The worst part was, this wasn’t even the weirdest thing to happen to them that week.

***NOW WITH CHAPTER 2!!!!***

...aaaand the essay portion you guys asked for (it'll make sense once you've read the story - trust me)

Notes

This is based on a plot bunny mass_hipgnosis generously gave me. It's not quite what we talked about, but I hope you still like it.

See the end of the work for more notes.
The tank stopped just in front of the police blockade.

The HPD had been getting calls about it all morning, from concerned citizens wanting to know what in the hell a tank was doing trying to navigate its way through the back streets of Honolulu. Thankfully, driving was all it seemed to be doing – creepy, yes, but better than firing off random shots or smashing into buildings – but that could change at any moment.

So 5-0 was here, along with SWAT and a couple of other teams that might have the chance of stopping whoever was driving the thing if they did suddenly decide to do some damage. There were also a couple of news crews, since tanks made for good visuals whether or not they were doing anything.

Duke had ordered the driver out a couple of times with no response, and now Steve was preparing to scramble up there and yank the guy out himself.

“And what if he’s waiting for that?” Danny argued, because serving as Steve’s sense of self-preservation was Danny’s lot in life. “What if the reason he hasn’t come out of there is that he’s specifically waiting for you to go up there – because if they know you at all, they know you’re the person who’s going to do that – so he can shoot you in the face directly?”

Admittedly, they didn’t know that the tank had anything to do with Steve, or even 5-0 – there had been no threats or demands made – but the law of averages suggested pretty strongly that this was somehow aimed at them. Normal criminals managed to do crime without tanks, but Danny’s husband attracted the attention of special criminals.

“I’ll make sure whoever it is doesn’t have a gun before I get in their line of sight,” Steve soothed, laying his hands on Danny’s shoulders for a moment. “If you want, you can even come up with me and open the hatch so I can have my hands free to disarm him.”

“Oh, I was going up with you the whole time, whether you wanted me to or not.” Danny jabbed a finger into Steve’s chest, and out of the corner of his eye he could see both Kono and Lou grin at the gesture. “If this asshole even tries to shoot at you, I want to be close enough to express my displeasure at both of you.”

A few minutes later, they were scrambling up the sides of the tank. The worst part was, this wasn’t even the weirdest thing to happen to them that week.

When they got up to the top, moving carefully in case the driver decided to pop up and surprise them, Danny gestured for Steve to come around to his side. “New plan. We both open the hatch together, then if this asshole pops up and tries to shoot anybody we slam this nice, heavy metal hatch down on his head and make sure no one gets shot.”

Steve’s lips quirked. “Yes, dear.”

But he came around and helped Danny open the hatch, which was the important part, and as it opened everyone at the police barricade raised their guns and aimed at the opening. Surprisingly, no one popped out, though there was a faint sound from inside that might have possibly been a shriek or squeal of some kind.

Privately, Danny immediately downgraded the crisis level to “an idiot who somehow got a hold of a tank.” Still dangerous, but less so.
Giving Danny a glance that suggested he’d had the same thought, Steve jumped down into the hatch. Danny followed him into the small space, finding a round-faced middle-aged man in a sensible button-down pressed against one of the walls. “Don’t hurt me!” the man shouted the moment Steve even leaned in his direction. “I’m sorry! I didn’t mean for this to happen!”

“What did you mean to have happen?” Steve snapped, firmly in interrogation mode. “Because I’m trying to think of legal things you could do with a tank, and so far nothing’s coming to me.”

The man cleared his throat. “Um, I was....” He stopped, scrambling through his pockets for a small piece of paper he unfolded and read from. “I was looking for a Danny Williams?”

Oh, those were the wrong words to say. Steve immediately snapped into “someone’s threatening my family” mode, entire body tensing and expression shifting to something way too close to his “kill” face for this guy’s future peace of mind. Which was sweet – Danny himself had a “kill mode” whenever anyone threatened Steve or the kids – but was probably not necessary under the circumstances. The guy looked more like he belonged in a customer service department somewhere than any kind of—

Oh, hell. How had he forgotten this?

