

Chapter 2:

Hearing Sara leave the house, Grissom let out a heavy sigh before settling his field kit on the floor of the bedroom. One wall was dominated by a huge bookshelf. The bedside table had a little reading lamp, an open book and reading glasses lying below it. Grissom slowly circled the king size bed, noting just one pillow and blanket under the beige comforter. Not wanting to contemplate this fact, he quickly got to work, dusting the bedside table.

“Prime example for a bachelor, huh?” Brass asked as he stepped into the room to look around.

“I guess.” Grissom paused to get out some fingerprint lifting tape. “I don’t think his death was out of free will, though.”

“Oh?” Brass raised an eyebrow. “And you arrive at this conclusion how?”

“No suicide note. Plus, if he was poisoned, it doesn’t look like suicide, either. Sleeping pills would be easier. Not much sense in poisoning your own food, if you want to end your life. Victims don’t usually hedge like that, if they’ve made the decision.” He got up and lifted the comforter off the bed.

“Wow! You’ve given this some thought, huh?” Brass grinned slightly. “Maybe he was in denial. Or the kind of guy that doesn’t take huge steps like this without agonizing for ages. Procrastination, Gil.”

Grissom looked at Brass’ smirk and decided not to comment. Getting out the compact ASL, he swept it over the blanket first, and then the bedsheet. “Nothing.”

Brass turned around from walking out the room, “Lonely guy,” then went into the living room.

‘Yeah. Lonely,’ Grissom thought. Pausing again to look over the room, his gaze settled on the lonely pillow on the bed. He quickly turned his head and picked up his field kit. ‘Don’t dwell on it.’

Music was blaring from the DNA lab as Sara rounded the corner. Seeing Greg Sanders nodding his head to the driving beat, she had to suppress a smile before stepping inside.

“Greg?”

Getting only vigorous nodding as a response, she slowly walked up to him, before saying “Greg!” very close to his ear once more.

“Jesus!” he spun around. “You just took ten years off my life!”

“Yeah, well,” she smiled. “I can say the same about your, err... music.” She drew out the last word with a dubious expression on her face.

Turning down the volume, Greg faced her once more. “How may I please you tonight?”

Quelling the urge to roll her eyes, she held out the two evidence bags.

“You want me to cook you dinner? At my place, and then.....”

“Don’t even go there, Greg.” Sara warned, raising her left hand to ward him off.

Sighing theatrically, Greg took the two bags before huffing. “Work, work, work. Where are the pleasures of my life?”

“It’ll be a pleasure if you could run the samples through the GC/MS, and then hand it over to toxicology.” Not waiting for an answer, Sara turned around and left the lab.

‘Story of my life.’ Greg thought before getting to work.

Grissom hated Las Vegas traffic. He hated it with a passion. This was the second time tonight he was being held up by a traffic accident. Turning off the radio, he took some time to try and relax. For some reason he felt somewhat jittery and couldn’t shake the feeling of cold dread. He shivered slightly. Ever since setting foot into Thomas Newman’s house – ‘the victim’s’, he chided himself – he’d felt a, for him, unusual sadness and nagging feeling regarding the case wash over him. ‘What Gil, feeling sorry for yourself? Seeing the victim’s sorry life....’ He couldn’t help but draw the parallels, despite every effort to stay detached.

And then the one person that could make his life less sorry had caught him spacing out. He’d shut down. Again. He’d shut her out, and closed himself off. He couldn’t bear her standing in that house. ‘Would she come to the same conclusion? Would she draw the parallels, too?’ So he’d sent her away as fast as possible, for once not caring that he’d obviously hurt her. How could he explain to her that it wasn’t about her as a CSI, without giving away his true feelings. About the case. About her. Them...

‘Dammit! Focus!’ He took a couple of quick breaths and pinched the bridge of his nose. Slowly easing past the accident site, he tried to banish any unwelcome thoughts from his mind.

It proved to be harder than he thought.

“Jaqui?” Sara stepped into the fingerprinting lab and looked around.

“In here!” came the reply from the adjoining cubicle. “You got something for me?”

Sara watched Jaqui step away from the fuming hood, and wipe her hands on the labcoat. “Yeah, some prints. These were taken from the victim’s house.” She handed Jaqui the cards. “One or two are possibly from the first two officers at the scene. Here are their sets.”

“Okay, I’ll see what I can find.” Jaqui took the prints and laid them on her worktable. Glancing quickly at Sara she picked up her magnifying glass. “You okay?”

“Yes. Why?” Sara frowned.

“You just look beaten.” She placed the glass on the table and turned to Sara fully. “Defeated, actually.”

“Gee, thanks. I’m just tired, this was supposed to be my night off.” She shrugged. “Don’t worry, nothing a couple of hours of sleep can’t fix.” ‘And how long have you been telling that to yourself, huh?’

“Sure.” Jaquie looked unconvinced. “I’ll page you when I get results, okay?”

Turning to leave Sara frowned slightly. “Yes. Thank you.” A wave was the only reply she got.

Sara checked the morgue to see if Doc Robbins had gotten any work done on their body, but when she saw David delivering the Thomas Newman just now, she left quickly in order to get some coffee and enjoy some down time. Walking towards the breakroom, she saw the lights on in Grissom’s office. As she passed it, she could see him sitting at his desk, head on his clasped hands, and staring off into nothingness. Was it just her or did he seem somewhat distracted tonight?

Not wanting to face him really, she quickly walked past, and went into the breakroom to get some much needed coffee.

“Hey! I thought this was your night off?”

Sara turned to see Nick Stokes walk into the breakroom. “Yeah, it was. I got called in to work a case with Grissom.”

“With Grissom, huh?” Nick settled onto a chair and rubbed the back of his neck wearily.

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“Nothing, just...” Nick shrugged. “You two don’t seem to work together as often anymore, you know?”

She threw him an angry glance. “What, you keeping statistics now?”

“Hey...” holding up two hands in front of him in a gesture of innocence. “It’s not like that’s hard to notice. I’m not the only one, you know?”

“Great. Don’t you have work to do? For I sure do.” With that she poured the coffee into the sink, and quickly left the room. ‘Why was everybody turning into a psychoanalyst around her lately?’

“Someone’s chipper tonight.” Nick mumbled to himself. “And thanks, my case is going really well, too.”

“I just got a page from...” Grissom checked his pager again. “Mr. Freeze?”

“The one and only!” Greg turned to him with a bright smile.

“And what would Mr. Freeze have for me?”

“Us.” Sara walked into the room and readjusted the pager on her hip. “Or am I off the case now?”

“No.” Grissom regarded her with a weary glance. “Why....”

“The results, Greg.” She interrupted Grissom, quickly looking at the now uncomfortable lab

tech.

Greg glanced over the sheet before clearing his throat.. “Umm. The samples you gave me? Lasagna. The frozen kind.”

“Okay.” Waiting a beat Grissom blinked. After a couple of seconds he sighed. “You called me – us – in for this?”

“Oh, I thought it would be helpful for the victim’s profile, or something...” Seeing Grissom about to lose his pleasant façade and send him an impatient look he quickly went on. “Tox also found remnants of Ethylene Glycol on both the plate and the fork. And some as of yet unidentified substance. They’re looking into it.”

“Ethylene Glycol.” Sara murmured.

“Found in anti-freeze.” Grissom supplied as he snatched the paper away from Greg. “Thank you Mr. Freeze. Shall we, Sara?” He turned to leave the lab, the tension of moments ago seemingly forgotten in light of Greg’s findings.

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