

Keiko finished counting the money. She set the final stack of bills down on top of the large pile of cash that was mounded on Marty's bed. Ken paced anxiously in the middle of the room while Marty sat quietly in the computer chair, watching. Keiko had a serious expression on her face.

“Well?” Ken asked.

She swallowed.

“Seventy two thousand.”

“Whoowhee!” Ken shouted at the top of his lungs.

As he started doing an odd dance in the middle of the room Keiko looked over at Marty. He hadn't moved at all and was still staring at the pile of money.

“Marty?” she asked.

He finally broke his gaze from it and looked at her.

“What are you thinking?” Keiko asked quietly.

“It’s more than I thought. It seemed like twenty, maybe thirty thousand, at the most. But seventy two?”

“I could count it again, if you want.”

Marty shook his head.

“No, it’s okay.”

He stood up and started slowly pacing. He pushed past Ken, who then jumped on top of his bed to continue his dance.

“What do you want to do?” Keiko asked.

“The only reason we took it was to pay the man to identify the spell,” Marty answered.

“So we spend it!” Ken shouted.

“Or,” Keiko said, pausing to give Ken a dirty look, “we could save it. This could pay tuitions, all sorts of things.”

Ken gripped his chest dramatically.

“Save it?” he yelled out.

He then collapsed on his bed and convulsed. Keiko rolled her eyes and then looked back to Marty. He was deep in thought so she started putting the money back into the safe. That was the one thing they had bought so far, to store the money and the scrolls they had taken from Sloan’s

vault. She saw the healing scroll in there, the one they now knew could cure Marty, and she was careful not to disturb it as she stacked the bills in.

“Come on guys, this money belonged to a terrible, horrible, awful man who probably was going to do terrible, horrible, awful things with it. What’s wrong with us having a little fun with it?” Ken asked.

Keiko shot him another look.

“It’s not your decision to make Kenshin.”

“No, he’s right,” Marty said as he stopped pacing.

“He is?”

“I am?”

Marty walked across the small room towards the safe. Keiko leaned out of his way as he reached in and grabbed two large stacks of bills.

“Life is short and every moment is a gift,” Marty said. “I know this better than most people.”

He paused before standing up. He was leaned down across Keiko and they were very close. He stared deep into her eyes and she into his and for a moment time stopped. Marty then smiled and stood up.

“So why the hell shouldn’t we enjoy it a little bit?” Marty asked as he tossed the money to Ken.

Ken caught it and counted it quickly. It was ten thousand dollars. His eyes went wide and he smiled bigger than Marty had ever seen a person smile. He shoved the money into his pocket and then ran across the room. He grabbed Marty in a big hug and kissed him on the cheek. He then reached down and gave his sister a weak high five. Keiko scoffed, but couldn't help but smile at her brother as he turned and ran out of the room.

“This is the best day ever!” Ken shouted as he sprinted down the hallway.

Marty and Keiko laughed. After they stopped he reached into the safe and pulled out another ten thousand. He held it towards

Keiko but she shook her head and scooted away.

“No, I couldn’t.”

“What? Why not?”

She stood up.

“Spend it on yourself, Marty. You deserve it.”

He looked at the money and then back at her. She was gathering her things.

“I’m horrible at shopping,” Marty said.

Keiko turned towards him.

“You know this, you’ve been with me hundreds of times. I’m horrible at it.”

She laughed, remembering some of their disastrous shopping trips together.

“You really are horrible at it.”

“So?” Marty said, taking a step towards her.

She wasn't sure what was happening. This was as happy and alive as she had seen him since she had arrived at BSU.

“So what?” she asked suspiciously.

“Come with me. Let's go blow a bad guy's money,” Marty said, still smiling.

She looked at the money, then back at him. He had taken another step and was now just a foot or so away from her. She smiled as she looked at him. He was reminding her of how he used to be, before the cancer. There was something about it that both excited her and made her want to

cry. Finally she shook her head and took a step away.

