

Mary's Contractions

by

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate this story to several people but primarily my prison buddy “Turtle”. I only wish I could remember his real name but we all knew him as “Turtle”. Before I met him I was only capable of writing 50 or 60 page short stories but his wisdom put me where I’m at today and he believes I may be the next Stephen King. Also I’d like to dedicate this story to another author I met in prison my man “Unique” and I’d like to thank him for steering me in the right direction when it comes to publishing. I would also like to dedicate this story to my beloved sister Dana and her husband Sam for providing me with a peaceful environment to write my stories. I would also like to throw out one last dedication to my mother because any jailbird will tell you there’s no other love out there like the love we have for Mom. Any dedications that are left I would like to devote to my readers because I know if you dedicate the time to finish reading this story you will not have any regrets.

Introduction

Bombs are showing up on people's door steps and the FBI and ATF have to act quickly. The case is so enigmatic that they have to utilize all of their resources because of the patriot Act proceeding 911. Monica Freeman is just starting her first year as a cop and can't wait to get her hands on some of the action. She leaves behind a promising career in psychology to become a cop because she no longer finds it challenging.

What she doesn't realize is her boss is going to put her on an assignment where she can use those skills for the ultimate challenge. Two weeks with a mental patient. They feel if she goes deep inside a mental patient's head that they might find similar patterns in behavior to catch the terrorist they're looking for. The mental patient thinks he can help in a big way but Monica is skeptical and feels her superiors are leaving her in the dark. Can a delusional schizophrenic help Monica catch one of Philadelphia's most dangerous killers? And who is Mary Maimer?

CHAPTER 1

“Shhh.... You musn’t laugh that will only upset him. Actually, maybe you should try your best not to look happy. This one doesn’t like to be around happy people..”

I shut my mouth. I Immediately thought of my grandmother in ICU then a somber look quickly chased away any giggles I had left. Being brought up to speed on such short notice was how could I possibly describe it? Exciting?

“Do you think that patient will ever figure out he’s got a streamer of toilet paper hanging out his butt?” I whispered.

I knew I shouldn’t laugh. I’d seen plenty of stuff like this before but it eventually gets old after a while. The 2 years I’d spent working on the 8th. floor over at the hospital felt like wasted time. I never felt like any of my patients truly suffered from mental instability, just issues, it was always the issues. Breakups, the bereaved, and yes of course, the indigent. Bums, hoboes, homeless or whatever you want to call them. They usually checked in just to stay warm in the winter time. Can’t say that I blame them.

My boss placed her index finger above her lips signaling me to be quiet as we slowed our walking speed to a near creep. It was my first year as a cop and I wanted to impress the heck out of my boss. I try not to bootlick but I’m not going to turn down a chance to get chummy. At least not in this economy anyway.

“I don’t get it, why does this patient think he’s so special that we have to shut up when were around him?” I whispered into her ear.

It was nice having a female for a boss. Don't get me wrong, I like working with men but girls can get so much more done without the distraction of, well...you know. We even had joked about how we would one day utterly destroy the glass ceiling. Girl domination we used to call it.

"Paranoid schizophrenic that's why. They're not a hundred percent sure yet of his diagnosis but were definitely going to help them look into it."

"Aw come on Nancy. They all say that. What's the real reason why?"

"Respect."

"Respect?"

I tried to speculate where she was going with this. This was definitely getting interesting.

"Because security has asked us to that's why. This patient has been here longer than any of the other patients and has never given our staff a problem. We keep our tone and mood at a bare minimum just out of respect. It seems to be working. Actually, we shouldn't even be whispering because if he hears our whisper he'll only assume we're talking about him."

"We are"

"I know"

"So we got ourselves a live one?" I asked jokingly.

My boss rolled her eyes in approval.

"Yeah we got ourselves a live one. Don't screw this up."

We stopped outside the patient's door that had been slightly pushed in. I braced myself for whatever I was about to look at. I didn't care either way. I was the one that was the cop. I had already seen too much just in my first year in the force. There wasn't anything really that I haven't already seen before.

"He's not going to hurt us is he?"

"Are you kidding? This one?" Nancy couldn't help but smile. It quickly diminished as she pushed on the door.

Nancy's huge frame blocked my vision of the creature I was about to meet. Nancy is a big girl. She once told me that she was the first African American

woman to play high school football. She claims that she was better than more than half of the guys on her team. I never doubted it. I've learned to stay out of her way when she's pissed. What could I say, this whole thing was starting to look like a scene from the movie *Silence of the Lambs*. I followed Nancy into the room.

