

ALMOST SHERLOCK

Written by

Tom Stohlgren

Writer:
Tom Stohlgren
Email: tjstohlgren@gmail.com
Representation:
Eleni Larchanidou, LL.M.
Literary & Talent Manager
P: + 1-310 696 3656 USA
email: managerelenilllm@gmail.com
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SUPER: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely actors and assholes, dare I repeat myself." -- Detective Séamas Regan paraphrasing William Shakespeare.

FADE IN:

EXT. MANSION, POOL - NIGHT

SUPER: "11 PM, Home of Marly Mason's Parents"

The naked, dead, handsome body of BRET COOPER (24) lies face-down in the pool. The pool light is dim and the patio is pitch dark. We see hair gel dissipating from his Hollywood hairstyle. There is no bathing suit, towel, or suicide note.

TEMPLE JACKSON (24), a beautiful black woman, walks out of the backdoor of the house wearing turtle-shell rimmed eyeglasses, EarBuds, stylish jeans, and a T-shirt that reads, "SAG Actors on Strike."

She sees the body in the pool and SCREAMS like an urban New Yorker in a horror film.

TEMPLE
Help! Call 9-1-1.

She focuses on Bret's bare butt.

Temple's hands shake as she tries to call 9-1-1.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)
It's Bret! He drowned. Marly, call
an ambulance!

PRESTON HART (24), a strong, blonde-haired, blue-eyed German wearing tight undies races out and dives in the pool to bring Bret to the side of the pool.

OSCAR GOOLAGONG (24), a native Australian in shabby clothes, races out the back door and helps raise Bret onto the patio (face down and away).

Temple surveys the pool area, perplexed. She speaks sadly in a low tone.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)
Huh. No sign of Bret's clothes, his
phone, a towel, a martini glass, or
a suicide note.

Bret is placed face down on the patio with his face turned from view.

GILLIAN LI (24) is a beautiful Asian woman in a designer silk kimono, races out the door and freezes. She hides her face in her hands but peeks between her fingers at Bret's naked body.

REKHA MITTAL (24), a beautiful Indian woman in high fashion, races out and stands behind Gillian with her head hanging in sorrow. Although, she sneaks a peak at Bret.

ANDREW WILLIAMS (24), a handsome black man, steps cautiously onto the patio. He's dressed in a white long-sleeved shirt, black slacks, and colorful tennis shoes. He stands next to Temple.

Preston and Oscar awkwardly feel for a pulse on Bret's neck as MARLY MASON (24) races out the backdoor in horror at the site. She wears a white fluffy bathrobe and pink fluffy slippers. Her blonde hair and makeup are perfect.

PRESTON

(sadly)

He's dead.

OSCAR

I'm afraid so, mate.

Marly SCREAMS the loudest.

MARLY

No! No! This can't be happening.

No!

We HEAR SIRENS.

Minutes later there is a chaotic scene on the patio, except that everyone ignores Bret's body which now has a beach towel over his head and torso. His face is still turned away.

Two uniformed POLICE OFFICERS (male 40s, female 40s) are frustrated when speaking to the overly dramatic actors who fight to be interviewed.

Yellow Police Tape surrounds the patio and the pool, but the actors walk in and out of the secured area further frustrating the officers.

A uniformed Fireman (40s) flits with Marly outside the yellow tape.

The Police Officers frequently look at each other and throw up their hands.

A Deputy Coroner (50s) in a white scrubs shower cap, latex gloves, and a COVID mask wheels a gurney onto the patio. He is completely ignored by the Police Officers and Fireman.

The Fireman leaves and Marly leaps to the coroner who maneuvers Bret's body into a Body Bag.

Oscar and Preston race to help load the body bag onto the gurney as Marly flirts with the Coroner.

The Coroner hands Marly his business card.

All eyes are on the Deputy Coroner as he rolls the gurney through the crowd of onlookers and around the side of the house.

SILENCE

DETECTIVE SÉAMAS REGAN (60s), a rough, impatient man stomps from the kitchen onto the patio to see the actors strolling in the crime scene and talking to each other.

The Detective calls the two police officers and yells at them as he points to the pool and the yellow tape.

DETECTIVE

What a shit show! Get that crime scene secured now!

The Policewoman smiles at the Detective.

POLICEWOMAN

Don't worry, Detective.
(hands him her smartphone)
We all saw the video of him drowned in the pool. We have it all under control.

The Detective angrily watches the video.

INSERT VIDEO of Bret, naked, floating facedown in the pool. Counters on the video show it is more than ten minutes long.

DETECTIVE

Who took the video?

POLICEWOMAN

None of them said they took it, but somebody posted it and it went viral. They all saw it!

The Detective slaps his forehead with his hand in disgust.

DETECTIVE

I'll find the asshole who did this.
Get me the coroner's COD. I'll notify the family.
(yells)
(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Assuming they haven't seen the video.

POLICEWOMAN

Yes, sir.

DETECTIVE

What do we know?

POLICEWOMAN

The victim's name is Bret Cooper, 24, but we think it's a stage name. We didn't find his clothes or wallet, so no official ID, but we know this party is a three-year reunion of graduates of the biggest Performance arts school in the City. The house is owned by the parents of Ms. Marly Mason whose parents are famous actors too. It's so exciting, sir.

DETECTIVE

(angry)

Find me the vic's ID, now!

(mumbles)

What a shit show. How did this happen?

The Police Officers stare at each other and race off.

EXT. MANSION, PATIO - AFTERNOON

SUPER: "Five hours earlier."

The ritzy patio tables are stocked with fancy appetizers, sandwiches, chips, and with cold drinks and wine in coolers. Off to the side is a full self-serve bar with bottles of top-shelf liquor, glasses, shakes, and ice buckets. Still, all the actors hold cans of sparkling water near an empty glass plate on a table for show.

Beautiful and witty Marly wears a cocktail dress and heels as the perfect hostess. She visits her scattered visitors who smile with bullet-like glances of suspicion to other actors. Light scents of in-vogue body wash and jealousy fill the air. Marly greets her guests in a predictable pecking order. Temple smiles and speaks like a wealthy Upper Eastside New Yorker.

TEMPLE

"Never be late for an audition or a cocktail party," you told me as a first-year.

Marly leans in to kiss Temple on the cheek.

MARLY

Temple, dear, you never forget a line.

(looks at Temple clothes)
Don't tell me you're still on strike!

TEMPLE

I'm trying to get into a writer's room in L.A., and I'm also...

Marley glances around and sees three actors taking videos.

MARLY

(interrupts)
Girl, and you know somebody's vid will go viral tonight!

Temple tries to fist-bump Marly, but she's busy smiling into all the smartphones with cameras rolling.

Temple rolls her eyes and smiles.

