

Title: Inevitable

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Rating: T, mostly for language, I guess the f-word kinda slipped in here and there, heh
Spoilers: None really, just general stuff up to currently aired eps.

A/N: The way the finale could have looked like IMHO based on a lof of anvils we've been getting this season. I guess QT disagreed ;)

Chapter 1:

He couldn't really pinpoint when it had all gone so horribly wrong. There wasn't a single, distinct moment he could pick and beat himself up over not seeing it for what it was right away. No. No such comfort.

There wasn't a single moment. There was a multitude of them – subtle hints, little signs that something was off, which he had either ignored or chalked up to other things. They had all seemed isolated little incidents, each dealt with at the time. Only now in retrospect he saw that none of them had been truly dealt with. They all made sense now seen as a whole. Not the root of the problem, but symptoms of it. Escalating. Like cancer – one building upon the other and festering until it was impossible to not notice it. But that moment of realization also meant that it was too late. Way too late, and making things look inevitable in a way.

And all of that had led to this. Sara. Sean. Him. And three guns in three clammy and cramping hands.

Grissom could feel the hard grip of his gun digging into his palm from the force with which he was holding it. He could feel the muscles in his right arm beginning to cramp and burn, cold sweat breaking out over his back, slowly trickling down his spine and pooling in the small of his back. But he was surprised at how steady he was holding the gun – no shaking or wavering. Steady, steady. Training and muscle memory taking over.

If there weren't a gun pointed at his head, he would have laughed about the absurdity of this moment. Stuff like this only happened in movies. It didn't happen to Gil Grissom. This was insane.

The laugh died in his parched throat the moment Sean clicked the safety off his gun.

"The last time, Grissom. Drop your fucking gun!"

'Steady, steady.'

It was quite the conundrum they were in – Grissom and Sara both pointing their guns at Sean, and Sean pointing his at Grissom's head. Which, in Grissom's eyes, was preferable to it being pointed at Sara's head, which it had been before he had stormed into the room earlier fearing the worst and seeing it happening in front of his eyes. At least his stupidly heroic act had caused Sean to falter for a moment and then swing the gun in his direction. And it had given Sara the chance to get hers out and get her out of the line of fire. Grissom, selfless hero. What a joke.

"You try anything, I shoot you, scumbag!"

Grissom heard the tenseness in Sara's voice. And something else. Fear. Unmistakable. For her, for him, for what might happen. It wasn't like he doubted her, but that same fear crept up his spine taking up residence in the back of his skull. No, he trusted her. With his life.

Not like he wanted to shoot someone any more than she did. He sure didn't. Taking a life was not something Grissom had ever tried to truly grapple with. Sure. He knew about the dangers of the job. God knows he'd foolishly put himself into some hairy situations before. And that one time with Nick, years ago... There was no doubt that he would have shot Amy Hendler. But he hadn't needed to. And

it was only afterwards, when he was alone in the safety of his townhouse, when the gravity of that event had sunken in and the shaking had started.

After that he'd stopped carrying his sidearm on himself, and instead had it in his kit. Out of sight truly was out of mind, and did it ever work wonders.

He must have looked like a crazed lunatic when he had scrambled to get his kit open earlier, grabbing the gun and running towards the dilapidated house where he just knew Sara was after seeing her car. Had scared seven kinds of shit out of him, but run here he did, gun at his side.

A regular Travis Bickle, huh? Another image he'd never thought he'd have of himself.

"Put your gun down, Sean. You're outnumbered, there's no point." Yes, try reasoning. That's a Grissom thing to do. Only it hadn't worked before, and it wouldn't now.

And Sean Edwards curled his lip upwards in that sinister way of his that made the hairs on Grissom's arms stand up and his stomach clench, and he knew reasoning was of no use. Sean took a defiant step towards Grissom, gun pointing directly between Grissom's eyes. Steady, way too steady.

He could smell the acrid smell of fear and sweat and gun cleanser. And Grissom knew he'd smell it for many nights to come.

The gun in front of him jerked slightly. "So what. I'll know I took one of you with me."

