

PART TWO

Title: HOLIDAYS

By: CAZ

When: Christmas 2006

Where: Washington DC Area

Chapter One: I Think We Have a Winner

**Sunday December 24
1930 EST**

It was Christmas Eve, the triplets first Christmas in the states, and Mac was being very careful not to over load them. They'd visited Santa, went shopping with Mom for a special gift for Dad, and visa versa, and attended a Christmas party at daycare. There was a half-melted, lop-sided snowman in the front yard, a tree in the living room with lights and ornaments, and their grandparents were flying in later that evening.

AJ and Marcella were still in McLean because Francesca had been working in NYC for the last two months and had to be back there after Christmas, so it was easier for everyone to stay in the U.S. They were looking forward to spending Christmas Day at the Rabbs, who all three considered family. But tonight, everyone was going to church and then gathering at the Roberts.

Harm had gotten home from a week on the Patrick Henry in time to put his stuff down and head out the door with Mac and the girls. "Daddy!" The girls hugged his legs while he leaned over and kissed Mac.

"How are my girls?" he asked with a smile and a glint in his eye.

"Oh, your girls are much better now that you're home." Mac answered his smile with one of her own. "But you'll have to wait for what your eyes are asking for. We need to leave for church now or we'll be late." She kissed him with a promise of things to come, and they went out the door.

The Rabbs stepped into the back of the chapel. "Stand still, girls, so we can take off your coats," Mac requested.

"I can take my own off," Savannah bragged, and grabbed for the front of her coat.

Harm quickly stopped her. "No! Let me do that. This is a fancy coat and opens different than your other one," he said, hoping that would deter her long enough for him to

complete the task. Mac was having an easier time with Morgan and Caitlyn, and soon the coats were secured.

The girls had on tights, dresses, patent leather shoes, and rhinestone barrettes in their hair. They'd picked out their own dresses. Each one came down about mid-calf, but that's where the similarity ended. Catey's was a green jumper with a white, long sleeved shirt underneath. Morgan had chosen a black crepe, long sleeved dress with a white lace collar, and Savannah had on a white top, blue skirt dress with a matching blue crocheted sweater.

They looked like young ladies, and Mac was hoping they could stay that way, at least until they got to the Roberts. Half way up the aisles to the pew where they were going to sit, the girls spotted Francesca and took off.

Harm tangled his fingers with Mac's. "It's going to get real exciting when Chloe gets here on the 27th," he whispered as they took their seats. "By the way, they look beautiful tonight... almost as beautiful as their mother".

The girls were telling Francesca everything they could all at once, half in English and half in Italian.

"We need to let them run when we get to Harriet's or we'll never get them down tonight," Mac suggested. "What time will your parents get there?"

"They should be there when we get there." He turned his attention to the girls. "Come back here with us now. The service is starting soon."

The girls came back and sat between Mac and Harm still chattering with excitement. "Mommy, is Santa coming tonight?"... "What did you and Daddy ask for?"... "Can we wait up for him?"

"Yes, Santa is coming tonight and, no, you can not wait up for him", Mac clarified. "Now settle down and listen to what Chaplain Turner has to say".

When the service ended, Catey was sitting on Mac's lap, and Harm had Morgan and Savannah. They'd been quiet but fidgety. "Stand right here so we can get coats on." Once the girls had their coats on, Harm helped Mac with hers, then he put on his own. "Stay with Mommy and me. There are a lot of people and we don't want to lose anyone in the crowd."

Out front, they stopped and spoke with several people before they went to the car. "We're going to go somewhere very special before we go to Jimmy's house," Mac explained to the girls. "Daddy's going to show you something."

"What is it?"

“You’ll have to wait and see,” Mac encouraged the interest. She knew this was very important to Harm, so it was very important to her, too.

Harm parked the car on Constitution Avenue behind the Viet Nam Memorial, and he and Mac got the girls out of the car. “Harm you go ahead. We’ll be right there.”

He headed for his place by the wall while Mac had a talk with the girls. “I want you to hold each others hands and stay close in front of me. This is Daddy’s special place,” she informed the girls, and headed them in the direction their father had just gone.

They came upon Harm in his usual place. She kept the girls in front of her a few feet behind Harm, letting him finish his private moment. When he turned to them and motioned, she moved everyone to him.

“This name right here is my father’s name,” he told the girls as he ran his fingers across the name. “All the names on this wall belong to people who went to a war in a country far away and didn’t come back.”

“But Granpa Frank is your daddy.”

Harm tried to explain, “When my first daddy couldn’t come home, Grandpa came to be my second daddy”

“Can we touch it?” Catey asked.

“Of course.” He lifted her up and helped her find the right name. He did the same with Morgan and Savannah. Mac was absently rubbing his back through his coat, knowing this was what he’d hoped for.

They left shortly after and headed for the Roberts’ home.

Mac lined up her daughters on the porch before entering the house. “I don’t want any fighting tonight. You can play, but you know Harriet’s rules, and I want you to obey them”

“Okay.”

“Don’t just say ‘okay’, you need to mean it.” She was rewarded with a smile from each one. That was as close as it was going to get to an answer, so they went in, removed their coats and joined the party.

Catey spotted Trish. “Gramma!” she yelled and the other two joined her. Frank stepped up behind Morgan and scooped her up. The squeal of excitement could be heard throughout the house.

“Gramma, who are these children?” Frank teased. “They can’t be our grandchildren. They’re too grown up.”

“It’s us Granpa,” Morgan announced, followed by giggles from all.

Harm and Mac walked up. “Hey, Mom, Frank.”

“Darling, how are you?” Trish asked as she hugged her son. She then turned and hugged Mac. “You look great as usual.”

“So glad you could come.” Mac returned the hug. “The girls are old enough to understand what’s going on, and we didn’t want you to miss it.”

The girls ran off to play with Jimmy and AJ while the adults caught up on things.

Sturgis and Varesse were showing pictures from their honeymoon in The Turks and Caicos Islands. With a little help from their friends, they had gotten married just before Thanksgiving. Harm had introduced him to the jeweler, and Sturgis took the plunge.

“See, Harm, when you take two months instead of two weeks to plan your wedding, you can pack the right clothes for your honeymoon.”

“Mac and I didn’t need clothes for ours,” Harm pointed out with a sly smile.

Sturgis rolled his eyes. “Oh, did I ever thank you for our honeymoon?”

“What?”

“The Vukovic pool,” he replied with a smile. “Bud told me it was a sight to see,” Sturgis acknowledged.

****Flashback****

Harm and Cresswell slipped into the back of the courtroom to watch the proceedings. Bets were placed as to how long into the proceedings before Vukovic charmed Mac, or she chewed him up and spit him out, and the general was to decide the results. Harm was there to watch his wife terrorize the lieutenant.

It was the first day that the defense was presenting its case. Bud had done a great job presenting the prosecution the day before. About thirty minutes into the proceedings, Vukovic made his fatal error. “Objection,” Bud announces. “This witness is not on his witness list.”

“She just came forward this morning.”

Harm leaned toward Cresswell and whispered, “Mac hates last minute witnesses.”

“Step up.” She motioned the two JAG lawyers forward. “Who is she and what does she have to offer to these proceedings, Mr. Vukovic?”

“She’s going to testify that my client is innocent.”

“And just what is she going to say?”

“Why don’t you let me put her on the stand and we’ll find out?”

Bud looked at Mac and then at Vukovic, and just stood there with a smirk. She was going to rip him a new one, and he had a front row seat.

Mac put her palms flat on the desk and glared at Vukovic. “Lieutenant, do you really think that’s the attitude I’m looking for here?”

“I’m just trying to defend my client”.

“No, mister, you are trying to control my courtroom.” She leaned forward and spoke loud enough for everyone to hear. “That’s my job. Now answer my question. What is she going to tell us?”

Cresswell looked at the betting sheet and whispered, “I think we have a winner.”

There was more whispering from the front. Then Mac could be heard to say, “I don’t allow smoke and mirrors in my courtroom, Mister”.

They stepped back from the bench, Bud with a smile and Vukovic stunned and obviously pissed as she announced, “Objection sustained.”

