closer to Jack and Jack instinctively tightened his grip. “You got here… just in time.”

Breathing out in relief, Jack was about to reply when he was interrupted by the medics getting downstairs. Gently untangling himself from Mac and assuring him he wasn’t going anywhere, he let the medics do their job, watching Mac like a hawk as they loaded him on a stretcher. The Phoenix medics knew better than to argue with Jack, so they let him into the ambulance without a question, and Jack’s heart did a little flip when he reached for Mac’s hand and Mac’s fingers instantly entwined with his.

Back at the Phoenix, Jack leaned against the wall of the medical room, not wanting to get in a way as the medics examined Mac and dressed his wounds. The good news was that all of it would heal with time, even the ugly looking burns caused by that damn electric cattle prod that Kovacs was using on Mac. Finally, after what felt like forever, Mac was moved to a small room and Jack immediately took a seat by Mac’s bed, already knowing he wouldn’t be moving any time soon. Taking the bulletproof vest off, Jack threw it in a corner of the room and leaned forward, taking Mac’s hand and rubbing it gently with his thumb. Mac’s eyes were closed and he looked so peaceful and so much younger, and Jack’s heart clenched painfully.

“God dammit, Mac.” Jack whispered quietly, swallowing the lump in his throat. “For a sec I really thought I was gonna lose you today.”

“You’re not getting rid of me that easily.” Mac’s voice startled Jack and when he looked up, Mac’s eyes were still closed, but he was smiling. Seconds later, Mac blinked and Jack was once again struck by how blue Mac’s eyes were.

“You were supposed to be resting, buddy.” Jack said with a small grin.
“And what does it look like I’m doing?” Mac arched his eyebrow and Jack rolled his eyes fondly.

“The sass is back, you’re already feelin’ better, aren’t you?” Jack chuckled, shaking his head with a smile, but it quickly vanished when Jack remembered what he wanted to say. “Mac, I’m really sorry about this.”

“I’ve told you, it’s not your fault.” Mac replied, looking at him sternly and squeezing his hand. “You couldn’t have known he was alive and-“

“That’s not what I’m talking about.” Jack cut him off gently. “I mean, what Kovacs said, about me looking at you, I just…” Jack paused, rubbing his eyes tiredly with his free hand. “I never thought it was visible to others and to think that it almost caused him to…” Jack cut off, not able to even voice was Kovacs was trying to do. “I’ll tone it down, I promise. And I’m aware that you’re probably weirded out by that, but I-“

“What if that’s not what I want?” Mac’s voice interrupted him mid-sentence and when Jack looked up, Mac was looking at him with an unreadable expression on his face. Seeing Jack’s confused gaze, Mac squeezed his hand again. “What if I don’t want you to tone it down?”

“Mac?” Jack said slowly, not entirely sure what was happening. “What are you-“

“What I’m saying is that…” Mac started before wincing. “Well, unless I’m reading it all completely wrong, then this is about to get very awkward.” He muttered quietly with a small shake of his head. “But what I’m saying is that I wouldn’t necessarily mind if you got up from that chair and kissed me.”

As his brain short circuited, Jack was pretty sure he was dreaming because it had to be a dream – there was no way Mac had actually said what Jack had heard – but Jack wasn’t about to risk waking up without complying to Mac’s wishes.

Jack would never deny Mac anything.

Standing up, his left hand still entwined with Mac’s right, Jack leaned forward, cupping Mac’s face with his free hand. “Are you sure about this?”

“I’ve never been more sure about anything in my whole life.” Mac whispered, his breath ghosting on Jack’s lips. “Now get on with it, cowboy.”

His heart pounding wildly, Jack closed the distance between them, pressing his lips gently against Mac’s. It felt as if the fireworks exploded in Jack’s brain and when he felt Mac kiss him back, Jack was pretty sure he was going to die right there. But if that was how he was supposed to go, Jack was totally fine with it, so he continued kissing Mac, feeling like if he was flying. Jack had had many first kisses in his life, but nothing compared to the feeling of kissing Mac – it was indescribable and all Jack knew was that he never wanted it to stop.

Eventually, he did have to stop and Jack pulled away, but not too far as he immediately leaned his forehead against Mac’s. His back was starting to hurt from being bent like this, but Jack didn’t care – all he cared about was Mac who was smiling at him with a smile that for some reason made Jack think of sunshine.

“You…” Jack started hoarsely, still not entirely convinced he wasn’t dreaming. “You do realize that now I’m never going to let you go.”

“I was really hoping you’d say that.” Mac replied, putting his free hand on the back of Jack’s neck and running his fingers through Jack’s buzzed hair. “Because in case you didn’t know, I kind of love
“I really didn’t know.” Jack let out a small chuckle, looking at Mac with a mixture of disbelief and adoration. “But in case you didn’t know, Angus MacGyver – I kinda love you too.”

And with that, Jack dived back, kissing Mac again, his aching back be damned.

Because now, that he was actually allowed to do that? He was not going to stop anytime soon.

End Notes

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