Marly moves to greet Preston who wears a black suit that is too small for him. Preston can't shake his German accent.

MARLY (CONT'D)

Hollywood has been feeding you well, Preston.

PRESTON

(laughs)
Ja. Producers shoot Nazi films. I shoot Americans and Brits. Funny, Ja?

Marly sneaks her hand down and taps Preston's crotch.

MARLY

I thought you'd be shooting porn by now.

PRESTON

(acts offended)
Nein. Screen Actors Guild.

MARLY

I'd still give you ten.
 (seductively)
 Catch me up later on all the
 Hollywood gossip.
 (laughs)
 I can't even remember if Arnold is
 still alive.

Preston leans in to kiss Marly on the lips but she turns her
 cheek to him at the last minute.

MARLY (CONT'D)

I must say hello to Gillian.

Gillian enters in her designer silk kimono.

MARLY (CONT'D)

Gillian, dear. You've exceeded the
 expectations of our graduating
 class.

GILLIAN

A sequel would set me up for life.

MARLY

Hence, the kimono?

Marly touches the silk kimono by Gillian's breast.

Gillian quickly surveys the patio and looks back at the door.

MARLY (CONT'D)

It was "Karate Girl" not "Naughty
 Girl, you stay away from my man
 with that slip-off nightie.

GILLIAN

(winks)
 I'm going "Commando" tonight.

Marly half-smiles at Gillian as she strolls away.

MARLY

I see a wardrobe malfunction in
 your future.

Marly glides to Oscar, the Australian in shabby clothes. She
 kisses Oscar on both cheeks.

MARLY (CONT'D)

More money than God but you still
 showed up.

OSCAR
I missed getting pissed with my
best mates.

Oscar looks her in the eyes before staring at her cleavage.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I missed you... both.

MARLY
Oh, Oscar. That was freshman year.

OSCAR
(laughs)
Freshman year? Best two years of my
life, mate!

Marly glares at Rekha the beautiful Indian woman in high fashion. Rekha glares back at Marly before approaching her like a pit bull. Oscar sees Rekha and disappears.

Both women plant fake kisses on both cheeks, none landing.

REKHA
I see what you did tonight, Marly.

MARLY
Overacting, I mean, over-reacting,
are we?

REKHA
(whispers)
You turned your cast system into a
caste system -- with an "e." All of
us are ranked by "class."

MARLY
(laughs, whispers)
That's not right, dear. You're all
my number ones...

REKHA
(interrupts)
Because Bret Cooper didn't come.

MARLY
And now, you're our number two.
(laughs)
Kidding. You were our most
competitive classmate, but the one
we all wanted in our study groups.

Rekha glares at Temple.

REKHA

Then why was she valedictorian?

MARLY

(laughs)

How should I know? I was voted most likely to be hounded by the Alumni Association.

Rekha finally smiles.

REKHA

Seriously, thanks for inviting me. Inviting all of us. You we always so kind and generous to us all.

Marly sincerely hugs Rekha.

MARLY

Stop it. You'll ruin my blush. You are all the least boring people I've ever known. That's a great club to be in. We should meet more often than every...

Everyone turns to the sliding door into the house to see Andrew, a handsome black man, who steps meekly onto the patio. He's dressed in a white long-sleeved shirt, black jeans, and colorful tennis shoes.

The actors stare and whisper to each other like they don't remember him.

MARLY (CONT'D)

(to Rekha)

Three years.

(to Andrew/Sherlock)

Did someone call for an Uber already?

Temple glares at Marly.

Marly strides slowly to meet Andrew with her hand out to shake. She looks puzzled.

MARLY (CONT'D)

So nice of you to join us.

Oscar holds up a large glass of Scotch and toasts Andrew.

OSCAR

We needed a bartender, mate!

Andrew speaks up nervously in a bad British accent.

SHERLOCK

That's precisely correct, old boy.
In performance arts school, I often
volunteered to be a bartender at
parties because that was the only
way I could get anybody to notice
me.

Temple smiles at Andrew, who glances back with a smile.

REKHA

I always thought you were part of
the custodial staff.

GILLIAN

No, he worked in the cafeteria.

SHERLOCK

I was always on a Work-Study
Program to pay my tuition.

MARLY

(proud of herself)

I remember you. You only wanted to
be Sherlock Holmes. No one else.
The Professors hated that. Did you
stay in touch with Bret?

PRESTON

You dropped out after two years.
What you do-ink here?

The crowd turns silent as Bret, the handsome James Bond type
in a black tuxedo with the top button of his white shirt
unbuttoned, enters like a god from the sliding glass door.

ALL

Bret?

The actors flock to Bret like a rock star.

They are all mumbling "small-talk" questions simultaneously
when Bret glances at Andrew.

BRET

I invited Andrew. Marly, I hope you
don't mind.

(points to Andrew)

He doesn't drink, so he's also my
Uber driver home!

Everyone chuckles, but Andrew feels embarrassed and
sheepishly moves to the bar and wipes it down with a towel,
while Bret is mobbed by his fans.

Bret takes center stage on the patio and points to each guest as he brags about them. The actors beam with pride.

BRET (CONT'D)

(to Gillian)

Gillian was in the blockbuster film, "Karate Girl."

(to Preston)

Preston, you're our steadiest actor with fifteen roles in three years.

(to Rekha)

Rekha, you've been offered a juicy part on stage off-Broadway.

REKHA

It's off-off-Broadway, but...

BRET

(to Oscar)

Oscar, you're the leading contender for that "Roots"-like special in Australia.

OSCAR

No one's supposed to know about that, mate.

BRET

(winks at Temple)

I thought Temple would be doing a major TV series with the BBC by now... Or finishing law school.

Temple looks away, hiding her disappointment.

TEMPLE

He's right. Underachiever. Check!

Bret shocks them all by leaping to Marly, wrapping his arms around her, and giving her a big kiss on the lips.

She lifts one foot halfway like in the movies, which everyone sees.

BRET

Who's my best, best friend ever?! Thanks for agreeing to host our reunion party tonight.

Marly is stunned. She smiles like a bride, while Rekha, Gillian, and Temple look away slightly.

MARLY

I didn't see that coming.

Bret strolls to the bar and everyone follows.

BRET

And Mr. Sherlock Holmes. I wanted to apologize for that minor incident back in school. I hope you were able to forgive me.

Sherlock shrugs his shoulders and smiles.

SHERLOCK

Ancient history, my dear friend. What can I make you?

BRET

A martini, of course.

ALL

Shaken, not stirred.

Everyone laughs and drinks around the bar. Sherlock doesn't speak as he tends the bar.

Bret remains the center of attention as everyone mingles and chats all around the patio.

A good time is had by all.