****End Flashback****

“Did you ever get the full story out of Mac?” Sturgis enquired.

“No,” Harm confirmed. “And Bud’s not sharing details either.”

Food had been put out and people began filling plates.

While everyone was distracted with the food, Harm grabbed Mac’s hand and led her into the hallway. He pointed up to some mistletoe hanging from the light fixture. “You owe me a kiss.” He pulled her close and took her lips with his. With in moments, everything blurred but them.

“You owe me a week’s worth, Sailor,” Mac answered and started collecting.

Harm was leaning against the wall, holding Mac as close as he could get her and locked in a passionate kiss when “Mommy!” came echoing down the stairs.

“Don’t hit him. Mommy will”... “It’s bad to lie”... “You’ll see”. Harriet and Bud entered the hall as the five older kids came down the stairs. Mac had turned around and was leaning against Harm’s chest as they all waited for the story that went with this ruckus.

“Mommy, AJ said that, since we’re bad, Santa’s bringing us a bag of coal,” Savannah announced.

“Mom, they won’t leave me alone,” AJ defended himself.

Harriet and Mac looked at each other, holding back smiles the best they could. “You leave AJ alone,” Mac told the girls.

“And no more talk of coal,” Harriet told AJ.

“Okay,” was uttered by all.

“Come on, girls. Let’s get something to eat.” Harm then turned to Mac and whispered, “We need to finish this when we get home.” He then patted her butt and led the girls into the other room.

Chapter Two: Are You Tagging Me?

The Rabb Home

2200 EST

The girls were in their pajamas. After one more look at the tree and the packages under it, they were headed for bed. “When’s Santa coming?”

“Not until all the children are asleep,” Mac assured them.

“What if someone stays up? Does that mean he won’t come?”

“As long as you go to sleep, he’ll come.” Mac had them all in bed when Harm came in to say goodnight and read a story.

“Look what Mom brought.” He held up an old copy of ‘The Night Before Christmas’ as he headed for the story chair. After all were tucked in their own beds, he started the story. They were all asleep before he got half-way through.

Harm and Mac went down to the living room where Harm got Frank, and they went to the garage. Three tricycles were hidden out there.

Trish and Mac started filling the stockings. “Harm said that you finally got them to sleep in their own beds.”

“It wasn’t easy. The biggest encouragement was they were use to sharing a queen sized bed, and trying to sleep in one twin sized bed was hard on them.” She smiled at Trish. “To be honest, I was ready to give up until Catey spent her first night in her own bed.”

“Yeah, Harm told me that the nightly fight to at least start them in their own beds was getting to you.” Everything was sorted, so they started putting the stuff in each stocking.

“Savannah and Morgan still end up together occasionally, but they all seem to like having some private space.” The men came in with the tricycles, and the four of them set up the Santa stuff.

“Mac, honey, where are the helmets?”

“Top shelf of the hall closet.” She turned to Trish and added, “We wouldn’t want Santa to forget safety.”

“We got the girls some DVDs. They are mostly Disney stuff, but you might want to check some of them out before you let the girls watch them.” Trish looked at Mac. “Sometimes the movies can scare them at their age.”

“That’s an understatement,” Mac mumbled.

Trish smiled at Mac. “You already learned your lesson, haven’t you?”

“Our lesson about what?” Harm and Frank had finished adding the extras to the tricycles.

“Age appropriate movies.” Trish looked from Harm to Mac then back. “Which one was it?”

“Well, Mom, how old was I when I saw ‘The Wizard of Oz’?”

****Flashback****

The movie started. The girls were lying on the floor with throw pillows from the couch under their heads. “‘The Wizard of Oz’ is a right of passage,” Harm proclaimed. “I remember watching it as a child.”

“I do, too,” Mac added. “It was always something to look forward to.”

As the movie progressed, the girls moved closer to the couch. By the time they got to Oz, Catey was standing on the couch behind Mac with her arms wrapped around Mac’s neck, ready to hide her face when something got scary. Morgan was on Mac’s other side, almost in her lap with her face half hidden in Mac’s chest, and Savannah was on Harm’s lap with a death grip on his shirt, peaking at the TV screen.

Mac looked at Harm. “Maybe we were older than this?”

“Should we turn it off?”

“No, they have to see it has a happy ending,” Mac pointed out.

When the flying monkeys showed up, Morgan and Savannah hid their faces and tightened their grips. Catey leaned closer to Mac, her eyes locked on the screen and whispered, “Mommy, did they kill the scarecrow?” “Where did the bad witch take Dorothy?” “Why is she so mean?” “Does she live here?”

“Catey, honey, it’s not real,” Mac tried to explain. “In just a bit, everything is going to be okay.” She leaned toward Harm and whispered, “They need to see the witch die or we won’t sleep for days.”

They made sure the girls saw the witch melt and Dorothy get home. “See, it was just a dream.”

Mac moved Catey around front so she could see her face. “Are you ok, sweetheart?”

With green eyes as big as saucers, Catey clutched Mac's shirt. "I don't want the circle wind to take me away."

That night, all five Rabbs slept in Harm and Mac's bed.

****End Flashback****

"Harm, darling, you were seven when you watched it for the first time." Trish smiled at her son. "It scared you at *that* age."

"We felt so guilty for a while, then Mac talked to Harriet." Harm stepped behind Mac and wrapped an arm across her shoulders and the other around her waist. "They had made the same mistake with a different movie when AJ was four."

"As parents, we all make mistakes. As good parents, we try not to repeat the same ones twice." Assuring her daughter-in-law she added, "And *you* are great parents."

"Marcella and I were going to take them to 'The Nutcracker' but couldn't get tickets"

"The rule for that is, not until they weigh enough to keep the seat down by themselves." Trish smiled at Mac. "Hopefully, next year."

"Harm, honey, I need to make a phone call." Mac patted his arms and stepped out of their warmth. She motioned for Trish to follow.

Once they were in the kitchen, Mac turned to Trish. "Santa got him something he gave up when we went to Italy. It was delivered to AJ's tonight, but I need help with the accessory." She opened a cabinet full of stuff rarely used and pulled out the accessory.

"Mac!"

"Its part of the man I fell in love with." Mac smiled. "Could you put this next to his stocking after we go upstairs?" She went to the phone and dialed AJ's number.

Meanwhile, in the living room, Harm was showing Frank what Santa had picked out for Mac. "What do you think?"

"Harm, she would love what ever you gave her, but this is beautiful."

Harm smiled and dropped the box into Mac's stocking. "Frank, she's my life. I fell in love with a marine who happens to be the most beautiful woman in the world. Then, if that wasn't enough, she gave me three beautiful little girls." He pointed at the stocking, "That's the least I can do for her."

Mac and Trish joined the men in the living room. “Honey, I’m going to check on the girls then go to bed.” Her eyes told him a totally different story before she turned and went up stairs.

“The girls are going to be very excited tomorrow.” Harm smiled at his parents. “I hope you can handle it.”

“Harm, we can take what ever they’ve got.” Trish smiled back at her son. “Now, I believe your best friend is waiting for you.”

Harm said his goodnights and headed upstairs.

He walked into the bedroom and shut the door to find Mac half undressed. He walked up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist. “I’ve missed you, Sarah.” He began kissing her shoulder and neck. “My day isn’t complete without you.”

She turned in his arms, wrapped hers around his neck and brought her lips within a whisper of his. “I missed you too. I still have trouble sleeping when you’re not with me.” As their lips connected in a searing kiss, she began to unbutton his shirt.

His shirt hit the floor when they broke for air. “Baby, you’re going to have to wait to catch up on your sleep.” His hands were ridding her of her remaining clothing, while his lips had returned to her neck. In moments, they were in bed, making up for lost time.

Temporarily spent, Harm lay across her chest and was again kissing her neck. One hand holding hers over her head, while the other roamed freely, reminding her it was only a temporary break. His mouth had been spending a lot of time in one spot on her neck.

“Harm, what are you doing?”

“Touching you, Baby,” he whispered, his hand continuing its ministrations.

