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Title: What once was broken

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Chapter four: Struggles; Grissom's POV

The voice of a ghost

Speaking of former times,

So fortunate, but buried deep long ago.

Can it make my heart beat again?

It'd been five days now since my mind was awakened from its dull slumber and I still feel like a sleepwalker wandering through the dark.

Again it had been a call that turned my life upside down. To lose someone to a kidnapper is a painful and incredible slow process. There's the hope that will always die the last, if it will die at all, but then to find out that this person is alive is like an internal earthquake, where not a single stone remains untouched.

It was Sara who called that night, the woman that had been the only love in my life. The woman that had been my downfall, for after her disappearance I was frozen inside.

When I thought of the night she called, I remembered that it was one of those hectic nights where we had to try to deal with multiple situations at the same time. We had two unsolved homicides, as well as a burglary to work and it was the third night that week that we would have to pull a double.

I was in my office when my cell phone started ringing. For some reason I felt uneasy and I wondered about that feeling, because I couldn't see a reason at all why I should feel anxious about answering a call.

I hesitated for just a moment longer but then realised that this feeling was completely irrational and reached for the phone.

"Grissom."

There was silence at the other end but I was sure that I could hear someone breath faintly. A wave of nausea seemed to roll around in my stomach.

"Hello?" I tried it another time.

This time I got an answer and my cocoon of indifference shattered into a thousand pieces.

"Gil, it's me. It's Sara."

Her voice trembled lightly but it was undoubtedly her.

How can I describe that moment? Is it possible at all, to explain how I felt when I heard her voice, when I had thought that she had been dead for years?

I remember that my body seemed to be paralyzed by shock and that my heart skipped a few beats.

I remember that all of sudden my head felt light and refused to let me think only the simplest rational thoughts, but that at the same time I felt thousands of questions lurking somewhere in my mind.

"Sara?"

I knew that my voice croaked but I was surprised that I was able to utter a sound at all, afraid she could hang up at any moment and I would never know if everything had been only a dream.

"I lost my memory."

Her voice was hollow, uninvolved, like the voice of someone who didn't want to speak about something. I waited for her to continue but she remained silent.

"Sara, I... I don't know what to say. What to think."

I didn't want to sound helpless but I felt lost, didn't know how to react. Part of me believed that my alarm would wake me only moments later, filled with fresh hope for another time, only to have to remember once more that I was alone.

"Gil, I'm sorry. I would have contacted you if I would have been able to remember."

Did she cry? I wasn't sure.

"Sara. Is this real? Are you real?"

I didn't mean to say that, to let my voice betray the fear I felt, but as silly as it was, I wanted to hear her answer.

"Yeah, it's real."

Now I could hear that she really was crying.

"It's okay. Please don't cry."

I tried to sound as soothing as I could. I never could stand to see or hear her cry. It had always made me feel utterly helpless.

"Where are you?"

I felt I had to know where she was and I desperately wanted to go to her, to see with my own eyes that she was real.

"I'm in Phoenix. It's a long story Gil. Don't let us talk about it on the phone. Would...would you like us to meet?"

"Of course I would like that. Tell me when and where. Shall I come to you? I can be on my way in no time at all"

Did I sound too urgent? I waited for her answer, not noticing that I was holding my breath.

"I would prefer to come to Vegas. I'll have to arrange some things before I can come. I promise to explain you everything later. Would Saturday be ok?"

What was she hiding from me? I could feel that she hadn't told me everything but what could I do other than to wait?

"That sounds fine Sara."

"Ok. I'll come to your house then. Let's say two o'clock?"

There had been a time when it was our house. I was so glad to hear that she was alive, so thankful that wonders happened from time to time, but to hear her talking about 'my' house hurts. It reminded me that we had lived apart for three years, that we wouldn't be the same as we were when we parted.

"Ok, I'll see you then."

I had thought about asking her for her phone number but had the feeling it would be wrong, that I shouldn't rush things unnecessary.

"Bye, Gil."

"Bye, Sara. Sara... I... I've missed you."

I wished I could have held my voice steady but I failed. I was barely able to whisper.

"I miss you too."

She hung up.

Finally it was Saturday and I was pacing up and down my living room. It was twenty to two and I couldn't wait for the doorbell to ring.

The last days I hadn't been able to sleep more than two hours in a row or to concentrate on my work like I had always been able to and it was no wonder that it didn't take long before I had to face the consequences. I lost my temper with a suspect and started to yell at him so Catherine and Brass had to drag me out of the room. Catherine then suggested that I should take some time off.

I didn't want to stay at home but I knew that she was right and that in my state of mind I would be of no use at work. So I spent most of the last three days at home, torn between my desire to drive to Phoenix and see Sara immediately and my common sense that told me to wait and let things happen in their own time.

Once more I sat down on my couch where I tried to calm myself. I breathed in as deeply as possible but it didn't work.

I wished I could stop the thoughts that were running through my head, but I couldn't. There were so many questions and I longed for the answers yet I dreaded them at the same time.