"Seriously?” Danny shouted at the man, throwing his hands up in the air as much as was possible in the small space. "You couldn't have, oh, I don't know, called first? Said 'By the way, Mr. Williams, I'll be bringing your tank by in the morning? 'You may want to alert your fellow members of law enforcement!"

The man shifted his attention to Danny, looking almost as panicked as he had at Steve's death face. "The company wanted it to be a surprise?"

"A surprise, he says," Danny muttered, looking heavenward for strength before jabbing a finger in the man's direction. "Do you know what happens when you surprise people who have heavy artillery? Death! Death happens! Did you not read the essay portion?"

"Um...." The man's voice was barely audible by this point. "Someone else actually handled that part. Several months ago.” He swallowed. “Sorry it took us so long to get the prize to you.”

Danny made clawing motions in the man's direction, reminding himself that stupidity wasn’t sufficient legal cause to strangle someone. Steve was staring at him, all traces of violence replaced with confusion that was rapidly being tinged with amusement.

Which, Danny realized suddenly, was nothing compared to how everyone outside was going to react. Shit.

Climbing up and poking his head out of the hatch, he found everyone behind the barricades giving him different but equally intense expressions making it clear that they needed to know what the hell was going on. Instead of doing that, he waved them all away. "Everything's fine!” he shouted. "The man's just a moron. Steve and I can take care of it, which means the rest of you should go back to your regularly scheduled days."

There were several groans, but the assault front slowly started breaking up. The rest of the team didn't move, all of them giving him looks that made it clear they knew there was more to the story, but he was going to damn well put that off as long as possible.

Ducking back inside the tank, he discovered the man explaining the story to Steve. "...been six months since the contest closed, but they said it took them that long to figure out how to get the tank
over here. They almost gave it to someone else, but they loved Mr. Williams' entry too much."

Steve grinned at him. "You entered to win a tank?"

Danny sighed. "No, I entered to win you a tank."

Steve's entire face transformed, making him look like a 12-year-old who'd just been told he was getting a puppy for Christmas. "Really?" He sounded genuinely moved, which Danny was going to cling to while he was busy dying of embarrassment. "You got me a tank?"

"I...." He held up his hands again. "I tried to go Christmas shopping online last year when I wasn’t entirely sober, and I ended up on a lot of e-mail lists I never bothered getting off of. Then I got an e-mail that said they were giving away an old tank to whoever could get the most use out of it, and I just...." Danny rubbed a hand along the back of his neck. "I knew you’d get a kick out of it."

Steve’s face was shining, making Danny’s chest hurt in the best way. “You got me a tank,” he repeated.

“I’m pretty sure I was actually Googling ‘grenade gift baskets,’” Danny managed, voice oddly rough with emotion given the utter nonsense coming out of his mouth. “Which don’t seem to exist, by the way. So don’t get your hopes up.”

Steve moved forward and Danny stopped paying attention to anything else. He had that blazingly intent look in his eye, the one that said Danny was about to get the breath kissed out of him, and Danny felt his pulse jump. "Oh, I think my hopes are doing just fine,” Steve murmured, leaning closer. “Though I'm clearly going to need to kick my gift-giving skills up a notch.”

It was hardly the most appropriate moment for a kiss, but Danny wasn’t about to argue. He just grabbed the front of Steve’s vest and held on, the few brain cells he had left that weren’t popping like blown fuses making a note that heavy artillery was, in fact, an aphrodisiac for Steven J. McGarrett. He’d suspected as much, but it was nice to get confirmation.

They broke apart to the sound of cheers and whistles coming from above their heads, and Danny looked up to see the rest of the team all grinning down at him. “So,” Chin called down. “We’re ready to hear the rest of the story now.”

Danny froze, kiss-fried brain desperately trying to come up with some relatively sane explanation. Steve beat him to the punch, however, by grinning up at them with that little-boy smile that always turned him to mush. “Danny got me a tank.”

Danny just groaned, dropping his head on Steve’s shoulder as their teammates burst out laughing above them.
Chapter 2

Steve hadn’t been to... well, any of the reunions his graduating class had held. Not that he didn’t like his classmates - he’d kept in touch with a lot of them as they’d worked together on various missions over the years - but it had just never worked out. He’d either been out of the country or deep in prep for a mission, the majority of which had been so classified he hadn’t even been able to explain why he couldn’t make it. Still, they’d understood.