“Mmm... not your hand, your mouth.” She had her free hand tangled in his hair. “Are you tagging me?”

He spent a few more moments completing his task. “Maybe.”

Mac pulled his face up and kissed him. “You know you’re not supposed to do that.”

“Says you.” He returned her kiss with more passion. “I say it’s okay to leave love bites.”

“Okay.” She then flipped him onto his back and proceeded to leave her own ‘love bite’.

After another round of lovemaking, they finally drifted off to sleep around 0300.

Chapter Three: Daddy, Yours Is Bigger

Monday December 25th
0427 EST

“Santa came, Santa came!” Harm jumped out of bed and raced for the bathroom. Mac grabbed a large t-shirt and put it on before the girls rushed through the bedroom door.

When Harm came out of the bathroom with sweatpants and a t-shirt on, he found the three girls bouncing on the bed, telling their mother everything Santa had brought.

The girls normally knocked then walked to Mac’s side of the bed when they come in at night. It was obvious that, this time, that wasn’t going to happen. “We need to add Christmas to the dates we need to sleep in clothes,” Harm whispered. He handed Mac a pair of sweatpants and attempted to distract the kids so that she could put them on.

“Daddy, Santa got you a hat, too.” Catey was pulling on Harm’s pants, trying to get him to the door. “Come on, it’s different than ours.”

Mac had her pants on and jumped out of bed. “Let’s go see what Santa brought.”

When they got downstairs, the girls showed each thing they got. The tricycles were the big things, but there were games and puzzles and little girl things in the stockings.

While Savannah was showing her new barrettes, Harm spotted something next to his stocking. He gave Savannah the appropriate oohs and ahs then walked over to what he saw. He picked up the motorcycle helmet and turned to look at Mac, requesting an explanation.

“Everyone should have their bike of choice.” She smiled and looked toward the porch.

He went to the front door, opened it, and there sat a new Harley. “Oh my God!” He turned to Mac with a look of total amazement. “How...why...oh, Baby!” He grabbed her and pulled her into a hug.

“Daddy, yours is bigger.” Catey was standing in the doorway, staring at the motorcycle. “Santa must like you best.”

“Somebody must.” Harm pulled Mac into a kiss that said ‘thank you’ ‘I love you’ and ‘I want you’ all at once. “Is this why you sold your ‘Vette?”

“No, I told you, we only need one of them, and yours has more value, both monetary and sentimental.” She was holding onto him as tight as he was holding her. “You do have to let me drive yours once in a while.”

“I can do that.” He sealed the agreement with another kiss.

They went back inside and shifted the attention back to the girls. Catey was sitting on her tricycle. She was almost shaking with the want to ride it. Mac smiled at her and shook her head. "Not in the house, sweetheart. When it gets light out, we'll go outside and you can ride it."

"Can we go now?"

"No. You're not dressed, and it's dark out. You can wait a few hours." Mac didn't want to be mean, but it was 0515 and that was just too early. "Why don't we play one of your new games?"

"Okay."

They set up a game and showed the girls how to play. Once they learned the game, the girls were giggling and happy. "Mommy, aren't you going to see what Santa brought you?" Morgan went and got Mac's stocking and brought it to her.

Mac took the stocking and looked at Harm. "Can this be emptied in front of the girls?" She whispered.

"The box can. The rest you might want to take upstairs." He flashed an 'X' rated smile and pointed to the stocking.

Smiling, she pulled the box out and took the lid off. "Harm!" She looked at him, still smiling with tears in her eyes. She pulled out a circle diamond pendant on a platinum chain, but this one was different than the others she'd seen. It had a blue sapphire in place of one of the diamonds and, opposite it in the circle, was a red sapphire. She jumped into his arms and started kissing him all over his face until she settled on his lips.

Harm pulled Mac over to the couch and sat down. The girls were engrossed in their game and weren't paying much attention to their parents. "I must've been a very good girl this year."

"You're very, very good." Harm kissed her and pulled her with him as he lay down on the couch.

Trish came downstairs at 7:30 to find her three grandchildren playing a game on the living room floor and her son and daughter-in-law asleep on the couch. Mac was lying on Harm, her face tucked into his neck. He had one hand up the inside of her shirt, massaging her back, and the other down the inside of her sweatpants, resting on her butt.

Smiling, she thought 'These two can't keep their hands off of each other even when they sleep.' She turned to the girls, "Want to come help me make breakfast?"

“Gramma, did you see what Santa brought us?”

Trish took a quick tour of the goods before steering the group into the kitchen, leaving Harm and Mac asleep on the couch. She remembered the last time that she'd encountered them after a night with little sleep.

****Flashback****

Harm grabbed his boxers as he climbed out of Mac's bed. Whoever was knocking was going to have to wait. Mac needed more sleep and so did he. He swung the door open and there stood his mom with a couple bags in hand.

He turned from the open door and headed back to the bedroom. “She's not ready yet. The kitchen's over there if you want coffee.”

Harm walked back into the bedroom, climbed into bed and wrapped himself around Mac. They'd stayed up late talking about their future: what they each wanted and when they wanted it. They were getting married in a few hours, and he'd had big plans for the night, so his mother could wait.

Again, there was a knock at the door. Trish answered it this time to find Harriet and Chloe with the dresses.

“Harm said that she's not ready yet and suggested that I have some coffee.”

Harriet put the dresses on the couch. “Sounds good.” She followed Trish to the kitchen. Looking around, she suggested, “I guess we should make it. Keeter should be here soon to pick up Harm.”

“Did everyone know Harm was staying here last night?” Trish was confused. “What about the groom not seeing the bride before the wedding?”

“Yeah, Trish, that wasn't going to happen.” She got the coffee started and pulled out some cups. “The only time they've slept apart in the last four weeks is when one is out on assignment, and you don't want to be around the one who's here.”

When there was another knock, Chloe answered it. “Hey, Jack, they're not ready yet. Harriet's got coffee if you want some.”

“Sounds great,” he said, then turns towards the kitchen and Harriet. “When do we pick up Bud?”

“He'll be through with physical therapy around 1400. The admiral and Commander Turner will be at Harm's at 1630. You all have to be at the chapel in your Dress Whites

no later than 1815.” She looked Keeter in the eyes to emphasize her next statement. “Mac will *not* be happy if you show up drunk.”

“I’ve already been told.” On his third cup of coffee, Keeter looked at his watch, “Hey. What’s taking them so long?” he asked and headed toward the bedroom door.

Trish intercepted him. “Jack, you can’t go in there. You have no idea the state of dress that Mac’s in.”

“Then you go.” He looked at the door. “What could be taking so long?”

She walked over to the door and slowly pushed it open, hoping not to interrupt this couple again. As the door swung open, she saw the two tangled together in the bed sound asleep. She leaned out to address the three friends in the living room, “They’ll be a little longer.” Then she turned back to the bedroom.

“Harm.”

“Mmmm hmmm.”

“Harm, you two need to get up. There are people waiting for you.”

“Okay,” he mumbled, then he pulled Mac tighter into his arms.

‘Well, this isn’t working,’ Trish thought, then decided to go the other way. She moved closer to the bed and spoke a little louder, “Mac, honey, you need to get up. Harriet and Chloe are here.”

“What? Oh, okay.” She rubbed Harm’s arms and started to pull away. “Tell them I’ll be out in a few minutes”.

“No, Baby, stay with me,” Harm pleaded, and wouldn’t let her up.

“Keeter’ll be here soon, Harm, so you need to get up, too.”

“Jack’s already here,” Trish announced as she left the room, knowing that Mac would get things moving.

Mac came out ten minutes later, wearing cut-off sweatpants and a Navy t-shirt, her hair still wet. “How long has everybody been here?”

“Harm let me in over an hour ago,” Trish answered. “The other three arrived shortly afterward.”

"I'm sorry. He didn't wake me." She headed for the kitchen and coffee. She returned to the room with two cups of coffee. "I guess he thought I needed more sleep." Taking a sip from one cup, she looked up at Chloe. "Did you have fun at Harriet's last night?"

