

Title: Freezing

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Rating: PG-13. Just to be on the safe side.

Disclaimer: No money is being made from this. Unfortunately, CSI still doesn't belong to me.

Chapter 1:

Pulling up alongside the police cruiser, Grissom put his Tahoe in park and turned off the engine. The red and blue from various police cars bathed the interior of his car as he picked up his field kit from the backseat. Seeing Brass approach his car, he opened the door and got out to meet up with the police captain.

“Hello, Gil. On your own tonight?” Brass stopped in front of Grissom and dug in his jacket pocket to get out his little notepad.

“Busy night. The others are away on their cases. I paged Sara, she should be here soon.” He looked towards the house and then back at Brass. “What have we got?”

Flipping through his notes, Brass said, “Dead male, 36. Thomas Newman. Slumped on the couch in his living room. His boss called him in missig after he didn't show up for work two days straight. Two officers went to check and found him. And no,” he grinned, “they didn't touch anything other than the front door.”

Grissom nodded as he started walking towards the house. “Okay. Tell Sara to take the perimeter when she gets here, I'll be inside.” With that he walked into the house, barely acknowledging the officer positioned outside.

Putting his field kit on the floor, he looked around the living room slowly. He noticed the tv was on, but other than that everything seemed to be normal. Grissom walked towards the victim and looked at the prone form lying on the couch. He seemed nearly... peaceful. Dressed in casual sweatpants and a t-shirt, half-empty bottle of beer on the coffee table. Checking the kitchen, he found a plate and a fork in the sink, obviously the last dinner. The rest of the food had caked to the plate from being out in the open for some while. Grissom put on gloves and grabbed two evidence bags from his kit. He gingerly placed the plate in one, and the fork into the other. Not having noticed any obvious wounds on the victim that could have been the cause of death, poisoning was beginning to look like a good possibility.

He looked through the kitchen once more and then went back to the victim. Turning on his flashlight, he shone the beam over Thomas Newman's still form, looking for any clues. He puffed out some air in a frustrated gesture, and put the flashlight away. No signs of a violent death. Standing up he looked over the corpse again for a while, not beeing able to shake the feeling of dread. Newman had obviously lived alone. ESPN was on the tv, a baseball game. After a dinner on his own, he'd obviously settled on the couch with a cold beer to enjoy some sports. *'Look familiar, Gil?'*

“Found anything?”

The voice startled him slightly, and he shook his head to clear the unwelcome thoughts. Grissom turned to see Sara standing in the doorway, the flickering lights of the television washing over

her. Had she been standing there, watching him? Grissom didn't like the thought of Sara catching him during an unguarded moment. He cleared his throat.

“Nothing prerogative. No external wounds, no apparent cause of death.” He motioned towards the bagged items on the kitchen counter. “Found an unwashed plate and fork.”

“You’re thinking poisoning?” She went over to the kitchen and lifted one of the bags. “This looks old. How long has he been dead?”

“At least two days. Listen,” he looked over to her, “I thought I’ve told Brass to tell you that you get the outside.”

She put the bag down and looked him in the eyes. “Yeah, like he’d need to.”

Before he could reply anything she turned towards the front door. “Been there, done that. Didn’t find anything that doesn’t belong there. Sorry to disturb you in your... reverie here, but I thought I’d get some work done.”

With that she picked up some fingerprint powder and started dusting the door knob, her shoulders slightly stiff. Grissom watched her jerky movements for a while before getting out his cell phone.

“David? Yes, when will you be here?” He listened for a while, nodding slightly. “Okay, don’t rush it. I’ll wait here.”

Sara had finished dusting the doorknob during the phone call and was in the process of lifting the prints she found on there.

“One or two officers opened the door when they were checking on the victim. Get their prints to compare with yours. Oh, and pick up the evidence before you go back to the lab.” Obviously dismissing her, Grissom took his field kit and walked towards the adjoining room.

Sara banged her fist on the steering wheel. ‘*Who the hell does he think I am? Some damn rookie?*’ Not liking the silence in the car, she turned on the radio and settled for some easy listening music.

It was her own fault. Really, she shouldn’t have gotten her hopes up in the first place. After his page to come work the case with him, she had felt slightly elated. Grissom hadn’t worked a case with her in weeks. ‘*With her, yeah.*’ He couldn’t even stand being in the same room with her for more than a couple of minutes. Be it a crime scene or the lab - let alone talk to her. Only about work related things. And even then, lately it had been more reprimands and off-hand remarks than anything constructive.

Her hopes had evaporated as soon as she had approached Brass. “*Sorry, it’s the perimeter again.*” he had told her with an apologetic shrug. Figures. Then as she had seen Grissom standing over the victim, with a calm, yet sad expression on his face, she had valued the opportunity to study him without him noticing. He hadn’t moved for a long while, oblivious of her presence. But as soon as she’s spoken, his face took on the usual mask and she could feel the tension all over again. And as he’d dismissed her as fast as he possibly could, she had had to rein in her emotions to not give him that satisfaction at least.

'This is getting ridiculous, Sara. You can't work like that.' Huffing in frustration again, she turned into the lab's parking lot. She shut off the engine and picked up her field kit. Shivering slightly from the cold night air that hit her as she opened the car door, she couldn't help but notice her feeling cold on the inside, too. *'Time to make a choice. This can't be healthy.'*

TBC