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Rating: PG 13

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Title: Pictures of you

Chapter seven: The Passing

Five years later

Be strong. That was what she had to do. Even though everything inside of her screamed out the contrary. But this wasn't just about her. It was about Grissom...and Emily. They needed her now.

It had been five years since the day they had been told about his illness. Time since then had passed in a hazy mixture of coping with its on going development and cherishing what few happy days of normality its progression allowed.

There were times when she was convinced that all she needed was a pinch. Something to help her awaken from the nightmare that stifled her and slowly drained the happy light that had shone over their first decade, as man and wife.

Daily she wondered how long it would be before the memory of their life together, had been erased from her husband's mind. For the last year, it had been nothing but work. She would go from solving crimes to caring for Gil to consoling Emily.

It was like standing on the brink of disaster with nothing to do but solemnly await its arrival. She had learnt that there was a price to everything- but would she really have to pay for all her former joys with the death of the only man she ever loved?

'It's sad, isn't it, doc? Guys like us. Couple of middle- aged men who've allowed their work to consume their lives.' Grissom spoke slowly, picking his words with care.' The only time we ever touch other people is when we're wearing our latex gloves.'

From behind her transparent barrier, Sara had watched in awe.' We wake up one day and realize that for fifty years we haven't really lived at all.' As she listened to him speak, his words wound a tight pain inside of her chest.

'But then, all of a sudden we get a second chance.' She held her breath, willing him to continue. 'Somebody young and beautiful shows up. Somebody we could care about.' That was when she gasped aloud in the silent interrogation room. That was the moment she stopped listening and decided she'd heard enough.

His voice had been defeated but he spoke of possibility. Sara knew now that she would make it come true, even if she had to turn him against himself, so that he could finally acknowledge his needs. That he wanted her as much as she craved him.

Gil had been practical from the very start. He had always been less emotional and more logical. After the initial shock of Dr. Matthews diagnosis, he had arranged all their financial details and secured the futures of his wife and daughter.

He was trying to make things easier, trying not to feel like it was all his fault, that his own body hadn't consorted against him. Slowly but surely the changes came. Sara would cling to him at night, while he mumbled in his sleep.

In the darkness she would stroke the lines of his face, while silent tears coursed down her own. He became more and more disorientated, as if the world had begun to close in on him and all he knew had changed. Nothing fit together any more, he was losing himself.

The first time he ever shouted at her, she had fiercely held him down until he stopped. Afterwards she left him in bed, and fell onto the bathroom floor, shaking. Emily's graceful little form surrounded her, as she joined in the lament.

Mother and daughter sat rocking, hoping the movement would push the sadness away before it became to unbearable. But, on days when he thought clearly. They became Sara and Grissom again.

He told her of how he hated the fact that Emily couldn't have a normal childhood, and how a beautifully innocent person was having to pay for their mistakes. She asked him if he regretted his decision to be with her, but he quickly silenced her questioning with a kiss.

The last time they made love, a piece of Sara went missing. She left it with Grissom, knowing it had belonged to him all along. She hoped it would comfort him in the dark and confusing times ahead.

'Since when have you been interested in beauty.' Sara said curtly, mocking him once again. But, a thousand lifetimes wouldn't have prepared her for his reply.

'Since I met you.' Grissom's voice was like lightning inside the hollow space that had made up her heart.

The last photograph Sara added to their album, was one him sleeping. Peaceful and momentarily at rest.