"Yeah, we planned the day and talked about you." Chloe laughed and gave Mac a sly smile.

"Good morning. Looks like everyone's here." Harm entered the room in jeans and a polo shirt. He took the extra cup from Mac and gave her a sweet kiss. "Thanks." He turned his attention to Jack. "So, Keeter, what's the schedule for the day?"

"Pick up the rings and anything else you need, lunch with the guys from flight school, pick up Bud and get you to the church on time."

"Let's go." As they headed for the door, he grabbed Mac's hand and pulled her along, stopping when Keeter opened the door to envelope her into his arms. "I'll see you at 1830. You'll recognize me from the Dress Whites and Gold Wings." This time, he kissed her passionately until they were both breathless. "That should hold me 'til then." He smiled, and then he and Keeter walked out, only to have Harm return for one more kiss before shutting the door.

****End Flashback****

When breakfast was almost ready, she sent the girls to wake their parents. Trish figured that they'd already done it once so they should be experienced by now. The girls ran into the living room and jumped on the couch or, more to the point, on Mac and Harm. "Gramma said it's time to eat. You need to get up now."

"Oof. Okay. Go tell Gramma that we're getting up." The girls climbed down and headed back to the kitchen. "Harm, you okay?"

"Yeah, I never thought Mom would send in the big guns on the first try." He patted her six and helped her up, then got up himself. "Let's go eat. I believe we have some trike riding to do this morning."

Chapter Four: Mommy Has a Skin Picture

Rabb Home

1000 EST

“Daddy, we want to ride our bikes.” Catey was sitting on hers again, barely restraining herself. All the presents under the tree were opened, and Mac and Trish were in the kitchen working on the Christmas dinner. Harm and Mac had invited everyone in the office with out family, who were remaining in town, to the house for dinner.

“It’s cold out, Catey. How about we go once around the house?” Harm was thinking that would satisfy her.

Mac slipped into the room before anything progressed. “Harm, not in the house.”

“Okay.”

“I’m not kidding, not in the house.” Mac looked at Harm in the way that said ‘I’m serious,’ and headed back to the kitchen.

“Girls, let’s get our coats, and you can ride in the driveway.” He came up behind Mac, wrapped his arms around her waist and whispered, “Is that ok?”

“Much better.” She turned in his arms and kissed him. “They need rules with the trikes or there’s going to be problems.”

“Okay, we have ‘not in the house,’ ‘helmets must be worn’ and ‘adult supervision at all times’. Anything else?” He gave Mac a mischievous smile.

She brought her hands up to the sides of his face. “I’m thinking you need to follow the same rules.” The kiss that followed made it clear she wanted him around for a long time to come.

He lowered his hands to her six and squeezed. “I’m not going anywhere, Baby.”

“Harm, get your hands off your wife’s rear end and take Catey out to ride the tricycle before she explodes.” Trish just shook her head when Harm turned his attention to the doorway to find Catey jumping up and down.

Harm went to Catey and squatted down to get her attention. “Let’s get your coat, hat, and gloves, and I’ll take you out to the driveway for a while, okay?” He was rewarded with a smile when he added, “And don’t forget your helmet.”

Frank and Harm bundled up the kids and went out to the driveway to ride the tricycles. Ninety minutes later AJ, Marcella and Francesca walked up the driveway. AJ was

carrying a motorcycle helmet that matched Harms. Morgan was the first to see them. "Granpa, look what Santa brought us!"

"Grandma, do you want to ride?" Savannah offered her tricycle to Marcella.

"Well sweetie, I think I'm too big. This one was made just for you." She bent down and gave her a kiss on the cheek.

"Girls, let's put the trikes in the garage and go inside. It looks like Grandma, Granpa and Francesca have some things for you." It was getting colder and Harm didn't want anyone sick.

Catey rode up to AJ and gave him her special smile. "Daddy got a bike, too. It's already in the garage."

"I heard about that." He smiled at Harm as he helped the girls put up their tricycles.

"Come on, girls, I think the boys want to play with the bigger bike." Marcella and Francesca took the girls in doors and left the men in the garage.

"Just what did you do to deserve this?" AJ smiled as he took a look at the Harley.

"I must have been a very good boy." All three men started laughing at that.

"I really wanted to keep it but, I was more afraid of your wife."

"Is that why you have your own helmet?" Smiling, Harm pointed to his hand.

"No. This is for Mac." AJ put a hand on Harm's shoulder. "You want to take her for a ride, don't you?" Her turned to Frank and smiled. "Mine's at home."

Frank laughed and turned his attention to AJ. "Bring it Thursday when we gather for the pictures. I want a ride, too."

Marcella joined Mac and Trish in the kitchen. It would be another two hours before dinner, but they were sitting at the kitchen table, drinking coffee and talking. Francesca was getting the tour of gifts from the girls.

Mac got up to check on the turkey, and when she came back, she pulled on the neck of her sweater. "It's a bit warm by the oven, maybe I should change."

"Did you and Harm get any sleep last night?" Trish smiled at Mac and pointed to her neck. "I saw Harm's this morning."

“Some.” Mac’s hand went to her neck. “He was out of town for a week.” She was now blushing deeply. “We missed each other.” She took a deep breath. “We slept about an hour and a half before the girls woke us up.” ‘I need to just stop talking’ she thought.

“You got another hour and a half on the couch this morning.” Trish was practically laughing. She loved her daughter-in-law, but she loved to tease this couple about their ‘hands on’ relationship.

Before this conversation got out of hand, Francesca joined them. “Do they ever run out of energy?”

“Occasionally, but not often.” Mac gave Francesca a hug. “I’m glad you could be here. Christmas wouldn’t be the same without the entire family.”

“Where’s Chloe?”

“Chloe’s with her father and grandparents. She’ll be in Wednesday.”

“Who’ll be in Wednesday?” Harm walked up behind Mac and put his hands on her shoulders.

“Chloe.” Mac’s hands went to his.

Harm looked at AJ and smiled. “We have a photographer coming Thursday. We want a family picture. That would be Chloe; Mom and Frank; you, Marcella and Francesca; and Mac, me and the girls.”

“That’s quite a picture.”

“There’ll be more than one taken, so bring your smile and a lot of patients. Mac has plans for several different ones.”

“This is the first time the family will all be together, and I’m taking advantage of it.” Mac defended herself. “Besides, a few pictures never hurt anyone.”

Trish looked at Harm with a questioning expression. Harm knew what she was asking. He remembered when the whole thing came up.

****Flashback****

She was up again. Harm was starting to get worried. She wasn’t getting any sleep. “Mac, what’s wrong?”

“I don’t know.” She looked down at him. “I can’t go to sleep. I thought I’d go in the other room so I don’t disturb you.”

“Mac, honey, you in the other room would disturb me. Come here.” He patted the bed. “Tell me what you can’t stop thinking about while I work on the tension in your shoulders.”

She climbed into bed, still wearing the t-shirt she had put on the first time she got up. He pulled her over between his legs and started to massage her shoulders through the shirt. “Talk to me, Mac.”

“I don’t know.”

“Yes you do.”

He could tell she was trying to think of a gentle way to tell him what was bothering her. “Sarah, just tell me. You don’t need to sugar coat it.”

“I got a letter at work today.” She was talking so softly he could hardly hear. “It was from my mom. She saw our picture in the Navy Times last summer and wants to meet you and the girls.” She sighed and looked down, trying to compose herself. “From the article, she knew I was at headquarters again.”

Harm wrapped his arms around her waist and put his face next to hers. “It’s not what she wants that matters, it’s what you want that does.” He turned her face to his, gave her a gentle kiss, and smiled. “If you don’t want this, then it won’t happen. If you’d like to give it a try, I’ll be standing right there with you.”

“I don’t want to confuse the girls. As far as they know, AJ and Marcella are their grandparents.”

“That won’t change. We can give a simple explanation, and they’ll be fine.” He pulled her a little closer to get her attention. “Is she in the DC area?”

“She’s in Baltimore.”

“Why don’t we lay some ground rules and, if she agrees to them, we’ll go up there, okay?”

