

We never Close

Season Three Reloaded

Von VampiresLady

Kapitel 2: Troubleshooting Part II

"H!" she greeted him as they met each other outside the morgue and her sullen expression told Horatio that Calleigh obviously had no good news. "I checked the gun. There was only one shot fired from the magazine and the bullets didn't match. So we obviously have a second shooter and no idea who he was. And we have no idea if Julie was shot by her sister at all. I'm was just on my way to collect the other bullets. Maybe I will find her bullet there. Otherwise we have a problem." she explained and showed him the notes she had made all through her examinations. "We already know that Viviane didn't shoot herself..." Horatio added slowly. He began to feel very uncomfortable about this case. Apparently nothing was as it seemed to be. "Tell me as soon as you found anything else."

She nodded and smiled slightly. "Will do, when I finish running our gun and the bullets through the database. Maybe we are lucky and the gun was used before."

Horatio nodded slightly in appreciation. "You may do so. Keep me posted."

Calleigh watched H leave and nodded to herself. She really started wondering, what had been going on between those two girls that made them suffer through such a terrible fate. And she hoped that they would be able to find out the truth about their death.

Alexx started smiling as Calleigh rushed into the morgue. She had been nearly finished with Viviane's autopsy when Horatio had left and so it took her nearly no time to move along with her twin sister. She had just removed the bullets and knew that the blonde CSI had come for those.

"Hey, Alexx! Have you got anything for me?" Calleigh asked her in her casual happy tone that never failed to amaze her.

Alexx nodded toward a small and slim plastic box half-filled with bloody water still smiling.

"Two projectiles, 9mm calibre. First one found in Viviane McMillers heart ventricle, second one in Julie McMillers uterus. You'll like them!"

"Yay! That's good news!"

Calleigh happily made her way over to her bullets and took a good look at them. "Like them, Alexx? They are nearly perfect. What about the other bullet?" she stopped and looked at her inquiring.

"Just be patient, honey" Alexx said in a light voice, "I'm cutting my way through her lungs. It must be somewhere in here..."

Placing a spreader between the bones and flesh, Alexx was able to reach the last

bullet with her tweezers. She tweaked it out of Julie's chest and placed it right beside its brother and sister in the plastic box. "There you go, honey! Have fun!" "Thanks, Alexx." Calleigh smiled broadly at her, took the bullets and went back to the ballistics to finish her work on them. She really hoped that they would be lucky and find the person who did this.

Ever since Rick Stetler woke up that morning, he felt a strange sensation that nestled in the pit of his stomach and the moment he entered the CSI laboratory, this feeling was getting even worse. His hair had been cut neatly and he wore one of his best suits that particular morning, but that and at least five cups of coffee didn't do much to bolster his confidence.

All night long, he'd prepared himself for the battle that was about to take place, although this was going to be a battle of words rather than weapons. He'd tried to set up a mental defense wall behind which he could hide his emotions and fully focus on his opponent. All he needed to do was wait until he'd crushed his enemy's own barriers, thus he could force his interests and those of the IAB. It appeared to him that this was the true nature of war.

Besides, he knew Horatio Caine and he knew this was going to be dirty anyway.

Take it easy, he told himself, everything will work out fine!

Taking a last deep breath, he grabbed the inconspicuous looking black briefcase that rested on the front-seat beside him and got out of his car. The briefcase contained – amongst other things like a *Pall Mall* cigarette pack, a box of matches and peppermint drops – the personnel file and medical records of Timothy Speedle. As the supervisor of investigation on the CSI squad of Horatio Caine, it was up to him to tell the lieutenant what's going to happen next to his recommended employee.

Straightening his tie, Stetler entered the building, stepped up to the secretary's desk and asked for Caine.

"I'll call him, but it might take some time. We have just started a new investigation this morning," she said.

"Just get him here!" Stetler snorted. He didn't have the time for further negotiations with a subordinate. And really this was far under his dignity, but he just wanted this over and done.

Fortunately, it didn't take too long for Caine to unglue himself from his work and join him in the entrance hall.