"Hey kiddo, is everything okay in here? They're saying you haven't come out much today. Is there anything you wan't to talk about?"

The creature refused to acknowledge our presence. Nancy pushed on.

"I have someone here with me today that wants to ask you some questions. Do you have a minute?"

I got eye contact for a split second and then the patient quickly averted his eyes and stared at my size 8 Nikes. They were pointed right at him. His eyes stayed staring at my shoes.

"Can you tell your Nikes to stop staring at me?" Pleaded the creature.

I could tell that his hair had just been cut. There were many spots that had been missed. Whoever had cut his hair was obviously in a hurry. His head looked like a lawn mower had run over it. Even my little brother wouldn't settle for a haircut like that.

I was no fool to this game. His intentional diverting of the eyes meant one of two things. He was hiding something, or he was just trying to play crazy. At this point I assumed the latter but truthfully I just didn't know. I would definitely find out. They say I have the persistence of an olympic swimmer. I don't swim. I run.

There goes a saying that a fool is quick to open his mouth. I opted to keep silent and let the creature continue on with his show. I wanted to get a good look at the creature I would be dealing with for the next couple of weeks.

Nancy broke the silence as I studied the creature.

"Hun I don't see Mr. Freddy. Oh I get it, are you supposed to be Mr. Freddy?"

"No, I'm Mr. Gary. Yesterday I was Mr. Freddy. I guess I forgot to change the card."

Great. Multiple personalities I thought to myself.

My boss quickly picked up a number 2 pencil from the tiny desk and erased Mr. Freddy with the pink eraser attached to the pencil. I had never seen so many bite marks engraved into a pencil in all my life. The eraser however looked completely unscathed. Evidently Mr. Freddy (or Mr. Gary) didn't make too many mistakes or the pencil was merely a stress reliever. The rafts of hand written documents piled up on his desk suggested the pencil was more than just a chew toy.

The creature watched in absolute horror as Mr. Freddy slowly disappeared and loose eraser shavings peppered the linoleum floor.

"Hun you know you're not allowed to alter the name on your name card. Security reasons bud. If you want to keep this mutual respect thing going you gotta work with us. You don't want to thwart the guards that do the night count. Believe it or not they actually like you."

The creature said nothing. He finally took his eyes off my shoe and snuck a furtive glance at me. They had already warned me at the front desk that it was hard to get steady eye contact from this one. Something about a paranoia and that people were constantly reading his mind? A pair of sunglasses sat on the desk next to his writings. I wondered if maybe he felt like putting them on.

"They stole my hair and I wan't it back. I'm not leaving this room until all my hair grows back!"

He seemed really upset about his haircut. I wondered how long it was before whoever it was butchered it. I let Nancy continue to prep the creature while I brewed up a look of concern. Stupid haircut. *No laughing* I told myself.

"Hun who stole your hair? It looks okay to me." Said Nancy.

"They killed Shaggy! Now I have to wear sunglasses to keep the other patients from monitoring my thoughts. I liked my long hair blanketing my face thank you very much."

Nancy looked over at me and then filled me in.

"His family was just here a few days ago and his father tried to give him a haircut. I guess they just didn't like the shaggy look. He seemed relieved after they cut it, so, I dunno."

She shrugged her massive shoulders then focused back on the creature.

"Well don't you worry bud, you're going to have plenty of time to grow it all back. The doctor doesn't feel you're ready just yet."

"I've been here at least a month."

"Yeah well you just keep taking that medicine okay, you're doing good. My friend here she's a cop but she used to work in places like this. She's only here to help you and maybe there's a possibility you can even help us."

The creature actually smiled. I didn't like where any of this was going but I was determined to do my job. *Get inside this creature's mind* I kept telling myself. Weird thing about us girls is we want to understand what it is we later intend to destroy. Men are less patient, when they don't understand it, they destroy it. It makes me sick how many video games my younger brother has destroyed out of mere frustration when he couldn't get them to load.

I took a different approach then the creature would have ever expected. I even surprised myself.

"So how are things with your mother?"

Bingo. The look in his eyes said it all. His pupils dilated quickly and filled with legions of demons. This man was dangerous, or at least had the potential to be. His face was flush red like he was about to explode. He looked at me with those hateful eyes but the hate diminished the longer he stared at me. I was just too pretty for him to stay angry for long.