“Okay.” Mac leaned back into him and relaxed. “I love you. You know that, don’t you?”

“I suspected as much.” He smiled and kissed her again. “Now let’s go to sleep.”

****End Flashback****

The look that Harm gave his mom indicated that this discussion was best left ‘til later.

The Roberts arrived, and everyone’s attention was drawn in another direction.

“Really, Mac, a motorcycle?” Harriet laughed. “Jen and Amanda are right behind us.” Sturgis and Varesse arrived with them.

“Mac, Faith is here with John and Dan.” Harm let Mac know so she could join him in welcoming them. That would be Lt. Commander Faith Coleman, Commander John Bailey and Major Dan Johnson. They all reported to Harm along with Lt. Gregory Vukovic and Lt. Andrea Jacobs.

The General and Mrs. Cresswell arrived right after Julie got there. Lt. Jacobs was on leave with her fiancé and Vukovic was TAD to the Patrick Henry to fill in for the JAG who was on emergency leave.

Everyone had gathered in the living room. The conversation was going in every direction. Some were talking about the motorcycle, some about vacation plans, and others about New Years plans. Little AJ came up to Bud, Faith, Julie, and Sturgis to showed them his wash off tattoo.

“Mommy has a skin picture.” Morgan offered the information like she would her favorite color. She and AJ still had a conflict issue going back to when they’d first met.

“What’s the picture of?”

“It’s a flower.”

Before anyone could stop them, these two children took this conversation too far. “Where is it?”

Mac walked up at that point. Catey walked over to her and put a finger on the right side of Mac’s abdomen. “There.”

Harm stepped up with Savannah. “What’s there?”

“Mommy’s skin picture.”

Chapter Five: The One You Had Done For Me

Rabb House

1200 EST

“Tell me that didn’t just happen.” Mac grabbed Catey’s hand to remove it from her abdomen, and then motioned for Morgan and Savannah to come with her into the other room. Harm stayed to get details before joining her.

“Why would you think that that’s an appropriate topic of conversation? We don’t discuss my anatomy with our guests.”

Mac looked at the girls and realized they hadn’t understood what she’d just said. Calming down, she knelt down and rephrased. “Why did you talk about my tattoo?”

“AJ was bragging about his skin picture, so I told him about yours.” The look that Morgan gave Mac made it clear she thought that it was okay to do that.

Mac took a deep breath. She knew that it had all been innocent. “Okay, how about we keep it our secret from now on?” She grabbed each girl around the waist and gave them a hug. She’d overreacted from her own embarrassment and didn’t want the girls to feel bad.

Harm walked in, a smile across his face. “Girls, no more talking about Mommy’s skin pictures.” He squatted down to their level. “Is that clear?”

“Yes.”

“Good. You can go.”

Harm stood up and pulled Mac with him. Before she could say or do anything, Harm took control. He took Mac’s hands and put them behind her back. “It’s not that bad.”

“I know, but now everyone knows about them.”

“No, four people know about one.” He leaned in and kissed Mac on the forehead. “All they said was that you have a picture of a flower on your abdomen.” Harm felt her relax and let go of her hands. He pulled her a little closer to whisper in her ear. “No one knows about the one you had done for me.” He lowered one hand to the left side of her six and squeezed.

“They promised not to share the information.” He kissed her with promises of later, then took her hand and headed back to the living room. “But they wouldn’t promise not to tease you privately.” He smiled mischievously as they rejoined the others.

After everyone had eaten, they split into groups again. Mac, Faith, Cresswell, and Dan were talking about their dream vacations. "I've always wanted to climb Mount Kilimanjaro." Gordon had been dreaming of it for years.

"Last year, I went diving in the Red Sea." Dan loved scuba diving. "I want to dive The Great Barrier Reef."

Mac and Faith were playing the 'you go first' game when Dan suggested that they just say what comes to mind.

Faith went first. "I'd like to go to New Zealand and try some of the extreme sports stuff they have." She gave a smile and took a deep breath. "I'm sure most of them would scare me to death, but I'd like to try." She looked at Mac as if to say 'your turn.'

"First, I'd like to go with you." She smiled warmly at Faith. "What I'd love to do is sail the islands of the South Pacific with Harm. He loves sailing almost as much as flying and he's been teaching me the fundamentals." The smile grew across her face. "I'm getting pretty good at it, too."

"Now, let's all agree to do our best to accomplish these dreams in the next year." Cresswell held out his hand as if to make a pact. "I'll do what I can to give everyone the opportunity to succeed." After each one put their hand on his, he smiled. "If anything comes up in the area of your wish, I'll make sure that you get the assignment."

"Everyone has to take pictures." Faith added her condition to the pact. "After the last one completes their wish, we share them."

"We bring a gift for each of the other three from our wish location." Dan decided to put in his two cents. "And we can take some one with us, since Mac obviously is."

Mac smile at him. "I'm in agreement with all the conditions." She winked at them and added, "We keep this between ourselves until we're all done."

"Agreed," the other three answered in unison. With one more assurance of the deal, they separated to converse with others.

Mac answered a knock on the door to find Leroy Jethro Gibbs. "I brought the girls something."

"Come on in. I'm sure they'll be thrilled to see you." They came running up, squealing as if to confirm Mac's prediction.

"Can we come see your office again?"..."I like playing with Abbey"..."Do we get ink on our fingers again?"

“Sure you can.” He looked at Mac as he pulled three little boxes out of his jacket pocket. “Ziva and Abbey helped me pick out these.” Gibbs inspected each box before he handed one to each girl.

Savannah was the first into hers. She pulled out a silver chain with an ‘S’ hanging from it by the side of the top curve. A big smile spread across her face. “Look, Mommy, it’s like the one Santa brought you.” Catey and Morgan had the same reaction when they opened theirs. One by one, they each gave him a hug and a ‘thank you,’ before running off to show their daddy.

“The necklaces were my idea. Abbey said that the letters needed to hang crooked and Ziva picked the chains for their strength.” Gibbs was smiling, partly from embarrassment and partly because the gifts had been well received.

“They’re perfect.” Mac returned his smile as Harm walked up.

Harm handed Gibbs a glass half filled with Jack Daniels. “Merry Christmas! You’re a hit.”

“Word on the street is that four out five in this household got bikes.”

“All four are in the garage. Come on. I’ll show them to you.” The two men made their way to the garage while Mac went to find the girls and collect the necklaces before they got lost.

Trish and Marcella followed her up the stairs. After learning about the letter that Mac’s mother had sent, they wanted to make sure she wasn’t holding back because of them.

“Mac, have you talked to your mother?” Trish decided to get right to the point.

“Harm told you?” Mac turned around to look at the two women. “Yes, I had lunch with her last week.”

“Are you going to let her see the girls?” Trish knew she was stepping over the line, but she was more concerned about making Mac understand that she and Marcella would support her in whatever decision she made.

Mac was getting uncomfortable with the conversation, but she knew these women and decided to just tell them what her plans were instead of dragging out the conversation. “I haven’t decided yet. She has to prove to me that she won’t do anything to hurt them before I’ll even consider it.”

Marcella put a hand on Mac’s shoulder to assure her. “You need to know that, no matter what, AJ and I will always be those girls’ grandparents. Your mother in their lives will not change that.”

“Thank you, that’s very important to me.” Mac smiled at Marcella and then looked at Trish. “Harm has agreed to go with me next month when we have lunch again. I’m taking this whole thing very slowly. Those girls are my priority.”

Trish put a hand on Mac’s other shoulder. “We just want you to know that, whatever you do, we’ll support your decision.”

“That means a lot to me.” Mac relaxed and smiled at the women.

“Well then, let’s go join the fun downstairs.” Marcella took Mac’s arm.

Trish took her other arm. “Do you think we can get your husband out of the garage?”

“Not today,” Mac replied. The three women laughed and headed down stairs.

After everyone left, Mac and Harm got the girls bathed and into bed. The girls were exhausted and barely made it through the second page of the story book. They gave each girl a kiss and shut the door.

Mac went to their room, wanting to put a few things away and then take a long hot bath. Harm went downstairs to lock up and say good night to his parents. He needed more than an hour and a half of sleep.