"Rick." Horatio greeted him, watching him intently. "How may I help you?"

Stetler tried to ignore the calm expression Horatio's face. It was always annoying how smart Caine could be even when he had no reason to do so. He opened the briefcase and took out the portfolio, trying hard to avoid Horatio's intense gaze.

"I thought you might be interested in Mr Speedle's current condition."

Caine nodded slightly. "What about Speed?" he asked and Stetler knew instantly that he had him truly interested.

"We just received a call from the doctor in charge of Mr. Speedle's rehabilitation, ensuring that Speedle did recover so far he could end his convalescent leave within the next few weeks. In fact, Mr. Speedle left the medical center in North Dakota and returned to Miami this Monday."

He handed the records over to Horatio.

Hopefully, Caine didn't know that this wasn't all he came for, but he won't give him the pleasure of knowing what he was up to. It had nothing to do with him after all, at least not directly.

Caine took the files and started to study them a long time before he let his gaze return to Stetler. "That's not all you wanted to tell me, was it?" he asked, raising an eyebrow. Both of them knew it was a rhetorical question.

"What makes you think so?" Rick answered coolly. "Don't think I must inform you on every event taking place in this institution."

"We both know that you would never just come down here to tell me how Speed was doing, bringing me his file and then leave again, right?" Horatio answered calmly. "So why won't you tell me what you really came for?"

Stetler frowned. He absolutely didn't like Horatio. He didn't like him for his talent to read everyone's mind and using the knowledge for his own advantage, for his god forsaken calm and for the fact that he seemed to always get past him. "This has nothing to do with you," he said tartly using his best *drop the matter* look on Caine.

Horatio looked down at the floor for a moment before tilting his head to one side to look at him, a small smile tugging at his lips. "Everything that happens inside my lab has something to do with me."

"Don't you take yourself too seriously!" Stetler snapped suddenly, "This lab is property of Miami-Dade County and no personal belonging of yours, Horatio!" He grimaced unwillingly as he tried to keep control of the emotional breakout that threatened to overcome him at any second.

"I am perfectly aware of that, Rick," Horatio responded.

"So, if you are 'perfectly aware of that'" Stetler quoted his words, "you're also aware that I have no responsibility toward you and that you can not force me to give account to you."

Stetler slightly turned his head toward the secretary's desk and – once again – avoided Caine's gaze.

They both fell silent and seconds turned to minutes before Horatio let out a long sigh.

"Very well, but you better don't try to pass something over me, Rick. You might regret it someday. If you'll excuse me, please, I've got work to do back there!"

Relief almost overwhelmed Stetler's body as Horatio turned and walked away.

He waited for Caine to pass the next soundproof door, before he turned to the secretary's desk again. "Can you do me favor? I'd like to leave a note for Mr. Ryan Wolfe. He shall come to my office as soon as possible."

He didn't turn to look back as he left Rick in the entrance hall, but his thoughts were still chasing each other around in his head.

When he'd received the secretary's call, he'd really hoped it would be something trivial, but somehow he already knew it wasn't. And the way Rick behaved was highly suspicious. Of course, they had arguments before, but he could count the few times it had been like this on one hand. Rick had suppressed the true reason for his little visit and tried to hide it underneath a cloak of self-confidence. Even though he tried to keep his cool during their nice and little chat, Rick got furious and Horatio knew he was up to something. The way he refused to tell him the truth was a sign that it was probably nothing good.

Shaking his head to clear his thoughts Horatio went to meet Calleigh in the ballistics research to find out if there were any news about the gun their second shooter used. But they were unlucky this time. The gun had never been used before, thus no suspect or any other useful information had come out of the research and they still didn't know what had happened.

"Calleigh, I want you and Eric to go back to the park. See if you can find our missing

bullet. Maybe it can help us." If they could find out in which direction Viviane had shot, they might get a clue of where her murderer had been right before he killed the twins. And that trace might lead them to a sample of the murderer's DNA or other useful evidence.

As he watched Calleigh leave, he couldn't help but wonder again what Stetler wanted. It didn't make him feel any more comfortable that he already knew Rick would decide something right in front of his eyes and over his head and he would get to know about it the moment it would be done.

