

## Chapter 8

"Nothing. I can't believe this!" Sara looked at the bottle once more, before turning to Grissom next to her. He had sat quietly to the left of her, watching her print the bottle.

"Not even Newman's?" He took the bottle and looked it over himself.

"No." She shook her head. "How can that be? He must have picked it up at least once."

"Looks wiped to me." Grissom turned the bottle a bit for her to see.

"Yes, but... why would he wipe his bottle?"

"He wouldn't." At her raised eyebrow he placed the bottle back on the table and walked over to her. "The evidence log says it was inside a paper bag in his bathroom when you picked it up."

"Yes. From the pharmacy."

He nodded. "Newman never took it out. So, whoever had it last before Newman picked it up from Janice Cole, must have wiped it."

"And you only wipe something, when you don't want your fingerprints on it." She pondered this for a moment. "That would exclude Janice Cole."

"How so?" Grissom looked at her.

"She wouldn't need to hide the fact that her prints are on the bottle. Someone else must have had it after she bought it." She turned back to the powder covered bottle on the table.

"Here you are!" Brass walked through the door and into the room. He looked at Grissom. "I paged you!"

Grissom frowned and looked down at his pager. Indeed, three new pages were waiting for him. "Oh." He unclipped the device and read through each page. "I must have not heard it somehow." 'Probably enjoying the fact too much that you could watch Sara unabashedly for once.'

"Yeah, whatever." Brass took a chair and sat down. "I checked Jenkins. He's been the manager for the last five years. Newman was directly under him. No apparent connection between these two, except for work."

"Hmm." Sara pursed her mouth. "What about family?"

"Jenkins has one brother. They don't see each other very often, though. The brother is in some sort of medical institution back east. He's got some disorder, err...." He pulled out his notebook and flipped through it.

"NMS?" Grissom supplied.

"Yeah." Brass looked up, eyebrows rising.

"That's what Newman was suffering from." He looked at Sara. "And that's our connection."

She smiled. "He would have known what Newman needed the supplements for, and just how to mirror the symptoms. Janice is his secretary, too. It wouldn't be suspicious if he were in her office now and then."

Grissom smiled back. "I say we call the judge?"

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With the link between suspect and victim established, and with the added attempt at covering up the access to the med files, Grissom had been able to acquire a "no knock" warrant in record time. They could serve the warrant and search the house without Jenkins having to be present. It was fortunate that Archie had called them in during the day, since Jenkins was still at work, giving them some time to do the search.

Grissom and Sara were standing outside Jenkins's house while two police officers went about securing the inside.

"All clear." The older of the two officers stepped outside onto the front porch. "I'll post Shawn out here, so you can go about doing your thing inside."

"Thank you." Grissom grabbed his field kit and led the way inside. He snapped on a pair of gloves and took in the spacious living room. It was decorated tastefully without being too in your face and obvious of the owner's apparent wealth. A large leather couch and flatscreen tv dominated the right side of the room. Some paintings decorated the walls. Other than that it was sparsely furnished, but still quite stylish.

"Nice," Sara commented, while taking in her surroundings. She let her gaze roam over the room, trying to notice as many details as possible. "I'll take the living room and office if you don't mind."

Grissom nodded, and picked up his field kit. Leaving Sara to work the living room, he checked the kitchen. It was clean. Incredibly clean. Not even dishes were left outside to dry, all had been stored in the various cabinets Grissom was looking through. The fridge didn't prove to be useful, nor the various holding places for cans, cleaners, and various other household items. The last place to check was a small storage space under the sink.

"Sara!"

She walked into the kitchen and crouched down next to him. "Found something?"

Grissom took one of the three bottles he had been looking at, and lifted it. "Anti-freeze. Three bottles. It must get cold in his garage at night."

"Yeah, seems a bit excessive for Las Vegas." She smiled slyly.

Reaching behind him to get an evidence bag out of his field kit, Grissom heard a soft rustle on his right, and found Sara already holding one open for him.

"Yes, it does. Thank you." He got up after sealing the three bags and put them away. "You found anything?"

Sara turned and picked up a bottle. "Well, just some food supplements." She grinned again.

"Same brand."

"He is good." She tilted the bottle a bit, so Grissom could see the cap. "This was bought the same day as the one we found at Janice Cole's office. He just exchanged the bottles."

Grissom nodded. "Good. However, all we have is pretty much circumstantial. We lack a motive. What?" He looked at Sara's widening grin.

"I think you'll really like the other thing I've found."

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Sara was sitting in Grissom's office, waiting for him to come back with the results from tox. If the anti-freeze from Jenkins matched the one used to poison Newman, the case would be over very soon. She sighed. 'Now or never, Sara. You've made the decision.' It had just gotten harder and harder during the current case. Especially with Grissom being nice all of a sudden. 'And then the invitation to breakfast...' She had to do it now, or her strength would be waning even further. No need to put it off any longer. She had always been one for acting on a decision she made. And contrary to a certain someone, she did make decisions. 'I've put off the inevitable long enough. Don't fool yourself, it'll be back to the usual ignoring and awkwardness after Jenkins has been put away. He gives me just enough to get my hope up, and then crushes it just as quickly.'

Sara heard the footsteps in the hallway, and just knew it was Grissom. He walked into the office, and went straight for his chair.

"Tox is working on it. They should be done right when Brass brings in Jenkins. I don't think he can talk his way out of this." He placed the files on his desk and rubbed his eyes, shoulders slightly drooping.

"Good." Sara thought for a moment before getting up and quietly closing the door. She looked at Grissom, as he lifted his gaze at the small sound the closing door made. She felt a bit guilty seeing his tired appearance, and tried to convince herself that she wasn't taking advantage of it.

"Sara?"

She shifted her gaze to his questioning blue eyes, but quickly looked away again. "Grissom. I..." She sighed, and pulled out the folded sheet of paper. "This is my resignation."

When Grissom didn't react in any way to her announcement, not even blinking, she stepped forward and placed it gently on his desk. "I..., my decision stands. No use for you to talk me out of it."

He continued sitting behind his desk, not moving, only his eyes following her every step, slight bewilderment readable in them. But he didn't say anything. 'Oh yeah, this figures. Don't

fall all over yourself to actually try and talk me out of it.' Sara thought resigned. Now, stronger than ever before, was she convinced that her decision had been the right one.

"Yeah, well, please sign it. I'll be in the breakroom, waiting for Brass to bring in the suspect." She turned to leave.

"Sara." His voice was barely above a whisper.

She couldn't turn around to face him – if it was for herself or for him, she didn't know. Sara pulled the door open. "Don't, Grissom. Just... don't."

With that she left, and closed the door behind her.

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Grissom didn't move for several minutes. Only to him it seemed like an eternity. The white sheet of paper on his desk screamed at him. He couldn't bring himself to pick it up, to read it, to confirm that what Sara had said was not just some sort of cruel joke. He had finally gotten himself convinced that the time for denial and procrastination was over. He had made a move. And he had meant it.

Maybe he should have offered her more than just a breakfast and a talk. But even that had taken a lot from him.

His eyes stilled on the bright patch of white on his desk again. He had his answer, manifested in a simple, pre-printed form to be filled out. All it needed was his signature to confirm his worst fear. His shoulders slumped as he closed his eyes, feeling a painful burning behind his eyelids and in his chest. 'Too late.'

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TBC