“I can’t. I’ve got something else I need to...”

“Blow it off,” Marty interrupted.

Keiko sighed.

“I don’t know, I should...”

“Blow. It. Off.”

They stared at each other for a long moment. He was smiling at her like he used to. Anytime he wanted something he’d use that crooked, half smile on her. He knew she couldn’t resist it, nor did she ever truly want to. Finally she smiled back. She reached into her pocket and pulled out her

cell phone. She dialed a number and as it started to ring she turned away from Marty.

“Hey, it’s me. I’m not going to be by until later, so don’t expect me until tonight.”

She hung up the phone and slid it back into her pocket. She turned around to find Marty still smiling.

“Alright,” he said.

He turned back around and finished stacking the rest of the money into the safe. Before he closed it he picked up the healing scroll and held it in his hands.

“You could use it now, you know,” Keiko said.

This was something she had been thinking about since they had confirmed the scroll's purpose the day before.

“Forget Blake and forget Sloan. You could cast that scroll here and now and get rid of the cancer.”

Marty stared down at it long and hard, giving serious consideration to her words. After several minutes he shook his head and placed it back in the safe.

“No. I don't owe Blake anything, but he's right about one thing. Sloan has to be stopped. If I cure my cancer now my ability to cast unlimited spells is gone. And if I'm going to have any chance of stopping Sloan I'm going to need every spell I've got.”

She didn't press the issue further and the two of them left the frat house. As they took a cab to the nearby mall things were tense. This was the first time the two of them had done anything alone since being reunited just a few short weeks ago. By the time they arrived at the mall she was feeling like agreeing to come had been a mistake. But as they started to shop things loosened up slightly. Keiko convinced Marty to buy a new pair of shoes and he picked out a shirt for her and bought it. At the next store she helped him pick out a new watch and she found a new purse.

Four stores later she realized that she had hooked her arm through his as they

walked down the aisle. She wasn't even sure when she had done it, it had just sort of happened. They laughed over a silly ad and she helped him pick out some new clothes.

Their next stop was the outdoor market on the edge of town. The weather was cold, but not too cold, and they talked over hot chocolates. Marty bought one for everyone who walked past and left the woman working the stand a hundred dollar tip. By the time they left the market it was as if they were back home in Florida, still engaged and in love. They were holding hands and both of them were smiling and the sky was blue and everything was wonderful.

They made their way a few blocks to a park. At this time in the afternoon it was completely empty and they took up residence on a bench. Keiko sat as close to him as she could. She rested her head on his shoulder and he wrapped his arm around her and they stayed that way for a long time.

Finally, Marty spoke. His voice was quiet and full of emotion.

“You asked me something a while ago and you deserve an answer about it.”

He paused and took a deep breath, gathering his courage.

“The reason I left Florida was...”

“Don’t,” Keiko interrupted.

She pulled her head off of his shoulder and looked up at him. He was confused.

“This has been the most perfect afternoon of my life. Let’s just let it be what it was and leave the heavy conversations for another time.”

Marty studied her face. She was achingly beautiful and he slowly smiled as he took her in. She leaned up, hesitated for a moment just inches away from his lips, then leaned the rest of the way. The kiss was awkward at first, neither of them knowing quite what the other thought of it. It grew in intensity, slowly at first, then more quickly. They kissed passionately, with their eyes closed, until finally Keiko

pulled back an inch, keeping their faces close together. She let out a heavy breath, overcome with the rush of emotions.

Marty slowly opened his eyes. His heart was pounding and he tingled all over. His face was hot and he too let out a breath, trying to calm himself. Keiko pulled further away. They smiled at each other, then laughed, unsure of what else to do. She straightened her shirt and then ran her hand through her hair. After another long silent moment she finally spoke.

“I think I’m going to head back to campus.”

Marty was staring at her hard, trying to gauge what she was feeling right now,

wondering if she regretted what they had just done. She started gathering her many bags of things he had bought her. Marty stood up and fished some money out of his pocket.