He better doesn't do anything stupid.

Determined to look into this later, Horatio went to see Alexx for further informations.

Eric collected all other evidence found on the crime scene and tried not to care about Ryan's getaway from the elevator. Besides, he himself had his mind on other things. He was, for instance, rather curious about the samples of the blood they had taken earlier.

Back in the DNA lab, Valera placed a few drops of blood from a blade of grass beneath the microscope as someone brought two bottles with the girls' stomach contents and two different strands of hair Alexx had cut off the dead bodies. The blonde hair was labeled "J. McMiller", the small bag containing the black hair read "V. McMiller". Eric knew they had to compare the DNA from the bloodcells to the DNA contained in the girls' hairs.

The scans of the blood as well as the strands of hair under the microscope told him that Viviane and Julie were a monozygotic pair of twins and thus completely identical in their genes. Only their choice of clothes and makeup differed them from one another. The blood being spilled all over the grass and the girls' bodies only testified that it was *their* blood and no-one else's. But he was stunned when Valera found the rest of a aggressive chemical substance that had circulated within Julie's veins. She took the stomach contents Alexx had extracted from Julie's stomach and let hightechnology do the rest.

Waiting for the printout of the results, she had checked on the gunshot residue found on Viviane's right hand. It belonged to the weapon, Calleigh had just conducted. Although he couldn't believe it: the evidence was telling that no third person was involved in the murder and suicide of Julie and Viviane. But as they knew this couldn't be true. It nearly seemed as if the other bullets just got out of nowhere. Eric hated situations like this. It made absolutely no sense.

Then the prints finally dropped out and he was caught by surprise again.

He gave Alexx a call and put a copy of the results into an envelope addressed back to her. Valera finished her work and took off for her lunch-time. "Thanks! See you later!" Eric shouted after her.

After that, he had just enough time to finish his notes and set the computer options back to normal, as Ryan walked in and asked for the results. Eric handed him another copy.

"I thought you're in the layout room?" he asked.

"I was, but now I'm here and I need these copies to rethink the sketches." Ryan explained shortly. He seemed to be in a hurry, but Eric didn't figure why. Ryan was working so hard, he'd tend to believe Ryan wanted to prove he was better than other investigators. Possibly better than Speed?

Suddenly Ryan's cell phone gave an annoying ring and he picked up the call quickly.

"Wolfe."

Eric fell silent and watched Ryan's face. His colleague frowned and started chewing his lowerlip nervously. His ambitious professionalism seemed to vanish into thin air and was replaced by something that just look like deadly mixture of fear and despair. "Yeah, I see. Okay, I'll be right with him. Thanks!"

Ryan hung up and noticed Eric's quite interested look. He cleared his throat extensively and roused Eric from his thoughts. The frightened expression on Ryan's face was completely gone and for a second Eric thought he had imagined this. "Thanks for your help. See you later," the brownhaired CSI said quickly before Eric could ask him about the call and turned to the door just as fast as he had rushed into the DNA lab.

Eric shook his head in confusion. Sometimes he really wondered if he ever would understand Ryan Wolfe at all. He just didn't know how he should feel about him...

Only a few minutes after Ryan's visit at breakneck-speed, Calleigh walked in, carrying her toolbox.

"What's up?" Eric asked with a smile.

"Horatio wants us to go back to the park! There's reason to believe the case of Julie and Viviane McMiller just became a double-murder."

Eric raised an eyebrow in interest. "Really?"

"Yeah, really. I can give you further detail on our way back, but for now let's get moving!"

"Alright! But did Horatio say anything about calling the girls' parents? We need to question them too and as far as I know they don't even know about the death of their daughters." She smiled back at him as he slipped into his jacket once more.

"Don't worry about that! H said he wanted to talk to the parents!"