EXT. BEACH - SAME

Two Russians (40s) wearing dark clothes are spying on Bret with night-vision binoculars.

INT. MANSION, DEN/FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: "Midnight, one hour after Bret died."

The Detective sits up straight in a chair behind a large, clean desk. He interviews Marly, the hostess, first. She's wearing a luxurious white bathrobe and pink fluffy slippers. She wipes non-existent tears from her eyes randomly during the interrogation. The Detective records the interview on his smartphone.

DETECTIVE

Please state your name and age to record the initial interview you agreed to without legal council present.

MARLY

Is this audio only or video too?

DETECTIVE
Audio and video.

Marly sits up in the chair, fluffs her hair, and opens her bathrobe a tiny bit. She wipes her eye with a tissue and leans into the smartphone.

MARLY
I'm Marly Mason age 24. This is my parent's home. They're separated, of course, and out of the country... Two different countries, on location, of course...

DETECTIVE
Confine your answers, please.

MARLY
Oh, right. But can I get a copy of your video later, right?
(with dramatic flare)
You must understand that my best friend and college boyfriend committed suicide in our pool tonight. We were practically engaged...

DETECTIVE
(interrupts)
What was the purpose of your gathering tonight?

MARLY
I had a few friends from our performance arts school to the house for a three-year reunion.

DETECTIVE
Uninteresting. I've heard of 10-year and 20-year reunions.

MARLY
(interrupts angrily)
We wanted to get together before anyone has had much work done or gained weight. Is that so wrong?

DETECTIVE
Where were you between 10 and 11 PM when the deceased was found?

MARLY

I was taking a long bubble bath, smoking pot which is perfectly legal, and picking out a nightie hoping Bret would...

DETECTIVE

(angry)

Please tell me exactly what you saw tonight out at the pool and be brief!

MARLY

I heard Temple scream. I threw on my robe and ran downstairs immediately after fixing my hair, and putting on face cream... again.

DETECTIVE

What did you see?

MARLY

The shit-show as you described it. Bret was naked on the patio. My guests were all sad despite having plenty of appetizers and drinks left. Your two cops were doing nothing. A fire department guy was bending over Bret when that snack of a Deputy Coroner arrived to carry Bret away on a gurney in a gastly body bag.

DETECTIVE

Snack of a Deputy Coroner?

MARLY

(winks)

Cute boy, hunk, Bea. But I got his business card before he left.

Marly hands him the business card.

The Detective studies the business card of the Deputy Coroner and it looks official, with a direct phone number.

DETECTIVE

Jesus, how long did you spend on makeup?

Marly ignores the comment and wipes away real tears into his smartphone.

MARLY
Here they come.

DETECTIVE
(sarcastic)
Right on cue.
(beat)
Do you know any reason Mr. Cooper
would commit suicide?

MARLY
(shocked, angry)
Did you see that video? I guess he
couldn't take it anymore! The vid
went viral.

The Detective stands and yells.

DETECTIVE
That video is evidence and I want
to know who took it and posted it!

Marly stands and stomps out while speaking.

MARLY
I didn't do it. All of us want to
know too. People have a right to
know, asshole! It's what he wanted.
His vid said, 'Let everyone know!'
Show some respect for the dead!

LATER

The Detective interviews Temple dressed as before. This time,
she speaks in an eloquent, strong but soothing voice.

DETECTIVE
Ms. Temple Jackson, how well did
you know the deceased?

TEMPLE
We were best friends in performance
arts school but we didn't keep in
touch after graduation.

DETECTIVE
That's odd, isn't it?

TEMPLE
No, that's life.

DETECTIVE

You found Mr. Cooper in the pool around 11 PM. What were you doing in the hour before that?

TEMPLE

Walking up and down the road out front imagining myself living in such a grand neighborhood someday, and listening to my elocution programs. I got tired and thought I'd walk along the beach, but I passed the pool, saw Bret, and screamed.

DETECTIVE

Did anyone see you on your walk?

TEMPLE

I heard two guys driving by in an EV speaking Russian, but I didn't see them well in the dark, but the car was EV-quiet so I heard them well.

DETECTIVE

Uninteresting. What exactly did you see at the pool?

Temple removes her eyeglasses and her voice and tone change to urban slang.

TEMPLE

Boy was naked, face-down, and I wanted to call 9-1-1 but my hands were shaking. So, I yelled for MARLY. But he was dead alright. I had no idea who took the video or how it went viral.

The Detective stares at her turtle-shell eyeglasses.

DETECTIVE

Did you see a towel or his bathing suit or clothes anywhere? Signs of drug or alcohol use?

TEMPLE

No. He had a few drinks earlier at the cocktail party.

DETECTIVE

But no drink glass or note around the pool?

TEMPLE

(angry)

You saw the video. We all did. Dead
naked boy. That's it!

The Detective smirks at Temple's eyeglasses.

DETECTIVE

Those aren't prescription glasses,
are they?

TEMPLE

(sophisticated voice)

We're done here, Detective.

Temple stands and storms out.

LATER

The Detective interviews Preston, now wearing a muscle shirt
and gym shorts. He still can't shake his accent.

DETECTIVE

You don't look a Preston Hart.

PRESTON

It's stage name.

DETECTIVE

Please state your real name and
age.

Preston looks away.

PRESTON

Guenter Schmidt, age 24.

DETECTIVE

Goon-ter?

PRESTON

G-U-E-N-T-E-R. I change for
Hollywood.

DETECTIVE

Uninteresting. Where were you
between 10 and 11 tonight?

Preston shows the Detective his email list on his smartphone.

PRESTON

In room, sending many emails to
find new agent.

DETECTIVE
Can anyone corroborate your story?

PRESTON
Nein.

DETECTIVE
(sarcastic)
Nine people?

PRESTON
Nein, nein, no!

DETECTIVE
I was kidding. Uninteresting. Did you take or post that video of Mr. Cooper naked and dead in the pool?

PRESTON
Nein. No!

DETECTIVE
How well did you know the deceased?

PRESTON
Bret was my best friend at the performance arts school. We swim together.

DETECTIVE
So you are both strong swimmers.

PRESTON
(flexes)
He help me in voice class and I help him swim stroke.

DETECTIVE
(sarcastic)
Sounds like it worked out beautifully for you both.

The Detective rolls his eyes in disgust as Preston exits.

LATER

The Detective interviews Gillian, who remains in her silk kimono.

GILLIAN
Gillian Li, age 24. Perhaps you saw my blockbuster film, "Karate Girl."

DETECTIVE

Uninteresting. Did you take or post that video of the victim?

GILLIAN

No, but I saved a copy on my phone like everyone else.

DETECTIVE

Great. How well did you know the deceased?

