

The Mortal Coil

By Sanguine

----- Part One -----

-----BEGIN GEEK CODE BLOCK-----

Version: 3.1

GED d-@ s:+ a- C+++>\$ U> P L>+ !E W++>+++& !N !o K--? w>+++& !O !M+ !V? PS-(+)@ PE Y+
PGP t+++>\$* !5 X+ R+>++++* tv+ b++++ DI+ D+ G>+ e+++>++++ h- r>+++ x-

-----END GEEK CODE BLOCK-----

As soon as MacGyver opened the e-mail, he knew exactly who had sent it. The e-mail address was different than the one that had been given to "Dexter Fillmore" all those years ago, but in spite of this, the prominent 1337speak in the body of the e-mail and the block of pseudo-code were more distinctive than a fingerprint. This e-mail had been sent by an old friend, not of MacGyver's, but of "Dexter's." Someone---a computer programmer named Michael Brighton---had come across MacGyver's alter ego while Mac was undercover helping the Phoenix Foundation track down a notorious ring of black-hat hackers. Since then, Brighton and MacGyver had kept sporadically in touch---with Brighton never finding out the truth about Mac's real identity.

Sometimes, Mac felt a twinge of guilt about keeping a secret like that from someone he genuinely liked, but he couldn't take the risk---especially considering that, someday, he might need another white-hat hacker on his side.

And thus, as MacGyver sat down at his computer screen, he fished a pair of Dexter glasses from the desk drawer and shoved them onto his nose. Just to remind himself to stay in character.

He wasn't sure if he loved or hated the challenge of deciphering an entire e-mail written in 1337speak and hacker slang, but by the end of the message, he was glad he did. With a grin, he typed back a reply:

I c4n'7 b31i3v3 W4rd3nc1yff3 i5 b3ing r355ur3c73d! 73514 r0xx0r!

-----BEGIN GEEK CODE BLOCK-----

Version: 3.1

G d@ s++:- a? C++\$ U++++ P+@ L++++\$ E@ W+ N+@ !o K--? w+++@ O++@ M V++@ PS+\$
PE\$@ Y++ PGP++\$@ t++ 5@ X R? tv-\$@ b++++>\$ DI+ !D- G++ e++++>\$ h@? r-(-)@?>+ y+@

-----END GEEK CODE BLOCK-----

Then, he grabbed a handful of bean sprouts from the fridge, snagged the Jeep keys from the sailboat-shaped hook by the door, and headed out for another day of work at the Phoenix Foundation.

He needed to ask Pete Thornton for a favor.

"But Pete, it's *Wardenclyffe!*"

"You keep saying that like I should be excited," Pete replied with a shake of his head. "I have no idea what you're talking about, MacGyver! Or why you're so desperate to drop everything and go there."

"This is about Nikola Tesla!"

"Tesla? You mean the crazy inventor guy?"

"He wasn't crazy!"

"Isn't he the guy who swore he built an earthquake machine and a death ray? That sounds crazy to me, MacGyver!"

"Okay, okay, he was eccentric. But he was still a *genius*, Pete! He changed the world! Alternating current was a revolution!"

"Yeah, and so was the lightbulb, but Edison wasn't crazy."

"He electrocuted elephants and nearly went blind by zapping himself with X-rays. Besides, Edison was a businessman, not a scientist! Not like Tesla!"

"All right, all right. But what is this Warden project anyway?"

"Wardenclyffe was Tesla's laboratory, and one of his achievements. It's part of history! Right now, it's on the verge of being torn down as an eyesore---or just plain falling apart from all this time being abandoned. But the Wardenclyffe Historical Society raised the money to buy it, and they're looking for volunteers to help renovate it into a museum and science center. If this organization is planning to save it from being condemned and restore it---then I want in. Can't you spare me for at least a couple days?"

Pete sighed, deflated. "Well, all right, MacGyver. I guess a couple of days wouldn't hurt, if it's that important to you."

MacGyver smiled and clapped his old friend on the shoulder. "Thanks, Pete."

"Don't mention it. But now you owe me one!"

Mac grinned. "I won't have to mention it. You won't let me forget!"

