

## The Field Where We Died by Xanthe

<http://www.xanthe.org/the-field-where-we-died/>

There was death. There was betrayal and death...there was betrayal and heartache and pain and death...there was the stench of it everywhere.

Skinner surveyed the scene of devastation, unblinking. Next to him he felt the tremor pass through Scully's body as she tagged and catalogued yet another victim. Poor bastards. Poor, stupid, bastards. And Mulder looking like someone had ripped his heart out and thrown it into the fire. Mulder often looked like that. Mulder's heart was a damn sight too accessible for Skinner's liking. It should be protected, like his own was, behind walls that hid walls, a veritable maze of stone and steel. And in the center, beating fiercely, hard, was a heart too passionate. Not on display, not easily found, conquered or won, but passionate none the less.

"Mulder get out of here," he said softly. Mulder didn't reply, cradled the woman's body, his hand clutching the photograph. "Mulder." Skinner looked helplessly at Scully and she shrugged, crossing to where Mulder knelt, putting a hand on his shoulder. Skinner allowed a painful stab of jealousy at the gesture to pierce those protective walls around his heart and then he turned back, pulling himself together, ignoring the stench of death, the scent of his own pain.

This was a cock-up. A monumental cock-up. As bad as Waco. Nearly as bad. And it was his project, his jurisdiction and he should have been able to stop it. All these lives wasted. Skinner shook his head, clenching his fists, fighting back the anger and guilt. My project, my jurisdiction, my blame. And something had gone on here that he didn't understand. Something he had not been told about. Why else was Mulder cradling that woman like he had lost someone he loved? Why?

Mulder and Scully were his best agents and he trusted them, but he was sure they had lied, or at least, been "economical" with the truth. Damn but he should have known everything, should have been told everything! He had needed all the information and they had failed him. Angrily he started issuing the clean-up orders, striding around, letting the activity squash his emotions, functioning on auto-pilot until he could get to the bottom of this. If this was Mulder's fault, if Mulder should have told him something...damn but one of these days he was going to snap and give Mulder a good shaking. He watched as Scully led Mulder out of the barn, over to the car. Mulder shook off her hand, muttered something angry, shot a look back at the barn, thrust something into Scully's hand and then took off. As usual. Skinner shook his head and turned back to the task in hand. Sorting out the bodies, working out what he was going to say in his report, trying to defuse the anger of his bosses about how this situation had occurred. And Mulder got to just walk away in a temper.

Skinner saw Scully standing, looking at whatever it was Mulder had given her. She seemed lost, frail, bereft. He found himself walking out of the barn, going over to her, prompted by

more than curiosity.

"Scully?" She looked up, tried to hide whatever it was (photos?) that she was holding in her hand. He felt angry again. "Is there something I should have been told about all this, Scully?" He asked her, unable to keep the aggressive tone out of his voice. She looked up at him, her blue eyes flashing at his tone, then becoming subdued as if she recognised that she deserved the anger.

"I...no, I don't think it's anything important, sir."

"Scully, I have a barn full of dead people and a report to write. My ass is very likely in a sling right now so I'd like to make sure there's nothing I've missed."

"Yes..." She looked down, bit her lip. "I'm sorry. I didn't think of it from that point of view." Nobody ever did, Skinner thought wearily to himself. Did they think he gave them a hard time for the sheer hell of it? Did they never think that he had people he had to answer to? People who were frankly, far less understanding and willing to give him the benefit of the doubt than he was to Mulder and Scully and the goddamn X Files with their dubious reports of monsters and conspiracies.

"Let's go over here."

He led her out into the field, found a tree to offer some shade, leaned one hand against it, waiting for her to speak. She was so small and yet so tough. When he looked at her he saw a kindred spirit. Self-sufficient, calm, controlled, rational. What did she see when she looked at him, he wondered? Just another bureaucrat? A stuffed shirt? A man who sat behind a desk? He wanted her to see more, to see beyond the façade to the man beneath but he never gave her any clues so how could she? And how could he give her those clues without revealing his soul? That's the trouble with walls, Walter, he thought to himself. Once they're built they're damned hard to pull down again and you become used to them anyway, peering over them to look at the view occasionally, wishing you were standing in the next door field but never quite being able to smash through the brick and steel to get there.