"You put your gun down, and no one will die." Sara. More assured and hopeful now – all the things Grissom was supposed to feel but didn't. His gaze flickered to her for a moment before settling back on Sean.

"No matter what, Edwards, one of us will shoot you."

'No matter what'. God, he sounded like one of those fucking heroes out of those horrible action flicks Nicky seemed to be so fond of. Always coolly staring death in its ugly eyes. Grissom was cool, the epitome of cool. Only try to rationalize away a gun pointed at your own head, Gris.

He caught an almost disturbed look in Sara's wide eyes at what he had said, but quickly focused on Sean's too calm eyes again. There was no doubt how this would end. So now the only question left was him or Sara.

'Murder gene,' her broken voice whispered in the back of his mind. Not too long ago actually, but everything felt so incredibly far away just now.

'Loose cannon with a gun,' another voice taunted him.

No. There was no question after all. He'd have to prove both of them wrong. For whom, he wasn't sure.

Deep breath. Calm. Focused. He'd never had trouble focusing, good at tuning everything out, and now he shifted that terrible focus of his to this moment. And it was like Sean and maybe Sara felt it somehow, like some barely tangible shift in the universe was taking place. Because he heard Sara gasp, and the last thing he saw in Sean's eyes was fear. Pure and primal and burned into his brain forever.

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The moment Sara caught Grissom's look, she knew he'd made the decision for both of them. And for a fleeting, guilt-laden moment she felt sweet relief flooding her system. But all that was forgotten when she saw Grissom move suddenly. He could move spookily fast when he wanted to, she realized in an almost detached way. Funny the way the mind tends to focus on little things at moments like that.

Sean must have anticipated it, though, because his gun tried to follow Grissom, forming an arc downwards. But he pulled the trigger too fast and didn't see the slight twist Grissom gave his fall, so the bullet only grazed his target.

In an eerily calm manner, Grissom fired two shots and Sean soundlessly crumbled in on himself, dead before he hit the ground. Sara had always figured Grissom for a rager, so the detached and calm manner in which he fired the shots somehow made it only worse.

And then the ensuing silence was so deafening, she couldn't hear her own heart hammering in her chest. She only felt the pounding in her head and her arm starting to shake. Shock or relief, she didn't know, but she let the gun slip from her grip slowly. The clattering noise penetrated the swirling fog in her mind, and her eyes snapped to Grissom.

Calm, way too calm even for him. He still hadn't moved. Gun still in hand, he was half lying on the floor, a distant, utterly and terribly calm expression on his face, like something had changed irrevocably and he had accepted it a lifetime ago. He winced as he moved his arm down, the blood beginning to seep into his shirt from where the bullet had grazed his shoulder. And it was this all too human gesture that finally propelled Sara forward and towards him.

"Grissom." She was surprised her voice sounded so normal after all.

Shaking his head, he looked away. "It's okay."

But nothing was okay. Not his shoulder, not what had happened, nothing.

Sara nodded silently and started to walk towards the door to get her cell phone from her car outside. "I'll call an ambulance." She turned halfway on her way through the room when she heard him call her name in a small voice.

"I'm sorry, Sara."

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She stared after the ambulance speeding down the street. No sirens. Sara felt cheated in a way, like they deserved at least sirens, but then shook her head at her own inane thoughts.

Brass had gotten here first. Good old, dependable Brass. They'd be lost without him. She ought to tell him that more often. But then there were a lot of things she ought to do.

He only needed one look at her and Grissom, and at Grissom sitting wordlessly next to Sean's body lying in a growing pool of his blood on the ground, almost as if he were holding vigil. One look and Brass knew not to speak just then.

The ambulance was next, and Grissom let the EMTs lift him up and walk him to the ambulance. He wasn't in shock nor resigned in any way, but lost, oh so lost that it hurt to look into his eyes. So instead she had stayed and collected and bagged his gun. After all, that was her job.

The wound was only superficial but bleeding steadily, so they had taken him to the hospital.

With no sirens.

And this time Sara didn't chide herself for her thoughts. It was easier that way.

TBC