Shortly after a quiet plane ride to Long Island, New York, MacGyver stepped out of his rental car and gazed up at the remnants of Nikola Tesla's once-great laboratory. In the midst of a field of half-cut grass, the laboratory was a rectangular brick building, the roof slanted in a way that made the facade appear to be a pentagon shape, with a small brick tower, perhaps an old chimney, poking up out of one side. A few other cars were scattered around, parked in the grass on either side of the gravel driveway that led up to what MacGyver presumed was the front door.

He took a deep breath, taking everything in, envisioning the great iron skeleton of Tesla's famed tower as it had once stood over the laboratory. How many childhood hours had he spent in the library reading about his favorite scientist's myriad of inventions? And what about that time that he'd tried (and succeeded, despite getting in massive trouble) to build his own Tesla coil for the school science fair?

Shaking his head, he stepped forward and opened the door.

What he saw broke his heart. White-gray paint peeled from the bricks, the concrete floor was dirty and stained, and in several locations the fluorescent lights attached to the rafters in the ceiling were flickering or not functional at all. Graffiti in all sizes and colors marred the walls. Now that he was inside, he noticed that many of the beautiful rounded-topped windows had been boarded up---smashed to pieces. Cardboard boxes, some opened and others taped shut, were scattered and stacked around the area.

He swallowed hard. How could this laboratory, a landmark in history that the man who invented the 20th century had himself once walked in, be so far gone? Like just another cleared-out warehouse, another instance of urban blight?

Luckily, there was now hope, and MacGyver was determined to help bring the lab---and the *dream* that stood behind it---back to life.

MacGyver ventured further inside. "Hello?" The empty space was eerily chill. "Anyone home? Hello?"

There was no answer. Mac shrugged; it was a big building, so the volunteers from the science museum probably just hadn't heard him. He slowly took a few more steps inside, calling louder, "Hello?"

This time, he heard someone yell back, faintly, "Someone there?"

"Yeah!" MacGyver called, moving toward the distant voice. The sound was muffled; they must have been calling from another room.

When he entered the next area of the empty building, he expected to see one of the restoration workers, but instead he saw...nothing. Puzzled, he glanced around the room. Could there be a door or an alcove that he had missed?

He hadn't missed anything that he could see, but there was a plastic folding table set up near the wall, laden with a variety of tools and a stack of papers that looked like floor plans and blueprints. Mac flipped through the designs idly, wondering where the other restoration workers would be. Most of the plans were written in one person's handwriting, probably the person who'd given them to the workers in the first place. But in several places, a different person had jotted down some notes, and in the bottom design, Mac's eyes fell upon one of the little scribbles: *Tesla may have had tunnels. Search plan for later in renovation.*

MacGyver blinked quickly. Secret tunnels beneath Nikola Tesla's laboratory? He'd never heard of that before, and as far as he knew, no one else had either. Was it possible that this could be true? Had the tunnels never been explored, untouched since Tesla himself had been forced to abandon the lab in 1903?

MacGyver grinned, realizing that this was an incredible science mystery that desperately needed solving!

Just then, he heard the front door open with a creak of metal.

"Hello!" MacGyver called out, stepping back into the first room.

Startled, the man who'd just entered took a step back. "Oh! Sorry, I didn't know someone else was in here. We were all outside working on uncovering the base of the tower."

For a moment, Mac frowned. If all the other volunteers had been outside, then who had called for MacGyver earlier?

But he didn't have long to contemplate this, because the volunteer had just stepped over to shake his hand. "I'm John Taylor. I'm the leader of this project for the time being. You must be from the Phoenix Foundation, right? Sorry, I forgot your name."

"MacGyver," he said. "Nice to meet you. And thank you---all of you---for what you're doing to honor Tesla. This project means a lot to me."

"Me too," Taylor said with a smile, brushing brown hair away from his solid-colored eyes. "Tesla was one of my heroes as a kid. Without him, I'd never have become a science teacher. He changed everything---AC power, radio, X-rays... Everything."

"He was really an incredible thinker," MacGyver agreed. "So what have you been working on?"

