Fictitious Season 26, Episode 8, "The Changling", Prologue

(scene opens in NCIS bullpen, Gibbs sitting at his old desk, McGee at his desk, arm in a shoulder sling..Torres sits at his desk, looking over at Bishop's desk...confusion on his face….)

Mcgee: "Torres…you having flashbacks?"

Torres; "No man…having trouble with the flashpresent"

Gibbs; "Separation anxiety, Torres?"

Torres; "No…(high pitch voice) "Me? Freaked out without my daughter? No way…."

McGee: "You have the right to take spousal leave Torres…"

Gibbs: "Yea, Torres…go home….(looks at Mcgee) "If your team leader tells you to…"

(McGee looks over at Gibbs…)

McGee: "It's okay boss…you sitting there just seems right…."

(McGee turns to Torres)

McGee: "So, Nick…if it's not wanting to be with your daughter…"

(Torres's face looks up, frustration on his face)

Torres; "Okay! I do! Sue me! It's no Bueno being here when Nickie needs her Padre!..."

McGee; "So…go home!"

(Torres looks down…mumbles…)

Gibbs: "Torres…speak up…"

Torres; "Can't"

McGee: "Can't speak up or can't go home?"

Torres: "Si…both…so so no Bueno…"

McGee: "Wait a minute…you've been staring all morning long at Bishop's desk…"

(scene shifts to Bishop's desk…Dawson stares back, waves and smiles at Torres)

Dawson: "I may bring a potted plant tomorrow"

Gibbs; "Nesting, huh, Dawson?"

(Dawson waves her hands around, taking it all in..)

Dawson: "I think I like this desk"

(Torres speaks under his breath)

Torres: “Oh madre de dios me protégé “

Gibbs: “Mother of God protect me?”

(Torres ignores Gibbs..keeps speaking in a whisper)

Torres: “Protogeme de me mujer que me asesinara”

(Gibbs chuckles…shakes his head..)

Gibbs: “…I wouldn’t want to be you right now, Torres”

Dawson: “What did he say?”

McGee: “Something about asking for protection from a woman that would murder him”

Dawson: “Okay, fine..It’s no big deal…so I’ll move to another desk”

Torres: “Beuno…muy Bueno…gracias, gracias”

(McGee looks at Dawson)

McGee: “Nope…I’m training you…I need you right across from me”

Torres; “Hey…Put her across from me! I’ll train her! I already know her!”

(Gibbs looks over at Torres, shakes his head, looks back down at some papers)

McGee: “Not your job, Nick…”

Torres; “Dinozzo trained Ziva!”

(Gibbs looks down, small grin, shakes his head)

Gibbs: ‘Oh yea…that turned out good”

(McGee’s phone rings…he answers…)

McGee: “NCIS, Special Agent, Team Leader Timothy McGee speaking, how may I help you?”

(Everyone turns to stare at McGee, especially Dawson..)

Torres: “Anyone got that written down?”

Dawson: “When he hangs up, call him…When he answers, I’ll start taking dictation”

(McGee ignores them, listens…then..)

McGee: “Yes, I remember…we received it, but could make no positive ID on it”

(Listens more….)

McGee: “Alright, maybe she can help us identify it..Send her up”

(McGee ends the call…He looks down at the phone, then up at Gibbs)

McGee: “Remember the package we got several months ago…”

Gibbs: “Yea….a finger”

Torres: “I remember that! I opened the box!”

(Gibbs smiles)

Gibbs; “You squealed”

Torres: “It scared me! Here I am, doing the mail open thing, being helpful, open a box, and I’m looking at a dead finger!”

Dawson: “You ever get live fingers here?”

Gibbs: “Not yet…but we’re waiting….”

Torres: “Man, the finger was wrinkled up…muy nasty….”

(McGee addresses Dawson)

McGee: “It was burned…Kasie couldn’t get a print, it was burned off…The DNA wasn’t in any of our databases…No ID could be made”

(McGee pauses…looks towards the elevators)

McGee: “There’s a visitor coming up…wife of…actually, ex-wife of a Navy Ensign. Says she knows something about it…”

(The elevator door opens, a middle aged woman, nicely dressed, long wool coat, matching gloves… sees McGee, walks up to him…)

Woman: “Are you NCIS Special Agent Team Leader Timothy McGee May I help you?”

(Torres laughs…Dawson bites her lip, facing the woman)

McGee: “Yes ma’am..(pauses, lets out a sigh) “That would be me…”

Woman: ‘My name is Kathy Wooding…I used to be married to Ensign Gregory Wooding…I lost something in the divorce that belongs to me…I believe you have it?”

(McGee looks at her, questioningly….)

McGee; “Mrs Wooding? We don’t keep anything regarding a civil matter here at NCIS, unless it’s evidence in a criminal matter....What is it you think we have of yours?”

(The woman holds up one gloved hand, pulls it completely off, holds up a burned hand, skin badly wrinkled…. one finger is missing, a short stub where it used to be)

Kathy: ““I believe you have my finger..(pauses) “…Divorces can get nasty, you know?”

(Gibbs looks at her, then at the hand..His eyebrows go up…)

Gibbs: “Ya think?”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the lab, Kasie talking on her phone, sees Gibbs walk in, ends the call….She looks over at Gibbs…He stops, stares…eyebrows go up)

Gibbs: "Well?"

Kasie: "They don't know anymore yet"

Gibbs: "How's Palmer?"

(She looks at Gibbs, shakes her head)

Kasie: "About the same"

(Gibbs walks to Kasie, gives her a quick hug…She steps back, looks at Gibbs curiously)

Gibbs: "Breena's a strong girl…she'll be okay"

Kasie: "Jimmy said to tell you thanks for coming by"

(Gibbs shrugs)

Gibbs: "What do you have on the match?"

(Kasie looks at him for a moment longer, then turns to her monitors…she clicky clacks, two DNA data screens come up side by side, then a green flashing number appears over both images…)

96.2% Positive Match

Gibbs: "Why not 99?"

Kasie: "To much damage from the burns. He hand wasn't burned, Gibbs…it was roasted"

Gibbs; "Painful"

(Kasie is still turned away from Gibbs, but her voice raises in anger)

Kasie: "Oh you think?"

(Gibbs looks at her…She still has her back to him)

Gibbs: "Worried about Palmer?"

(She nods her head…Gibbs walks to her, places a hand on her shoulder, kisses the back of her head)

Gibbs: 'It's the downside to family, Kasie"

(She nods, wipes her eyes)

Gibbs; “Come see me if you need to”

(Surprised, she turns….looks at him, says nothing….her face shows fear..Gibbs nods to her…)

Gibbs: “I’ll be there if you need me”

(Gibbs turns, walks toward the door to the lab….he stops…still with his back to her…)

Gibbs; “Nice work Kasie”

(She nods….he continues to walk out of the door….once he leaves, out of sight, she keeps staring at the door…Then she sees him reappear….Her face contorts….Gibbs walks in, closes the lab door behind him, then walks to Kasie…He extends his arms, she falls into him, allowing him to hug her….)

Gibbs: “I know…”

(She nods…her voice breaks)

Kasie: “I don’t want anyone down there except Jimmy!”

Gibbs: “I know”

Kasie: “No one else belongs there!”

Gibbs; “I know”

Kasie: “He’s worried that they’ll replace him, Gibbs…Breena’s been sick for weeks…”

Gibbs: “They’re not going to replace him, Kasie…I promise…”

Kasie: “Yes they are! I heard someone temporary is coming in! Gibbs….what if it takes longer? What if this person is good? I don’t want a good one! I want someone that sucks!”

(Gibbs chuckles…steps back….)

Gibbs: “Kasie…I picked the replacement….”

Kasie: “NO! Why?”

(They are interrupted by a knock at the door….a familiar voice is heard…)

Ducky: “Is this still the laboratory, Jethro, or have I walked into the wrong room?”

(Kasie sees Ducky, her face lights up…She runs to Ducky, hugs him tight..)

Kasie: “Dr. Mallard!”

(She hugs him tighter….big smile, some tears)

Ducky: “Kasie, my trustworthy friend, if there is one thing about being the NCIS Historian, it is that if I leave the work for a time, history is still there, waiting when I get back”

Gibbs: “Thanks, Duck”

Ducky: “Jethro, it is a bittersweet ‘you’re welcome”…How is she?”

Gibbs; “Fighting”

Ducky: “And James?”