“Here’s some money for a cab so you don’t have to carry all of that.”

Keiko took it but when she realized how much he had given her she shook her head.

“This is eight hundred dollars.”

He smiled.

“Okay, so it’s money for a bunch of cabs.”

She laughed, then looked at him intensely. This was the man she had fallen in love with, agreed to marry, dreamed of

spending her life with. She feared what would happen if she stayed around him any longer, so she stepped forward and kissed him on the cheek quickly.

“Thank you for today. It was perfect.”

He nodded and stepped aside as she walked by.

“I agree,” he said.

After he watched her get into a cab and drive away he collapsed back onto the bench. His fingers went to his lips as he replayed the kiss in his mind. He laid his head back and looked up into the sky, a smile on his face.

Eventually Marty gathered himself and headed back to the Beta Theta Pi house. He

had several shopping bags with him and despite his best efforts to get rid of it still had a stupid grin on his face. He opened the door to Ken's room to find Ken sitting on his bed among a pile of newly purchased comic books.

“Best day ever,” Ken said without looking up from the comic he was currently reading.

Marty smiled as he walked over to his bed.

“Agreed.”

He busied himself with putting up his new purchases and when he was done he sat down on the edge of his bed, thinking about Keiko.

“I bought you something,” Ken said.

“Oh yeah?”

“You know how when you use your teleport spell it takes you to that terrible little area with no payphones or cell reception?” Ken asked.

“Yeah, all too well.”

“There’s a rock there, it was right by us when we teleported in. Next time you use the spell look under it. I bought some supplies that could come in handy and buried them under the rock.”

“You went all the way out there and buried them?” Marty asked.

“Of course man, what are friends for?” Ken answered. “Besides, it sucked last time

we were out there. I put in some snacks and stuff too, just in case I'm with you next time you teleport.”

Marty laughed.

“Thanks Ken.”

The phone rang and Ken groaned loudly.

“You get that. Someone keeps calling and asking for you and when I say you're not here they hang up.”

Marty walked over to the phone and picked it up.

“Hello, this is Marty.”

“It's about time you got back home.”

His blood ran cold. It was Sloan Scott on the line. Marty looked at the door

quickly, wondering if someone was about to come rushing in.

“There’s someone here who wants to speak with you,” Sloan said.

Marty could hear struggling in the background and then voices.

“Say hello to your little brother,” Sloan said.

Sweat started running down his forehead and his heart was pounding.

“Marty?” it was Tammy. “I don’t know what’s happening. These people are holding me and I don’t know what they want or why they’re calling you, please get help!”

He could tell that she had been crying.

“You stole from me and now I stole from you,” Sloan said before hanging up the phone.

Marty dropped the receiver and stumbled backwards. He felt like he was going to fall over.

“Marty? What is it?” Ken asked.

“They took Tammy. Sloan has my sister.”



Created and Written by A.C. Hall

EPISODE TEN

αναζήτηση
(PURSUIT)

“SLOAN!” Marty screamed.

He was flying up the stairs of Sloan’s building, taking them two at a time. Ken and Blake were behind him, trying to keep up as he ran ahead of them. Marty stopped in front of the heavy steel door. He held his hand up.

“Aerios!”

He concentrated as hard as he could, sending a massive force of wind against the door. It stood unchanged for a moment, then began to bend inward. Marty stepped

closer and continued to cast and a moment later the steel door ripped from the wall and flew into the room beyond.

Marty rushed inside, his hand raised and ready to cast. Blake and Ken swept in behind him but soon all three of them stopped. The place was empty.

“Over here,” Ken said.

They turned and saw that he had approached a table. There was a small laptop on it with a piece of paper taped to the screen that said “push play”. Marty swallowed hard as he reached down and pressed a key on the computer. It came on and there was a video on the screen. He

pushed the play button and watched anxiously as Sloan's face appeared.

“Hello Marty. If you're watching this then we've already talked and you already know that I have your sister. But in case you didn't believe me...”