A slight chuckle followed along by a goofy smile. He was already learning to dissemble.

"What kind of opening statement is that?"

"It's just the stuff I'm so used to asking, I'm sorry." I said.

I wasn't sorry. I wanted to read his body language ASAP. Nancy had given me tid bits on the ride over of the history between this patient and his mother. I had trouble believing most of it. You hear so many of these stories that most of them end up in one ear and out the other.

"Do you know how many counselors and psychiatrists have tried to get me to tell them things about my mother?"

"And you never told them?"

"Heck no!"

"Why not?"

“Reverse psychology?”

“You took psychology?”

I watched the expression on his face. This creature was going to be a lot easier than I thought. I was already picking up on his body language. He was so far telling the truth.

“No I never took psychology. I barely managed to finished high school, but I’m smart enough to know that leaving them in the dark would only make them assume something dire had happened to me. Things so dire that I wouldn’t even be able to talk about it.”

“So then you did want them to know?”

“No”

“Huh?”

Now I was the one confused. I was starting to feel like the creature was trying to spin me.

“Let’s just drop the subject. This is starting to feel gay. Why are you here?” He asked.

I looked at Nancy and she picked up the manila envelope from the desk. Apparently she had set it down while observing the creature’s little show. She handed it to me and I released the rubberband that held it together.

“We have a little problem that we think you can help us with.”

“Little?”

“Well nobody has technically died yet but someone has already been seriously hurt”

“I don’t get it. How do I fit into all this?” He asked directing his question directly to me.

I didn’t want to tell him but he had already been straight up with me earlier. I figured the truth couldn’t hurt him.

“Profiling.”

“Profiling?”

"Yeah, your name came up in our data base."

The creature quickly became excited but yet looked somewhat relieved.

"I knew it! They really do do that kind of stuff. They have computers now where the feds can type in key words involved in unsolved crimes and a whole list of potential suspects comes up. I even heard they have equipment now that can hone in on phone conversations designed to pick up words like **Kill, Bomb, Drugs, etc.**"

Time was already being wasted. I didn't particularly care to update this patient on the latest counterterrorism technology. I pulled the front page of the newspaper from the manila envelope and tossed it onto his lap. The weight of the paper pushed deep into his micro thin polka dot gown. I found it rather disturbing that he had not earned his clothes yet. *A month?*

From the time he picked it up to the time his eyes actually hit the paper was crucial. I watched his every move. His eyes widened when he read the headlines. I got a sick feeling in my stomach when his eyes moved to the story. There was a smile. Not a nice smile but an impish one. He knew something. I knew it.

"This is yesterday's paper. I've been here for at least a month I'm sure. Just ask the people at the front desk. The nurses see me every day. I....uh...I don't understand?"

"We obviously already know that you didn't do this okay hun, we were just hoping that somehow you can help us figure out who did."

I felt like I was talking to a two year old. Nancy left the room to give us a tete-'a`-tete conversation. Nothing at all looked neat about the room. A chair sitting off in the corner had an opened box of pop tarts of some flavor that I've never heard of. A pile of crumbs lurked beneath the chair. My new patient was far from a clean feak. I went for the box of pop tarts.

"Do you mind if I move these pop tarts onto your desk for a while so I can take a seat?"

"Sure take them with you on your way out. I took one bite into them and nearly puked all over the floor. My mother gave them to my father to give to me. They expired almost 2 years ago."

I was used to seeing balloons and flowers, but pop tarts? Evidently this creature came from an unusual family. I took the chair and moved it up closer to the bed so I could interview. My presence caused the creature to scoot fur-

ther back onto his bed. I certainly wasn't going to sit on the bed. God only knows what this guy does in his free time. I placed both my hands on my lap and leaned in forward a little while I spoke. My new patient already looked nervous. Perhaps he was just intimidated by me. I wasn't going to kiss him or hold his hand, I just prefer to get close when I interview.

“A teenage boy almost died in the hospital yesterday. The ATF and bomb squad are completely flummoxed..... I.”

I got cut off.

“What's flummoxed mean?”

“It means they're confused”

“About what?”

“The bomb, the motive, none of it makes any sense.”

“Was the bomb meant for the boy?”

The creature now gave his undivided attention. I made a mental note. Just talking about bombs seemed to get the creature all jazzed up.

“Were not really sure at this point but it's very unlikley. The boy was only in seventh grade and must have been at the wrong place at the wrong time and inadvert-.....accidentally picked up the explosive.”