GILLIAN

We were best friends and partners in our dance-fighting classes but we didn't stay in touch after graduating because I moved to Hollywood, of course.

DETECTIVE

Were you ever romantically involved?

GILLIAN

That's for the tabloids to decide after Bret's viral vid. Nice ass, huh?

DETECTIVE

What were you doing between 10 and 11 PM?

GILLIAN

I was reading the trades and looking for auditions. It's all I do.

(excited)

Ooooh. And online shopping for a new black skinny dress for the funeral.

DETECTIVE

(sarcastic)

I see you're all broken up by the death.

LATER

The Detective interviews Oscar who slumps in his chair, still tipsy. He wears his same shabby outfit.

OSCAR

Oscar Goolagong, 24.

DETECTIVE

Australian accent. Is it real? Or are you practicing it?

OSCAR

(sarcastic)

We never say 'put another shrimp on the barbie!' We say, 'give our land back, you imperialist, colonizing assholes!'

DETECTIVE

Uninteresting. How well did you know the deceased?

OSCAR

He confided in me we was best mates. We'd hit the grog and get pissed every weekend. Lost touch after graduation.

DETECTIVE

Uninteresting. Where were you between 10 and 11 PM?

OSCAR

I had a grog or three with my mate, Bret, about 9 in the kitchen 'til I went upstairs about 10. Snapped out of it when I heard Temple scream bloody murder.

DETECTIVE

Who said anything about murder?

OSCAR

It's an expression, ya gronk!

DETECTIVE

Did you take or post that video?

OSCAR

I was busy mate.

(beat)

Me and Preston dragged his bum out of the watta.

DETECTIVE

It's water!

OSCAR

Piss off, gronk!

Oscar storms out.

LATER

The Detective is tired and cranky as he interviews Rekha who still wears her beautiful Indian high-fashion gown.

REKHA

I'm Rekha Mittal. 24. I heard you were filming your interviews. I'd like a copy of this for my sizzle reel.

DETECTIVE

Sizzle reel?

Rekha hands the Detective a headshot photo.

REKHA

We are always rehearsing for auditions.

The Detective rolls his eyes in disgust and sets the headshot aside.

DETECTIVE

(angry, tired)

Let me guess. You were best friends with the deceased but you've lost contact after acting school when you moved to Hollywood.

REKHA

I stayed in New York. I'm interested in theater. On Broadway. Film and TV are so yesterday. I did lose touch with my old boyfriend.

DETECTIVE

Old boyfriend?

REKHA

He dumped me for the bimbo who owns this dump.

DETECTIVE

Uninteresting. Do you and Ms. Mason get along now?

REKHA

Like everyone here, we're all best friends for the cameras and cutthroat competitors on the inside.

DETECTIVE

Interesting choice of terms. Where were you between 10 and 11 PM?

REKHA

In my room working on my lines for Hamilton.

DETECTIVE

What role?

REKHA

The lead, of course.

DETECTIVE

Any witnesses? George Washington, maybe? Did you take or post that video?

REKHA

Don't be ridiculous!

SILENCE.

Rekha stands and stomps out annoyed.

DETECTIVE

Do they get any weirder?

Andrew Williams acts as Sherlock Holmes as he storms in, remains standing, and studies the Detective. He maintains his comically horrible British accent.

The Detective checks his notes without looking up.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Andrew Williams.

SHERLOCK

Holmes. Sherlock Holmes. Call me, Sherlock, or Mr. Holmes. I'm an easy bloke.

The Detective looks up, angry but speechless.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

You've recently been on a trip, Fiji or Lapland. You read romance novels not detective stories, you watch only Hallmark Rom-Coms, Ewww!, you walk with a slight limp, you're unmarried, and you own a Chihuahua-doodle.

The Detective stands and glares at Sherlock as he smiles confidently like he nailed it.

DETECTIVE

Sit down and answer my questions.

Sherlock snatches a light brown hair from the Detective's coat as he sits down. Sherlock sits with a puzzled expression and maintains his poor accent.

The Detective sits.

Sherlock cringes as he finally notices the Detective's wedding band.

SHERLOCK

My apologies to your wife, and your Chihuahua-doodle needs a trim.

The Detective glares and attempts to control his temper.

DETECTIVE

How well did you know the deceased?

SHERLOCK

I think he loved me for my acting prowess. He tried to be my best friend, but I kept his advances at bay, as we say.

DETECTIVE

(mumbles)

Advances? Finally. A possible motive.

SHERLOCK

In fencing class. What, pray tell, did you think I meant? You saw his video, my old man. We know it was a suicide.

The Detective takes notes.

DETECTIVE

Until we get the Deputy Coroner's report...

SHERLOCK

Right, old boy! We have to treat it as a suspicious death, but it was suicide.

DETECTIVE

Did you take or post that video?

SHERLOCK

No, my good boy. I was fast asleep on a couch in the family room waiting to drive Bret home. I was his Uber driver home, although he wanted to be dropped off in Times Square. Odd, old boy, odd.

Sherlock takes a fake pipe from his pocket, sticks it between his lips, and smiles approvingly as the Detective takes notes.

DETECTIVE

Where were you born, Mr. Anthony Williams?

SHERLOCK

Queens.

DETECTIVE

Then I'll call you Tony and you can speak like you're from Queens. You're getting on my nerves. I'll ask you again. Did you take or post that video?

SHERLOCK

No.

DETECTIVE

Is anyone around here responsible for what led Mr. Cooper to suicide?

SHERLOCK

I assure you, Detective, no one staying here is responsible.

(laughs)

No one here is very responsible at all, old boy. They're all spoiled rich kids who picked acting as a profession, so they're all crazy too.

DETECTIVE

(angry)

And you're not an actor, Tony?

SHERLOCK

I left the performance arts school after a few years. Marly only invited me tonight because she says Bret demanded I be here tonight.

DETECTIVE
 (sarcastic)
 Why, pray tell, why?

Sherlock stands to exit.

SHERLOCK
 That's what I'm investigating, old
 boy. I'll keep you abreast of my
 findings.

Sherlock exits leaving the Detective scratching his head.

He turns off the video recording on his phone.

DETECTIVE
 What a nut house.

He gets a call on his smartphone. The Caller ID reads,
 "Deputy Coroner."

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 Séamas here.
 (listens)
 Yes, it's a regular chlorinated
 pool.
 (listens)
 That's what you deduced too. Good.

The Detective looks out the window as he listens a bit
 longer.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 You found traces of seawater, and
 phyto what in his lungs.
 (writes down)
 Phytoplankton. And zooplankton?
 (perplexed, defensive)
 But the sea is 100 yards away.
 Maybe he went swimming in the sea
 before committing suicide in the
 pool!
 (yells)
 Idiot, I need that tox report!