How would Sara be? What would she look like and how much would her character have changed? I was realistic enough not to think she would be the same woman who disappeared that dreadful day three years before.

How much of a change would she see in me? I knew that I had changed physically. My hair was completely gray now as well as my beard and I had many more wrinkles around my eyes, but the most drastic change was my loss of weight. To eat hadn't been a pleasure anymore and now it was almost safe to call me thin.

Would there be a way for us to be together again? It would be two completely estranged people that would meet today and if there was still that certain something that had drawn us towards each other in former times would have to be seen. Love's a plant that needs to be fed and memories alone, wonderful as they were, wouldn't be enough.

I grabbed for one of the magazines on the table but laid it back only five minutes later, after I read the same sentence for the fifth time. Instead I decided to make some coffee. I thought it would be safe to assume that that at least hadn't changed, for Sara had always been addicted to coffee, like most people who worked in graveyard.

I had poured in the water and grabbed for the coffee filters when the doorbell rang. I stood paralyzed for a moment, then I laid the filters down at the sideboard with suddenly stiff fingers. It had to be Sara. I didn't expect anyone else and she had always been early.

The doorbell rang another time. I took a last deep breath and went to open the door.

I was right, it was Sara.

I don't know how long we stood there, simply facing each other. I wanted to greet her, embrace her, wanted do what our culture dictates as being the right thing to do, but I couldn't move.

It was Sara, but she looked so different. She wore her hair longer now so that it fell wavy around her shoulders. She still was slim and she wore a simple blue dress that showed her delicate figure.

As I took a closer look I saw that the creases on her forehead were deeper than before and although she smiled at me I could sense a sadness emanating from deep within her.

"Hi Gris."

Of course it was Sara that spoke first. It had always been her that took things into her hands, while I was the one who reacted to her. Her voice was low, she sounded unsure.

I always hated to see her vulnerable. Still unable to speak I went to her and embraced her. She still smelled so good and it felt so right to hold her in my arms.

We stood embraced for a long time and after a while I heard her sobs and felt her tears on my neck. I stroked her back and mumbled soothing words.

As I felt her crying stop, I slowly withdrew from her and looked into her eyes.

"I'm so glad that you're here."

She gave me a small smile and her left hand searched for my right. Her hand was cold and I returned the soft pressure. Together we stepped into the house and I closed the door behind us. I was still unsure what to say, so I offered her some coffee and she agreed. I got the impression that she felt as uncertain as me. While she sat down on the couch, I went into the kitchen where I grabbed the dropped coffee filters and prepared the machine.

As I turned to her on my way to the living room I caught her staring at me. As before I had the feeling that she was hiding something from me.

I suddenly became nervous, for what did I really know about this woman sitting before me? What did she do while she was in Phoenix? Was she married? Was that the reason why she came to visit me? To say goodbye? So many questions and I dreaded nearly every answers.

I sat down beside her. She bent her head and looked down. She didn't want to meet my eyes and my feeling of anxiousness got stronger.

"Sara, what is it? I can see in your eyes that there is something. Don't you want to tell me what it is?"

It wasn't like me to confront someone directly but I couldn't stand the fear building up inside me any longer. I knew that my voice had a begging quality, but I didn't care anymore.

She remained silent and I refrained from saying anything more. I offered her to talk and now it was for her to accept or to refuse.

Finally she looked up again and I could see that she was on the verge of crying again. The knot in my throat tightened.

"Oh Gris, there is so much tell and I don't know how. The last three years I lived a life I could never have imagined before. It wasn't a bad one, but so different from the one I had here in Vegas. I... It's only that it is hardly over a week that I got my memories back. I had an accident, with the car, that's why I can remember now and there's... there's so much stuff in my head. The past as Sara, my life as Jane, the kidnapping and... ."

Her voice trailed off and the tears she tried to suppress were running down her cheeks. I wrapped my arms around her and let her cry again. I felt like crying too, but wanted to be strong for her.

As she stirred in my arms I let loose and she looked at me again, calmer now.

"Gil, before I tell you more, I want you to meet someone. Can you come to my hotel this evening at six o' clock?"

Another man, I knew she had found someone else. I didn't even have to ask who the person was, I knew it was a man. Someone like Sara wouldn't be alone for long and without the memories of me, she would have taken her chance. How could I be so dumb and believe there was a second chance? I closed my eyes and wished she would be gone. I didn't want her to see my pain.

"Gris, please."

Her voice sounded pleading.

Although the simple thought of her being together with someone else hurt me more than I could describe, I would do her the favor and meet him. If she wanted my absolution so that she could live her new life I would do that. I loved her after all and only wanted to see her happy.

"I'll be there."

I sounded firm and I was thankful for that, because I didn't want her to see me vulnerable.

Five minutes later she was gone. She had given me the address of the hotel and after a last short hug I was alone again. She hadn't even drunk her coffee.

It was five to six and I stood in front of Sara's room. I had arrived ten minutes before but hadn't found the nerve to knock. I wished that it would be over, wished that I wouldn't have to go inside that room at all.