"Well?" he demanded. She wouldn't know he felt any tenderness towards her. Nobody would guess from watching them. She was anxious, maybe even scared what his reaction would be to whatever it was she had withheld, he could see that much in her eyes. "Come on, Scully. What is it you haven't told me?" He asked, knowing his tone was a low growl, wishing it wasn't.

She took a deep breath, as if she were taking her life into her hands. No need, Scully, he thought, no need. I'm not a monster, I just want the truth. Yet his eyes still glared at her and he found himself crossing his arms forbiddingly. Aggressive, defensive body language. No wonder she was apprehensive.

"It wasn't exactly a legitimate avenue of investigation," she began nervously. He sighed. When was it with these two?

"Go on."

"We, that is...Agent Mulder and I, stumbled onto something unusual during our

investigation into the woman, Melissa."

"You told me she had a multiple personality problem," he reminded her.

"Yes, but...Agent Mulder didn't believe that."

"What? As I recall Agent Mulder was the one pushing that particular theory." He frowned.

"Yes. But he didn't believe it." Scully went red, obviously feeling this was a betrayal of her partner.

"Scully." Skinner could feel himself getting angry all over again. "There are a lot of dead people in that barn. Don't they deserve the truth?"

"Yes." Scully nodded, not meeting his eyes.

"So what was it that Agent Mulder believed?" Probably that they were all part of some mad zombie cult involved in voodoo if I know Mulder, he thought to himself.

"That...Agent Mulder became convinced that he had known Melissa in a previous life."

"What?" Oh god, this was ludicrous even by Mulder's standards. He passed a weary hand over his eyes, dislodging his glasses, replacing them again. "Are you telling me that I have a major disaster on my hands because Agent Mulder was indulging some ridiculous fantasy?"

"No, sir." Scully looked directly at him. "Mulder couldn't have prevented this, sir. His personal beliefs did not influence the outcome of all this. I'm sure of that. I wouldn't have allowed it, sir." Good for you, Scully, he thought. Good for you. Loyal, dedicated, committed. Of course she would stand up for Mulder. He was glad she did. It just confirmed the sort of woman he knew her to be.

"Explain it to me then, Scully," he said, frowning again.

"Sir. Can I be frank?" She was still looking him directly in the eye.

"Yes." He nodded. Of course. Always. Did she need his permission for that? Didn't she understand the smallest thing about him?

"Well, this story is bizarre. I didn't believe it at first. Maybe I still don't. I'm not sure. But I need you to keep an open mind while I tell it."

He took a sharp intake of breath. "Do you really think I wouldn't give you a fair hearing, Scully?" he asked softly. She seemed surprised.

"I...no. Of course." A little half-smile. He got a grip on himself, calmed down, tried to appear less threatening, less the angry boss, more approachable.

"Good. Why don't we walk?" He set off, noticing the sun angling down behind the trees, the sound of a stream a little way off. It was pretty here. If he closed his eyes he could imagine taking her hand, walking with her into the sunset like something from the pages of a romantic novel. He didn't close his eyes and his long strides took him away from her making her jog a little to keep up.

"You were talking about past lives." He muttered, wishing the whole thing didn't sound so ridiculous, wishing they were talking about something else, about themselves maybe, about what she did at weekends, about the movies she liked going to, the books she read, her hopes and fears.

"Yes." He could feel the brush of her sleeve against his hand, the merest touch of her shoulder next to his arm. So small, so strong, so beautiful. "Mulder went to see a hypnotist." "He did what?" Skinner could feel himself bristling, fought down his incredulity that Mulder had wasted time on this nonsense when he was supposed to be working on a case.