John sighed and gestured around the spacious, rundown building. "What are we *not* working on? Clearing the grounds, uncovering the tower base, cleaning up the lab, scrubbing graffiti... Structurally, the building is sound, but the plumbing and electricity need updating and repairs. Not to mention the hazardous waste..."

"What?"

John shook his head. "After Tesla was forced to shut his wireless transmitter down, the property was sold and used by a commercial photography company up until about ten years ago. All the waste had to be cleaned up by hazmat teams. It should be safe enough now, but..."

"But it's the principle of the thing," MacGyver finished.

"*Exactly,*" John sighed. "But enough of my complaining. We're here to fix it, after all! So, what can you do?"

MacGyver just grinned. "Oh, a little bit of everything..."

----- Part Two -----

MacGyver was covered in paint and elbow-deep in plaster when he heard a loud shout reverberate through the building. Without hesitating, he dashed through the big empty space, nearly knocking over a ladder, and ran into the back room. When he rushed in, skidding slightly on the smooth concrete floor, he was shocked by what he saw.

Absolutely nothing. The room was entirely empty and still.

MacGyver frowned. He knew the sound had come from this room. Was it possible he'd misheard? That the sound had echoed from a different area?

But then one of the other volunteers rushed in, a twenty-something man named Brody. "What's wrong? I heard a yell," Brody said.

MacGyver shook his head slightly, unnerved. "I don't know. I heard it too, but..."

"But we're the only ones here," Brody said, scratching his head. "John and Trish are still outside. Something weird's going on here."

"Like what?"

Brody shrugged. "Dunno. But I've been hearing all kinds of weird noises, seeing stuff move out of the corner of my eye and then there's nothing there. Stuff like that. Real creepy. But it's probably just my mind playing tricks on me, right? I mean, it's a big creepy old building, right?"

"Right," MacGyver agreed, more to reassure Brody than anything else. True, that was the only logical explanation so far, but...how could something be only in Brody's head if two people were experiencing it?

He tried to shake off the concern as he went back to work, but he kept feeling an odd sensation behind him, like the feeling of the hair prickling on the back of one's neck...the sensation of being watched.

Around half an hour later, he heard the front door squeak open and went to investigate, wiping his hands on a rag. This time, he was thankful to see that the sound was accompanied by people: John and Trish Taylor, carrying hedge trimmers and thick gloves from where they'd been attempting to tame the brush that had grown up around the tower base.

"I have no idea," John said to Trish, involved so deeply in conversation that it took him a moment to notice Mac standing there. "Oh, hey, MacGyver! We were thinking of grabbing a bite to eat. You and Brody want to join us?"

"Sure. I'll go round him up."

"I'll come with you. I need to put these back in the toolbox anyway."

As they walked deeper into the old lab where Brody was working, MacGyver said, "Hey, I wanted to ask you something."

"Sure, shoot."

"Brody mentioned hearing noises, seeing things out of the corner of his eye. Have you ever experienced anything like that in here?"

John paused for a second, seeming to carefully consider his answer. "I guess so. Nothing that I'd classify as unexplainable, of course. Just some bumps and squeaks here and there, you know. Shadows. It's an old building, and the acoustics are terrible with all these hard surfaces, so I'm sure most of it is nothing. But I can see where a kid like Brody would be put on edge by it. It's spooky enough knowing that you're in an abandoned, vandalized building without also knowing that it was once the real-life equivalent of Frankenstein's lab."

"Good point," MacGyver conceded. Privately, he wasn't so sure. Brody seemed to have a pretty level head, and Mac himself--after all the things he'd seen in his life---was definitely not prone to jumping at shadows. Whether John was willing to admit it or not, something strange was afoot at Wardenclyffe.

After a short jaunt through Long Island's peaceful suburban landscape, the group returned to Wardenclyffe to get back to work. There was a cool breeze blowing Mac's tousled hair into his face. John and Brody were joking about something as they stepped out of John's sedan, but MacGyver was too lost in thought to listen, his eyes fixed on Wardenclyffe.

What was it about the building that was so strange? And what about the mysterious tunnels that had been noted on the building layouts? Could they possibly account for some of the unusual noises?

"Kinda spooky like this, isn't it?" Trish commented, startling Mac.