In the early afternoon Alexx had finally finished the autopsy of the girls' and wrote down the reports in her office. Needing a break, she got out of her chair and fetched up a cup of coffee from the dispenser that should help her concentrate on her work. She couldn't help herself tough. She pitied the girls and their parents, felt sorry for their loss. Closing her eyes for a moment she thought of her own children. Hopefully neither her kids nor Alexx herself would ever have to suffer from such an ill fate.

When she returned to her desk she found the folder Eric had send.

Although he'd told her everything on the phone, she still felt her heart beat a little faster as she read his notes over and over again.

Her thoughts were finally interrupted when she heard a soft knocking on the door and saw Horatio waiting outside. She waved him in and he made his way over to a chair.

"Anything new about the girls?" he asked her and leaned back.

Alexx combed back a strand of her black hair and fixed her mind on the subject again. There was no point in rethinking her life by now.

"Indeed."

She disposed the coffee cup and stretch out to grab the folder, then handed it over to Horatio.

"I already send Eric all the evidence I could find on either Viviane or Julie. Oh, and I've discovered the meaning of a tattooed Chinese character on Viviane's neck. It has the meaning 'death', I expected something less disturbing... But again it could also be just a symbol for them. During my autopsy on Julie I found a tattoo on her spine. It was also a Chinese character standing for 'life'."

H took the folder and opened it with his famous mime of curiosity.

"Eric said to me that all samples – whether blood or hair – belong to our two victims. But here's the surprise: Julie's stomach contained several pharmaceuticals that require a doctor's prescription. All of them are used to cure the symptoms of leukemia."

When Ryan entered Rick Stetler's office, the IAB agent was standing in front of the window and stared down at the busy street below.

"Sit down", Stetler said when he heard the door close.

Ryan took a seat and watched Stetler turning around slowly, a rather serious expression on his face.

"I hope you understand that the following conversation is to be kept a secret between you and me, Mr. Wolfe. I don't have any intentions to let Lieutenant Caine interfere in this matter. And he surely would, even if it's just to displease me."

Ryan was not sure if he wanted to know what Stetler was talking about, but he knew that he didn't have much of a choice. So he simply nodded, while making a mental note that he would still tell Horatio if he thought it would be for the best.

"So... why did you want to see me?"

Stetler sat down in his massive and over-sized office chair and looked at him for a while, before he leaned back slightly.

"As you know", he said slowly, "You were given the position as a CSI, because Mr. Timothy Speedle was wounded in a terrible accident. His wound began to suppurate and infected his immune system. The sepsis forced him to resign from his post as a crime scene investigator for the time being."

Stetler looked at him intensively, trying to track Ryan's reactions.

"That was 10 months and 27 day ago. Shortly after this, you were recruited by Horatio Caine to bridge the gap until Mr. Speedle is able to return to his post."

Ryan nodded. Even though Stetler still didn't came up with the reason why Ryan was here, the young man had a fairly good idea why he wanted to speak to him.

It seemed like the day he dreaded since he first started at CSI had finally come.

"I can tell by your eyes that you know why I called you", Stetler said with a sadistic smile on his face. "Well, Mister Speedle will be on top of things within the next week. I would have informed you earlier, but he had just returned to Miami two days ago."

All of a sudden, Ryan's mouth felt dry.

Stetler leaned forward and stared at him. *So this was what Horatio called Stetler's do-as-I-say-pokerface*, Ryan thought.

"If I may give you a good advice: Don't tell Lieutenant Caine about this conversation for your own good will. He just recruited you, because no-one else was available and if he knew now, that Mister Speedle is going to return, he will let you drop out of CSI before you can say 'double jeopardy'."

Ryan nodded again and sighed softly. "So what exactly will happen once Speedle comes back?" he asked Stetler. He really didn't know if he wanted to hear the answer, but sooner or later it would all become real after all. So better have some time to adjust.

"It depends...", Stetler said cryptically. "My superiors and I will watch the progress on the McMiller-case and wait, if Lieutenant Caine has anything to say about you staying at his lab."

"Ok" was everything Ryan said before he stood up quickly. "I believe that's all you wanted to tell me? So an I go back to work then?"

"Yes, sure. Go ahead!" Stetler said indifferently, waving him off with one hand.