(Gibbs shrugs…Ducky nods to him, understanding…Ducky turns to Kasie…)

Ducky: “Young woman…I believe you need to apprise me of this current mystery, fraught with questions, absent of answers?”

(Kasie grabs Ducky by the hand, pulling him to the work area…Gibbs watches, smiles….then walks out of the lab….He hears a voice calling him..He turns, Kasie is running out of the lab, to him…hugs Gibbs)

Kasie: “Thank you”

Gibbs: “This is the upside to family….”

(She nods, wiping her eyes)

Gibbs: “….we have each other”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in bullpen…Gibbs at his desk, Dawson at Bishop’s desk, McGee and Torres at theirs….)

Torres: “Man, Breena……”

McGee: “Yea…it’s gotten bad….I talked to Palmer about an hour ago, and they had to put Breena on a ventilator”

(Gibbs listens, paying close attention to both of them)

Torres: “I couldn’t do it…no Bueno, man….”

(Gibbs looks over at McGee)

Gibbs: “How’s Palmer?”

(McGee shakes his head…)

McGee: “Not good, boss…he’s trying to put up a brave front, but…..”

(His sentence trails off…)

Gibbs: “Yea…he would”

Torres: “Palmer’s always upbeat…trying to find the best in everything..”

McGee: “He’s scared, Torres….he’s real scared”

(Gibbs looks up at both McGee and Torres)

Gibbs: “Want to know how to help him?”

Torres: “Yea…how…”

Gibbs: “Get to work. We have a case…(looks at Torres) “Torres…any luck on contacting the ex husband?”

(Torres gets up, goes to big screen…hits remote…A picture of a Navy officer comes up)

Torres: “Ensign Gregory Wooding…Currently on the battleship USS North, heads up the Radar Room…18 years of service, muy Bueno record, 3 citations for Distinguished Service…”

Gibbs: “Good sailor?”

Torres: “Everything says so…his file does say he took emergency personal leave 3 months ago…reason not listed. There’s a note in his file to contact Captain James Hensworth, skipper of the North, for any information on Ensign Wooding…”

(Gibbs grins, looks down, shakes his head)

McGee: “Why contact the Captain?”

Gibbs: “Medical reasons…you find that note next to Leave Reason, the information is private…”

Torres: “No mention of any sick bay calls, doctor visits,,,nothing’

Gibbs: “Could be about his wife”

McGee: “Or he needed time to cut off a finger….His leave time matches the same week we received the box…”

(Torres shakes his head)

Torres: “Dude…that box…daaaaaang!”

(Gibbs sighs….McGee catches it)

Gibbs: “Call the captain”

McGee: “On it boss”

(McGee turns to his PC, clicky clacks….pulls up Naval Fleet Directory….McGee begins grinning)

McGee: “Got him….switching ISP now…”

Torres: “He gets all nerdy up when he does this”

Gibbs: “What?”

Torres: “Yea..ever since Delilah gave him the codes to make ship to ship satellite calls….”

Gibbs: “What?”

McGee: “Not just satellite calls, Torres…(bigger grin) “…GSP 1700 Global satellite ship to ship flash traffic calls!”

(Torres looks over at Gibbs)

Torres: “That mean anything to you?”

(Gibbs shakes his head)

Gibbs; ‘Nope…I can’t even say it…”

(McGee smiles even bigger)

McGee: “Aircraft carrier USS Jenny is routing the call now…”

(Gibbs does WTH look at Mcgee)

Gibbs; “USS JENNY?”

McGee; “Yea…these calls are only allowed ship to ship”

Gibbs: “McGEE! JENNY?”

(McGee grins…)

McGee; “Sorry boss…I used that name before….it just kind of….sir…I….”

Gibbs: “YOU KINDA JUST WHAT, MCGEE?”

McGee: “It was already registered in the call system, boss….”

Gibbs: “Already registered? What the hell does THAT mean?”

McGee: “Uh…it means…the system sees that calls have been made before….from the USS Jenny…”

(Gibbs hangs his head….looks up at McGee….pitiful look on his face)

Gibbs: “Why? Why, McGee?”

(Mcgee turns red….)

McGee; “Sorry boss”

(Gibbs shakes his head….The speaker on McGee’s PC begins sounding out the satellite ring tone…..The phone answers…A man starts shouting into the phone)

Man: “NO ONE ELSE BUT JETHRO GIBBS HAS THE BALLS TO USE AN OLD GIRLFRIEND’S NAME FOR A SHIP!.”

(Gibbs gives a small grin….He speaks across the room)

Gibbs: “Hello Jim”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in Autopsy…Ducky sitting at the desk on the wall, looking out over the autopsy tables…The doors open, Gibbs walks in…Ducky looks over at him, sad smile…)

Ducky: "So much pain, Jethro"

Gibbs: "It's an autopsy room…"

Ducky: "No, Jethro…I was simply reminiscing…Kate…Jenny…"

Gibbs: "Not a smart thing, Duck"

(Ducky nods….)

Ducky: "I suppose you are right…but poor James…"

Gibbs; "What happened? She was sick, yea…but this…."

(Ducky looks off….)

Ducky: "Alpha 1…."

(Gibbs waits…)

Ducky: 'Breena had a hereditary disease…Emphysema, Alpha 1….weakened lung tissues…"

Gibbs: "I didn't know that…"

Ducky: "Not many did, Jethro. Breena chose not to talk of it…It is controllable, can even be treated…but in this situation…."

Gibbs; "How bad, Duck?"

(Ducky looks up at Gibbs…sad face, fearful face)

Ducky: "I'm afraid our Jimmy….He has been told to prepare for the worst"

Gibbs: "Ducky…."

(Ducky interrupts Gibbs…..)

Ducky: "You are not the only person that called me, Jethro…."

(Gibbs face falls…)

Gibbs: "Aw no…."

(Ducky nods his head….)

Ducky: "He called me…in case….He said he didn't want anyone else taking care of his wife…."

(Ducky stops….his head drops…His shoulders begin shaking….)

Ducky: “That dear, sweet, sweet, woman….She can’t die….she just can’t…..”

(scene fades out, Gibbs standing, holding Ducky to his chest….)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens next morning in the NCIS bullpen, all sitting at their desks…Torres looks over at Bishop’s desk, sees Dawson sitting there, smiling at him)

Torres: “It’s not funny!”

Dawson: ‘It’s funny”

Torres: “Gibbs, tell her we have work to do!”

(Gibbs looks up, looks over at Dawson, sees a potted plant on the corner of her desk…He turns to Torres)

Gibbs: “It is kinda funny…Now Torres….(yells) “GET TO WORK!”

McGee: “Boss, the call with Ensign Wooding should come in any minute”

Torres: “Yea…from the USS Troublemaker”

Gibbs: “You got that right”

(In the background, Bishop can be seen getting off the elevator, holding little Nickie, wrapped up in swaddles of blankets. She is carrying bassinet in other hand…)

Gibbs: (raises voice) “And by the way! Which one of you told Caprice about Jenny?”

(Bishop can be seen stopping, her eyes get wide, she makes a U-turn, heads back for the elevator)

McGee: (shouting) “Hey, it’s the baby!”

(Bishop seen stopping right before she reaches the elevator doors, closes her eyes, mouths, “uh oh”…)

Gibbs: “Bishop?”

(Bishop turns around, starts walking towards the bullpen…all eyes on her…she arrives, stops in front of her/Dawson’s desk. Dawson looks up, sees Bishop standing by her, head turns, eyes show panic as she turns away)

Torres: “Hey!” (he gets up heads towards Bishop) “Let me hold my little girl!”

(Bishop looks at him, starts shaking her head back and forth)

Torres: ‘Come on, little momma….”

(She shakes her head back and forth, faster, backing up one step, her eyes on Gibbs..Gibbs shakes his head, looks down at his desk)

Gibbs: 'Go on, Bishop…I'm not gonna hit you"

(Torres looks at Gibbs, then at Bishop, then at Nickie, then back up at Bishop….)

Torres: "What? You were using my daughter as a shield?"

(Bishop's eyes get wide)

Bishop: "I panicked!"

(Dawson heard mumbling)

Dawson: "You think YOU'RE panicking?"

(Bishop hears her, looks down at the desk, sees the potted plant…)

Bishop: "Cute plant"

(Dawson looks up at her, disbelief on face)

Dawson: "Thank you?"

Torres: "Bish? My daughter?"

Bishop: "Yea..yea…here you go, daddy…."