This year, though, he’d gotten the invitation while on the phone with his mother-in-law, and she’d immediately offered to watch the kids while they went. Annapolis was just a three hour drive from Newark, and they could grab a hotel there for the night and drive back to Newark in the morning.

“You know he’ll say yes if you ask him, Steve,” Clara said, using her best cajoling voice. “He adores you. He got you a tank.”

Steve winced at the reminder. Not of the tank – it still went down as the best present anyone had ever given him, ever, and he melted every single time he thought about Danny spending all that time on his entry simply because he thought it would make Steve smile. But... well, there had been a news report about the tank’s drive through town, and Danny had gone on air to give the shortest explanation he could as to what happened.

“I could have done the interview, you know,” Steve said, rubbing the stiff muscles of Danny’s neck. “You didn’t have to get on camera at all.”

“I love you with all my heart and soul, but you have absolutely no concept of what’s embarrassing and what isn’t,” Danny said, closing his eyes. “I minimized the situation as much as possible. Hopefully, everyone will forget about it in a week.”

Unfortunately, they hadn’t.

5-0 already had a reputation, but the idea that the two guys who basically ran it considered tanks to be on the same level of flowers and chocolates had shot it up to a whole new level. Cops and criminals both asked them about it, with varying levels of credulity, and while Steve would be happy to answer a thousand questions Danny had started to look like he wanted to hide under something every time it was brought up.

“Yeah,” Steve said finally, watching his husband through the blinds. He’d told pretty much everyone he’d ever worked with how amazing Danny was, but hardly anyone had gotten to meet him in person. Not only would it give Danny a break, but it might be nice to show him off. “Getting out of town might be a good idea.”

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Steve and Danny got out of the rental car, listening to the sounds of the party going on inside. Steve just let himself look for a moment, willing to admit now that he’d possibly missed the previous reunions on purpose. Listening to people talk about their families, about all the people he’d had waiting for them at home, had been too painful.

He turned, grinning at the person who’d become his home. “So, what do you think?”

Danny shot him an amused look. “I’m planning on getting some embarrassing college stories out of these people,” he warned him. “I hope you’re prepared for that.”
Steve shook his head. “There aren’t any.” He hadn’t really figured out how to be somebody who could be comfortable with people until later. “I was painfully rule abiding and responsible while I was here.”

Danny raised an eyebrow at him. “You are so full of shit right now.” He must have read the answer on Steve’s face, however, because he just sighed and shook his head. “You only come alive around rocket launchers, is that it?”

“That’s it.” He grinned. “Too bad for me, I hadn’t met the guy who loved me enough to give me heavy artillery.”

Danny rolled his eyes. “Promise me you won’t bring it up here, okay? I don’t even think about these buttoned-up navy types looking at me like I’m deranged.”

“They would look at you like you were a genius,” Steve argued, sliding his arm around Danny’s back. “I would be the envy of every single person in that building.”

“Steve....”


They were given a surprisingly warm welcome inside, both of them treated to a round of backslaps and fist-bumps. Davidson did try to stare Danny down, a classic intimidation method used by every CO since the beginning of time, and Steve just grinned when Danny stared back hard enough to make Davidson blink first.

“You got off easy,” Steve said, handing Danny a drink from the open bar. “He punched me when I tried that.”

“Seriously?” Bailey sounded absolutely delighted as she turned to Danny. “I like you. Now I’m annoyed the PD got you instead of the Navy.”

“Never would have worked.” Danny shook his head, grinning up at his husband. “I would have punched my CO the first week.”

Soon a group of them had found a table, sharing stories from Annapolis and the lives that followed. Bailey’s wife and Danny hit it off immediately with their longing for proper pizza, and their insistence that pineapple should be nowhere in the immediate vicinity. Watkins and her husband wanted to hear everything they could about 5-0, while Parker and his girlfriend kept asking questions about Hawaii in preparation for a vacation they’d apparently been talking about. Purcell showed everyone pictures of every single one of his nieces and nephews.