"More sad than anything," MacGyver said, measuring out his words. "This was Tesla's dream. Part of his life's work. He envisioned a better world and he wanted to give it to people. Not for fame or money. Just to make life better."

"And despite all his successes, this part of his dream was his greatest failure," Trish surmised.

MacGyver shook his head firmly. "It wasn't a failure. It inspired a lot of people and gave them hope. As long as there's still hope, anything is possible."

Trish frowned slightly. "But if that's true, then why is it sad?"

MacGyver didn't take his eyes off the ruined laboratory as he answered, "Because people like him are hard to find."

Trish may have been ready to reply, but before she could say anything, MacGyver took off for the lab. "MacGyver?" she called. As she jogged closer, she heard a vague shout in reply, but the wind stole the words away. "What? I can't hear you!"

Eventually, Mac circled back to meet her halfway, his mouth set into a frown. "Tell John I saw a shadow at the window. Someone is inside the building."

"I just don't know what to think," John said, pacing the concrete floor. "We searched the whole building. There's no one in here. But c'mon, half the windows are just covered with boards. Most of them aren't even nailed shut. It was probably some teenage kid checking out the old lab. Could've been some curiosity-seeker, someone on a dare... Anything."

"Maybe," Mac said, eyes following John's footsteps. "Or maybe not."

"I know you're not convinced, but what else could it be?"

"A ghost," Brody supplied.

Trish shook her head, tapping her purple-painted nails against the workbench she was sitting on. "There's no such thing as ghosts."

John snorted. "And even if there were, who'd want to haunt this?"

"It's not a ghost," MacGyver agreed.

"Finally, someone sees reason," John said.

"It's more likely someone's trying to scare you away," MacGyver added. "Or search for something without you knowing."

John paused in his pacing to stare at MacGyver. "You can't be serious."

"Sure I am. I've seen it a hundred times before."

"But there's nothing valuable here. It's just an empty building!"

"That you know of," MacGyver countered. "We both know that Tesla was an eccentric, sometimes borderline unstable personality. It's possible that there could be something hidden here that's lost to history. Or, it's equally possible that the property has some kind of hidden value that hasn't been made public knowledge yet."

"Except there isn't. We had this property surveyed well before the renovation started. And the photography company had it surveyed numerous times before that. If there were anything valuable here---anything at all---it would've been discovered by now."

"What about the tunnels?" MacGyver asked point-blank.

John's jaw dropped just a fraction before he recovered. "They're just a rumor."

"Someone wrote it on those building plans you've got over there," Mac said with a gesture to the table.

John sighed. "Look, the tunnels are a rumor, that's all. It's a rumor that's been around ever since the place was first built a hundred years ago. There's never been any proof that the tunnels actually exist."

"There's never been any proof that they don't."

John shook his head, tossing his hands up in the air. "All right. If you want to look for these tunnels, be my guest. And if you do find them, you're more than welcome to say 'I told you so.' But I'm telling you, it's a waste of time."

"Either way, until then, we should make sure to keep the doors locked behind us when we go in and out," Trish jumped in. "And we should check to make sure that all the window boards are nailed in place until we can get those windows replaced."

"Good idea," said Brody, grabbing a hammer from the toolbox on the floor. "I'll take care of that right now!"

"I'll join you," Trish said. "John, you can finish cutting those briars, and MacGyver, if you're not too worn out by all your tunneling, could you finish with the graffiti in this room?"

"Sure," Mac said with a polite nod and a tight smile, choosing to keep the peace and ignore the dig. As the four of them went their separate ways, MacGyver took a moment to look around the area, casting a careful glance at each wall and crack.

If he were an unconventional, innovative, and somewhat fantasy-minded genius light-years ahead of his time, how would he hide a secret tunnel?

Then the answer came to him like a flash of Tesla's lightning bolts.

MacGyver smacked himself on the forehead. "*Of course!*"

Quick as mercury, he grabbed the building plans off the table, reached for his Swiss army knife, and started searching the piles of trash and refuse for materials.

It was time for MacGyver to get to work.

----- Part Three -----

As usual, the first step started with a paperclip.