(She hands Nickie to Torres, watching him beam when he takes her….Bishop looks down at Dawson, winks at her…Dawson looks back at her wide-eyed, fearful)

Bishop: "Probie…I'm going to make this quick…"

(Dawson jumps up, grabs her plant, starts to run out from behind the desk)

Bishop: "No! You can have the desk!"

(Dawson stops, turns, faces Bishop)

Dawson: "I can?"

Bishop: "Yep…I've decided…Since the father of my child can't protect my territory…."

(She looks at Gibbs)

Bishop: 'You're on no stairway restriction how much longer?"

Gibbs: "4 weeks…Why?"

Bishop: "Which is right about the time I come back, right?"

Gibbs: "Yea…."

(Bishop crosses her arms, does scrunchy mouth thing…then she points at Gibbs)

Bishop: “I’m taking THAT desk!”

Gibbs: “WHAT?”

(Scene fades out to Gibbs looking open mouthed at Bishop)

(scene shifts to Walter Reed hospital corridor, sign by large doors…)

NEGATIVE PRESSURE ROOM

AUTHORIZED STAFF ONLY!

(Palmer stands in the hallway, face pressed up against the one window allowing him a view of Breena’s bed…There is a partial screen up, blocking her face…all he can see is her upper torso down, her chest slowly rising, then falling, then rising again, two, long light blue ribbed tubes laying on her body, connected at a juncture near her face, creating a ‘Y’ shape..He stares at Breena’s chest, watching it move…Caprice comes down the hall, sees Palmer at the window…She walks up to him, says nothing..Instead, she turns and watches the same scene he does…finally, still looking through the window, he says…)

Caprice: ‘If you can see their chest moving, it feels like hope”

(Palmer turns to face Caprice, her face still looking at Breena)

Palmer: “She looks like Agent Gibbs did…”

(She nods, still looking at Breena)

Palmer: “How scared were you?”

(She blinks several times…)

Caprice: “Terrified”

(Palmer nods at her…)

Palmer: “You retired”

Caprice: “I know”

(He looks at her, taking in the scrubs, the hair covering, the pull on plastic booties…A lanyard around her neck holds a tab that says “ICU – Level 4”, the highest ICU level)

Palmer: “Thank you”

Caprice: “You’re welcome”

Palmer: “Can she hear you? Does she know it’s you?”

(She nods….)

Palmer: “Will you tell her something for me?....(pause) “…Please?”

Caprice: “I’ll try, Jimmy…She’s losing oxygen to the brain…I don’t know if…”

Palmer: “Please….”

(She stares at him, her heart breaking…she nods)

Caprice: “I’ll tell her”

(Palmer looks down in his jacket pocket, pulls out a folded piece of paper..)

Palmer: “Give her this, read it to her…then tell her I said no. Tell her I’ll be like Gibbs”

(Caprice stares at the folded paper)

Caprice: “Okay….”

(She take the note, does not unfold it….She looks up at Palmer)

Caprice: “Jimmy….if she gets through this…the lack of oxygen…she might not be the same…”

Palmer: “NO!” (he pauses, calms) “She’ll always be the same to me…Her eyes will always be smiling….No matter what, no matter what….I’ll be able to see her”

(Caprice sees nurses coming out of the ward….)

Caprice: “I’ve got to go in…It’s my shift…”

Palmer: “Thank you for doing this…I know you didn’t have to….”

(She stands on her toes, kisses Palmer’s cheek)

Caprice: “Yes I did”

(She turns, pulls her mask up, places a set of goggles on her face, then walks into the depressurized room….the doors close quickly behind her….)

Caprice: (to self) “Oh Jimmy….”

(She approaches the area Breena is in…She goes to Breena’s bed, talks to her, tells her about the day, about how the others are doing…she tells her how much Jimmy loves her, that he’s right outside….then she pulls out the folded paper, unfolds it, and reads it to herself before reading it to Breena…It was the last thing Breena could do before losing motor control…she had written in a barely legible scribble..)

“I want you to marry again. I want you and Victoria to be happy. You’ll always be my beautiful man. Wherever I am, I’ll be loving you from there”

Three Hours Later…

(scene shifts to Caprice exiting the ward doors…Palmer is still standing where he was before…looking through the window…He sees Caprice come out….)

Palmer: “How is she?”

Caprice: “I read her the note…then I told her what you said…”

Palmer: “Thank you…all I can do is hope it makes her fight…”

Caprice: “Jimmy….”

(He turns away from the window, looks at her, she gives him a slight smile)

Caprice: “Jimmy honey…” (pause..she thinks…) “I think….I think her eyes smiled”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in NCIS bullpen, Bishop still standing by her desk, staring at Gibbs’s desk, arms over her chest, scrunchy mouth going…)

Bishop: “Tim…you told me…I have seniority….”

(Gibbs looks to McGee, stares, one eyebrow goes up…)

McGee: “Sorry boss….I even think it was your idea at first”

Gibbs: (raised voice) “McGee! Don’t listen to me!”

(McGee looks away, towards the elevator….He sees Kathy Wooding getting off the elevator, heading their way…McGee stands up)

McGee: ‘Mrs. Wooding…nice to see you again….”

(She looks at McGee curiously, then speaks, in an exaggerated Southern Belle drawl…)

Wooding: ‘Why dahlin’, you must have sipped once too often from your granddaddy’s jug…..”

(She looks at the team, all of them looking curiously at her…)

Wooding: ‘Oh my…you look like lost kittens….My name, civil servants, is Adams….Jolen Donnabelle Adams..You know, from the much celebrated and revered lineage of Brigadier General William Wirt Adams? The hero of the Confederacy?”

(She looks down at Dawson…a sneer comes over her face)

Wooding/Adams: “Well…isn’t this special….I do suppose, suga…your momma and daddy must be very proud” (shakes her head) “Affirmative Action is so silly…(looks at McGee) “…don’t you agree?”

(Dawson looks up at her, open mouthed, speechless…Bishop is heard to say in her own Oklahoma drawl)

Bishop: “How nice”

Dawson: “I have no time to dilly dally…where might I locate a certain man by the name of Jethro Gibbs?”

(Gibbs stares at her, then gets up from his desk….She sees him…her eyes take him in….)

Wooding/Adams: “My my….what a magnificent member of the unfortunately necessary male species we have here….”

(She stares at Gibbs, her eyes narrow, a small smile forms on her lips…Gibbs feels like he should reach for his gun)

Wooding/Adams: “I might have to take you home with me and eat you up like a kitten lappin’ a saucer of milk…You would make a marvelous ex husband”

(Bishop drawls once more)

Bishop: “How nice”

Gibbs: “Ma’am? You were just here this morning…you told us your name was Kathy Wooding”

(She flicks her hand in the air, dismissing his statement…)

Wooding/Adams: “Is that vile woman coming around again? I swear…I neva will understand why a tramp like her would even be bold enough to show her face in public..She is a vile, vile, woman…Pay no heed to her, dahlins…she is a trollop of the worst degree”

(Bishop is still staring at the woman…she says it again)

Bishop: “How nice”

Gibbs: “Ma’am..what exactly are you here for?”

(The woman holds up her right hand….the one with the finger missing)

Wooding/Adams: “Why else, you beautiful man? To retrieve what is rightfully mine…My finger!”

(She pauses, looks at Gibbs)

Wooding/Adams: “Breaking an engagement can be such nasty business”

(scene fades out to entire team looking in disbelief, except Bishop. She is glaring at the woman, mouthing the words, “How nice”)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens

(scene opens at the Thomas House…Cal standing on the back deck, looking up at the waterfall he can see after clearing out the trees….His face full of anguish…He is seen dropping to his knees, head bowed)

Cal: “Please…please take this task from me…”

(He is quiet for a moment…then nods…)

Cal: "…As you will it…."

(He gets up, walks into the house….He is seen driving his truck towards the city)

(scene shifts to NCIS bullpen, all sitting at their desks. Bishop sitting on desk across from Torres, Nickie in carry basinet on floor by her chair, sleeping…Torres constantly looking over at the baby)

McGee: "Jolen Adams Wooding Kathy sure seems motivated to retrieve that finger"

Bishop: "Multiple Personality Disorder"

Gibbs: "Poor guy"

Bishop: "Poor guy? What about her? It must be horrible living like that!"

Gibbs: 'Yea, maybe"

Bishop: "MAYBE?"