The camera panned to the side and there sat Tammy. She was bound and gagged and had a blindfold over her eyes. Marty clenched his fists as he watched. After a moment the camera returned to Sloan.

“As you can see, she is unharmed. Honestly Marty, you only have yourself to blame for this. You forced my hand here.”

He paused and that murderous smile spread across his lips.

“But this doesn’t have to end badly. You do one simple thing for me and your sister will be returned to you. I’m sure that by now that rat Blake has told you my plan to hit the city of Olympia. By midnight tonight it will be nothing more than a flattened graveyard and I’ll be well on my way to cashing a billion dollar check courtesy of the American government. So what I need from you is simple.”

The camera zoomed in on his face.

“Stay out of Olympia. Stay in Longview. If you do this and don’t interfere with me in any way you’ll be hugging your sister by 12:05. But if you choose to come after me...”

He paused and walked over to Tammy. He grabbed a handful of her hair and wrenched her head backwards. He then bent down and nuzzled the top of her head.

“Things are going to go very badly for your dear sister.”

The video ended. Marty grabbed the edge of the table and flipped it over, sending the laptop flying across the room. He stood, taking deep breaths, trying to keep some sort of control of his anger.

“What did you do that pissed him off so bad?” Blake asked.

When Marty didn't answer Blake stepped closer.

“You provoked him and now he’s moving forward with the plan. What the hell did you do Marty?”

Marty still didn’t answer and Blake grabbed his shoulder and pulled on it hard, trying to turn him around.

“I’m talking to you!” Blake yelled.

“Get your hands off of him!” Ken shouted.

Ken stepped forward and punched Blake hard in the side of the head. Blake stumbled away, almost falling down. He clutched his head as he regained his balance.

“What’s your problem?” Blake yelled.

“Sloan’s probably halfway to Olympia already because you and your friend decided

to get heroic and you ended up pissing him off!”

Blake stalked back towards Marty.

“You listen to me. We’re going after Sloan right now,” Blake said.

Marty shook his head.

“I’m not going anywhere until we find my sister.”

“You will if you want the healing scroll. You either come with me this second to go after Sloan or our deal is off, you’ll get no healing scroll and you’ll die of your brain cancer. It’s your choice.”

Even though he had secretly been looking forward to this moment Marty hadn’t expected to enjoy it as much as he

was. He smiled and stepped forward, getting right in Blake's face.

“I've already got the scroll, genius, so you're not the one calling the shots anymore.”

Blake took a step back, a confused look on his face.

“You're lying.”

“Why do you think Sloan's so pissed? Ken and I broke into the vault and took the scroll. So if you want to go fight Sloan right now, be my guest, but if you want my help then you're going to do exactly what I say exactly when I say to do it.”

His words hung in the air over Blake. The young man stared at Marty with hatred,

wanting to strangle him, but finally he relented. He knew he couldn't beat Sloan without help.

“What do we do?” he asked quietly.

Marty started pacing.

“Okay, Sloan said Tammy would be back by 12:05, so that must mean that he didn't take her with him. If she's still around then we can find where she's being held and free her. You two go to the motel where she was staying, see if anyone saw anything suspicious or anyone skulking around Tammy's room. I'm going to The Seasoned Reader to see if anyone's been in there asking about me or my sister. Meet

back at Ken's room in the frat house in an hour.”

Without waiting for any response, Marty rushed out of the room. He made his way down the stairs and out onto the street. His mind was churning and he found himself running down the sidewalk towards The Seasoned Reader. His stomach ached and he had a pounding headache. Tammy was only in town because of him, because she cared about him and was worried about him. Knowing that she was in danger because of him made Marty want to vomit.

He had the money to take a cab but never stopped running. The cold wind against his face felt good and by the time he

reached the bookstore he felt calmer and more focused. He caught his breath outside, hoping desperately that someone other than Annabel was working today. As he stepped through the door the first thing he saw was her, standing at the counter looking bored. Their eyes met and she immediately stood up straight.