Laying two D batteries "borrowed" from a flashlight side by side, with one upside down, he gently placed the paperclip across the batteries so that the clip touched the positive end of one and the negative end of the other. Then, he used black electrical tape to secure the paperclip and tape both batteries together. Next, he cut six-inch lengths of spare electrical wire, stripped the ends, and taped one to each battery. Now he had a working power source.

Then, he grabbed a big nail, wrapped it in wire, and hooked it up to the batteries. Electromagnet? Check.

With the unmistakable grin of someone deeply satisfied with a creative work, he grabbed a hammer and drove his electromagnet nail into a scrap piece of board before nailing a wooden block onto the other end. He found two scrap pieces of thin metal; one he nailed onto the base to serve as a switch, and the other was nailed into the top of the wooden block so that it just barely hovered above the top of the electromagnet. After securing the batteries to the board, he slowly---carefully, making no mistakes---hooked the batteries to his makeshift switch.

All that was left to do...was close the circuit and see what happened.

MacGyver took a deep breath and steadied his hands. He reached for the switch...

And jumped as a door slammed. "Hey, MacGyver, have you seen the---" Brody trailed off as he gawked at Mac's contraption. "What's that?"

"It's a telegraph machine," MacGyver said.

"Cool!" Brody said, coming over to get a closer look. "Did you build that?"

MacGyver nodded. Brody continued talking absently as he scrutinized the handmade gadget, "I just came over to get some more nails. I think I must've put the box down somewhere and forgot what I did with it. Why do you need a telegraph machine?"

"I think it may help me figure out how to access those hidden tunnels. Tesla invented a form of rudimentary remote control in the 19th century, and he was able to remotely steer a boat down a river using electrical signals. Most people brushed it off as a hoax, but it actually did work."

"Wow. What does that have to do with a telegraph machine?"

"A telegraph works by transmitting and receiving short and long electrical signals---Morse code, which was partly the basis for Tesla's remote. If I can just figure out which sequence of signals Tesla used to control the door to the tunnels, I should be able to open it."

The light dawned in Brody's eyes. "Like a garage door remote with a passcode!"

Mac nodded. "Exactly! It's gonna take some trial and error, but once I get the right combination, it should work."

"So, how are you going to figure out the passcode?"

Mac shrugged. "That's where the trial and error comes in. Most people use significant names or dates for their passwords, or it could be something simple, since Tesla wouldn't have had to worry about anyone else knowing the way in. We can probably manage to figure it out with some educated guesses."

Exhaling slowly, MacGyver tapped the switch on his makeshift telegraph in a careful pattern. Each tap, short and long, made a slight metallic 'click,' spelling out what MacGyver hoped would be the correct code.

Nothing.

"I guess that wasn't it? What'd you try?" Brody asked.

"His birthday. It was worth a shot."

"Try 1902! The year Wardencllyffe opened!"

"Good idea!" MacGyver diligently tapped out the numbers, but still there was no reaction.

"Or maybe not," Brody said, deflated. "What else can we try?"

MacGyver thought it over for a moment. "Clemens, maybe? Tesla and Mark Twain were good friends." Brody frowned. "Wouldn't that be an awfully long word?"

"Not for someone fluent with Morse code. But you have a point. Maybe we're overthinking it."

"Try 1234!"

With a chuckle, Mac tapped the telegraph again, but to no avail.

"What else do we know about Tesla?" Brody said, frustration evident in his voice.

"What else do we know about passwords?" MacGyver added. "If significant dates aren't working, let's try something else that's equally common."

"A word? Like his mom's name?"

MacGyver tapped 'Djuka.' No result. "Hmmm..."

"Maybe Smiljan, where he grew up?"

"No, not his hometown. Apart from dates and their mom's name, what do people most commonly use as a password?"

Brody shrugged. "Dunno. The word 'password,' I guess?"

MacGyver grinned in excitement that he hoped wasn't about to be crushed. "A pet's name."

"Did Tesla have pets?"

Mac nodded rapidly. "A cat. In fact, an experience with static electricity from the cat's fur is what started getting Tesla interested in electricity in the first place."

"That's gotta be it! What's the cat's name?"