Eventually, it came around to Christmas shopping, and the debate over what to get the kids and whether it was better to buy earlier or later. At one point, Davidson leaned forward. “I heard from a buddy of mine that some woman got her husband a tank for his birthday. Now, that’s an unbeatable birthday gift.”

Steve stopped breathing for a second. Next to him, Danny groaned and dropped his face into his hand.

“I’m calling bullshit.” Watkins shook her head. “Nobody’s gonna be cool enough to give their spouse a tank.” She patted her husband’s cheek. “I love you anyway, though.”

He just smiled. “I love you, too, but there’s no way in hell I’m letting you have a rocket launcher in the house.”
“You know that’s just a story the guy made up,” Bailey added. “He was trying to one-up his buddies, decided a tank was the best way to go about it, and someone put it up on Facebook.”

Steve glanced over at Danny. “It is possible,” he argued. “If the husband was really into that sort of thing, think of how thoughtful it would be. It’s like…” He held out a hand, trying to find the words. “…like they’re saying that, no matter how much I might have yelled at you about how crazy you are, I still love even that part of you.”

He cleared his throat, a sudden burst of emotion making his voice a little thick, to notice that Danny had lifted his head somewhere in the middle of all that. The expression on his face was a strange mixture of surprise and intensity, and Steve squeezed his hand and hoped that didn’t count as talking about it.

Everyone was silent for a moment, pondering this, then the chorus of denials exploded around the table. “Nah, everyone else is right.” Davidson shook his head, looking disappointed. “No way somebody would think to get their spouse something like that. It’s too crazy.”

“Besides,” Bailey’s wife added. “How could they even get one? It’s not like they sell them on ebay.”

“It was a contest,” Danny sighed, surprising Steve. “A military supply company got their hands on an old tank, but it wasn’t in good enough shape for collectors so they decided to hold a contest.”

Bailey turned to him, surprised. “Really? Well, that’s probably where the story got started. Some guy saw the contest, and was dreaming about—“

She was cut off by the sound of Danny’s phone clattering on the table, opened to his picture gallery. Parker was the first one to pick it up. “Your kids are still adorable,” he said, “but I don’t…” His voice trailed off, and he lifted his head to look at Danny. “They’re sitting on a tank.”

Bailey took the phone out of his hand. “Some museums have….” Her voice also trailed off. “It’s in a driveway.”

At that point, Steve gave up trying to fight his grin. “We had to move it because there wasn’t any room for the cars. We ended up just renting garage space for it.”

Every single person at the table turned to Danny, their eyes huge, and Danny made an exasperated noise. “What? It was the closest thing to grenade gift baskets I could find.”

“I like it better than the gift basket.” Steve leaned over for a kiss. “The mayor already asked me if I’ll drive it in parades.”

Everyone at the table looked back and forth at each other, then at Steve, then back at Danny. Then there was a spontaneous round of applause.

“Legendary,” Davidson shook his head admiringly. “No one’ll believe me when I tell them.”

“What was the contest like?” Parker’s wife asked, fascinated. “Was it just a random draw?”

Danny shook his head. “There were some questions, then an essay portion.”

“An essay?” Bailey leaned forward. “I have to know what you said in that essay.”

Danny pointed a finger at her. “Not in a million years.”

When she turned to Steve, he only shrugged. “Sorry. He won’t even tell me.”
“You know people will just make it up,” Purcell said. “What they don’t know, they’ll fill in for themselves.”

Danny sighed. “Seriously, guys, it’s not that big a deal.”

The protests were, unsurprisingly, even louder than the applause had been.

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Even two years later, various Navy personnel who wandered across their path would ask if Danny had really won Steve a tank. Occasionally they were incredulous, but mostly their voices were full of the sheer admiration the story deserved.

At one point, a four-star general leaned in close to Steve. “Did he really give you a tank?” he murmured.

Steve grinned, the same way he always did. “Yes sir, he did.”

General Morshower nodded, a small smile on his face. “Lucky man.”

When he left, Danny came up to him. “What did he say?” he asked, faintly suspicious.

Steve shook his head. “You don’t want to know.”

Danny sighed. “He asked about the tank, didn’t he?”