He pounds his fist on the desk.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 (yells)
 You should never remove a DB until
 the lead Detective analyzes it!
 (beat)
 I'm getting the CSI team back out
 here.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I want to find the vic's ID, and I want a full TOX report by morning!

He pounds his fist on the desk again and makes a phone call on speaker.

MARLY (O.S.)

Yes, Detective.

DETECTIVE

Can you gather your guests for me outside by the pool in thirty minutes?

(pauses)

I know it's late but have something to ask everyone and I need to check a few things first.

EXT. MANSION, POOL - LATER

Everyone gathers uncomfortably on the patio. The Detective stands with his back to the pool. He holds a flashlight.

DETECTIVE

Sorry to bother you all so late. I've checked the doorbell camera and no one else has come in or out the front door all night except our police staff, and...

Checks his notebook.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Ms. Jackson.

Everyone turns to Temple who is stunned. Temple speaks in her urban tone. She's defensive.

TEMPLE

I went for a walk, asshole, then I walked back here and found Bret dead. Good thing I did or wouldn't nobody would have found his ass 'til morning.

The Detective holds his hands up.

DETECTIVE

(to Marly)

Can you confirm that this is a freshwater pool?

MARLY

(angry)

Even the pool boys know it's a freshwater pool! Yes.

DETECTIVE

I've been down and back to the beach twice. 88 to 90 yards is what I paced.

MARLY

That's at high tide, Detective. It's 100 paces or more at low tide.

The Detective takes notes before addressing the actors.

DETECTIVE

I saw footprints from the pool to the beach, as expected, but no footprints going up or down the beach, suggesting that your group was responsible for the footprints I saw.

He waves his flashlight at the actors.

REKHA

What's bothering you, Detective? We need our beauty rest.
(glares at Gillian)
Some more than others.

Gillian restrains herself, then turns her head to Rekha.

GILLIAN

Shut up, you cow!

DETECTIVE

Listen up. All of you. The Deputy Coroner's preliminary report will show that Mr. Bret Cooper died with traces of seawater in his lungs!

OSCAR

What are you saying, mate?

DETECTIVE

That finding may suggest our victim went to the beach before he drowned in the pool. Did anyone see him walk to the beach tonight?

Everyone gasps, but Sherlock.

SILENCE

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Why weren't his clothes down there?

MARLY
We'll look in the morning.

SHERLOCK
So, the game is afoot.

Preston points to the sea and the pool.

PRESTON
No clothes. No towel. Ja, a dead
naked body, like video.

DETECTIVE
(angry)
The lack of clues bothers me. It's
as if one or more of you tampered
with the evidence!

Everyone stares at each other suspiciously.

Sherlock puts the pipe in his mouth and steps in front of the
group.

SHERLOCK
Excuse me, Detective.

DETECTIVE
Yes, Tony.

Sherlock cringes.

SHERLOCK
Did you say that you conducted your
footprint survey tonight, at high
tide?

Everyone stares at Sherlock.

DETECTIVE
That's what I said, yes.

SHERLOCK
Isn't it entirely possible that the
high tide has washed away Bret's
clothes and any footprints of
others who may have wandered up and
down the beach willy-nilly?

The Detective is flustered.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

And couldn't those same nefarious hoodlums have been responsible for coercing the suicide of our dearest friend, Mr. Bret Cooper?

The Detective glares at Sherlock as the actors high-five, fist-bump, and hug Sherlock.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

You see, Detective, you have only eliminated the improbable, and have barely scratched the surface of what is possible! I, Sherlock Holmes, will seek the truth!

The actors cheer again, and the Detective turns angrier.

DETECTIVE

I'm in the early stages of my investigation. No one leaves this house until I complete it!

(glares at Sherlock)

I want you to stay out of my way or I'll arrest you for impeding my investigation. Got it?

SHERLOCK

Yes, sir, Detective.

TEMPLE

(to Sherlock)

Excellent deductions, Mr. Holmes.

SHERLOCK

(to Temple)

Elementary, Watson!

(winks at her)

Elementary.

Temple and Sherlock share a moment. Their exchange catches the other actors off-guard.

The Detective begins to stomp away.

MARLY

Oh, Detective?

He turns to see Marly pointing to Sherlock.

MARLY (CONT'D)

In the absence of our family's attorney, I'm appointing Andrew Williams, AKA Mr. Sherlock Holmes as Counsel for our Mason Family during your investigation.

The actors cheer as the Detective throws up his hands in disgust and stomps away.

DETECTIVE

(mumbles)

Actors and assholes, dare I repeat myself!

The Detective turns his head to the side and yells.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I want everyone up, dressed, and fed by 8 AM when this place will be crawling with police while you sit quietly on this patio. You'll leave your driver's licenses and passports on the kitchen table by morning.

He turns and exits slowly.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Good evening.

OSCAR

(whispers)

I say we hold a good old-fashioned wake for our best friend and shagger, Bret Cooper.

They all nod and return to the house in a solemn mood.

INT. MANSION, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The actors stand around the kitchen island to drink and grieve.

MARLY

Why would he do such a thing? He looked so hot.

OSCAR

You can't tell what's spinning inside a bloke from the outside. Remember Robin Williams, ey!

GILLIAN

Who stayed in touch with Bret after graduation?

Everyone looks around sadly as no arms go up.

GILLIAN (CONT'D)

We're all too self-involved to worry about others.

REKHA

(defensive)

Speak for yourself.

GILLIAN

I was in L.A.

PRESTON

(smirks)

So was I. I could have called.

Preston sobs and covers his face.

TEMPLE

We all should have called. No friend left behind.

Sherlock lifts a can of sparkling water.

SHERLOCK

Raise a glass, mates.

The others raise shots of various types of liquor.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

(no British accent)

I thought about it too. After I got kicked out of the school. I suspect Bret found out and that's why he wanted me here tonight. He felt sorry for me, I guess.

The others gather around Sherlock, but Temple looks him in the eyes.

TEMPLE

Why... why didn't you...

SHERLOCK

Because suicide leaves a wake of unconsolable emptiness in others.

TEMPLE

You couldn't let that happen.

Oscar and Preston slug down their drinks.

Oscar slaps Sherlock on the back.

OSCAR
Nailed it, mate.

The others, except Temple, slug their shots.

Temple turns her head and smiles at Sherlock. They share a moment.

LATER

Everyone is on their smartphone and sipping drinks.

TEMPLE
I can't find anything on Bret Cooper after Performance arts school.

MARLY
I assumed he was Bradley Cooper's younger brother. He would blush whenever I said it.

GILLIAN
I assumed he was an alien. Too good to be true.

PRESTON
I never talked about his home life.

REKHA
I thought he was a billionaire's son.