"Mačak," MacGyver replied as, breathlessly, he pressed the makeshift telegraph switch in sequence: *DAH-DAH di-DAH DAH-di-DAH-dit di-DAH DAH-di-DAH.*

There was a resounding *clunk*, and the shaking rumble of twisting gears, that echoed throughout the building.

MacGyver and Brody stared at each other for a split second with huge grins. There, just a short distance away, a narrow but thick door had churned open in the wall.

"Are we gonna go in?" Brody asked, his hammer and nails forgotten.

"Do you really have to ask?" MacGyver replied, staring through the newly-opened door. He could see a brick staircase leading down into darkness. "Grab a flashlight. We're going to need it."

Brody quickly complied---though he had to put back the first flashlight he grabbed, finding that it lacked batteries. He passed one of the working flashlights to Mac and switched on his own. "What was that cat's name? Magic?"

Mac shook his head. "Close. Mačak. It's Croatian."

"What does it mean?"

MacGyver smiled as he took a step into the dark tunnel. "My Eastern European languages are rusty, but from what I remember, it means 'Tomcat.'"

"Tesla's tunnels and Tesla's tomcat," Brody whistled, following Mac down the stairs. "Whaddaya know?"

----- Part Four -----

MacGyver led Brody down the stairs, one step at a time, going slowly and shining the flashlight across each one, just in case any of the steps had become broken or fragile with age. So far, all of them seemed as sound as the day they were built. At last, they reached the final step and touched a flat brick floor. Large metal switches and pipes lined the walls.

"This looks like something out of an old *Frankenstein* movie," Brody commented, shining his light across the walls. "Creepy."

MacGyver shrugged as he continued to explore the tunnel, unable to see any end in sight. "Yeah, but just think about how this place must have seemed in its heyday. It would've been new and modern. Cutting edge technology for their time."

"So, not *Frankenstein*. Just 19th century *Star Trek*. Cool."

"These tunnels probably span the entire length of the building," MacGyver said. "There could be anything down here."

"Like a ghost?" Brody said, suddenly filled with fear.

"There's no such thing as ghosts."

"Then there must be another person down here. Right? To explain all the weird stuff that's been happening?"

"Probably," MacGyver admitted. "Just stay close until we know for sure."

"You think any of these old light switches still work?"

"I doubt it. And even if they did, I'd be afraid to try."

"Electrocution?"

"Always a possibility. It's better safe than sorry. C'mon. I think I see a door up ahead."

"All right!"

MacGyver traced the beam of the flashlight around the right wall of the tunnel. Made of sturdy old wood, the door was set into the brick wall and opened with a brass knob, patinated with age. He swung the door open, shining the flashlight inside before stepping in. Small, somewhat sparse bookshelves and small cabinets were set up along the walls in various places around the room, while the center was occupied by a wooden desk and chair. The desk was still adorned with an inkwell, an

old fountain pen, and a glass paperweight, and if not for the cobwebs, one might think that the room was still being used. As MacGyver stepped closer to the desk, he noticed something else. Covered in a thick but fine layer of dust, a leather-bound book rested in the center of the table.

"Are we the first people in here since Tesla?" Brody asked, sticking close to MacGyver.

"Could be. It's hard to say." Gently, he touched the edge of the book, flipping open the leather cover. What he saw took his breath away. "This is handwritten."

"Who wrote it?"

MacGyver moved closer, standing behind the desk. "Hard to be sure, but the name inscribed at the top is...Nikola Tesla."

"Whoa," Brody whispered, too excited to speak.

"Can you bring your light over here?" MacGyver felt equally exhilarated as he carefully turned the page. It took his brain a few moments to decipher the handwriting before him, but when he felt he had a good grasp of it, he began to read aloud.

November 14, 1941

I have said before that within each being there is a finer fiber that transcends the intellect which is called instinct, and this instinct possesses a mysterious power which no man's intellect could truly ever grasp. Perhaps it is through this force of natural instinct that, as an aging animal shutting itself away and curling into a den or seeking to wander the wilderness, I bear a strange foreboding, a sense of what I believe to be my oncoming demise. Thus it is that I make preparations for such an event, though I hope that it is not quite so near as I now believe. Regardless, everyone must and will die; thus, these preparations will serve me whether my hour should be near or in a more distant future.

