

The Death of Mary Sue

By `tera_gram`

Rating: PG

Pairings: None

Warning: Out of character Gus, alternate universe

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Summary: A very special murder.

Lassiter crouched down for a better look at the body. She must have been pretty before she was stabbed to death. Her dark chestnut hair spilled across the floor like Botticelli's Birth of Venus. The blood loss left her looking like a marble statue, and maybe it was a trick of the light, but her eyes looked to be an unusual shade of purple that reminded Lassiter of Elizabeth Taylor. If she hadn't smelled like a slaughter house, and she hadn't been so dead, he might have thought she was hot.

"Who would want to kill Mary Sue?" Buzz asked. His voice was heavy with disappointment at the heartlessness of humanity.

"You know the vic?" Lassiter asked, looking up curiously at McNab. He noticed that the big cop's lower lip was quivering.

"Of course," McNab said. "Everyone knows Mary Sue. She ran that mystical healing centre down by the boardwalk."

"Sounds like a hippy," Lassiter said, disapprovingly. "Tambourines, incense and malarkey."

McNab shook his head. "No, she was really good. She grew back two of my toes. She helped people *so* much. It's hard to believe she's really gone." McNabb sniffed, holding back his tears.

Lassiter rolled his eyes at this unmanly show of emotion.

"I know, I know," O'Hara said, placing a hand on McNab's shoulder to comfort him. "And she had such a tragic and mysterious past."

Lassiter turned his sharp gaze on both of them. "So you *both* knew the vic?"

"How do you *not* know Mary Sue?" O'Hara asked, not bothering to hide the exasperation in her voice. "She talked Chief Vick into hiring Henry Spencer, she de-fused that bomb

at the shopping centre and she used her martial arts knowledge to save me from those rapists."

"I don't remember those cases," Lassiter said, frowning. *Was he really that much out of the loop*, he wondered. *Could this woman possibly have done all these things and he somehow managed to miss it all entirely?* He dismissed the possibility. *O'Hara and McNab must be exaggerating.*

"No one who knew Mary Sue could ever have wanted to hurt her," McNab affirmed, his voice awash with naive sincerity.

"Well that certainly narrows down the list of suspects," Lassiter muttered. "Basically you're suggesting she was killed by a stranger."

"Yeah," McNab replied, oblivious to the sarcasm in Lassiter's voice. "Some psychotic killer must have picked her at random."

Lassiter cleared his throat. "Well since you knew the victim you can prepare a background report on her. I want family and work history, known associates, possible enemies. The works." When McNab didn't flee immediately to the station Lassiter added, "Sometime today would be nice."

He looked around at the apartment. Something was definitely wrong. The place was too perfect. If he didn't know better, he'd think nobody lived here. For one thing, it was too clean. There wasn't any laundry in the hamper. The bathroom looked pristine. There wasn't even anything in her garbage cans.

Maybe the killer had taken the garbage with him. Could they be dealing with an obsessive compulsive killer?

The furniture and decorating seemed a touch too expensive for someone who ran a mystical healing booth. People who were living far beyond their means were automatically suspicious. *It could be drugs*, Lassiter thought. *Which would help explain the dead body. Where drug deals went, death usually followed.*

The door opened and Shawn Spencer came bounding into the room, followed reluctantly by Burton Guster, who kept his face turned away from the body.

"Spencer," Lassiter smiled icily. "You're not on this case. I've got all the help I need." He stepped in front of the two investigators, blocking their passage further into the room.

"Actually," O'Hara cut in, "I called Shawn. Mary Sue was such a gifted psychic and a powerful healer that I thought Shawn might be able to pick up her spirit."

"Fine," Lassiter extended an arm. "Please," he said sarcastically, "just stroll through my crime scene, contaminating *all* my evidence."

"Don't mind if I do!" Shawn said cheerily. "We'll just see if we can help. You know. With the justice." Shawn grabbed Gus by the arm and dragged him around to the other side of the body. He quickly glanced about the apartment, then put his index fingers to his temples. "I'll check the room for psychic vibrations." He began picking up random objects, holding them to his head, then tossing them to Gus, who set them down wherever was handy. Finally he shrugged expansively and sighed. "No luck. I'm getting something about a drug cartel, a broken oath and mistaken identity, but it's all choppy and chaotic, like a Quentin Tarrantino film."

"Great!" Lassiter pointed to the door. "Then can you and Guster please get the hell out of my crime scene?"

Shawn walked the rest of the way around the body, dragging Gus behind him. While his back was turned, Lassiter wrote "Drug cartel?" down in his notebook, hoping Shawn wouldn't see.

"If you need any background on the victim, just let me know," Shawn said as he was leaving.

"Oh, so you knew her too?" Lassiter was beginning to wonder if this was all some kind of anxiety dream. He almost expected to discover himself wearing no pants.

"You could say that," Shawn said. "In fact, you could say that I knew her in the Biblical sense. By which I mean sex, not that we sacrificed our first-born or killed our brother with a rock or any of the other weird stuff in there."

"You might have wanted to mention that *first*," Lassiter said, opening to a fresh page in his notebook. "Or didn't you think it was relevant that you dated the victim?"

