In fiction, a **MacGuffin** (sometimes **McGuffin** or **maguffin**) is a plot device in the form of some goal, desired object, or other motivator that the protagonist pursues, often with little or no narrative explanation. The specific nature of a MacGuffin is typically unimportant to the overall plot. The most common type of MacGuffin is an object, place or person; other types include money, victory, glory, survival, power, love, or other things unexplained.

The MacGuffin technique is common in films, especially thrillers. Usually the MacGuffin is the central focus of the film in the first act, and thereafter declines in importance. It may re-appear at the climax of the story, but sometimes is actually forgotten by the end of the story. Multiple MacGuffins are sometimes derisively identified as **plot coupons**.