Part of my preparation has been to ensure that my animal companions will be cared for in my absence; but naturally, the greater need, and my greatest duty, is to my fellow members of humanity. I have selected five of what I believe to be my greatest inventions and theories, the ones which will benefit not just the twentieth, but also the twenty-first century and beyond. They will fill the pages of this journal to help usher in the dawn of the future, the great wireless age, when all mankind will be United through the mere flip of a switch, as close as kin regardless of race, creed, or nation.

December 18, 1941

A great tragedy has befallen this great nation in the past weeks, and the world is officially encompassed in war. I fear now that, were I to perish suddenly, my papers and inventions would be seized in the name of protecting them from the enemy. Yet my inventions, though created with America in heart, were not designed for destruction, but for peace. I am not innocent enough to believe that my creations will be forever untainted by war or pain, yet the future will remain a place dimmed less so by suffering and global strife; rather, science, technology, and illumination will be the great pathways and defining moments of the twenty-first century instead of the groans of war. I see

now that it will not be enough for me to merely bequeath these inventions to America's children and the world's progeny; I must place them securely for safekeeping until such a time as their revelation will be accepted.

March 31, 1942

Many months have passed as I have labored to collect and transcribe the most beneficial of all inventions, and as I have made arrangements in which to hide them. The current proprietors of my beloved, but failed, Wardenclyffe are kind enough to humor me for visits. They view me as an elderly man, perhaps showing signs of madness with age. It is possible, of course, that in some measure they may be correct; and yet, have I not said in the past that one must be sane to think clearly, but one can think deeply and be quite insane?

December 31, 1942

The work is completed at last, and I fear not a moment too soon. This journal, collected in which are the writings, thoughts, and designs which I have worked so hard to produce, is safe in the secret places of my dear Wardenclyffe. Success, you see, is borne of failure as much as it is borne of determination; to separate one from the other would be to take away a man's soul. To those in the later centuries of humanity who may find this and look upon it, know that the future is yours and mine; let knowledge and invention illuminate the way.

Nikola Tesla

MacGyver exhaled slowly, looking up at Brody. The two of them were in a state of pure shock. MacGyver gently flipped through the rest of the journal---handwritten designs, plans, blueprints, notes...

"Oh my gosh," Brody said. "Did we just...?"

"Uncover the greatest historical and scientific find of the decade? Yes. We did!"

"And now you're gonna hand it over," a voice drawled behind them.

Brody jumped and flicked the flashlight to the doorway. A stranger was standing there, holding a smaller flashlight and a switchblade in his hands.

"Who are you?" MacGyver demanded. "What do you want with the book?"

"I'm not an idiot," the man replied calmly, the beam of light revealing his crooked nose and gray eyes. "I know that if that crackpot Tesla took the trouble to put tunnels underneath his building, he put something valuable in them. Now hand it over."

MacGyver slowly closed and picked up the leather journal. "No."

The stranger took a step forward. "I don't think you understand what you're---"

"Run, Brody!" Mac said as he grabbed the paperweight and hurled it at the intruder as if he were flinging a hockey puck across the ice. The heavy glass struck the man squarely in the forehead, sending him reeling, and as Brody made his escape, he shoved the man for good measure, sending the stranger toppling to the brick floor. MacGyver leapt over him and charged after Brody, making for the entrance to the tunnel.

A silhouette appeared in the doorway, framed by the light streaming in.

"Trish!" Brody shouted as he ran, "Get John!"

"No need," Trish said calmly. "Not until you hand over whatever it is you found down there."

Brody skidded to a halt as MacGyver pulled a 180-degree turn, tugging Brody along with him. "Other way, Brody!"

They could hear Trish behind them starting to give chase.

"You think there's another way out of here?" Brody panted.

"I hope so, but we don't have a choice!"

After what seemed like a mile, they reached a pair of immense wooden double doors, with brass handles clearly designed to be pushed inward. They charged through and swung the flashlights around, looking for another exit or a place to hide.

Instead, what they found was a giant metal cage.

