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**Rating:** PG-13

**Disclaimer:** We own nothing; we only borrow

**Title:** An European Paperchase

**Chapter two:** Afternoon Tea

The flight was the longest Sara had ever been on, but having seats in first class made it significantly more bearable. Grissom made an unmitigated amount of trips to the airplane toilet and drank his weight in malt whisky, to apparently no effect.

Sara got the message loud and clear—he was not happy about this.

It was obviously no time to make jokes about the joining the mile high club, but being the nervous wreck that she was, Sara cracked a few anyway. Grissom response had been somewhere between intense embarrassment and general disdain.

They passed the rest of their journey half-hearted discussing their last case, a run of the mill robbery, and feigning sleep.

“We will shortly be touching down at Gatwick Airport. Today’s forecast predicts light showers, a strong North-easterly wind and lows of about 4 degrees centigrade.”

It was late November in London. Sara silently thanked God for the bulky jumpers she had wisely brought along. The plane emptied and they headed towards luggage pick-up, but thirty minutes passed with no success.

“Excuse me. Are you Mr. Grissom, and Miss. Sidle?” A small Indian man requested, an official looking tag hung loosely around his neck.

They nodded, stunned at his recognition.

“I have these for you,” he said, handing them a familiar looking envelope. “If you’d like to proceed through customs and out of the arrivals gate, your driver awaits you.”

“What about our stuff?” Sara exclaimed.

“I assure you, Miss. Sidle. All your needs will be adequately taken care of, please follow me.”

Twenty minutes later, sat in the back of a classic Rolls Royce, driven by a chauffeur named, ‘Steed’, they opened their third message.

Grissom and Sara,

I hope you’re both fond of afternoon tea because they love it here.

I'm glad you landed safely and don't worry about your luggage; alternative attire will be provided.

Want to be treated like royalty?

Your every wish is my command.

They shared a glance of extreme skepticism before settling back down into their seats. Sara noted Grissom's frown and tried to forget his grumpiness by watching the beautiful scenery beyond her window. Before long, Steed drew the car up in front of an old, elegant looking building in the midst of the city.

A man in black opened their door and greeted them with a curt nod before helping Sara out of the Rolls. She shot him a curious look, but tried her best to remain polite. Grissom on the other hand was less worried about social etiquette; he stared at the man as if he were a lab specimen—trying to fathom him out.

“Ms. Sidle and Mr. Grissom, welcome to London. I am William your butler and this is 13 half-moon street; an address which is synonymous with the best hotel our humble country has to offer. I have no doubt whatsoever that your stay will be extremely enjoyable.”

After the stress of the last twenty-four hours they followed this towering and confident man inside like willing sheep. On the way to their suite, they were treated to an in-depth account of the hotel's prestigious history, dating from 1851.

“Our central location makes all areas of interest easily accessible: Green Park, Buckingham Palace, Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus and Covent Garden. That's just to name but a few. Now, here we are. All of our rooms are uniquely decorated to suit our vast range of clientele, and I hope everything will be to your satisfaction.”

The suite turned out to be vast, but full of old-fashioned charm. Sara took an astonished look around, trying to get a good grasp on the luxury surrounding her. The whole floor was covered with a thick, soft green carpet and the expensive wallpaper was patterned with petals that jumped off the walls at her—making her breath catch in her throat.

The sight of two large beds, one full of gilded cushions, the other with a masculine blue spread, finally allowed her to smile.

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“Maybe it's Sydney,” Greg squealed, “or Tibet! How cool are monks?”

Nick groaned and once again pleaded with Warrick to trade seats. He just grinned and continued to look studiously out of the window, until a familiar blonde slinked into the aisle seat beside him.

“Sorry, Nicky,” Catherine purred. “Green eyes over here is sitting with me! Better buckle up boys, it's time for take off.”

“What about Sara?” Greg questioned.

“And Grissom?” Nick added.

A light went off inside of Warrick’s head and his smile grew.

“I don’t think we have to worry about them.”

“That sucks,” Greg whimpered sadly. “I was hoping to catch a glimpse of sexy Sidle in her bikini!”

“Don’t worry, Greggo,” Catherine simpered. “She won’t be needing that in Europe.”

“Wow!” Nick exclaimed. “Are we going there... you know how I feel about Italian Girls!”

“Easy,” Catherine throatily warned. “We’re headed somewhere even better. There’ll be less romantic tension and even more fun!”

“Where’s that?” Warrick asked, and his brows rose in anticipation.

“How do you feel about the Caribbean?” She coyly suggested.

“Yeah, mon!” Greg yelped, causing Nick to resume groaning.

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Grissom suggested that they shower and head out to make the most of the remaining daylight. Jet lag would only be worse if they went to sleep straight away. Sara agreed and blushed profusely at his stuttered offer to let her wash first; before his seamless exit from the room, William had informed them that new clothes were waiting in their wardrobes.

Sara emerged in a fluffy, white bath robe as Grissom was nervously fingering a wine coloured fleece.

“Do you like that?” she murmured, startling him significantly.

He shrugged and quickly dropped the offending material.

“I think your new threads are on the other side,” Sara smirked. “Unless there’s something you want to tell me about you and women’s clothing.”

Grissom gulped and then glared, making his way to the bathroom as fast as his legs would carry him, stopping only to glance over Sara’s slender finger as she turned towards the abandoned top. He emerged twenty minutes later to find her dressed in the fleece he had so admired, well cut black trousers and boots—his desire to stroke the soft material, now increased by tenfold.

“Look at this pile of money! How are we going to spend it all?” she exclaimed, pointing to a wad of notes on a nearby dressing table.

But Gil’s eyes were still elsewhere, scouting out the sleek terrain of her feline form.