“Oh look, it’s my friend, Marty.”

She emphasized the word friend and her voice was flat and emotionless. He hated seeing her hurt like this and even though he really wanted to just turn around and leave he knew he couldn’t. Marty approached the counter.

“There’s something I need to ask you,” he said.

“Just don’t, okay Marty?”

She started to walk away but she whirled back around quickly.

“I like you a lot. And you like me, I know that you do. And yet you just insist on being this aloof jerk and backing off right as we were starting something. It doesn’t make sense.”

He hadn’t come here to discuss the state of their relationship and he struggled to come up with something to say to make her feel better.

“My life has become very complicated lately,” Marty said finally.

“Are you talking about Keiko?” Annabel asked.

Marty took a step back.

“What? She and I are just...”

He trailed off and thought about the kiss from earlier, realizing that he wasn’t actually positive what they were.

“Friends from back home?” Annabel offered. “I know there’s more to it than that.”

He had no idea who she could’ve talked to about all of this but clearly she knew something. Marty shook his head and walked all the way up to the counter. He reached across and took Annabel’s hand in his.

“Listen to me. We can sit down and have this conversation soon. There are things about my life that I haven’t let you in on and maybe if you knew more about them then you would understand, but right now something more important than me and you is going on and I need your help.”

His serious, straightforward manner startled her.

“What’s going on, Marty?”

“Someone has kidnapped my sister. Her name is Tammy Schultz and she’s in town visiting and someone has taken her.”

“Oh my God,” Annabel said.

“I need to know if anyone was in here recently asking about me or my family or

where I might be staying or anything like that. Anyone at all who made you feel uncomfortable. Take your time and think about it.”

Annabel shuddered and then nodded.

“There was this one guy, a few nights ago. He came in right as I was closing and said he was looking for you, said he was a friend of a friend. He asked a bunch of questions about your family and where you were living now and stuff.”

“What did he look like?”

She gave him a description and Marty knew exactly who it was. Overweight, dirty stained clothes, going bald in a hurry, it was

the individual they referred to as Rain Man, one of Sloan's henchmen.

“Thank you Annabel, that's very helpful.”

Marty released her hand and rushed towards the door.

“Marty?” she called out.

He turned around.

“Be careful.”

He nodded and then left.

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“So that confirms it, Rain Man must be the one that has her,” Marty said.

They were back in Ken’s room. Ken and Blake received similar descriptions of a man that had been hanging around the motel. Blake was nervously looking at his watch and was about to speak when there was a knock on the door. Ken nervously opened it and Keiko stepped inside.

“What are you doing here, Keiko?”
Marty asked.

“Ken called and told me what was going on.”

“We’re running out of time here,” Blake said loudly. “If we don’t get on the road to

Olympia soon we're not going to make it in time to stop Sloan.”

Marty whirled on him, anger flashing across his face.

“I won't leave my sister in the hands of some psycho! She'll die if I don't stay here and save her!”

“And hundreds of thousands of innocent people will die if you do!” Blake shouted back. “It's not even a choice Marty, one life is nothing compared to hundreds of thousands.”

Marty grabbed him by the front of his shirt.

“I won't leave her to die!” he screamed.

Ken had remained silent through the entire conversation. He was sitting on the side of his bed, completely still, staring down at the floor. He spoke now, his voice quiet yet filling the entire room.

“I’ll save her.”

Marty released Blake’s shirt and turned towards his friend.

“I’ll do it. I’ll save Tammy while you go after Sloan,” Ken repeated quietly.

There was a heavy weight to his words, an acknowledgement of the seriousness of what he was offering and the danger of the situation.

“I can’t ask you to take that on alone, Ken, I just can’t,” Marty said.

“He won’t be alone. I’ll help him,”
Keiko said.

Everyone turned toward her. Marty stepped closer and shook his head.

“No, no way, it’s too dangerous.”

“Tammy is like my sister. I want to help save her.”