Steve just smiled.
The essay portion

Chapter Notes

Technically, this isn't a chapter, but a few people have been asking for the essay portion of Danny's entry. For the record, I maintain that the real reason he refuses to tell anyone what he wrote is because he doesn't really remember what it was. He could tell you the general idea, I'm sure, but he's not the type of person who'd copy it into a file before hitting the "send" button. And when you throw words around as much as he does (as much as I do) I can tell you with absolute certainty than you don't remember half of them.

Tell us, in 1000 words or less, why you would be the perfect person to win this tank:

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First, I feel like I should state for the record that both my husband and I are members of law enforcement, and the unit we work with has special dispensation from the governor to be flexible with certain regulations in the pursuit of justice. This means that any incident I hint at in the following paragraphs was almost entirely legal, or at least was declared so retroactively. So no need to panic about any of it.

It also means I know what I'm talking about when I say that this entire contest is completely insane. What is anyone going to do with a tank that you’re not going to immediately regret later? For all you know, awarding it to someone might actually break up their marriage – what relatively sane spouse wants a tank in their yard?

So I’ll solve that problem for you and explain why you should give it to me. Not only will winning a tank NOT break up my marriage, it will probably win me at least a solid year of awesome husband points. Because, see, Steve is ALSO insane, so he and the tank would be kind of a perfect fit. (You’ve de-activated any weaponry, right? Because Google says that has to happen to make it street legal, but if you haven’t I need to take care of that before my husband gets anywhere near it.)

Though my husband is currently with law enforcement, he was a SEAL for several years and did all kinds of secret terrifying missions all around the world I’m still not legally allowed to know the details of. As a result of that – though let’s be honest, they were just enabling a tendency that was already there – he automatically leaps toward anything remotely resembling danger.

I mean that literally.

Since I’ve met him, that list of jumps has taken him off the sides of various buildings, directly in front of bullets, and onto a helicopter that was in the process of flying away. There was one time he jumped a car ONTO a boat. That was moving. Once the jumping happens, he feels like hand-to-hand combat is the next logical step rather than oh, I don’t know, hiding behind cover and shooting at them the same way EVERY OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONAL IN EXISTENCE DOES IT. The bad guys are, of course, inevitably doing their own shooting, and at least 30 percent of the time either they or Steve will figure out how to blow something up.

At first glance, I will admit he doesn’t seem like the kind of person who should be allowed anywhere
near a tank. When I first met him, I would have agreed to that 100 percent and probably arrested anyone who tried to give one to him. Even now, I’m going to make certain it’s not authorized for work use – even without weaponry, I can totally see him driving it through the side of a building (legally, as I said, during the process of taking down whatever criminals were inside. But I’m still not going to let him do that).

Underneath the terrifying super hero adrenaline junkie, however, is a nerdy, surprisingly awkward teenage boy who will geek out over this tank the same way an average nerd would one of the spaceships in “Star Wars.” My husband basically went through hell when he was younger, and he hides that part of himself behind the super-tough, super-competent exterior designed to cope with everything that was happening to him. These days he lets it out around the people who are closest to him, particularly me and the kids, but even now he’s still uncertain about it.

I can’t go back in time and give his younger self a puppy, or a car, or any of the things he should have gotten but missed out on because his teenage years sucked. But I think a tank is probably the adult equivalent to that magic Christmas present under the tree, and I do what I can to help him get some of those experiences back. He deserves them, and so much more.

And yes, the guy who jumps off of buildings will go crazy over it, too. But I love him just as much as I do the nerd, and honestly when there’s not a chance of him dying because of it I really don’t mind so much. Hopefully, he’ll be fine with me just watching while he drives around in the tank, but I am unfortunately a ridiculous pushover when it comes to Steve McGarrett. I’ll probably end up in the damn tank.

There’s at least a 50 percent chance I’ll end up calling myself an idiot once I think it through – if nothing else, where the hell are we going to put the thing? But even then, I won’t regret it.

I’ll do a hell of a lot to make my husband smile. Even put up with a tank.

(Note: If you’ve made it this far, you’re probably pretty sure by this point that I’m making all of this up. If you are, jump on Google and look up the 5-0 task force in Honolulu, Hawaii. It won’t have a lot of the details, thankfully, but there should be enough there to give you the general idea.)

End Notes

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