"I didn't date-date her," Shawn said. "She just showed up at the Psych office one day and the next thing I knew we were having sex. It didn't last."

"Really?" Lassiter's voice was terse. "That's hard to believe. Your relationships are usually so solid."

Shawn shrugged. "She kind of freaked me out."

"*She* freaked *you* out?" Lassiter looked from Spencer, who was dressed as if he'd just rolled out of bed, to the graceful body on the floor at his feet, and back again.

"Is there an echo in here?" Shawn asked, rhetorically. "Yes! She freaked me out, okay? She knew things there was no way she could know. It was almost as if she'd been watching whole chunks of my life. Like I said. Creepy."

"So she was your stalker?" Lassiter looked at Spencer with new interest. Instead of

seeing him as an annoying interruption to his work he was now considering him as a possible suspect.

"No." Shawn shook his head, but his spiky hair barely moved. "She didn't have to follow me anywhere. She just *knew*. She even knew about stuff I did as a kid." He tilted his head thoughtfully. "It actually gave me a new perspective into how weirded out people must be by what I do."

Lassiter smiled. "It is with great pleasure that I say this, Spencer." He took a deep breath and smiled even wider. "You're off the case."

"What? Why?" Shawn looked hurt.

Lassiter wrapped an arm around Shawn's shoulders and guided him forcefully toward the door. "See, a police investigation is supposed to be objective," he said evenly. "And you're personally involved."

"No way, dude. I think you mean I can't *not* be on it."

Lassiter's smile took on an eerie look. "Actually, there is a role I'm considering you for." He looked at his notebook and then back to Shawn. "Going by the facts, you could be my prime suspect."

"That sounds like fun, Lassikins," Shawn said. "But if you want us to spend more time together just ask. You don't need some trumped up excuse to justify it. Repeat after me: Shawn, I want to hang out with you. Come on, Lassy, now you try it."

Lassiter pushed Shawn out of the doorway. As much as he'd have loved to arrest him, just as Shawn had known that Lassiter wouldn't shoot a man in police custody, Lassiter had a gut feeling that Shawn hadn't stabbed their vic to death.

When he turned back to the crime scene McNab and O'Hara were discussing planting a memorial tree in honour of Mary Sue. He excused himself and stepped outside for some fresh air. All the sweetness in their conversation was making him queasy.

Shawn and Gus sat in the Psych office, playing Super Street Fighter IV on Shawn's Xbox. Ken had just defeated Ryu with a Shoryuken, followed by a fast-moving fireball. Shawn turned his head to look at Gus, then looked back at the screen.

"Just so you know, Shawn said, "they're never going to solve that Mary Sue case."

"You just think that because they took you off the case," Gus said. "They can solve murder cases without you, you know. They have before."

Shawn's mouth turned up at the corner. "Well they're not going to solve this one."

Gus looked at Shawn briefly and his eyes narrowed. "You sound pretty sure of that."

"I am." Shawn "Why do you think I dragged you all through that crime scene? Now their DNA evidence is useless."

Gus' face didn't change expression. "I have no idea what you're talking about, Shawn." He started a new game and began punching Ken in the head. Shawn set his controller down and looked at Gus.

"We have to talk this out, buddy," Shawn said. "How many guys have their best friend kill someone for them? I mean, it's huge."

"Don't mention it," Gus said, as Ryu defeated Ken with his Shinku Hadoken. Shawn opened his mouth to speak but Gus cut in. "No, seriously," he said, wearing his most serious expression. "Don't mention it. Ever."

"Personally, I don't even count it as murder," Shawn said. "The way I see it, you just helped send her back to her own universe. It's like on Buffy, when Giles killed Ben to protect everyone from Glory."

"I'm glad you see it that way," Gus said, letting out a breath. Personally, he saw it *exactly* that way. "But for someone who owns both Buffy and Angel on DVD, it took you long enough to figure out that she wasn't human."

"In my defense," Shawn said, "I've had one-night stands go bad before. I don't usually jump to the conclusion that they've Quantum Leaped here to manipulate me and my friends like a bunch of Playmobil people."

"Technically," Gus explained, "Scott Bakula's character was just lost in time. Mary Sue actually lives in another dimension, and only astral projected her idealized avatar here."

"So it's more like you killed one of the characters from The Sims," Shawn said.

"Since she's still alive in her own dimension, I don't consider myself to have killed anybody," Gus said defensively.

"Okay. Relax," Shawn said. "If you make any more worry lines on your forehead you're going to look like that guy who plays Worf."

Gus considered explaining to Shawn that Michael Dorn didn't actually have large ridges on his forehead, but now didn't seem to be the time for an explanation of the art of prosthetic makeup.

Lassiter looked at the forensics reports on his desk. Except for prints belonging to

Spencer and Guster, the place had been clean. He sighed and closed the folder. Unless someone confessed, this case was never going to get solved. He glanced at his watch, downed the rest of his cold coffee and put his suit jacket on. He'd promised to meet O'Hara and McNabb in the park for that damn memorial tree planting. As he filed the folder in the cold case drawer he thought, not for the first time, that Mary Sue seemed almost too good to be true.

Except for having slept with Spencer, he added. Everyone had to have one flaw, he supposed. Otherwise they'd hardly be human.