Harm stepped into the bathroom to find Mac up to her neck in a hot bath. She was leaning back against a bath pillow with her eyes closed. A smile spread across his face as he removed his clothes and stepped into the tub. She sat up just as he slipped down behind her. “Mind if I join you?” He wrapped one arm around her waist and pulled her back to rest against his chest.

Mac started laughing. “Do I have a choice?”

“Just relax.” He leaned back and took her with him.

He held her lightly around the waist, occasionally rubbing her arms. “Once we catch up on our sleep, I’m going to have to thank you for my bike.” His whispered voice and gentle kiss just below her ear sent a shiver down her spine.

“I have a thank you for you, too.” She melted into him with a sigh. “I checked out the rest of the stuff in the stocking. You’ll never let me wear it for more than five minutes.”

He could see her smile when he leaned in to whisper to her again. “Oh, but I’ll love those five minutes.”

They drifted into silence, Harm occasionally kissing Mac on the top of her head. It wasn’t long before Mac fell asleep.

“Mac, honey,” Harm whispered to her twenty minutes later. “We need to get out. The water’s starting to cool.” He wrapped his arms around her waist and started to stand.

“Mmm...” She was only half awake, but stood up with Harm and stepped out of the tub.

He wrapped her in a towel and then wrapped one around his waist. “Now, aren’t you glad you let me share your bath?”

“I always am.”

“Let’s get you to bed.” They dried off, brushed their teeth, and then Harm gently pushed her into the bedroom. They both climbed into bed, and Harm pulled her into his arms. “Tonight, Baby, you sleep.”

Chapter Six: This Is Like Herding Cats

Rabb Home

Thursday, December 28, 2006

1000 EST

“Somebody grab her.”

AJ put an arm out and scooped up Catey as she attempted to run by. “I don’t think your mommy is through with you.” He looked at her with an accusing frown.

She answered him with her special smile. “We’re gonna get our ‘pitchure’ took.” She was wearing the same dress that she’d worn on Christmas Eve and the necklace that Agent Gibbs had given her.

“Well, don’t you want to comb your hair for the picture?”

“Why?”

AJ shook his head and took her upstairs to Mac. “I think this is what you’re looking for.”

Mac laughed and took Catey from AJ. “You’d think I was torturing her.” Mac finished combing Catey’s hair and let her go. “You’re her hero, you know.”

“No, Mac, you’re her hero. I’m just her grandpa.” AJ smiled at Mac. “The photographer is setting up downstairs. Maybe we should get down there before your husband and your three offspring scare him off.”

Jeff, the photographer, had lights set up around the living room. He wanted to do everything with the kids first before they lost interest. He’d been highly recommended, but what Mac hadn’t been told was that he liked to take candid photos of the subjects while they set up each picture. These pictures were the ones that most of his clients ended up purchasing.

The first picture was to be of the three children. While preparing for this picture, Jeff took one that would end up on Harms desk at JAG. He caught Mac and the girls looking at each other, all giggling. He also got one of the girls from another angle, all three wearing their father’s smile.

He captured one of Harm and the kids that Mac thought was perfect.

He got several of the whole group that made it hard to choose.

There were two that everyone agreed stood out. Jeff had noticed Chloe, Francesca and Mac standing off to the side, watching the three children tag team Harm, trying to

convince him to take them out to ride their trikes when the picture taking was done. The picture showed three would-be-sisters, arms draped around each other, laughing.

The other one was of Harm and Mac. It showed Harm behind her with his arms around her waist. She was resting her hands on his, their wedding rings shinning next to each other. She was looking at the girls, who weren't in the picture, and he was looking at her. This picture would also sit on Harms' desk.

There was one more picture. This picture was very personal and would wind up on display in their bedroom. Harm and Mac had been in an embrace so normal for them that they hadn't even realized that the picture had been taken.

Mac knew that the men wanted to spend the afternoon riding the motorcycle. After the picture taking had been completed, she suggested that everyone change clothes and then that Chloe, Francesca and she would walk with the girls while they rode their trikes around the neighborhood. Trish and Marcella had plans for the afternoon.

Jeff was packing his stuff, so everyone went to change. As he was walking out, he spotted Mac and Harm in the driveway by the motorcycle. The picture showed them head to toe, looking into each others eyes and offering each other a sexy smile. Mac had her hands clasped together behind his neck, and Harm had his arms around her waist. Just as his right hand dropped to rest on her six, Jeff took the picture.

The one thing all the pictures portrayed was a happy, loving family.

"You ride safe." Mac leaned in to kiss Harm. "Remember the rules."

Harm kissed her back. "I'll save the last ride for you." This time, the kiss had hints of things to come.

"Mac!" Chloe stood with her hands on her hips. When Mac turned to look at her, Chloe continued, "Get your hands off of him and come on. The girls are ready to go."

The three 'sisters' started down the street with the three little girls between them on their tricycles. "Papa said that you got the girls in separate beds." Francesca was helping Morgan stay on the road and off of the grass. "How'd you do it?"

"It wasn't easy." Mac was trying to keep Catey from riding down the middle of the street. "We let each one pick out their own bed and then let them torture us every night while we tried to get them to sleep in the things."

Chloe was making sure Savannah didn't get too far ahead. "Is that why the beds are all different?"

"This is like herding cats." Mac stopped Catey, and the other two women followed suit. There were only two other houses beyond theirs before the street dead ended, but Mac

wanted the girls to learn to ride safely. “Girls, we need to stay together. You can ride at the side on the street only until we get to the end.” She looked at each of them. “Do you understand?”

“Yes”...“Yes”...“Why?”

“Catey, if you can’t ride safely in the street, then you’ll be allowed to ride only in the driveway.” Mac squatted down and looked her daughter in the eyes. “Do you want that?”

“No.”

“Okay, let’s go.” The women let go of the trikes and they proceeded to the end of the street. Mac gave the girls boundaries for riding, and the women continued their conversation.

“So, how’d you do it?” Chloe reminded Mac what they were talking about.

“Every night we’d put them in their own beds. Harm would start reading a story and they’d move to Morgan’s bed.” Mac rolled her eyes and continued. “That’s when the torture would start.”

“We’d move them back, and one or more would start crying. Then we would talk to them and explain why they should have separate beds.”

“How’d that work?” Chloe had heard bits and pieces, but not the whole thing.

“Not well. Poor Harm, I wound up in tears half the time, too.” Mac started laughing. “One morning, I found them sleeping on the king size bed in the guest room. That afternoon, Harm and I took it apart.”

Francesca was now laughing. “How long before they actually stayed in their own beds?”

“About five weeks into it, Harm came home from a trip to find me sitting on the couch crying. I couldn’t stand to have them upset every night, just to find them all in the same bed in the morning. I was close to giving up.” Mac smiled at the other two. “After I calmed down, we went up to check on them, and Catey was asleep in her own bed. She had one arm wrapped around her dinosaur and the other hand tightly gripping its neck.”

“I think I checked on her four or five times during the night. In the morning, she was still in her bed.” Mac had a big smile now with a few tears running down her face. “I wanted to thank that stupid dinosaur for helping her through the night.”

“The other two took another week and a half. They’re doing really well now.” Mac went over to Morgan and put her gloves back on.

They let the kids ride for about an hour before they headed back to the house. As they finished putting the tricycles away, the tell-tale sound of the motorcycle engine grew louder.

Harm and AJ pulled up in the driveway, and Harm shut off the engine. When both men got off the bike, the girls ran over. “Can we ride with you, Daddy?”

Mac was afraid this would happen. She squatted down and pulled the girls to her. “You’re too young to ride. The police won’t let you.” She knew that they’d understand that.

Harm had a problem saying ‘no’ to his girls - all four of them. He knew that Mac was right, but he wanted to give them something to make up for it. Mac gave him a warning look, knowing what he was thinking.

“When you’re older, Daddy will take you for a ride.” Mac felt this should be enough to stop the conversation from continuing. She was wrong.

“How old?” Caitlyn was full of herself today.