TEMPLE
I'm sure it was a stage name. I assumed he had it legally changed because I saw his driver's license once.

SHERLOCK
How?

TEMPLE
I peeked in his wallet when he was swimming laps.

They glare at Temple.

MARLY

Or you gazed at his lap when he was swimming.

Sherlock looks away.

TEMPLE

(angry)

We all wanted to know more. He was mysterious, charming, and a stud. We each Googled him, I bet!

They nod, "Yes."

MARLY

His online bio was vague.

SHERLOCK

I don't have one.

TEMPLE

(softly to Sherlock)

You may have had little to say, but he had everything to hide.

SHERLOCK

(to Temple)

Brilliant!

Everyone nods, "Yes."

They are all Googling "Bret Cooper."

MARLY

So who was this mysterious hunk? He vanished after Performance arts school.

PRESTON

White pages? Nothing.

GILLIAN

Zero social media presence!

ALL

Ewww!

REKHA

No photos or vids anywhere. So, who posted his snuff film?

Everyone glares at Rekha.

REKHA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm stressed!

TEMPLE
But that's the question that's been
bothering me all night! I say we
play Truth of Drink!

They pour shots in case they lie.

OSCAR
I'll go, mates.
(beat)
I never auditioned for a single
role.

MARLY
Because of your ethnicity?

OSCAR
Because of eccentricity.

REKHA
You poor thing!

OSCAR
I took out loans to attend
Performance arts school, but before
I got home, rare earth metals were
found all over my Pappy's land in
the outback.

The others cringe. Oscar pretends to cry.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Forced as a youngsta to be
eccentric like my role models: Bret
and Marly.

GILLIAN
(sarcastic)
Aw!

TEMPLE
(to Oscar)
Don't joke about it. Look where it
got Bret.

MARLY
Andrew... Sherlock. What's your
secret?

Andrew stays in character and speaks like an upper-class
Englishman with a poor accent.

SHERLOCK
I'm not really British.

The others stare at Sherlock with blank expressions.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)
Or upper-class.

The others, except Temple, gather around Sherlock to console him.

GILLIAN
Many actors had to take jobs in the
food industry: WonTom Cruise.

PRESTON
Kevin Bacon Burger.

The group cringes, so Preston slugs a shot.

PRESTON (CONT'D)
I should have said, Kevin Vienna
Sausage.

The group nods, "Yes."

REKHA
Cuba Pudding Jr.

MARLY
Elvis Parsley.

Everyone glares at Marly, so she drinks a shot.

MARLY (CONT'D)
I should have said Mark Ruffalo
Wings.

They nod "Yes."

MARLY (CONT'D)
Tough audience. The point is, don't
let your past define your future.

Temple pulls Sherlock aside.

TEMPLE
Can we talk on the patio, Andrew?

SHERLOCK
We're not supposed to go out there.
It's a crime scene.

TEMPLE

(paces)

We could tell the policewoman we need a smoke and it's not allowed in the house.

(beat)

If we only had vape...

Out of nowhere, five vape pipes are presented to Temple and Sherlock from Marly, Gillian, Preston, Rekha, and Oscar.

EXT. MANSION, PATIO - CONTINUOUS

The uniformed Policewoman puts her hand on her pistol when Temple and Sherlock enter the patio from the house.

TEMPLE

We need a smoke.

SHERLOCK

We'd call them fags if they were cigarettes, but we have those electronic...

Temple and Sherlock show the officer their e-cigarette.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

E-fags? That doesn't sound right, Eh, mate?

The Officer rolls her eyes and walks off toward the beach.

Temple whispers to Sherlock in a British accent.

TEMPLE

Sherlock, I'm in urgent need of your assistance, but it must remain strictly confidential.

Sherlock's eyes open wide.

We see them from a distance and cannot hear them, but Temple does all the talking, pointing, and explaining.

EXT. MANSION - LATER

The Policeman guards the front of the house. The Policewoman walks the beach.

The Detective calls the two police officers simultaneously.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

My current thought is that one or more of those actors were involved in covering up the suicide. I'm bringing a search warrant. Secure the premises. Keep them all in one room if you can.

EXT. MANSION, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sherlock nods "Yes," as he and Temple enter the kitchen.

INT. MANSION, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The others are drinking and telling quiet stories. They see Temple leading in Sherlock.

MARLY

The Policeman at the front door notified me that until the Detective returns with a search warrant we're all to stay in one room.

SHERLOCK

I hope it's the loo, 'cause I gotta go, mates!

Marly laughs and points to the bathroom.

Sherlock exits and Temple returns the two vape pens they borrowed. Her hair is wet but nobody notices.

Marly leans into Temple as the others look on.

MARLY

Is there something going on between you and Anthony?

Temple speaks to all of them.

TEMPLE

First, Anthony never liked the name Anthony because everyone rudely shortened it to Tony.

PRESTON

What wrong with Tony? Tony Soprano.

REKHA

Tony Bennett.

GILLIAN
Tony Randal.

MARLY
Tony and Cleopatra?

Temple points an "I warned you" finger at MARLY as the group groans.

Marly drinks another shot of booze.

TEMPLE
He's working hard to perfect his
Sherlock Holmes impersonation.

OSCAR
Why?

TEMPLE
The character's name, Sherlock
Holmes, became public domain in the
US for the first time in 136 years
in January 2023. He wants to be
prepared if he is offered the lead
role.

The actors, except Temple, chuckle at the suggestion.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)
(angry)
We are all so self-absorbed! We
didn't grieve after Bret, our
classmate for 3 years of college,
committed suicide, and we often
treat each other like shit. We will
not kill Sherlock's dream! Take a
shot!

Sherlock returns to the group and they drink up.

SHERLOCK
What the hell happened, mates?

REKHA
Use your powers of deduction,
Sherlock.

Sherlock nods his head and gets in Rekha's face.

SHERLOCK
Truth or Drink. Rekha.
(as he studies her)
(MORE)

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

You tire of being offered roles as a background chorus dancer in low-budget Ballywood movies.

Rekha's eyes open wide.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

You think your skin color, as beautiful as you are, is preventing you from getting leading roles.

Rekha looks away.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

You feel guilty that your parents are supporting you even though they wanted you to go into medi...

Rekha stops him with hand over his mouth.

She takes a shot of booze and steps back.

Sherlock gets in Oscar's face, puts his hands on his shoulders, and speaks quietly to him.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

Oscar, you are a promising actor. You have a near-photographic memory for learning lines. Your greatest fear in life is not pursuing acting because you no longer seek money and you never sought fame.

Oscar smiles.

OSCAR

Damn, mate. You're good.

Sherlock moves to Gillian.

Gillian surprises everyone by pushing Sherlock away and drinking a shot of booze.