Gibbs: 'Well yea…maybe…Look, every woman I've ever married has a personality..(pauses) "All of them in disorder"

(Bishop goes wide eye mouth open shock…Gibbs chuckles)

Bishop: 'You married them"

(Gibbs thinks, shrugs)

Gibbs: "Yea…there is that"

McGee: "Maybe Ensign Wooding can shed some light on his ex wife…He's scheduled any minute to call"

Torres: "He calling us, or calling the USS Jenny?"

(Gibbs drops his head….)

Bishop: "Too bad Caprice isn't here…We could see some of that disorder Gibbs is talking about"

Bishop: 'Ya think?"

(Gibbs looks up at McGee, shakes his head, looks back down…McGee looks down at his own keyboard)

McGee: "Sorry boss"

(McGee looks over at Bishop)

McGee: "Bishop…what's with the 'how nice' thing?"

Torres: "Yea…it was creepy…I was expecting you to slap her"

Dawson: 'I'd a paid to see that!"

(Bishop looks at the team….)

Bishop: "It's a story…and honestly, one each of you should listen to…It will help you deal with life, so much easier.."

McGee; “Well, come on with it! We’re not doing anything while we’re waiting…”

(She looks over at Gibbs….)

Gibbs: “Yea Bishop…tell us a story”

Bishop: “Okay….now…There were these three southern belles, and I mean ‘southern…”..They were sitting on the veranda, in front of the plantation house, sipping mint juleps, all three discussing what they did for the summer…”

Gibbs: “Sound dangerous”

Bishop: “Yes..it was…anyway, two of the southern belles were old school, aristocratic, nasty southern belles…The third one, was a young hoochie momma, recently married to an elderly plantation owner”

Gibbs: “I think I married the first two”

(Bishop chuckles)

Bishop: “The two snotty belles hated her, but her husband owned the largest plantation in the south…so, they were obligated to include her….So…they began discussing what they did for the summer…The first snotty belle starting talking..”

(Bishop prepares her southern belle accent, imitating the arrogant southern belle)

Bishop: ‘Well, sugas…this summa, I went to Savanah, the capital of our great state, and found out I was directly descended from Robert E. Lee himself! I am a certified, DNA tested, member of that wonderful Southern family!”

Hoochie Momma: “How nice”

Bishop: “So, the second snot nose belle says…”

2nd Belle: “Oh my, that is wonderful! But…I went to Atlanta, and due to my perfect behavior, honoring the South, I was inducted into the Daughters of the Confederacy! I am an official, licensed, verified, Southern Belle!”

Hoochie Momma: ‘How nice”

Bishop: ‘So, the two bitches turn to the hoochie momma, and with disgust dripping from their voices….”

Belle: “Well, dahlin…whatever did YOU do this summa?”

Hoochie Momma: “Well, I went back across the tracks from wence I came, and I learned how to say “How nice”…(pause)..”Instead of $%&@ You, bitch!”

(team roars in laughter, none any louder than Dawson…..Gibbs chuckles, shakes his head….)

Torres: “That’s my girl!”

Gibbs: “Yea…that she is, Torres”

(McGee, grinning…)

McGee: “I love it”

Dawson: ‘Dang girl! You rock!”

(Bishop blushes, looks down at Nickie…)

Bishop: ‘You didn’t hear that, baby girl…”

(McGee’s computer signals a satellite call…McGee clicky clacks, puts call on speaker)

Voice: “Agent Gibbs, Ensign Wooding here…I hear you’re calling about my ex wife?”

Gibbs: “Yea, Ensign…it seems we have a problem….”

Wooding: “With which one?”

Gibbs: “Both of them!”

Wooding: “Oh…just wait, sir…there’s more”

Gibbs: “WHAT?”

Wooding: “Seven in all”

Gibbs: “WHAT?”

Wooding: “It made for an interesting marriage”

Gibbs: “Ya think?”

Wooding: ‘Yes sir…what did she say about her finger?”

Gibbs: “Nothing…but she seemed proud of it”

Wooding: “She is…when I told her I wanted a divorce, she ran into the kitchen, pulled out a cleaver, chopped it off, then held her hand over the gas stove burner, not saying a word….She just looked at me and said…”

(A pause)

Wooding: “This is what I’ll do to you if you leave me”

McGee: “Wow!”

Gibbs: “And…after that?”

Wooding: “Hell! It scared the beejesus outa me! I ran….got on my ship, sailed out….I keep looking for her, though…she’s persistent”

Gibbs: “Ensign, we’ll check out your story, but why do they….why does she want the finger back?”

Wooding: “Her engagement ring was on it…4 carats of perfect diamond”

Gibbs: “There’s no ring on it…”

Wooding: “I know…it dropped off when she cut the finger off…I left it on the floor”

Gibbs: “She know that?”

Wooding: “I don’t know…I didn’t stick around long enough to ask…”

Gibbs: “I guess not…So, we should let her know to find the ring in your house?”

Wooding: “Kinda hard to do that sir”

Gibbs: “Why?”

Wooding: “She burned it down…MPs told me they found her outside in the front yard, laughing”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in NCIS bullpen, team present, McGee, Dawson, Torres at their desks, Gibbs not there yet. Daisy is seen trotting into the bullpen, greeting McGee and Torres, then, in middle of bullpen, she turns, looks at Dawson, stops, sits…Daisy cocks her head one way, then the other, curious dog look on her face)

Dawson: “Oh god, not you too..This desk…”

(Daisy looks back at Torres, then at McGee….Gibbs is seen finally walking into the bullpen…He walks past Dawson and McGee without acknowledging them, sits at his desk…He looks up, sees Daisy still sitting)

Gibbs: “She’s okay”

(Daisy immediately pops up, walks to Dawson, who now can see just how large Daisy is. The top of Daisy’s back is almost even with the desktop, the dog’s head now inching closer to Dawson…Dawson is seen leaning away from Daisy, apprehensive look on her face)

Dawson: “Please don’t eat me”

(Daisy cocks her head, then looks over at Gibbs….She chuffs…Gibbs, still looking down at papers on desk, gets small grin on face)

Gibbs: “You’re not part of her food chain”

Dawson: “Then what is she doing?”

Gibbs: “Waiting”

Dawson: “For what?”

Gibbs; “To see if you’re going to give her anything that is part of her food chain”

(She looks fearfully at Daisy, leans further over, pulls bottom desk drawer out, lifts brown paper bag…Daisy perks up, focuses on the bag…Gibbs looks over)

Gibbs: “Daisy….that’s her lunch”

(Daisy looks back at Gibbs…Gibbs stares at Daisy…Daisy whines, turns around, trots to the side of Gibbs’s desk, lays down on her blanket, her face still staring at Dawson…Dawson stares back)

Dawson: “That dog is big”

Gibbs: “Yea”

(Gibbs continues to focus on the papers on his desk, looking through each one…)

Gibbs: “Anyone see the budget file?”

(He continues looking, no one responds…He hears a voice, then a hand extends across his desk, comes into his view..A voice is heard)

Voice: “My name is Doctor Lucille Peabody..I understand you have come in contact with a patient of mine?”

(Gibbs does not look up, keeps shuffling)

Gibbs: “It’s about time….”

(He looks up from his papers and sees the extended hand…It is missing a finger…He looks up…Sees a lab coat, stitched on the area above the pocket, it reads “Lucille Peabody, MD Psych”…The woman wearing the coat is Kathy Wooding)

(scene shifts to Walter Reed, the ICU 4 room is quiet, the attending nurse has checked all vitals, she taps several areas on the main terminal screen in the room, hits ‘update’, then the screen closes. The nurse looks across the room, speaks softly to the doctor, his back to her, attending to a patient in their bed)

Nurse: “All done, doctor. The shift nurse called in, sick. They called in Nurse McNalley to cover. If you want, I can stay until…”

Doctor: “Thank you nurse. I assure you, I will be fine. And I believe her name is Nurse Gibbs now?”

(The nurse shows surprise)

Nurse: “Yes…Gibbs….I forgot”

Doctor: “I am most sorrowful regarding the ill nurse…I am quite sure it will pass quickly”

Nurse: “Hope so…Then Dr. Francis got sick. I was afraid we’d be stuck with an intern. You were a godsend”

(The doctor turns, cap and mask on, then his eyes show he’s smiling…gold flecks can be seen dancing in his eyes)

Cal: “A beautiful compliment, child…I shall do my best to live up to it”

(The nurse smiles at him….shakes her head, then exits the room, talking to herself)

Nurse: “He is such an angel…”

(scene shifts to hospital parking lot, Caprice seen racing up in her Jaguar, screeches to a stop in her assigned place, exits the car, begins walking fast towards the employee entrance)

(scene shifts to the ICU room…Cal has moved to Breena’s bedside…The view shows the fabric screen still up, only her toro and down seen, Cal can be seen reaching out to her with a hand…)

Cal: “No child…do not fear”

(the sound of the heartrate monitor starts increasing. He touches her head)

Cal: ‘No more fear….ever”

(the heartrate sound increases more. He touches her throat)

Cal: “No more pain…ever”

(the heartrate beeping slows….)