Mac rolled her eyes. “When you’re fifteen.” Now that should stop her.

“Why?”

This time, Harm came up behind her and picked her up. “Because that’s what Mommy said.” He kissed her cheek and smiled at her.

“Okay.” Catey started to laugh.

Harm put her down. “Now, you three go inside and behave yourselves while I take Mommy for a ride.”

“Is Mommy old enough to ride?” This time, it was Morgan being silly.

Harm winked at Mac before answering his daughter. “Just barely.”

Chloe took the girls inside, and AJ and Francesca headed home.

Harm took Mac’s hand and walked toward the bike. “Now, there are rules that you have to follow when riding this bike.” He leaned in and kissed Mac, then released her hand and put her helmet on. “You must always wear a helmet.” He then got on the bike. When she climbed on behind him, he reached around and took both her hands. “You’re

required to hold on to the driver at all times.” When she started laughing as she gripped the front of his jacket, he started the engine and they pulled out of the driveway.

When they returned an hour and a half later, Mac was driving and Harm’s arms were wrapped around her waist.

Chapter Seven: The Second You Got Me Pregnant

JAG HQ Falls Church, VA
Friday, December 29, 2006
1400 EST

He knew she was standing there. He could feel her presence. Harm looked up and smiled at his wife. "Do you have a minute?" he asked.

"Of course." Mac stepped into his office, shut the door and sat down across from him. "What's up?"

"The general okayed my request for an additional attorney, and I wanted your help in deciding who." Harm handed her a piece of paper with some names on it. "These are the ones whom I'm considering."

Mac took a look at his list. One name jumped out. "Do you know any of these people other than the obvious?"

"No."

"Then, by all means, take Lt. Cmdr. Mannetti." She smiled at Harm and shook her head. "You didn't want my opinion - you wanted my approval."

"Actually, I wanted you to confirm my choice." He was looking as innocent as he could. "I do think that she's the best for the team. I have all the problems I need with Vukovic. I know that she'll hit the ground running, and my team can use that."

"I totally agree." Again, Mac smiled at him. "Harm, it was four years ago and I was pregnant. I have no problems with Tracy. She knows that."

"I just want to make sure that I don't get in trouble again."

"You were in trouble the second you got me pregnant," Mac replied and started laughing.

****Flashback****

"Mac, I love you. You know that." Harm knew the pregnancy was causing this strange behavior, but Mac's jealousy of Lt. Cmdr. Mannetti was ridiculous. "I work with her. She's my partner."

"I was your partner, too." Mac looked at him. Her chocolate eyes looked so sad.

“You were more than my partner. You were, and still are, my best friend and I’m in love with you.” Harm was careful how he said things these days. Her hormones could turn on him in an instant. “Baby, you know better than to suggest anything is going on.”

Mac started crying. “I know. I’m sorry. Why do I do this?”

Harm wrapped her in his arms. “Because you’re four months pregnant with three babies.” He kissed her forehead and looked into her eyes. “But you’ve got to stop accusing this woman of doing something that she’s not.”

“I’ll apologize to her tomorrow.” She had a tight hold on Harm.

He was rubbing Mac’s back, trying to reassure her. “Please be nice. She thinks that you’re going to beat the crap out of her.”

****End Flashback****

“Come on Harm. I apologized, we talked, and everything is fine.” Mac thought that it was cute that he was still concerned about the situation. “She even came to see the girls while we were still in Italy, remember?”

“As long as you’re okay with this.” He wanted her confirmation one more time.

“She’s the best for the job and will be an asset to your team, so why wouldn’t I be okay with it?” Her smile grew a little larger. “I’ve got to go, honey. I’m due in court in fifteen minutes.”

She got up to leave, but before walking out of his office, she turned around. “Remember, everyone’s meeting here at 1630. I’ll be down as soon as I’m able.” She gave him one more smile and left.

Harm picked up the phone and dialed Lt Cmdr Mannetti. “Tracy, would you be willing to come back to DC for awhile?”

Meanwhile, upstairs, Mac was holding court. The two attorneys were doing everything they could to turn her courtroom into a circus. Thirty minutes into the proceedings, she’d slapped down both of them enough times so that things were running smoother. She noticed the door to the courtroom open, but kept her attention on business.

AJ and Catey walked into the back of courtroom and took a seat in the last row. AJ whispered to Catey, who was now standing on the bench seat next to him. “You can’t say a word. Okay?”

She nodded her head and stared at her mother, who was talking to the two attorneys.

Mac had seen them come in. Although curious as to why they were there, she had a courtroom to run. "Lieutenant, you may proceed, but keep it within the scope of the charges."

Catey never took her eyes off her mother. She was standing just behind AJ's right shoulder, her hand grasping his shirt. When Mac glanced her way and winked at her, she started to smile.

The proceedings lasted another twenty minutes before Mac adjourned for the day. Once the courtroom had cleared, she stepped away from the bench and walked over to her daughter. "I didn't know that I'd have an audience today." She leaned over and picked Catey up off the seat.

"Wow, Mommy, you're the boss." Catey put an arm on Mac's shoulder and kissed her cheek. The smile across her face was huge.

Mac answered Catey's smile with one of her own. "Well, only in here." She kissed Catey's cheek this time. "Did you thank Grandpa AJ for bringing you?"

"Yes."

"She was very good." AJ praised the child. "The other two are with Harm, but she wanted to see what Mommy does." He turned his attention to Mac. "I'll see you two downstairs in a few minutes." AJ left the courtroom and went back to Harm's office, leaving Mac and Catey alone.

"Do you want to sit up where I sit?" Mac was rewarded with a huge Rabb smile. Mac took her up to the bench and put her in the chair. "What do you think?"

"Can I bang the hammer?"

"Yes, you may." Mac let the girl play a little longer before it was time to go. "Come on, Sweetheart, I need to change my clothes, then we can go back to Daddy's office." She helped Catey out of the chair and took her hand.

On the way to Mac's office, they stopped so that Catey could say 'hi' to Julie. "Well, Miss Caitlyn, were you in court today?"

"Yes ma'am." Still wearing the smile, Catey started to giggle.

Julie found the smile infectious and smiled, too. "What did you see?"

"Mommy was at the big desk, telling everyone what to do." Catey was still holding Mac's hand, not willing to let go just yet.

Mac tugged lightly on Catey's hand. "Come with me to my office, sweetheart, so I can change my clothes. Daddy's waiting for us."

Fifteen minutes later, Mac and Catey walked into Harms office. Mac was wearing black slacks and an emerald green sweater. Catey ran to her sisters and proceeded to tell them of the adventure she'd just had.

"Can I come watch you some time, too?" Harm whispered to Mac and then kissed her sweetly. He'd changed into light grey slacks and a black dress shirt.

Mac intensified the kiss just slightly. "Only if I can watch you." When whistles came from the bullpen, they broke apart.

General Cresswell and AJ enter Harm's office as the cat calls subsided. "Entertaining the troops again, Captain?"

"Sorry sir."

"Something's come up in Guam that requires one of your people. I'd like to recommend Major Johnson." Cresswell winked at Mac, letting her know that this was giving Dan his chance at his wish.

"Is that the file?" Harm pointed to the paperwork in the general's hands.

"Yes."

"I'll look it over and get it to him. When does he need to be there?" Harm was all business at this point, and the girls were in awe.

"I think the fourth should give him enough time to sort things out before decisions need to be made." Cresswell knew that that would also give Dan enough time to estimate the time required to complete the assignment and request leave so that he could pursue his wish.

Harm looked at Mac. "Would you mind waiting a few minutes? I'd like to go over this with Dan so that he can have it all weekend before he leaves next week."

"Go, Honey. We have plenty of time." They were having dinner with the family. Trish and Chloe had dropped Mac and Harm off that morning so they could take the girls to the zoo.

That afternoon, AJ had agreed to take the girls and pick up Mac and Harm, leaving Frank to get the women to the restaurant on time. He knew that he'd gotten the easier job.

Harm was back in ten minutes. He gave her a strange look as if he'd just learned something. They packed their things and headed to the car. After strapping the girls in, the three adults climbed in the front seat with AJ driving.