I tried my best not to use big words that would prolong this interview. Nancy told me this patient tends to play stupid a lot just for kicks. I guess it's some kind of facade he puts on when he wants something.

“So you came to visit me to tell me about an accident? What let me guess, some kid was playing with a quarter stick and now somebody else is to blame? This is ridiculous!”

I took a deep sigh and tried to hold my cool. I knew Nancy would have flipped out by now.

“Look the way it blew up and the way it was put together has us all a little scared. Were talking about a small IED hidden inside a pack of cigarettes designed to detonate upon picking it up off the **ground**.”

I articulated that last word to keep his attention. His face lit up from shock and he grabbed his chest.

“Oh my gosh you guys are going to have your hands full for awhile. Sounds like your dealing with a mercury switch. I heard the CIA really hates mercury switches.”

“No” I replied

“No?”

“The bomb squad ended up finding all the remnants of the IED and submitted the remains to forensics. They’re still working on it right now actually, all evidence has been catalogued, but there’s a huge problem.”

The creature squirmed around a little bit but I still had his attention. It was hard to believe this guy was 33 years old by the way he was acting. I wondered how he ever finished high school.

“I used to watch all their stupid shows on the discovery channel. I didn’t know there was a project too big for those guys in forensics.”

“Yeah well they’re having a real tough time trying to locate any traces of mercury right now.

The top forensics leader is still scrutinizing the remains but is coming up empty handed. There’s a lot to this case that just doesn’t make any sense.”

“What was the kid doing picking up a pack of cigarettes in the first place? What would his parents say about that?”

Jeez. For a so called paranoid schizophrenic this creature wasn’t so out of touch with reality. I noticed the sweat marks he was leaving from rubbing the palms of his hands into his gown. He didn’t seem to realize that he was doing it. Maybe it was just from the medication. Nancy had told me that this one doesn’t warm up to strangers very well. Something about a social disorder.

“The kid only began talking this morning because he was in shock all day yesterday afternoon. He swears up and down all he did was pick up the pack of cigarettes and had plans of finding it’s owner or throwing it away. He never got a chance to open the box. The cigarettes were sitting on the front porch plain as day. Needless to say his morning off to school was not off to a good start.”

“How bad off is the kid?”

“He’ll never pick up a pencil again and be able to write like I see you like to do. Metal shrapnel manage to puncture his heart. He’s lucky to be alive.”

The creature scratched his chinny chin chin and mulled over the newly-found news on his lap. He kept his gaze on the article but my vision was not sharp enough to determine which parts he was reading.

“Sounds like you guys have a maimer on your hands.”

He furled the paper and placed it on my lap. I checked his cuticles but saw nothing. *Pencil Chewer* I told myself.

“Yeah, well were worried this maimer may strike again.” I said.

A part of me wondered if maybe the maimer was just warming up before the bigger bombs came out.

Nancy stormed into the room startling us both.

“Come on we have to go now,” she said tugging my arm,” There’s been an emergency!”

I left the newspaper article with the patient and proceeded to head out the door.

“Wait! I never got your name! What’s your name?” pleaded the creature.

We scampered out the door nearly tripping over each other. Life as a cop was still proving to be exciting and on the beat. I turned my head as I shouted back to the creature.

“My name is Monica it was nice chatting with you!”

CHAPTER 2

Nancy was a big girl but she still had it in her. Don't ever think that just because someone is heavy that they can't move fast. We caught our breath when we reached the elevator and Nancy's cell rang once again. She handed me her gloves and leather satchel so she could focus all of her concentration on the phone call. Nancy was my boss but hey what could I say? Even she had a boss too. I listened intently as the elevator car took us down to the first floor.

“Okay, okay. Are there any casualties? Uh-huh I see. What time did it happen? Oh my gosh that sounds awful! Is she going to be alright? Okay were heading down to the station now.”

Nancy hung up the phone with a look of dismay on her face. I pruned for information while I had the chance.

“What? What is it? What happened?”

“There's been another bombing. Soccer mom this time.”

“Another pack of exploding cigarettes?”

“No. This one is really sick. Lady opens a small manila package thinking she's getting some free promotional vitamin pills and the bottle explodes before it ever makes it out of the envelope. They're not even sure yet if this is the same bomber.”

The elevator doors swung open and we swiftly exited the car and headed towards Nancy's Chevy Tahoe. Nancy always insisted that big girls needed to drive big vehicles. I myself drive a mini cooper, convertible of course.

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