Marty looked at Ken, expecting him to speak up, but he remained still and silent. Marty turned back towards Keiko.

“These aren’t just random bullies we’re talking about here. This is a cold blooded murderer.”

Finally Ken stood up. He walked across the room and put his arm around his sister.

He then fixed Marty with a deadly serious stare.

“You can count on us. We’ll get Tammy, you get Sloan.”

Marty stared at both of them for a long moment. They stood together, unwavering, and finally he nodded.

“Okay, good, that’s solved,” Blake said quickly. “Rain Man spends almost all of his free time at The Hellhole, it’s a bar on the edge of town. I guarantee that someone there will be able to tell you how to find him.”

Ken nodded. Everyone stood, the tension in the room heavy. Finally Marty

started gathering his things, realizing that there wasn't anything left to say.

“You could die tonight,” Keiko blurted out.

Everyone stopped and looked at her. She was slightly embarrassed but she kept her eyes on Marty. He nodded, acknowledging the truth of her words.

“Maybe we should talk before you go,” Keiko said.

Again Marty nodded.

“We'll give you two a minute,” Ken said, grabbing Blake by the arm and leading him out of the room.

Once they were alone Marty and Keiko stood and stared at one another. Neither knew where to start.

“Should we sit down?” Marty asked, gesturing to his bed.

Keiko nodded and they both sat on the edge of the bed. She stared down at the floor.

“In the park earlier today you started to tell me something and I stopped you,” she said.

Marty nodded.

“Will you tell it to me now?” she asked quietly.

He cleared his throat before beginning.

“The reason I left Florida was to give you a chance at a full life. The first time I was sick, it put everything on hold. Our lives just stopped. You were so loving and so supportive, you carried me through and you helped me fight. But that’s all we did, for almost two years we just existed in hospital rooms and doctors appointments and treatment facilities.”

He paused for a long moment to gather himself.

“When I found out the cancer was back I knew what I had to do. I had to leave.”

A tear ran down Keiko’s cheek.

“We were about to get married,” she said.

“That’s why I left. You were going to be a widow by the age of 25. Our marriage would’ve been three or four years of me getting sicker and sicker and you having to again put your life on hold and take care of me. You wanted kids and a house and all I could give you was a hospital bed and the curse of watching me die a slow, painful death. I wasn’t going to do that to you.”

She looked over at him, her eyes red and filled with tears.

“That wasn’t your choice to make!” she cried. “You stole it away from me, you stole my ability to decide what I wanted for my life.”

She had to pause as she started to sob. After a moment she was able to continue.

“All I wanted since I was twelve years old was to be your wife. Four years or forty, it didn’t matter, we would’ve made the most of our time and we would’ve been together. How could you steal that from me? How could you leave without even saying goodbye?”

Keiko broke down into a fit of crying. Marty just sat beside her and stared down at the floor, letting her words flood through him. He had spent two years of his short remaining life exiled away from the person he loved most in the world in order to try not to hurt them. As he sat just inches away

from the proof that his actions had caused the exact opposite to happen and in fact had hurt her deeply made him feel worse than he had ever felt in his entire life.

“I loved you more than anything else in this world, Keiko. I still love you. I thought by leaving I was protecting you and helping you have a better life.”

She cried for a while longer and then finally was able to pull herself together. She wiped her eyes and spoke.

“I don’t know if I can ever forgive you for leaving me like that, Marty. I don’t think you’ll ever understand how badly you hurt me.”

He nodded solemnly.

“I understand,” he said. “I’m sorry.”

She stood up and again wiped her eyes. She looked over at the safe and then turned towards Marty.

“If everything goes okay tonight then soon you’ll use that scroll and you’ll be cured. That could complicate things between us, especially after...”

“This morning,” Marty said, completing her sentence.

She paused for a moment and both of them let the memory of the kiss replay in their minds.

