

**Title:** Inevitable

**Author:** Frumpy

**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:** Thank you so much to Grissom for being a great beta! Any remaining mistakes are mine. And as always, thank you for the reviews. Greatly appreciated!

### **Chapter 3:**

It was a strange sensation - as though he were part of what was happening, but at the same time looking in on it from the outside, watching events unfold and being totally powerless. The resulting feeling of disorientation was disconcerting; being everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Grissom didn't know where he was. Let alone who.

Everything played before his eyes in slow motion as if the images that had burned themselves into his brain forever weren't enough. As if his fucked up subconscious wanted to make sure he would remember every small and cruel detail. Not that he'd forget anyway - his cruelly calculating mind would make sure of that.

Fear.

Pure, primal, palpable. All around him and flashing at him from Sean's and Sara's eyes the moment they realized what he was about to do. The quick flash of terror in Sean's eyes when he realized that his bullet would miss Grissom was worse. But it was nothing compared to that tiny flicker of helpless resignation, when the mind shut down and age-old instincts knew what was to come. That moment of acceptance of the inevitable death.

Grissom recognized that last flicker of calm acceptance in Edwards, for it mirrored his own. Only he hadn't died. Not really.

His mind's picture of the bullets ripping through Edwards were slowed down so grotesquely it seemed almost comical, but his thoughts were racing all the faster, as if to compensate for his mind's messed up speed. He watched the life seep out of Edwards, thinking that with all the blood he's seen in his life, he had never grasped the true essence of life it was carrying. And it was slipping away now, because of him.

The gun clattered to the ground slowly, sounds muffled and disturbed as if coming from far away. A lifetime away. And then her eyes burning into his. Opened wide and full of shock and something that looked almost like awe. But slowly it all gave way to a look of utter disgust on her face. It jumped out at him and Grissom had to close his eyes. It felt like it punched him so hard into his gut that his breath was knocked out of his lungs and something was shredded to pieces forever.

Doubling over as if in pain, he gasped in shock at the sticky hot hand that grasped his wrist, crushing the skin, grinding muscles and bones together. Grissom's eyes snapped open again, trained onto the searing, blood-smearred fingerprints that felt as if they were burning into his pale skin forever.

Slowly, Edward's sick grin spread over the deathly pale face, a cold, triumphant glint in his eyes because he knew...

Grissom recoiled from the knowing look, but the grin turned into that lip-curling grimace that made Grissom want to throw up as that same knowledge slammed into him unrelenting. Sean's grip on Grissom's wrist was slackening as cold realization left him feeling drained and numb.

Desperately looking away, he searched for something, anything to hold onto, something to steady him and let him regain his solid footing again. But the last thing he saw was the blood on his hands and

the image of Sara turning away, disgusted with what she saw clearly for the first time now when looking at him.

Edwards had known he wasn't the only one dying. And he knew that in the end, he had won after all.

xxxxxxx

That last image of Sara turning away lingered behind as if refusing to go away as Grissom woke up slowly. Closing his eyes again, he willed the image to go away, or at least hide somewhere in the back of his skull with the rest of the things he refused to let surface. Counting, he consciously tried to get his breathing and heartbeat to calm down again. He knew he wouldn't be able to sleep again, but he refused to let the demons in his mind take over. He needed to control them. He always had. Grissom knew he couldn't overcome his demons, ever. But he could face them day, after day, after day, and just keep going. That's all there was.

Grissom swallowed and grimaced at the gritty feel in his mouth and throat. Shit.

With an angry jerk he flipped the covers to the side and sat up. The cool air from the air conditioning hit his warm skin and he shivered slightly from the chill. Running his hand through his hair, he let his head hang as he felt the first faint pounding behind his eyes that was a surefire sign of an impending headache. What a start to the day.

Grissom got up and pulled an old and well-worn sweater from the bottom of a drawer in his wardrobe to ward off the morning chill. Burrowing further into the soft comfort it provided, he slowly made his way to the kitchen for a glass of water.

He had just stopped the tap and was about to take a sip of the water, when he felt a hand land on his shoulder. The touch was soft, but it made Grissom jump, leaping away startled. He flinched again at the sound of breaking glass and the sensation of cold water hitting his naked feet.

"Geez, Gil! Overreaction."

He gulped a panicked breath and turned around to see Catherine standing in his kitchen, right arm still raised from where she had touched his shoulder. The startled look on her face probably matched his own.

"Catherine?" His voice scratched in his dry throat. "What the...?"

She finally dropped her arm at his rough voice and frowned at him. "Good God, Gil. You just took about ten years off my life."

"Am I supposed to be sorry here?" Grissom would probably regret it later on that he'd lost his cool when she was probably only here to help him. But the momentary panic he had actually felt at the unexpected touch angered him, and it had only served to intensify the insistent pounding in his skull. Warily running the back of his hand over his forehead, he closed his eyes. "Shit."

"Headache?"

He nodded numbly and kept silent.

Catherine crouched down and began to pick up the shards of the dropped glass, deciding to ignore Grissom's foul mood for now. She knew from experience he only let it show when feeling exposed or vulnerable, and also knew not to push if she didn't want him to shut down completely. Or any more than already.

The sound of softly clinking glass made Grissom swallow his anger and look around, blinking away the pressure behind his eyes. "How... What are you doing here?"

"You didn't answer your calls. " Shooting an almost accusing glance at his answering machine and then him, she continued. "Brass called. We know what happened." She scrunched her eyes, looking for a sign.. anything really in his face, but he seemed to have himself under control again. The momentary flash of terror was gone from his cool blue eyes. "We were worried, you know?"

Grissom took this info in without any outward sign of emotion. "The spare key." He saw Catherine frown and motioned towards the general direction of his front door. "I had forgotten I gave you one."

"Never needed it before." She got up and placed the bigger glass shards to the side. "You seemed to be sleeping soundly, so I didn't want to wake you to see if you're okay." Catherine thought she caught a haunted look in his eyes, but it was gone too quickly for her to be sure.

"I'm fine."

She regarded him for a moment and then just nodded softly. "Of course you are." Walking into the living room, she picked up her purse. "Warrick's over at Sara's."

Grissom's head snapped up at the mention of Sara's name, but Catherine's coolly asserting gaze made him school his features and pretend to be only mildly interested, trying to keep his voice even. "Good."

"She's fine too, you know? Of course she is." Catherine looked as if she wanted to say more, but then only shook her head slowly. "You know where to find me." With that she stepped out through the door and let it shut behind her with an audible click, as if a statement in itself.

Somewhere in his mind Grissom knew what she was trying to do with her apparently nonchalant demeanor. Usually he'd brush her not so subtle attempts at drawing him out off, or he'd simply get annoyed at her till she let off. But that scare a few moments ago seemed to have sapped him of all strength and he plain didn't care one way or another. There were a lot of things he couldn't rouse himself to care about right now. Except for one. And it was up to him to fix that later on.

**TBC.**