

**Title:** Slipping

**Author:** Frumpy

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

**Disclaimer:** If I'd own CSI, we'd have it on HBO by now.

**A/N:** Again, sorry for the long wait, but RL is rather crazy right now. And as CSI seems to build up to even more angst with the way it's going, I keep getting caught up in it. All G/S, and still fluffy.

As always, heartfelt thanks for the reviews. They mean a lot.

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## **Chapter 8:**

Grissom lay silent in his bedroom, staring at the ceiling unblinking. The thick drapes across his windows kept the low sunlight out, but he was starting to feel boxed in. Tossing the blanket that covered him to one side, he felt the chill from the air conditioning on his sweaty skin as he walked to the window and opened the drapes. The sun had just risen and cast a soft yellow light on the neighborhood. Grissom glanced at the watch on his bedside table, confirming what he knew anyway. He had slept maybe three hours before another nightmare had awoken him.

Padding into his bathroom he splashed cold water onto his flushed face, not looking at himself in the mirror. No need to try and go back to sleep now, he knew that. He noticed that he had soaked his bandage, and took it off carefully. The skin over his knuckles was still sore, but well on its way to healing, so he didn't rewrap them. It only served him as a physical reminder of his lost temper. For someone who kept such a tight rein on his emotions and found strength in his control, knocking down lab walls wasn't a healthy way of dealing with his frustrations.

A breakfast with Sara sounded like a much nicer option, so he chose to occupy himself with something useful instead of wallowing in self pity.

Grissom donned a t-shirt and sweat pants and then went to his living room. He rooted around in his bookshelf for a while till he found what he was looking for. His mother had given it to him years ago, but he had never used it before. He liked to cook, and he loved her family recipes, but for the longest time it had only pained him, as it reminded him constantly of the loss of the one person who truly knew him. Lady Heather had been right - that was his biggest fear. Yet she was also wrong, for deep down he wanted to be known, desired to not having to hide constantly. And that scared him even more.

And now the one person that he would let inside his walls was coming over for breakfast.

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Soft music awoke Sara from a restful slumber. She looked over at her alarm clock, surprised she had actually slept long enough to be awakened by the alarm. It seemed so long ago that

that had happened, she had forgotten she had set it to wake her with the radio playing, instead of the annoying beep.

The soft strings of Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 drifted across the room. Not the optimal wake-up music, but it beat being jarred out of sleep by a driving rock beat.

Falling back onto her pillow, she left the music playing and closed her eyes, listening to the soft flow of the melody and not thinking about the math behind the composition as she usually would have. It figured that she couldn't even take simple pleasure from music. It always had to have some purpose, some ulterior function to tickle her brain. She was slowly learning to take pleasure from the simple things in life and not overthink everything.

Like Grissom. Now there was something to ponder. Sara had realized that she had probably put too much blame on his shoulders. She was just as much at fault. And while she had accused him of oversimplifying things before, it had been her really all along. It had been an eye opener when she realized just how complicated things seemed to be to him. Beneath that cool and strong exterior lay one vulnerable soul. Maybe she had always been aware of that on some unconscious level, though it wasn't what had drawn her to him initially.

He had said he would take the risk now. It wasn't exactly flattering to be seen as a risk, but she understood better now, as the tables had turned. He presented just as much of a risk to her. Sara thought she had been ready to pull away, to get on her own two feet. But after all these years he still held a spell over her. It was the only thing that had kept her from running away when he had made his intentions clear. That and knowing that hurting her had hurt him just as much, as cheesy as it sounded.

Rubbing her eyes slowly she got up and stretched. Before going to the bathroom she switched the station on the radio alarm clock - Mozart made her overthink no matter what.

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'Table - check. Ice cream in cooler- check. Coffee in coffee machine - check.' Grissom looked around his living room. It was so him to plan a simple breakfast meticulously. Shaking his head softly, he went back to the kitchen and the shopping bag on the counter.

After poring over his mother's recipes, he had busied himself with preparing everything. A quick run to the grocery store around the corner included. It felt nice to be shopping for someone else than just him. Usually he just made sure he had some orange juice and vodka for Catherine in the house, but that had become routine over the years. He had never thought of himself as a homey person, but he found pleasure in planning a nice breakfast.

The soft smell from his oven tickled his nose. He had forgotten how much he loved that one, hopefully Sara, too.

Grissom was in the middle of dicing some fruits when the doorbell rang. With a smile he went to the door and opened it.

"Good morning."

"Hey," Sara's gaze drifted to the knife still in his hand, and the kitchen towel slung over his shoulder. "Oh nice. I love a man who does the housework."

Stepping aside to let her in, Grissom smiled slightly. "Only for special occasions."

Sara looked around the room, noting the set table. She was glad he hadn't set a candle in the middle of it or anything like it. Looked like he stayed true to his word that it would be a simple breakfast and nothing more. Or less. Her head snapped to the right when the timer in the kitchen went off.

"Ah, you're just in time." Grissom walked over and she followed him. He opened the oven door and used the towel to get out the baking form. The delicious smell of butter and peaches hit Sara.

"Oh, that smells entirely too good, Griss. Peach Cobbler, hmmm." Looking over his shoulder she saw the other plates he had prepared. "Grissom..."

He lifted one eyebrow when he looked at her.

"I came here expecting some easy breakfast, not a four course meal! When did you have the time to prepare all this?" She meant it in joking, but saw his eyes darken a bit in response. Quickly changing the topic, she made a sweeping motion with her right hand. "I didn't know you could cook."

His gaze softened, and the corner of his mouth lifted slightly in that half-grin of his. "Well, I have many talents you don't know about. Yet."

The line was openly flirtatious. Easy banter, yet also loaded. "I thought I remembered you saying 'No strings attached', huh?"

He had the grace to look a bit embarrassed at that. "I'm sorry. I promised, I know. Forget I said it."

"For now." Her return smile wasn't any less flirty, but she moved quickly towards the living room. "Need any help?"

Grissom motioned behind his shoulder. "Let this cool for a while." He picked up two plates with sliced cantaloupe and strawberries and extended them to her. "Let's start nice and easy. Coffee?"

Sara snatched a strawberry from one the plates before taking them and nodded. Settling at the table, she waited for him to return with the coffees. He handed her her cup and she had to smile. A little milk and lots of sugar, just as she liked it. "Thanks."

She kept stealing glances at him while they ate, trying to decipher what was going on in that mind of his. Mindless banter wasn't their thing anyway, but for once the silence between them wasn't as loaded as usually, so she didn't mind. Aside from the nagging feeling that one of them would have to make the first move and tackle the reason they were here. A breakfast between friends or not, Sara was tired of the indecisive nature of things right now. As much as

he tried to keep this light, she just couldn't go on like this anymore. Putting down her fork, she looked at him openly. "Let's talk."

She saw him stop chewing for a moment, a startled look in his eyes, but he quickly caught himself. Swallowing, he ran his hand over his mouth and settled back, picking up his mug of coffee as if he needed something to hold on to. "Okay."

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**TBC.**