“I’m with Brian now. I’m glad you’re going to be well and I want to be a part of your life but I’m not going to leave him. He

left Florida too, Marty, but the difference is he asked me to go with him. He didn't just disappear. And I'm not going to abandon him just because you're all of a sudden well."

He was surprised by her words. After the way she had acted around Annabel and then this morning he had thought there was more there, a glimmer of hope for the two of them. He stared at her for a long moment before responding.

"I understand."

Marty stood up and she stepped towards him. They embraced and he held her close, hugging her tightly. After a moment she stepped back. He was looking downwards

and noticed that the top two buttons on her shirt were unbuttoned. There, resting against her chest, was a necklace. He hadn't noticed it before but as he looked upon it he recognized something. On the necklace was the ring he had given her when he proposed. His spirits rose slightly as he studied it and he couldn't help but think that it was a sign that she wasn't as done with him as she had just said.

She didn't realize he had seen it and he looked up at her as she stepped away.

“Are you okay?” Marty asked.

“Yes. Go get Sloan. We'll save your sister.”

He nodded and the two of them left the room together.

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“Keep your eye out for any suspicious cars following us,” Blake said.

They were just pulling onto Interstate 5, heading north towards Olympia. Blake was driving and Marty was sitting in the passenger seat, his head resting against the window.

“There’s a good chance Sloan had someone watching us to make sure we didn’t leave town. If that’s the case then

they'll try to stop us for sure," Blake continued.

Marty muttered his understanding but continued to stare out the window. His mind was racing as he thought about Keiko and the things she had said, about the ring she secretly wore around her neck. His ring. He also thought about Annabel. Part of him had felt guilty for wanting to be with her, but if Keiko was going to stay with Brian then maybe he should pursue someone else. Like Keiko had said, if all went well tonight then he'd soon be cured. The idea of a full, long life was one he rarely allowed himself to entertain. But now he thought about it, daydreaming about how it would be.

“Have you been watching that black van?” Blake asked.

Marty sat up. He had been completely zoned out and was surprised when he looked at the clock and realized that twenty minutes had passed. They were still on the Interstate, traveling across a low bridge that went over a small creek.

“The van, Marty, have you been watching it?”

He turned around. It was coming up on them fast.

“No, I haven’t. Wait, there’s someone hanging out the window.”

A man had his upper body out the passenger window. He pointed his hand

towards the car that Blake and Marty were in. For a moment Marty was confused, but then he realized what was happening.

“Spell!”

His warning came too late. A fireball hit the back of their car, sending it careening wildly to the right. It crashed through the guardrail and sailed through the air towards the creek below. The car slowly did a forward flip before slamming upside down into the bank of the creek. There was barely any water in the creek and the car slid down until it settled upside down against the dry bottom.

The impact had been hellish and Marty was struggling to stay conscious. His head

was bleeding and his vision was blurry. He could barely move and he hurt all over.

Blake was unconscious, his arms hanging limply above his head as they sat suspended upside down, still belted to their seats.

Marty tried to undo his seatbelt and finally was able to get it. He fell awkwardly onto his head on the top of the car. He groaned as he tried to untangle himself.

Marty heard his car door open and looked over just as someone reached in and grabbed him roughly by the hair. They pulled hard, dragging him out by it. He cried out but was too weak and dazed to fight back. The person dragged him away from the car, out into the creek bed. They

finally stopped and looked down at him. Even though his vision was still blurry, Marty recognized the man. It was the man Marty had fought on the football field. He wore the same black jacket with flames on the sleeves.

“So predictable,” the man said. “Sloan knew you wouldn’t stay in Longview.”

There was another man coming down into the creek bed now. He wore a black suit and had a pistol in his hand. He glanced over at Marty and then started to make his way towards Blake in the car.

“I just want you to know one thing before you die. No matter what happened tonight, Sloan already gave the order to have

your sister killed at midnight. So don't you worry, you won't be lonely in the afterlife. She'll be joining you real soon," the man said with an evil smirk.

He then took a step back and extended his hand. A fireball began to form there and it was aimed right for Marty's head.