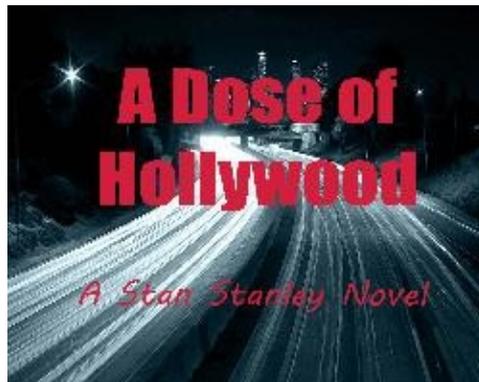


# A Dose of Hollywood

By : **mshumai**

Stan Stanley was an FBI special agent for eight years before suddenly quitting after his father's death. After six months of bumming around, he formed his own private investigation firm to get back to doing what he does best - solving crimes and mysteries. From the onset, it seemed that Stan would be relegated to spying on cheating spouses and finding lost pets, but one day a woman hires him to investigate the suicide of her wealthy Hollywood mogul husband, thrusting Stan into a mystery darker and more complex than he ever bargained for.



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# A Dose of Hollywood : Chapter 1

## Chapter 1: The Sonographer

It was only ten in the morning, but Stan had already started nodding off sitting at his office desk. He ran his hand through his short sandy-blond hair and yawned while peering casually out the open window at yet another empty blue sky over Los Angeles. On top of his cheap veneered desktop laid two manila folders containing hardcopies of his ongoing case files. Next to them were his laptop, a coffee-stained Georgetown mug, and his nameplate spelling out his full name and current title - "Stanley Stanley, P.I."

Anyone with an unusual name could empathize with his misfortune of getting picked on by other children in his younger school days. Stanley was a perfectly common name, but having the same first and last name made him an easy target for jokes, especially when he had no middle name to hide behind. Stan blamed his parents, but in truth the responsibility rested on the sonographer.

Thirty-three years ago, Sean and Margaret Stanley were set to have their first child and had decided on a name for the baby boy after their sonogram visit to the hospital. The sonographer was a nice man, but had a habit of passing the day sipping Jack Daniel's from his hip flask. After all, his work rarely dealt with life-threatening situations, and the whiskey made the repetitive work much more bearable.

And so, when the sonographer saw what looked like two fetuses in the womb, he thought he was having double vision as always and congratulated the Stanleys on their baby boy. To be fair, in those days of b-mode 2-D sonograms the images were much harder to interpret, and most patients were not even shown the sonograms. With that it was simple for Sean and Margaret, who had chosen to name the boy Sean Patrick Stanley after his father and grandfather, making him the III. But barely half a minute after Sean III had been born, a twin boy was discovered and pulled out to the amazement and shock of the mother and father.

Because they had not contemplated alternative names, the elder Sean was at a loss when asked to fill in the babies' names on the birth certificates. Without telling his exhausted and resting wife, Sean named their firstborn as planned, and for their second, unexpected child he wrote "Stanley" above the line for both the first and last name. Stan had heard his dad recount the story many times and once had asked him why he did not fill in a middle name, as some of Stan's friends went by their middle names. The response he got was, "Would you rather be named Stanley Stanley Stanley?"

Stan did not know why he even had the nameplate made since no one else occupied the office - he was the sole owner and employee of his recently formed private investigation firm. Perhaps, he admitted, it was from nostalgia of his childhood spent watching film noir, and an attempt to retain some of the mystique of the profession. But after eight years working for the FBI prior this gig, he knew that there would be no smoke-filled dark offices, no cigars and fedoras, and definitely no distressed femme fatales coming for his help.

That was when she sauntered through his opened office door.

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