Mac was leaning against Harm, and his arm was around her shoulders. While the radio played one of AJ's favorite songs, Harm leaned in to whisper into Mac's ear. "So, we're going to go sailing in the South Pacific?"

Chapter Eight: You're Eyes Are Awfully Green Tonight

Rabb Home

Sunday, December 31, 2006

1930 EST

"Mac, honey, we're suppose to be at the restaurant in thirty minutes. We need to go soon." Harm was secretly gloating that he was on time and she was the one running late for a change.

Chloe was in charge of the girls for the night. Mac and Harm had reservations for dinner and dancing at a new Italian restaurant with the Roberts, the Turners and Jack Keeter and his latest. Harm had other plans for him and Mac to bring in the New Year.

Morgan looked up as Mac came down the stairs wearing a red silk dress. The dress was fitted at the top with spaghetti straps. The skirt flared out and came to rest at mid calf. "Mommy, you look pretty."

Harm came around the corner to check on Morgan's opinion. He confirmed it by staring at her in awe.

Harm was wearing his charcoal grey suit with a dark blue shirt and tie. Mac was equally in awe of him.

They'd kept the loft when they'd moved to Italy. When either or both would return to DC for any reason, if there was enough lead time, they'd have the loft cleaned and stay there. Harm had made arrangements to have it ready for them after the evening with their friends. Their overnight bag was in the 'Vette and he was ready to go.

"Chloe, you know how to get a hold of us, correct?" Mac had to go through the last minute things one more time. "AJ's number is in the directory in the phone. If it's an emergency, call him first, then call us."

"Yes, Mac." Chloe rolled her eyes.

Mac lined up the girls. "You're to be good girls tonight." She squatted down and gave each one a kiss. "Chloe's in charge. You're to do what she says. Is that understood?"

"Okay."

That wasn't the answer she was looking for. Mac knew that 'yes' meant we will and 'okay' meant we'll try. The smile on Savannah's face confirmed her interpretation.

Harm kissed the girls and tried one more time. "Make me proud tonight and be good." He too got the 'okay'.

“Chloe, don’t be afraid to say ‘no’. They’re going to test you.” Mac warned her before she and Harm left.

Mac and Harm joined everyone at the restaurant fifty-five minutes later. The table was set for eight and, as usual, they were the last to arrive. Keeter’s date was in the ladies room, and Varesse and Sturgis were on the dance floor.

Keeter shook his head. “Late again. What were you two doing, making out in the car?”

Mac turned an interesting shade of red, which made it impossible for Harm to deny it.

Harm had pulled to the curb a few blocks before the restaurant. He’d leaned towards Mac, placed his right hand behind her neck and pulled her to him. “Have I told you how beautiful you are?” The kiss that followed had confirmed his plans for later.

Mac had encouraged more, until they both remembered where they were and that they were expected somewhere else. “I want you to myself at midnight.” Harm let her know this was not a choice with another passionate kiss, then he removed his hand from her neck and the other one from her thigh, and pulled the car up to the valet.

Harm chose not to take the bait. Instead he held the chair for Mac, then sat down next to her and took hold of her hand. “Happy New Year, everyone.”

When Sturgis and Varesse returned to the table, everyone ordered drinks. The server returned with their drinks, took the food order and left them. Sturgis lifted his glass, waiting for the others to join him. “We have an announcement. I got orders today for San Diego. We leave in two months.”

“Congratulations, buddy.” Harm was happy for his friend. “That’s a great assignment out there. Looks like you’ll make Captain with the next board.”

Congratulations were added by everyone at the table. Once dinner was served, the conversation went in other directions.

Harm’s cell phone rang. He looked at the caller id and handed it to Mac. “It’s Chloe.”

“What did they do?” A smile spread across Mac’s face while she listened to Chloe. “Let me talk to her.” Harm raised an eyebrow in question. “Savannah’s just testing Chloe and, apparently, getting the best of her.” Mac walked toward the ladies room with the phone, where it was quieter, to finish the conversation.

Harm loved his girls. He and Mac had decided a long time ago to encourage good behavior, but not to stifle their creativity and sense of adventure. He remembered the day Mac told him she was pregnant, and a smile grew across his face.

****Flashback****

“You son of a bitch!” Harm’s office door slammed shut, and his wife walked up to his desk.

Harm looked up to see a very frustrated marine. He decided to go with charmingly innocent. “Mac, you seem a bit agitated. Is there a problem?” He showed a boyish grin and waited for the other shoe to drop.

“I was at Bethesda this morning.” She looked him strait in the eyes. “I’m pregnant.”

He looked at her dumbfounded. “Aren’t you on the pill?” It hadn’t quite sunk in yet.

She was pacing around his office. “I was until about an hour ago when the doctor told me that I was pregnant.” Mac was almost shaking now. “I figured what the hell, your swimmers seem to be immune to it anyway.”

As everything finally registered, Harm got up and walked around his desk. He sat on the edge of it and pulled Mac between his legs and into his arms. “So, we’re going to have a baby?”

She relaxed in the protection of his arms. “I know that we were supposed to wait a year before we... but...” Mac had her arms wrapped around his neck. “...well ...something happened.” Tears were running down her face.

“Yeah, I guess something did.” Harm wiped her tears. “Why are you crying?”

“I don’t know.” Mac tightened her hold on him.

Harm lightly rubbed her back. “This is a good thing,” he whispered in her ear. Harm leaned back a little, looked at her with loving eyes and kissed her. That’s how the admiral found them.

AJ had heard the door slam and came to see what the problem was. “I thought you were going to keep your personal life out of my office?”

They broke the kiss, and Mac started to pull away, tears still falling, but Harm wouldn’t let her go. They both looked at the admiral, and a huge smile spread across Harm’s face. “We’re pregnant.”

****End Flashback****

When Mac returned, she was laughing. “They ganged up on her. I had a talk with Savannah and made sure she understands that we can keep the trikes in the garage for a couple of weeks if she doesn’t behave.”

Harm was having trouble keeping his hands off Mac. There was something about her tonight that had his undivided attention. Keeter asked her to dance, and Harm had to curb the urge to deck him.

Halfway through the dance, Harm cut in. Keeter smiled as he handed Mac off to Harm. She went to him with ease and put her forehead to his. "Your eyes are awfully green tonight."

"Sarah, is it time to go?" Harm's voice was low and very sexy.

"Let's go say goodnight." He had her undivided attention now.

When they returned to the table, they made excuses. Harm threw too much money on the table, and they were out the door.

"Was it something I did?" Keeter's smile was over the top.

Before they ever pulled away from the curb, Harm leaned over and kissed Mac with a passion that told of his plans for the remainder of the night.

When the elevator opened across from the loft door, Harm pulled Mac out and to the door, never breaking the kiss that started the moment the elevator doors shut. Once inside, he dropped their overnight bag by the door and turned on some music while Mac hung up their coats.

The only light in the room was a low wattage lamp. Harm took her in his arms and began a very slow dance to the music. She undid his tie and then clasped her hands behind his neck, never taking her eyes off his.

He leaned in and lightly touched her lips with his. "I love you." His words were barely audible. He kissed her mouth again before moving to her neck to further ignite the desire building in both of them.

Her fingers threaded into his hair and she pulled his mouth back to hers. He loved the little sounds that she made when their kisses were so passionate. He'd learned which were moans and which were words that she was speaking with out breaking the kiss. She told him she loved him, and he answered by simply unzipping her dress and running his hands inside.

Mac had Harm's shirt unbuttoned in moments. They were still slightly swaying to the music, but you couldn't really call it dancing. She'd long since kicked off her shoes and, when he slipped her dress from her shoulders, it left her wearing just her panties. His shirt hit the floor and he started leading her to the bedroom.

When the New Year arrived, there were fireworks displays in Maryland and Virginia that could be seen from the Mall. Chloe was in the guest room of the Rabb home, watching

the ball drop on TV in a tangle of sleeping little girls. And in a loft north of Union Station, Mac and Harm never noticed the year change as they created fireworks of their own.

End Part Two