Everyone chuckles as Sherlock goes to Preston.

SHERLOCK

Guenter, your secret is safe with me.

Preston eagerly takes a drink.

Sherlock moves to Marly, who tenses up.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

Marly, you've had difficulty remembering lines in the past.

Marly looks away.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

But there is no one, except Oscar, who found it easy. I predict a technological device will soon make it easy for you to recite your lines like the next Meryl Streep.

Marly smiles and hugs Sherlock.

MARLY

Thank you, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

Sherlock moves to Temple and they gaze into each other's eyes. The others look on.

Sherlock reaches to the kitchen island and takes a drink. It nearly kills him to drink alcohol.

He returns to gaze into Temple's eyes.

SHERLOCK

Is my secret safe with you?

They hear a POUNDING on the front door.

Moments later, the Detective stomps into the kitchen holding up a search warrant.

DETECTIVE

Listen up, people. My officers will be searching your cars outside, all the rooms in the house, and everything in your pockets and on your phones. You can request a lawyer to be present.

The actors point to Sherlock, who shrugs his shoulders.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I'm not leaving until I find out much more about the victim, which of you tampered with evidence at the crime scene, and who took and posted that video online. Got it?

They all nod, 'Yes,' as the Policewoman joins the Detective.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Put the booze away now!

Oscar races to get in one last shot, but the Detective stops him.

Marly removes the bottles of booze and wine.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Let's start with your IDs and phones.

The Policewoman examines the phones and IDs at the Kitchen table.

The Detective glares at each of his suspects.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Withholding evidence is an offense punishable up to one year in prison and a fine of up to \$2,000.

SHERLOCK
(snickers nervously)
That's fine with me.

The Detective glares at Sherlock.

DETECTIVE
Tampering with evidence is a felony with up to 20 years in prison.

Everyone gulps and is frightened.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I want to know everything you all know about Bret Cooper.

The Policeman runs into the kitchen.

POLICEMAN
No sign of the vic's clothes, wallet and ID in any of the cars outside.

SHERLOCK
(to the Detective)
The high tide could have swept them away, old boy!

The Detective glares at Sherlock but yells at the Policeman.

DETECTIVE
Check the house!

The Policeman exits quickly.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

How did Mr. Cooper arrive here tonight?

Everyone shrugs.

MARLY

He showed up last, probably by Uber.

DETECTIVE

How did the rest of you get here?

GILLIAN

Our LA crowd, Preston, Oscar and I, took the same 4 AM redeye to LaGuardia and Oscar rented the car for us.

TEMPLE

I took a train from Queens and then and Uber.

SHERLOCK

I drove my Uber car.

DETECTIVE

(to Temple and Sherlock)
Uninteresting!

REKHA

I drove the new Tesla outside.

The Detective checks his notes.

DETECTIVE

Registered to your parents, Ms. Mittal.

The Detective glares at the actors.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I assume all your parents are less than proud.

SHERLOCK

(to the Detective)
Be careful about assumptions, old boy. Some of us prefer our mother's cooking to no food at all.

The actors giggle, as the Detective gets in Sherlock's face, but he's interrupted by the Policewoman.

POLICEWOMAN

Sir, they all have copies of the drowned victim in the pool on their phones.

The Detective is elated.

POLICEWOMAN (CONT'D)

But none of them have the original video which had different EXIF data.

DETECTIVE

EXIF data?

SHERLOCK

Exchangeable image file. It's like a fingerprint for every smartphone that is recorded along with every video taken and shared.

POLICEWOMAN

(smiles at Sherlock)
He's right, Sir.

DETECTIVE

That proves nothing!

SHERLOCK

Except that none of our phones took the initial video. And we demand our phones back.

The actors gather around Sherlock, cheer, and pat his back.

The Detective paces angrily. He yells to the policewoman.

DETECTIVE

Return their phones to them.
(to the group)
So, one of them had a burner phone.
(yells at the policewoman)
Find it!

POLICEWOMAN

Yes, Sir.

The Policewoman exits quickly.

The Policeman stomps in.

POLICEMAN

No sign of the victim's clothes or wallet in the house. I searched all the rooms upstairs.

(excitedly)

I think Ms. Mason was expecting company.

Marly smiles at the Policeman.

DETECTIVE

How do you know?

POLICEMAN

Every room was cleaned and vacuumed for the party. Most had on set of footprints. However, there were two sets of wet footprints in Ms. Mason's room where her wet footprints were observed from her huge bathtub to her dressing table and someone else's footprints went from the bathtub to the bed.

The actors hoot and holler.

MARLY

Very observant, Officer...

DETECTIVE

Never mind.

The Policeman, proud of himself, winks at Marly.

POLICEMAN

I like having candles lit, soft lighting, and the slight scent of...

REKHA

French whore perfume from a gallon jug?

Rekha and Marly glare at each other.

GILLIAN

(to Marly)

You were entrapping Bret.

Marly looks away.

MARLY

It's been over three years.

OSCAR
Since you...?

MARLY
With him!

Preston smiles at Marly.

PRESTON
He pick bad time to commit suicide.
Maybe not as smart as I thought.

Marly smiles at Preston.

The Detective points out to the pool and yells at the actors.

DETECTIVE
So, we have a video of the victim's
suicide taken by a phone that is
not in our possession.

The actors nod, 'Yes.'

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
None of you knew if Mr. Cooper was
suffering from anxiety or
depression.

The actors nod, 'No.'

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
You all claim to be his best friend
at the Performance arts school.

The actors nod, 'Yes.'

The Detective's phone rings. Caller ID reads, "Deputy
Coroner." He walks away to answer it.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Detective Regan.

He pauses to listen.

The Detective turns and glares at the actors.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I see. TOD, slightly before 11 PM.
COD is not definitive. Preliminary
TOX report shows trace elements of
what?

He listens.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(yells)

Then get me your full report as soon as possible!

The Detective ends the call.

The Policewoman stomps in to whisper in the Detective's ear.

The actors look on nervously.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Thank you. Get them on the phone for me when you can.

The Policewoman glances and smiles at Sherlock before exiting.

The Detective calmly addresses the actors.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

New evidence, which I am not free to share with you, has come to light.

(beat)

What I can share with you is that we're now treating this as a suspicious death.

All but Temple and Sherlock are stunned.

TEMPLE

A death is suspicious if it is unexpected and its circumstances or cause are medically or legally unexplained. Bret's death remains unexplained.

The actors look at Temple in awe.

OSCAR

That's our valedictorian!

SHERLOCK

(smiles at Temple)

Elementary, Temple, but well-played, old girl!

DETECTIVE

(sternly)

It's not a game or a play! This means we have every right to treat you all as suspects in a potential murder investigation!