Cal: “I will be here when you are ready, beautiful child. For now…sleep”

(The heartrate increases, dramatically…His face can be seen looking at her, questioningly)

Cal: “Of course…you may ask me anything”

(No sound is heard..Cal smiles, nods his head)

Cal: “Yes, beautiful soul, I promise…I will look after her. It will be an honor”

(The beeping sounds decrease…then level out at a steady, slow, rate…Cal looks quickly towards the Ward doors, moves out from behind Breena’s bed, walks quickly toward the doors, just as Caprice comes rushing in, immediately moving to the main monitor, starts inputting her ID and password)

Caprice: “I’m here, doc! Thank you for covering!”

(The doctor passes by her without a word….she turns to see him exit through the doors…The doors close, she rushes through them…She enters the hallway, looks both ways….Nothing..she whispers to herself)

Caprice: “Cal?”

(She looks again, listens, no one, no noise…she enters the ward, walks quickly to Breena’s bed….She looks at the monitors..)

Caprice: “Well look at you! Pulse down, blood pressure normal….”

(Caprice looks at Breena’s face, then registers the surprise)

Caprice: “Baby…for the first time in days, you look peaceful…and is that a smile I see at the corners of your mouth?”

(With one finger, Caprice touches her mask at the area over her lips…she extends it, lightly touches Breena’s cheek…Then she moves on to check on the other patients….)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the bullpen, Gibbs staring up at Kathy Wooding, aka Dr. Lucille Peabody..He notices the team, all staring at her, shocked into silence…Gibbs gets up, comes from around his desk…faces the ‘doctor’…She takes him in as he gets up, and for a moment, the same predatory look in her eyes that ‘Jolen Adams’ had…The look vanishes as quickly as it appeared…)

Gibbs: “Your patient?”

Peabody: “Yes…she is one of mine…and the others…they are mine”

Gibbs: “Others?”

Peabody: “I’m afraid so, agent…It seems that they travel in a pack…”

Gibbs: “Their names?”

Peabody: “Now, agent, I’m sure you are aware of privacy concerns…I cannot discuss any identities without the proper ROI…That stands for…”

Gibbs: “Release of Information..yea…I know”

Peabody: “Then without it, I cannot help you…but if you would give me any information you have on them….”

(Dawson interrupts)

Dawson: “I have the releases”

(Everyone including Peabody turns to Dawson….)

Peabody: “You do?”

Gibbs: “You do?”

Dawson: “Yea…I put them over here…”

(She gets up from her desk, walks behind McGee’s desk, opens the file cabinet, pulls out a manilla folder, withdraws two sheets of paper…she walks to Peabody, hands her the papers…Peabody stares at them, stupefied….she looks down at Dawson)

Peabody: “They are in order….thank you…”

(She hands the papers back to Dawson)

Gibbs: “Dr. Peabody? Should we continue this in the conference room?”

Peabody: “Yes…that would be appreciated”

(Gibbs looks at McGee…Gibbs nods….McGee nods back…Gibbs and Peabody walk up the stairs, Gibbs slowly…McGee is seen picking up his desk phone…)

McGee: (into phone, quietly) “She’s here….In the conference room…(pause) “..Thank you”

(McGee hangs up the phone, looks up)

McGee: “The Psych team is on its way….”

Torres: “Bueno…she gives me the creeps”

McGee: “Yea…me too…Boss handled it well…(looks at Dawson) “..Speaking of handling it well…Dawson…you had releases?”

(Dawson gets up, walks to McGee’s file cabinet, takes out the manila folder she had pulled the papers out of, closes the drawer, puts the papers back in the file, walks to Gibbs’s desk, drops the folder on the desk)

Dawson: “We got them all the time at Metro…they’d come in, claim to be a cop, a detective, one claimed to be Richard Nixon…did a pretty good imitation….”

Torres: “The papers….?”

Dawson: “I handed her the first two pages…You could hand them a blank sheet, and they’d see what you want them to see…standard operating procedure with them”

McGee: “You put the file on the Boss’s desk…”

Dawson: “The budget file he was looking for. He gave it to you yesterday”

(McGee looks over at Torres…both have awe on their face…They look back at Dawson…)

McGee: “Nice work Dawson!”

Dawson: “Thanks…I’m just glad she didn’t come in naked….those are the worst…”

(She shakes her head, goes back to her desk…sits)

Torres: “I think Jolen was considering it….dude…she had the hots for Gibbs!”

(They stop as a Psych Ward attendant comes into the bullpen….)

Attendant: “We clear to bring a gurney in here?”

McGee: “Yes sir…they’re in the conference room upstairs…”

(The attendant nods, motions to the others waiting in the elevator…They see two more men come out, pulling a stretcher with straps on it…McGee motions for them to wait….He opens a desk drawer, pulls a small box out…hands it to the attendant)

McGee: “This might help her go calmly”

(The attendant looks curiously at the box…he opens it…face goes into shock)

Attendant: “AAAACK!”

(McGee smiles)

McGee; ‘It is hers, after all…All of the hers…”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in Walter Reed….Palmer standing outside in the hallway, talking on the phone…)

Palmer: “It’s about the same, but last night, her levels evened out, and they said she was sleeping well…”

(scene shifts to NCIS bullpen, McGee’s phone on his desk, Palmer on speaker…Everyone is gathered close, listening)

McGee: “Jimmy, that’s great….sleep is the best medicine….”

Palmer: (On speaker) “Yes! When Breena is sick, and she starts getting better, she always sleeps well the night before!”

Gibbs: “Gotta keep up the hope, Bubba…”

Palmer: “Yes! Thank you…all of you!....Wait..hold on….”

(scene shifts back to the hospital…Palmer sees Caprice walk out of the doors….she stands still for a moment, looking at Palmer…)

Palmer: “Hey! How is……”

(scene shifts to bullpen, all listening to Palmer..)

Palmer: (on speaker) “Caprice…why are you looking at me like that….”

(scene shifts to hospital….scene shows Palmer’s phone hitting the floor….)

(scene shifts to bullpen…they hear a loud clatter…then..)

Palmer: (on speaker) “No….please, no..”

(Gibbs closes his eyes…Torres turns away…McGee covers his eyes with his hands…Caprice's voice can be heard)

Caprice: (on speaker) "Jimmy…I'm so sorry…"

(Over the speaker, they hear the sound of a man falling to his knees….then a long, heartbroken, agonizing wail echoes over the bullpen……)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the Walter Reed Hospital….attendants can be seen preparing Breena's body for the morgue…Palmer, scrubs and protective gear on, provided by Caprice, is leaning against the far wall, arms crossed, watching them…he is watching everything, no tears, just watching them prepare his wife's body…Caprice moves close to him…)

Caprice: "They'll take good care of her Jimmy…I promise"

(Palmer says nothing, nods his head….They both see one of the attendants begin to remove Breena's wedding ring…Palmer straightens up…)

Palmer: "NO!"

(The attendant looks at him…then at Caprice…)

Attendent: "It's standard procedure..Nurse…what do I do?"

(Caprice looks at Palmer, his face firm, resolute…)

Palmer: "No"

(Caprice looks back at the attendant)

Caprice: "Do what he wants"

(The attendant nods, goes back to work, leaving her ring on)

Caprice: "Jimmy…maybe you shouldn't be in here…"

(He turns his head to her….his expression is his reply)

Caprice: 'I understand…"

(He turns his face back to the work being done in front of him)

Palmer: "Is Dr. Mallard ready?"