"Please, sir." A cool, calming hand on his arm that spun a web of fire around his heart. He slowed his pace so that she didn't have to keep trotting. "I thought it was ridiculous at first as well, but Mulder's been right before. And also...usually past life regressions are just fantasies, sir. I didn't believe them either. But Mulder gave names, the names of real people. I looked them up. They did exist, sir."

She got out the photos he had seen her hiding earlier.

"Look." She showed him a handsome man, the name Sullivan Biddle written on the back of the photo. A petite woman, the photo ripped in half. "Mulder believed that this woman, Melissa, had been his...partner, lover, in previous lives. In more than one. As if they were destined for each other or something. And he saw other people too, his sister, even smoking man. They had been reincarnated with him before. He really believed that."

"And what about you?" Skinner swung round, wondering why he was really entering into this madness, not wanting to even guess at the resonances this nonsense was stirring deep inside him. "Were you with him in these previous lives, Scully?"

"Yes." A look of unexpected, blazing anger in her eyes. "Yes I was some adjunct to him then as well. His father, his sergeant... looks like my destiny is always to play second fiddle to Mulder whichever goddamn incarnation I'm in!" Her eyes flashed fire at him and her whole body was a tightly balled mass of fury. Skinner stared at her in surprise. "I'm sorry." She got control of herself. "I shouldn't have said that. I don't blame him but it just...well if it's true and of course I'm not entirely sure I believe it, then it all just seems so hopeless. Do you know, he believes he died here."

"Here?" Skinner looked around the calm, tranquil field.

"Yes. Oh and I did as well, apparently. But it's his story. He got the big romance to go with it. He died in the civil war, with Melissa hovering nearby, wringing her hands. And another time he was a woman and he died in Poland, killed by the Nazi's. That's where the smoking man came in apparently. God, what a miserable set of life stories!"

"Mulder must have an unlucky soul," Skinner commented wryly. "But if they are true...and I'm not sure for a minute that I believe any of this, but if they are, well you would have had your own story too, Scully. It's just that Mulder saw things from his viewpoint. If you're seriously concerned about this why don't you follow it up? Undergo past life regression yourself? I can't really believe I'm saying this." He grinned at her and she looked startled and then grinned back. He felt it again, that sensation he had experienced before, countless times. Soulmates. Connected. They belonged together, as one. I love you, a voice imprisoned behind walls said. I love you, Dana Scully. She frowned and stumbled, her face

growing pale. He put out a hand to steady her, feeling warm flesh beneath his hand, and a current of electricity under his fingertips.

"Just walked over my grave," she murmured. He raised an eyebrow. "No, literally," she said. "I died here too remember?" They stopped and stared at the patch of ground where she had faltered.

"Spooky." Skinner murmured and then they both burst out laughing, finding the joke.

There was a big tree trunk lying on the ground. He gestured to it and they sat, watching the dusk fall over the field. It really was beautiful here. Out of sight of the barn and its grisly contents, away from the noise and bustle of the clean-up operation. Nobody could see them out here. They were alone.

"What you said earlier..." he began. "You don't really feel like that about Mulder do you? That you play second fiddle to him?"

"Sometimes." She shrugged. "Sometimes it seems everything is about Mulder. It's the sort of person he is. I don't mind it normally but when he was talking about those past lives, a part of me just screamed "what about me?" I know it's absurd, it took me by surprise too." Her eyes were astonished, guilty even. "But I want to be more than a sidekick. I wonder what my stories were in those past lives? Did I even have a story? It was weird the way he believed we get incarnated together. I mean, is that true? Have I known him before?" "Maybe. Maybe you've known me before," Skinner ventured. "In a previous life." He could feel her thigh against his, just touching lightly. The wind was rustling through the trees, a small breeze, refreshing. It had been a hot day. "Have you ever..." he paused, wondering what had gotten into him.

"Yes?" Those blue eyes impaled him and he found himself speaking against his will.

"Have you ever met somebody and felt like you've known them before?"