I shook my head. I should be thankful that Sara was alive. Did it matter that it was someone else who gave her the love she needed, as long as she was alive? I should only be thankful and I was. I tried to tell myself that it would only be this last time and then we could go our ways.

I knew that I lied to myself and that I wouldn't get over her but I had no choice. Who said that being in love guaranteed happiness?

I knocked and soon I could hear a voice that was definitely not Sara's. As the door opened a woman in her early forties stood in the doorway. I must have looked surprised, because she smiled knowingly at me, with impressive dark brown eyes. She was a tall woman, almost as tall as Sara and she was very slim.

I didn't know why, but for a moment I was sure that Warrick would definitely like her. He was still single and this woman emanated an aura of sincerity and serenity that would do him good.

"Gil Grissom I assume? My name is Pamela Harker. I'm a friend of Sara's."

I hardly noticed that we shook hands because I tried to look in the room behind her.

"Nice to meet you Ms. Harker."

"Call me Pamela. I guess we'll meet each other more often in the future."

She stepped back to finally let me into the room.

I must have frowned for she smiled again. If what she said was right it meant that Sara hadn't planned to say goodbye, maybe that she didn't have another man at all. I was confused but felt a light hope building up inside of me.

I passed her by and entered the room. I scanned the room but couldn't see Sara anywhere. It was a big room with two king-size beds and separate living area. The door of what I supposed to be the bathroom opened and Sara came out of the room, closing the door behind her. She had changed into a jeans and blue sweater since the afternoon. Her trouser was stained with what seemed to be water droplets. I couldn't help but stare at them.

"Hi Grissom, I'm happy that you're here." I could hear the edge of uncertainty in her voice and fear began to raise again.

All my life I had enjoyed riding roller coasters but this emotional up and down seemed to overpower me.

"Sara, let's please stop these games. What is it you want to tell me? Is it that you don't you want to see me again, is there another man?"

I was surprised by my sudden outburst and she obviously was, too. She gave me a startled look but took a deep breath and nodded. When she spoke her voice was firm.

"Gil, there is no other man in my life. At least no one I have a relationship with and I don't want to say goodbye to you. When I was abducted I..."

Suddenly I heard the laughter of a child. It seemed to come from the bathroom and only now I registered that Pamela was gone. All kinds of thoughts were running through my head and I looked at Sara.

"Pamela's child?," I croaked.

Sara bit her lip and slowly shook her head. I couldn't believe it. Sara had a child? Who was the father? Hadn't she just said she wasn't in a relationship?

Realization slowly dawned inside on me. I looked at Sara again, asking her the question with my eyes that I couldn't voice with my mouth.

This time she nodded and I felt my legs become weak. I tore my eyes away from her and started to walk to the bathroom. My heart beat fast and I was afraid like seldom before.

I opened the door slowly and looked into the room. There was Pamela sitting on the floor in front of a bathtub and inside sat a boy of around two and a half years. He'd heard the door open and looked at me.

I swear that my heart missed a beat at that moment. The boy had Sara's curls but my blue eyes. As he saw me he looked up at me enquiringly, biting his lips in the same gesture I had seen from Sara only moments ago .

"Daddy?," he asked.

Sara must have told him that I would come. I was still unable to speak and could only nod.

The answer seemed to satisfy the boy for he beamed at me and was reaching out with his arms for me.

In his right hand he held a toy and as I inspected it more closely I saw that it was a plastic spider.

I lifted my son out of the tub cautiously and embraced him. I knew that I cried but I couldn't help it. I knew that I got soaked but I didn't care.

It must have only been seconds but it felt like an eternity had passed when I heard this wonderful, earnest voice again.

"Daddy, is wet."

I laughed despite the tears that were still running down my cheeks. I saw Pamela standing beside us, with a towel in her hands and I handed her the boy cautiously.

"His name is Connor." It was Sara who spoke calmly and I turned around. I could see that she, too, had cried.

"Do you want Connor and me in your life?"

I saw the fear in her eyes and without a second thought I took her in my arms. How could she even ask such a question?

"I don't only *want* you in my life, Sara. I *need* you. Sara, I was dead those last years and without you I will never be whole again. I love you so much."

I wanted to say more but I felt her lips on mine and I couldn't help but moan at the sensation. It was like no time had passed and all the memories of tenderness and passion came back to me.

"Eeww, Mommy and Daddy are kissing." Connor sounded truly disgusted.

Both Sara and I had to laugh. We turned around to him, my arm around her waist and when we looked at each other again I saw a warm smile directed at me and I was sure that the same expression of love was mirrored in my eyes.

I knew that we would have a long road before us, that we both would have to come to terms with our pasts and that we wouldn't be the same people again. I knew also that I would have to cope with Sara's awakened memories about the Cop Hunter. She didn't tell me about it yet but I was sure that she would need my help.

That was one side of the coin but I felt that there was still much love between us and that there was a young boy who would need both of his parents . Somehow I was sure that we would cope.

I turned back to Sara and kissed her once more, despite the protests vocalised by our son.

The End