Caprice: "Yes…he's downstairs in the van"

(He nods)

Caprice: "Honey…do you want someone to talk to? It can help"

(He shakes his head…)

Palmer: "The only one I need to talk to is our daughter…"

Caprice: "Oh, Jimmy…Viktoria…I'm so sorry"

(His head drops…the first emotion he's shown)

Palmer: "Thank you…me too"

(They begin to wheel Breena's body out of the room…)

Palmer: "I have to go with them…She hates being alone…I don't want her to be afraid"

(Caprice watches as Palmer takes his place by his wife's side….Caprice whispers to herself)

Caprice: "Go with her honey…she knows you're there……"

(scene fades to black and white)

One Week After The Funeral

(Scene opens at The D Ranch, afternoon, Gibbs, McGee, Torres, Dil, in the kitchen, sitting at the kitchen table, drinking beer, playing cards.. Caprice, Nell, Dez, Delilah, Bishop, sitting in the living room, Caprice holding little Nickie)

Caprice: "Ellie…She is precious…"

(Bishop smiles, beams)

Bishop: "She is…thank you. For the hundredth time"

Delilah: "I miss having a baby"

(All head turn to Delilah…She looks back at them, holds her hands up, shrugs)

Delilah: "Sue me…I miss having a baby"

Caprice: "I don't know what it's like, but I'd like to think I would have been a good mom"

Nell: "You are a good mom…you're a great mom! Have you ever seen a happier boy than Danny?"

(Caprice looks down the hallway on the opposite side of the house, listening…)

Caprice: "I don't hear any noise…That's a bad sign"

Delilah: "I don't hear Johnny or Morgan either…."

(Delilah wheels her chair to the hallway, stops before she gets to the playroom set up for the kids…The door is open, Delilah leans forward, trying to hear without being seen…She leans back, smiles, turns her chair around, wheels back to the living room)

Delilah: "You will not believe what's going on in there"

Caprice: "Danny's not trying to play doctor, is he?"

(The girls chuckle….)

Caprice: "I'm serious! He's way too young!"

Nell: "How old does he have to be before you're okay with that?"

(Caprice looks at Nell…thinks…..)

Caprice: "40. And only after he completes his time at the monastery."

Dez: “What are they doing in there?”

Delilah: “Danny has a book out…he reads a page out loud, then quizzes the twins….Morgan is leading Johnny 5 to 4”

(Bishop turns and looks out the front window towards the entrance road)

Bishop: ‘There’s a car coming!”

Nell: “Jimmy?”

Bishop: ‘I can’t tell….Nell, Dez…you expecting anyone else?”

Dez: “No…Well, Cal, but he’ll come across the pasture in my jeep”

Caprice: “Or poofs here”

(Dez and Nell both look towards Caprice in surprise….)

Caprice: “He was there! Then he wasn’t there! It was weird!”

Dez: “You sure you saw him?”

Caprice: “Honey…there’s only one man that walks like a cat, like Cal does, that’s a doctor…AND speaks with an Italian accent”

Dez: “He’ll be here shortly, Caprice…you can ask him yourself”

Caprice; “I will!”

(She thinks…)

Caprice: “I won’t”

Dez: “And….why not?”

(Caprice remember Breena’s eyes, and how peaceful she seemed when she drifted off in her sleep)

Caprice: “Because if it was him….He did something wonderful….maybe it should stay between him and Breena”

(A car can be heard pulling up in front of the house)

Bishop: “He’s here….I’m looking….looking…..Yes! He’s got Viktoria with him!”

Delilah: “That child…I hope she’s better….it’s horribly sad”

Bishop: “She hasn’t left her daddy’s side once….She barely talks….”

Dez: “She lost her mother…it’s a horrible feeling”

Bishop; “Palmer’s been quiet too…he’s still not back at work…”

(Nell looks outside, sees Palmer going to the passenger door to get Viktoria…Nell walks quickly into the kitchen to tell the men. Bishop gets up….)

Bishop: “I’m going outside….”

(Bishop walks to the front door, opens it, walks outside…..Viktoria is seen walking up, holding Palmer’s hand…She sees Bishop, immediately grabs holds of Palmer’s leg, hides her face behind the leg)

Palmer: “I’m sorry, Ellie…she’s been this way ever since….Ever since…”

Bishop: “It’s okay, Jimmy…we all understand…”

(Bishop kneels down, calls to Viktoria)

Bishop; “Hi Viktoria…we’re all so glad you could come….”

(Viktoria moves her head from behind Palmer’s leg….she looks at Bishop…shyly, she says…)

Viktoria: “Thank you very much, Aunt Ellie”

(Bishop smiles at her, then stands….)

Bishop: “Come on in, Jimmy…maybe your girl here might see someone she wants to see…”

Palmer: “I hope so….I’ve been trying to help her….”

(Bishop cocks her head…)

Bishop: “Anyone helping you, Jimmy?”

(He looks at her….says nothing for a moment…then….)

Palmer: “I don’t know what to ask for…..”

(He shrugs)

(Bishop walks quickly to him, hugs him tight….)

Bishop: “I’m so so sorry Jimmy….She was such a wonderful woman”

(Palmer hugs her back, nods his head…)

Palmer: “She was….It still feels like she’s…”

Bishop: “I know…I really do know…”

(Gibbs appears in the doorway….he stares at Viktoria….She looks at him….He raises one eyebrow…She tries to do the same, awkwardly….Gibbs stands where he is, then extends a hand to her..)

Gibbs: “Come on…You and me got stuff to do”

(Viktoria stares at Gibbs for a moment….then surprising both Palmer and Bishop, she walks slowly to Gibbs…She takes his outstretched hand, then as Gibbs turns to enter the house, Gibbs reaches in his jacket pocket, pulls out a bubble gum cigar…She looks at it, then back at Palmer…Jimmy smiles, nods to her….Viktoria reaches up, takes it from Gibbs…He starts walking into the house, she reaches up with her other hand, takes Gibbs’s hand….Bishop and Palmer are staring, disbelief on their faces)

Palmer: “I’ve seen it a dozen times…The way he has with children..”

Bishop: “I’ve seen it too…we all have…It’s unbelievable”

(Nell steps outside, her head turned towards Gibbs and Viktoria walking to the kitchen…)

Nell: “He makes people feel safe. Hurt children need that”

Palmer: “I’ve always been afraid of him…”

Bishop: (chuckles) “We all are”

Palmer: “But…somehow…when he’s needed….”

Nell; ‘He’s always there…I know”

(Bishop grins at Nell…)

Bishop: “So says the president of the Jethro Gibbs Fan Club”

(Nell smiles back at Bishop)

Nell: “I am…Guilty as charged…I think he’s a wonderful man…”

Bishop: “Weird Nell….weird…But it sure works for you…He thinks you hung the moon”

(Nell gives Bishop a big smile….then goes to Palmer, gives him a hug)

Nell: “Thank you for coming, Jimmy…When they told me you were, it made me really really happy”

Palmer: “Thank you Nell…I needed to get Viktoria out of the house….”

Nell; “Yes you did, daddy….and maybe you needed to, too…”

(He looks at her, blank expression…Nell kisses him on the cheek)

Nell: “We’ve missed you”

(Palmer’s face struggles….he regains composure)

Palmer: “I’ve missed everyone….I just…(blushes) “I really don’t know why I haven’t talked to….”

(She slips her arm through his….)

Nell: “Because you didn’t want to hear everyone reminding you….Sometimes we hide from that”

(He looks at her…surprise on his face)

Palmer: “Yes!”

Nell: “Then come on in….Everyone is going to remind you….But Jimmy…if it has to happen, this family of yours…”

Palmer: “Ours..this family of ours….”

(She smiles at him, cocks her head…)

Nell: “Now you’re getting it”

(He smiles at her….wags a finger at her)

Palmer: “That was tricky. (pauses) “I’m glad you came out. You know, Breena didn’t know you very well…but….(he looks off towards the pasture) “She always talked about how much she loved you….She told me more than once she felt you and her were so much alike”

Nell: “I thought that too…I think, Jimmy, us gals that want to see the best in everything….not every man understands that…But when we find one that does, it changes us….We finally get to live without someone calling us naïve, or dumb.....I think you did that for Breena…And I think she saw that Dil does that for me”

(He looks at her in shock)

Palmer: “She said that! I swear! She said you had found in Dil what she had found in me! I never understood it, and when I asked her what it meant, she laughed at me!”

Nell: “Because if you understood, you’d try too hard…and then you wouldn’t be you, even though you were you, trying to be you, which would make you not you!”

(He looks at her, blank expression..)

Palmer: “It worries me that I understood that”

Nell: “Good! Worry on!”

(She leads Palmer into the house, both of them smiling…Delilah watches as they enter)

Delilah: “She’s magic”

Caprice: “Yes…she is…Jethro thinks the world of her”

Delilah: “I do too….People don’t realize she’s probably the smartest person in the room. Any room”

Caprice: “Is she?”