"No. I don't think so." She frowned. "Oh I don't know. Sometimes you take a liking to people or a dislike without knowing why. I mean I disliked smoking man as soon as I met him but then he isn't very likeable so it's not surprising! But it's not enough to jump from that to imagining you've met someone before is it?"

"I don't know." He shook his head.

"Why?" Her eyes were curious, alert. "Have you?"

"Yes." He knew what her lips felt like under his because he had kissed her before. He knew what it felt like to love her and to be loved by her. He knew because it had happened.

"With who?" She asked, genuinely curious. He didn't want to say it. The walls tried to muffle the sound but somehow it came out all the same.

"You."

There was a shocked silence. She stared at him and he could see her scientific rationalism taking this information apart and putting it back together again.

"Really?" She was smiling. "No? Really?"

"Yes. The first time we met, I just felt as if I knew you. As if I had known you for a million years."

"I don't believe you." She was still grinning, looking faintly astonished, but smiling all the same.

"It's true. I'm not a stranger to psychic experiences myself. There have been a couple of occasions...things I can't explain," he told her. "I'm not interested in looking too deeply, like Mulder does, but sometimes I surprise myself. And really, it's true. I knew when I met you that you were someone important...someone I should know or someone I already knew, had known somehow, although logically I was aware we'd never met before. Not in this lifetime at least." A self-deprecating shrug at what he was saying, what he was implying. It was ridiculous. A few moments ago he had been angry with Mulder for getting involved with this nonsense and now he was endorsing it himself!

"Mulder would believe you." Scully nodded. "He really believed it all. And the photos..." She looked at them again, still held clutched in his own big hand. He passed them back to her and as he did so their hands met, touched, lingered too long.

"You had your own story in those lives," he told her, meeting her eyes, his own totally sincere. "A story that had nothing to do with Mulder." He wanted her to believe it because he believed it. Her blue eyes were puzzled and intrigued. He could see himself reflected in them. He looked dull, studious, plodding, old. He was a fool. She wasn't interested in him - not in this life, not in any life. Yet he wanted to make her understand. He could tell her this way, without revealing too much, pretend it was about past lives, not here and now. "You were loved, Scully," he said. "You had a special destiny of your own." Her eyes were fixed on his lips as he spoke. "You were..." Suddenly, without warning, she leaned forward and their lips met - so unexpected, so right. "Mine," he finished, drawing back, his fingers finding her hair, softly stroking it. She looked bemused, enchanted, afraid.

"Is that true?" She asked. "I want to believe..." a self-deprecating grin at her choice of words. "Someone who loved me time and again? Someone meant for me, meant only for me...?" "Why not believe?" He asked, his fingers lightly holding hers. "You and I, in a hundred different lifetimes, stretching back, stretching forwards into time." He pulled her against his chest, could feel his heart beating too loud as if in a dream. Was this happening? Where was the safety of the walls? How had he come to be sitting here, on this tree trunk, with Dana Scully nestled against his heart? He heard the sound of her muffled laughter, looked down, enquiring.

"You and me and Mulder!" She told him, laughing out loud and he snorted. "You and me and Mulder and Cigarette Smoking Man and Melissa and Mulder's sister...all of us, over and over again. Trapped in this destiny like some sort of loop!"

"It's a sobering thought!" He joined in her laughter, hugging her close.

She had allowed him to kiss her! His heart still sang out the knowledge. She had let him hold her hand, hold her body, kiss her, touch her hair.

"I died here." She looked round the field. "Where were you then I wonder? As I died."  
"At your side," he told her. "I don't remember the details, Scully. I just know that's where I would have been. And that I'd have saved you if I could."  
"You could have been a woman." She laughed again. "I was a man!"  
"Hmm...I'll have to think about that one," he grinned.

"I like it when you smile." She pressed herself against him again. He could feel her hard nipples against his chest as her lips found his.

"I like it when you kiss me." He plunged back down onto that soft mouth.