"Whoa!" Brody squeaked. "What's all this?!"

"No time to explain!" MacGyver said, his eyes mentally tracing the pathway along the wires on the wall---leading from the variety of switches to a small metal tower with a distinct ring across the top. "Get inside the cage, Brody!"

"What?!"

"Just trust me---and hope that Tesla's electrical devices still work!"

MacGyver had only a few seconds---he did a quick cursory check of the equipment. It seemed to be in working order...probably, it was deemed too large to be moved when Tesla's operation moved out, and with the tunnel sealed, it had been left intact and away free of any disturbances.

He heard footsteps running closer---Trish and the recovered stranger weren't far behind.

MacGyver darted into the cage with Brody and shut the metal door behind him.

"Is this really a good idea?"

"We're about to find out!"

Trish and the stranger dashed into the large room, their steps echoing, the wild movements of the flashlight beams creating bizarre shadows that stretched and twisted across the walls.

"You're out of escapes, Mr. MacGyver," Trish said. "Give us the book."

"Tell me why you want it."

"We're going to sell it, obviously," the stranger said, curling his lips. "From the minute I found out about those tunnels, I knew that something valuable would be left behind down here. And collectors will pay just about anything for a rare find like that."

MacGyver stared them down, backing up towards the rear wall of the cage. "Tesla didn't invent things for money. He created them to help people."

"Tesla was an idealist, MacGyver," Trish said. "Just like you. But you were right: people like him are hard to find."

She stepped forward and reached out to open the cage door.

That's when MacGyver grabbed the switch on the wall behind him and flipped.

The reaction was, if not instantaneous, impressive. With a distinctive crack and hum of electricity, the wires along the walls came to life, nourishing the metal tower in the center of the room...

A Tesla coil.

The machine thrummed and popped into life, the crackle of electrical power growing louder as the spark gap activated and the Tesla coil sent bolts of racing violet-white lightning across the room, brilliant and blinding in the darkness. The surges of electricity danced harmlessly across the metal mesh that Brody and MacGyver were encased in.

But Trish and the stranger...

When the two of them collapsed to the ground, MacGyver immediately turned the switch off, and as soon as it came, the man-made lightning dissolved away. The Tesla coil hummed into silence once again.

"Get to the nearest telephone and call an ambulance," MacGyver commanded.

As Brody took off, racing out the door, MacGyver checked on the unwitting people he'd just electrocuted. Their pulses seemed fine and they seemed to be doing well for people who had just been given a nasty shock, but they would likely remain unconscious for quite a while.

As he got to his feet, he looked back at the colossal Faraday cage that had saved him and Brody, and he smiled. "Thanks, Tesla."

As he began to turn away, he shuddered slightly... He had a distinct feeling that he was being watched.

"As it turns out, Trish had been collaborating with this man all along, and that's where she got the blueprints in the first place," MacGyver explained to Pete, sitting in one of the chairs in Pete's office. "He used to work for the photography company that owned Wardencllyffe, so he knew the building well enough to get around inconspicuously even without the tunnels. He was sure they were down there, so during the restoration, he and Trish kept looking for a way in, but they couldn't do it until I figured out the remote switch."

"And what happened to the journal?" Pete asked.

"John and I took it to a local university for authentication, and they verified it as Tesla's real writings. Several different research teams are going to come to study his projects, maybe even build a few prototypes. Tesla's final inventions will finally be shared with the world, just the way he wanted! Isn't it great?"

Pete shook his head. "I don't believe this."

MacGyver frowned. "What? What is it?"

"Every time I send you on some kind of vacation or hobby project, you always end up finding an adventure! Every single time!"

MacGyver grinned. "Does that mean you want to come with me next time?"

"I think I'd rather take my chances with the Tesla coil," Pete said dryly. "But don't you think it was an awfully lucky coincidence that you found that room, after all these years? And that the electricity still worked? Don't get me wrong, MacGyver, you've always made your own luck, but still..."

"You know, now that you mention it, I kept getting the feeling that I wasn't ever alone down there," MacGyver commented. "But that's impossible."

"Because there's no such thing as ghosts?"

"Right. No such thing as ghosts..."

The End