Delilah: “Girl, you wouldn’t believe…I knew she was intelligent…but damn…when she has 3 or 4 things going at once, she still sees things others miss….Everyone at the agency is in awe of her”

Caprice: “She’s really happy”

Delilah: “Over the moon happy…Her and Dil…he’s made such a difference in her life”

Caprice: “He’s perfect for her…He’s happy too”

(Delilah looks at Nell, then at Caprice…)

Delilah: “Remind you of anyone else?”

(Caprice smiles….takes Delilah’s hand)

Caprice: “Yes…us”

(Delilah squeezes Caprice’s hand….)

Delilah: “Let’s go see what horrible thing Gibbs is teaching that child”

Caprice: “I’m sure they’re fine…”

(They move from the living room into the kitchen, then when they see the sight in front of them, they both stop….shock…Delilah looks up at Caprice….)

Delilah: “Fine, huh?”

(They see the men playing cards, chips in the middle of the table..Viktoria is sitting in Gibbs’s lap, bubble bum cigar clenched between her teeth, pointing to a card in Gibbs’s hand, urging him to discard it…Caprice looks down at Delilah…)

Caprice: “Every girl needs to learn how to play poker, beat the men, and appreciate a good cigar”

(Palmer walks into the kitchen, surprised to see his daughter sitting in Gibbs’s lap. Caprice and Delilah both look towards him, waiting for his response. Gibbs looks up at Palmer…)

Gibbs: “Hey Palmer…pull up a chair..”

Palmer: “No…no thank you sir….I’m not much of a poker player”

Gibbs: “Not what Ducky tells me…He said you’d won enough money off him over the years to pay all your med school bills”

(Viktoria pokes one of the cards in Gibbs’s hand, he looks at her curiously…)

Gibbs: “You sure?”

(Viktoria eagerly nods her head up and down…Gibbs shakes his head….)

Gibbs: “Alright…if you’re sure…”

(Gibbs discards, laying the card face down)

Gibbs: ‘We’ll take one”

(Delilah whispers to Caprice)

Delilah: “He just tossed away a pair….”

Caprice: “I don’t think he’s trying to win, honey”

(Gibbs picks up the card he’s dealt back…tucks it in his hand…He looks over at Viktoria….smiles)

Gibbs: ‘I’ll match your 25cents…and raise 50…”

(Everyone at the table stares at Gibbs….)

Torres: “You’ve got help….”

Gibbs: “Yea…I do”

(Gibbs looks at Viktoria, notices she’s looking past his face, out through the French doors to the back deck…Gibbs turns his head to look…He looks back at Viktoria)

Gibbs: “That’s Cal, honey…you’ve never met him..”

(Through the doors, Cal can be seen standing at the edge of the deck, far away from the door..He is looking through the doors, directly at Viktoria…)

Palmer: “Honey…that’s Mr. Cal…he’s a doctor”

(Dez has walked into the kitchen, sees Cal outside….)

Dez: “Veterinarian…at least today….”

(Dez hesitates to join Cal….she notices Cal’s gaze is fixed on Viktoria….She looks at the child, who’s own gaze is locked in also)

Dez: “Viktoria, honey…do you want to meet Mr. Cal?”

Palmer: “Not a chance…she’s shy to begin with, but right now….”

(Palmer is shocked into silence…Viktoria is climbing down from Gibbs’s lap, puts her feet on the floor, then turns to face Cal through the doors…)

Dez: “Honey….he’s the nicest man…”

Palmer: “Viktoria, would you like me to take you outside to meet him?”

(The child turns to her father, shakes her head ‘no’)

Palmer: “Told you….she’s not going to….”

(Another shock into silence….Viktoria begins walking towards the doors…Cal can be seen at the edge of the deck, directly under an olive tree branch…He is still focused on the girl…The room has gone silent, all eyes on the little girl)

(scene shifts to Cal, seeing Viktoria walking to the door….)

Cal: “Come child….let us speak…”

(Viktoria can be seen on the other side of the door, reaching up to pull the door lever down…Everyone inside is staring at her….Palmer can be seen with both fear and shock on his face)

(scene shifts to kitchen, the group watches as she opens the door…)

Palmer: “I don’t believe this…she never goes to a stranger”

Dez: (still watching Viktoria) “Maybe he’s not a stranger”

Palmer: “Viktoria’s never met Dr. Nuntio….”

Dez: “Depends on your definition of ‘met’….”

(Palmer looks curiously at Dez, then turns back to his daughter….Viktoria walks through the open door, closes the door behind her…From the kitchen, the scene shows her through the doors, slowly taking the steps towards Cal…He stands still, focused intently on the little girl approaching….He says nothing…she is silent….)

Bishop: “This is intense”

Caprice: “Very!”

(Gibbs is seen staring at Cal through the doors, then at Viktoria….)

Dez: “Something’s about to happen…..”

Nell: “Yes…”

Dez: “It’s important….”

Palmer: “I don’t understand….”

Dez: “Neither do we”

(They see Viktoria reach Cal….She stands still, looking up at him…He looks down at her…)

(scene shifts to Cal and Viktoria…)

Cal: “Hello, Viktoria”

(She is silent….she looks up at him…..then…)

Viktoria; “You know my mommy”

(He smiles, nods)

Cal: “Yes, I do”

Viktoria: “My daddy said she got sick and went to heaven”

Cal: “Your father is correct”

Viktoria: “Is she okay?”

Cal: “She Is wonderful, my dear….she is no longer ill”

Viktoria: “That’s good”

(Silence……then Viktoria speaks…)

Viktoria: “Mommy said you’re my friend now”

Cal: “Yes, beautiful child, she is right….and you are mine”

(Silence….)

Cal: “Would you like to go see a friend of mine? She is a very special friend….”

(She thinks…then nods….then she holds her arms up towards Cal, in the universal language of children)

(scene shifts inside the kitchen….the group is focused intensely on the scene….)

Dez; “She’s going to ask Cal to pick her up…”

Palmer: “No…she’ll never do that….ever….”

(They watch….then they see Viktoria’s arms reach up to Cal..everyone stops breathing)

Dez: “Just did”

Nell: “Oh my god…It’s so wonderful….”

(Scene shifts to Cal and Viktoria…Viktoria reaches up to Cal….He smiles, leans down, picks her up, nestles her in one arm against his chest…She is looking directly into his eyes….her own eyes open wide)

Viktoria: “I see gold things!”

Cal: “Yes, I imagine you do, dear…When I feel love, they come out and dance….they dance to show my joy”

Viktoria; “Are you happy?”

Cal: “Right now? Yes…I am quite happy…”

(She says nothing….then leans her head against Cal’s neck, looking back towards the kitchen….Through the doors, everyone can be seen in awe…Except for Dez and Nell…Dez stares intently at Cal, a small smile…Nell has covered her mouth with her hands, her eyes bright….Viktoria gives them a small wave of her hand…)

(scene shifts back to Cal and Viktoria)

Cal: ‘Are you ready to go see my friend?”

Viktoria: “The special friend?”

Cal: “Yes…very special”

Viktoria: “What is your friend’s name?”

Cal: “Her name is Bessie”

(Cal, holding the small child, walks towards the captive audience seen through the doors)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the house, a silent group watches Cal exit the house through the front door, heading towards the stable, Viktoria still in his arms)

Palmer: “I don’t believe what I just saw….”

Nell: “It’s wonderful, Jimmy….”

Palmer: “Yes! I just don’t believe it!”

Nell: “Maybe this will help, Jimmy…”

Dez: “Can’t hurt…”

Palmer: “I’m so worried about her…..”

Bishop: ‘Jimmy….children bounce back…quicker than we do”

Palmer: “I know….I’m just waiting,…”

Bishop: ‘Waiting? For what….?”

Palmer: “For her to cry….”

(Bishop stares at Palmer for a moment…then nods)

Bishop: ‘She will, Jimmy…sometimes it takes time”

(He nods to her, then looks off towards the stable)

Palmer: “Yes…sometimes it does…”

(Gibbs gets up….places a hand on Palmer’s shoulder…Palmer jumps…When Gibbs squeezes, Palmer turns to Gibbs)

Palmer: “Yes sir?”

(Gibbs looks over to Caprice…she nods her head…he turns back to Palmer)

Gibbs: ‘Let’s walk, Palmer…”

(Caprice watches the two men exit through the French doors….)

Nell: “What is Gibbs doing….?”

Caprice: “What he does best”

Nell: “What’s that?”