Time stood still. This had happened before. Once, twice, a hundred times. Soulmates, bonded forever.

"Everyone has their own story," he murmured, his hands on her jacket, undoing it. Her fingers were cool on his face, tracing down the side of his jaw, soft, like a whisper. "Not an adjunct, Dana. Your own story."  
"And you. What's yours?" A little nipping kiss along his neck, ending up in his mouth once more. Her sweet tongue, delicious, fizzing, swallowing his mind and his senses.  
"Mine? Part of yours. Always."

She shrugged her jacket away, guided his hands to remove her tee shirt and he wanted to feast on the sight of her forever. His fingers quickly undid her bra, pulled it away and he knew he would bury himself in her breasts as he had done in countless dreams. He could feel her hands on his head, running down his back as his lips found the hard tips of her nipples, his tongue flicking over them, making her shiver. She was pulling his shirt out from his trousers, her hands on his belt now, on his fly, releasing his hot, pulsing cock, already hard, wanting her. She pulled away from him, holding his hand, dragging him down to the grass, her other hand still undoing the buttons on his shirt. He could smell the sweetness of the grass, that fresh, earthy smell. An ant crawled along her hair and he blew at it, laughing. She blew back at him, laughing as well, her warm breath teasing his desire and then their lips met again. His shirt went the way of her jacket, abandoned on the ground, near the spot where her bones lay buried, the debris from a previous life.

"Making love on a grave?" he queried and she rolled over on top of him, her breasts pressed against his naked chest. He could feel the grass, itchy and cool on his back.

"Why not? It's my grave," she smiled, hooking her fingers into his glasses, removing them, throwing them onto his abandoned shirt.

"Then mine is probably nearby." She was blurry in his vision, all hazy red hair, flashing blue eyes and creamy white skin. His fingers pressed down into her trousers, found the warmth between her thighs, the wetness. "Or we're digging some new ones for ourselves right now."

"Ssh..." She closed his mouth with her own, opened it again with her own, poured herself

into him, like water running into a stream, making them one, each indistinguishable from the other. Where did he end and she begin? "Make love to me," she murmured, getting rid of her trousers, her panties, lying naked on top of him in the long grass in the field where they had died.

"Gladly." He rolled her down beneath him, his mouth and fingers exploring every inch of her pale body.

"Hard. I want to feel you. I want to know you," she murmured. "So strong..."

He bunched her up in his arms, enjoying the hungriness of her body, the crushing power in his that matched her need. She was tiny, like a bird within the tight embrace of his own large frame and yet tough and feisty too. Not a bird then, a turtle...hard shell...He laughed at himself for thinking of such ridiculous things when the pressure in his erect cock and the feel of her under him were all that should be on his mind.

Their flesh stuck together, warm, sweaty in the sultry evening air. It was like coming home as he entered her, thrusting, stabbing, smoothly penetrating the dark, welcoming recesses of her body. She cried out, a flood of ecstasy making her body glow, tiny pinpricks of sweat standing out on her skin. He was crushing her into the dirt and the grass, her body disappearing beneath him, too small. Wary of hurting her, he rolled them both back again so that she was on top of him, still thrusting up into her as she rode down on him, her hands on his chest, her mouth nuzzling at his neck. His fingers caressed her buttocks, ran up her back, his body shuddering with pleasure, encasing her in his huge warmth, his protective embrace, swallowing her whole, as she was swallowing him. She looked down on him as he reached climax, as she reached climax, their eyes locked.

"We've done this before," she whispered.

"Yes. Another lifetime..." He came with a groan, his hips forcing forward as she orgasmed with him, clenching him tight in the warm, breathtaking clasp of her thighs.

They rolled over in the grass, she gathered up tight, close, her breasts like perfect mounds of soft pleasure against his body. She was where she belonged, where she had always belonged in a hundred, thousand, million different lifetimes.

"The field where we died," she murmured, her hair under his chin, her words spoken into his chest.

"The field where we were reborn," he said.

THE END

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