(Caprice thinks…..then…)

Caprice: “I don’t know…whatever’s needed, I guess”

(Nell smiles, bounces on her feet)

Nell; “That’s my Gibbsy!”

(Caprice looks at Nell, shakes her head)

Caprice: “Girl…am I going to have to adopt you?”

(Nell turns to Caprice…smiles big…points to Gibbs walking away with Palmer)

Nell: “He already has….”

(Nell smiles even bigger…looks at Caprice, finishes her sentence…)

Nell: “…Mom!”

(Caprice shows surprise, then shakes her head)

Caprice; ‘Girl….You were doing just fine until you said that….”

(scene shifts to olive orchard, Gibbs and Palmer walking slowly through the trees)

Gibbs: “She found a friend”

Palmer: “Yes sir….it was a surprise”

Gibbs: “He’s different”

(Palmer looks at Gibbs…smiles, nods)

Gibbs: “Seems to be an okay different”

(No reply….)

Palmer: “Viktoria hasn’t cried yet”

Gibbs: “That bother you?”

Palmer: “Yes! It’s how they start processing it’s real…they can’t start dealing with life at all until they accept what’s happened! It bothers me a lot!”

(Gibbs nods, looks down at the ground..)

Gibbs: “Have you?”

(Palmer stops….He turns to Gibbs….lost expression on his face)

Palmer: “No”

Gibbs: “Okay”

(Palmer stares at Gibbs…)

Palmer: “What are you trying to tell me?”

Gibbs: “Nothing….What are you are you trying to tell yourself?”

(Palmer thinks….)

Palmer: “I owe you an apology”

Gibbs: “No you don’t”

Palmer: “Yes I do! I wrote Breena if she didn’t live…I threatened her I’d be like you!”

(Gibbs chuckles)

Gibbs: “I know..Caprice told me”

Palmer: “It was a horrible thing to say….”

Gibbs; “No…it was the right thing to say”

(No reply…Palmer continues to stand, staring at Gibbs)

Gibbs: “I was miserable Palmer…After I lost Shannon and Kelly…I was a miserable son of a bitch…And I made everyone around me miserable too”

Palmer: “You missed your wife…and your daughter”

Gibbs; “Plenty of men miss their wives, Palmer…”

Palmer: “So…why? Why didn’t you…?”

(Gibbs shrugs)

Gibbs: “I didn’t let myself grieve…not really…”

Palmer: “Why?”

Gibbs: “If I did, it was admitting she was dead. It felt….I don’t know, Palmer…Somehow it felt like disloyalty…”

(Palmer stares at him…..)

Palmer: “Loyalty is the biggest thing about you…What changed?”

Gibbs: “I cried…Hell, Palmer, I lost it…”

Palmer: “Did it help?”

(Gibbs looks away…then down at the ground)

Gibbs: “Saved my life”

Palmer: “It’s been a week….since she…(pauses)..” It’s been a week…How long did you wait…?”

(Gibbs looks at Palmer….)

Gibbs: “30 years”

(Gibbs pauses…)

Gibbs: “Palmer….Don’t be me”

(scene shifts to the stable….Cal, still holding Viktoria, stands in front of Bessie’s stall…)

Cal: “Bessie…this is Viktoria….”

Bessie: “Moooooooo”

(Viktoria giggles….points at Bessie)

Viktoria: “Hello Bessie…It is very nice to meet you”

Bessie: “Mooo”

(She giggles again)

Viktoria: “She’s beautiful”

Cal: ‘Thank you…many people do not think so”

(She looks at him, precocious serious…in a very matter of fact voice…)

Viktoria: “You have to look inside”

Cal: ‘Yes dear…one does…Who taught you that?”

Viktoria: “My mommy….”

Cal: “Your mother was very much like that, child…she looked for beauty where others would not”

Viktoria: “Like my Aunt Nellie?”

(Cal smiles, nods….)

Cal: “Yes…just like her”

Viktoria: “Can I pet her?”

(Cal lets her down)

Cal: “If you wish…”

(Cal opens the gate….Bessie takes several steps towards her….Viktoria doesn’t flinch….Bessie moves her nose, the area not covered in tumors, towards Viktoria…)

Cal: “She is…”

Viktoria: “Telling me where she wants to be petted…I know…”

(Cal shows genuine surprise…)

Viktoria: “Everyone will tell you where they want to be petted…If you look for it….”

(Cal raises his eyebrows…..)

Cal; “Indeed, child….yes…”

(She pets Bessie on the nose, then leans forward, takes Bessie’s face in her hands, kisses the cow on the nose. She turns to Cal, is silent for a few seconds….then…)

Viktoria: “How do I help my daddy?”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the kitchen….everyone gathered around the kitchen table and kitchen counter, snacking on food made by Dil and Nell….Gibbs turns to Nell..)

Gibbs; “You cook these?”

(Gibbs holds up chip loaded with meat and cheese)

Nell: “Sure did!”

(He slides the entire chip in his mouth..mumbles with mouth full)

Gibbs: “Good”

Nell: “It’s a Tbone nacho”

(Gibbs smiles, mouth still full….)

Nell: “Cooked over the fire pit”

Dil: ‘She made them for you, Gibbs”

(Gibbs chews, swallows)

Gibbs: “Good girl…thanks”

Dil: ‘How’s everything else?”

Gibbs: “Don’t know…haven’t eaten anything else…”

(He picks up another nacho, shoves it in his mouth…Dil puts his arm around her waist, pulls her close)

Dil: “He likes them”

(She brightens)

Nell: “Yes!”

Dil: “He’s important to you, isn’t he?”

Nell: “Yea…before you….For so long…He was the only one that believed in me….I can’t help but love him”

(She turns to Dil, concerned look on her face…)

Nell: “You’re not…”

(He shakes his head, smiles…)

Dil: ‘Jealous? No, honey….I’m glad…”

Nell: “Okay…you’re sure….”

Dil: ‘Positive…you love him…I get it…I love the guy too…Are you jealous?”

(She smiles…)

Nell: “No…don’t be silly…”

Dil: ‘I’m human…Silly is what humans do”

(She leans against him…)

Nell: “I love you”

Dil: “I love you too…very much…”

Nell: “It feels like home now…”

Dil: “Me too”

Nell: “You’re being silly again…it’s always been….”

Dil: “My house…it didn’t become a home until you came”

(She presses herself closer to him…)

Nell: “I wish I had better words to tell you how much I love you”

Dil: “You do”

(She looks up at him curiously)

Dil: “You show me”

(He pulls her even closer….then they see Cal and Viktoria walking back in the kitchen, Viktoria holding Cal’s hand…Nell looks around)

Nell: “Where’s Jimmy?”

Dil: “Out there….”

(He nods towards the French doors…Palmer can be seen outside on the deck, alone…he's looking at the olive trees. Cal is seen kneeling, face to face with Viktoria)

Cal: 'There he is"

(She looks towards the doors…sees her father…)

Viktoria: "He looks sad"

Cal: "He is"

(She looks at her father, then back at Cal…She surprises everyone by reaching out and hugging Cal around the neck…Then she lets go, kisses Cal on the cheek…He smiles back at her)

Viktoria: "We're friends now"

Cal: "Yes, beautiful child…we are"

Viktoria: "Gotta go"

Cal: "Then go…."

(Viktoria walks quickly towards the French doors…Dez moves up to Cal…He stands…Dez puts an arm around him, pulls him close)

Dez: "Thank you"

Cal: "I have done nothing"

Dez: "You've been your wonderful self…."

Cal: "I know no other way"

Dez; "I love you"

Cal: "I love you as well, My Destiny"

Dez: "You were with her, weren't you?"

(He pauses….silence…then…)

Cal: "Yes"

Dez: "Then she was in the best of hands"

Cal: "No..but she is now"

(They both watch, as does everyone in the room, a young girl that has lost her mother, walks to her daddy, a man that has lost his wife….They can see that he hears her enter the back deck…they see him turn….They watch as the young girl walks up to her father, prompts him to kneel down….they watch, entranced at the scene, as Palmer kneels on the deck…They see Viktoria talking to him, him responding…..then suddenly, he wraps his daughter in his arms, as she begins weeping….He holds her, closely, speaking soft words….then he stops…he leans his head on hers, and they can see….The lost husband begins releasing the grief…And they see the little girl hold her father, the father holding the child, and they see both of them, healing each other)

(scene fades out to the sight of Palmer and Viktoria embracing….)

(scene fades to black and white)

THE END