The gravity of the situation shakes the actors.

Sherlock steps up to the Detective.

SHERLOCK

But we are not your only suspects,
isn't that right, old boy?

The Detective looks puzzled.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

You still haven't found the missing
phone. You're unable to rule out
outsiders who wandered by the beach
at low tide, and if Bret's phone
and clothes wash up on the beach in
the morning, we have to rethink
your entire case.

The Detective charges Sherlock but the other actors form a
human shield around him.

DETECTIVE

You're a real smartass, Tony.

SHERLOCK

Elementary, my old man.

DETECTIVE

Stop calling me, old man.

SHERLOCK

Stop calling me, Tony.

The Policeman races in and hands the Detective a private
note.

DETECTIVE

It seems we've located the
deceased's parents. I'll be out in
my car giving them a call.

(sadly)

The worst part of my job. But you
wouldn't know anything about that!
A job, that is! A real goddamn job!

He storms out.

The actors look sadly at the Policeman.

MARLY

Can I make you some coffee or get
you a sandwich?

The Policeman looks back and then smiles.

POLICEMAN

That would be great. My husband expected me home by now. He worries sick about me. I didn't expect this case to take so long.

Oscar consoles the cop and pats him on the back.

OSCAR

I know the feeling, mate.

Marly makes coffee while everyone else scrounges for food in the fridge, plates in cabinets, and silverware. Preston finds coffee cups.

MARLY

Let's make three plates.

TEMPLE

You got it, Marly.

Sherlock moves in close to the Policeman.

SHERLOCK

Do you think it was suicide?

POLICEMAN

Either suicide or made to look like suicide.

SHERLOCK

What do you mean?

POLICEMAN

The sad thing about suicides is you rarely know what they were thinking just prior to the act. I would have tried to stop him.

MARLY

We all would have.

POLICEMAN

I would have told him, 'It gets better.' And it does.

TEMPLE

(consoles the policeman)
Sounds like the voice of experience.

The Policeman nods, "Yes."

Soon the coffee is ready, the Policeman starts to eat, and the Detective and Policewoman enter the kitchen.

The Detective leaps to stop the Policeman from eating or drinking.

DETECTIVE

I wouldn't do that. The Coroner told me there were traces of Novichok in the vic's system!

The Policeman stares at the wonderful plate of food.

POLICEMAN

Novichok?

SHERLOCK

The poison of choice by Russian operatives. The respiratory muscles become paralyzed and death occurs, typically by asphyxiation. Perfect for use by a swimming pool, wouldn't you agree, old man?

The Detective orders the Policewoman.

DETECTIVE

Cuff him.

(to Sherlock)

Tony Williams, I'm booking you on suspicion of murder.

Sherlock's eyes open wide. He is stunned into shock.

His fellow actors freeze at the sight of Sherlock having a nervous breakdown.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(snickers)

He's a smartass who knows his poisons as well as he knows his Miranda rights.

POLICEWOMAN

(sadly)

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you.

Sherlock's knees buckle and he collapses to the floor.

The Detective takes evil pleasure in watching Sherlock fall apart.

Sherlock sobs. His British accent disappears.

SHERLOCK

Ma was right. I'm no good. I'll never be good at nothin'

Temple comes to his aid first, and the others follow, putting their arms around him.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

The Detective checks his body-cam.

DETECTIVE

Mr. Anthony Williams. Are you ready to confess?

TEMPLE

Don't say a word without a real attorney present.

MARLY

I'll get you two attorneys. The best lawyers in New York.

DETECTIVE

Go ahead and confess? What did you do? Poison the most successful member of your Performance arts school class?

Sherlock looks up, tears in his eyes. The others look on helplessly.

SHERLOCK

No?

DETECTIVE

The only best friend you ever had, although he had dozens. You were jealous, admit it.

SHERLOCK

No.

DETECTIVE

The same classmate you fought with in the locker room? Maybe a gay relationship gone bad?

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Seeing him so successful tonight in a tuxedo must have enraged you in your shabby urban best. That's why you killed him! Admit it!

SHERLOCK

No.

DETECTIVE

He goes for a swim in the sea. You follow him. You stab him with a syringe of Russian poison. Slow acting Novichok. He doesn't realize it.

SHERLOCK

No.

DETECTIVE

It was you who suggested his clothes, phone, and wallet would be swept out to sea with the high tide.

The actors look sadly at Sherlock. The Detective's accusations are beginning to sound plausible.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Then you use a burner phone to record his so-called suicide and post it on social media before crushing it with a rock and tossing it into the sea! Didn't you, Tony Williams? Admit it! You killed Bret Cooper!

Sherlock looks up, tears in his eyes. He's too stunned to speak. Temple hugs him.

TEMPLE

Don't worry, Sherlock. We'll get you out of this.

(glares at the Detective)

Sherlock has no motive and you have no evidence that he poisoned anyone, or that he ever owned a burner phone. And you were Bret's Uber driver back to the City. No evidence and no motive!

(angrier)

What do you have to say for yourself, Detective? I hope this is all on your cop-cam.

The Detective looks around to see Marly, Gillian, Preston, and Oscar taking videos on their smartphones.

The Detective shuts off his cop-cam.

DETECTIVE

I've got the Police Chief and the
FBI on my butt to close this case.

Marly and Preston whisper to each other.

MARLY

(whispers)
FBI?

PRESTON

(whispers)
Maybe he was James Bond?

DETECTIVE

I've had enough of this Sherlock
Holmes pretender.

The Detective glares at the two Police officers.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I'll be in my car waiting for the
COD and TOX reports. Officers,
don't let anyone leave the house.
Will have this case solved at dawn,
when it's also low tide.

(points at Sherlock)

He's not smart enough to pull
something like this off alone.

(glares at the actors)

That's going to make one or more of
you accomplices to Murder One.

(laughs)

Life in prison, ladies and
gentlemen. Life in prison.

The Detective storms out angrily.

Everyone is stunned. Sherlock shakes in fear.

POLICEMAN

Can we eat now?!

POLICEWOMAN

I could use a bite.

Sherlock remains huddled on the floor with Temple rubbing his back.

The others slowly pull out snacks, drink coffee, and chat around the kitchen table. They glance occasionally at Sherlock.

OSCAR
We gotta eat, mate.

GILLIAN
It'll be morning sooner than we think.

PRESTON
(to Sherlock)
Maybe eat to cheer up.

Marly stands and places her hands on the officer's shoulders.

MARLY
Sherlock here has incredible powers of observation and deduction. You should let him describe you. Maybe it will cheer him up.

Temple and Marly pull Sherlock up.

Sherlock stands nervously before the Policewoman. He speaks slowly and without confidence. His voice quivers with weak questions rather than observations. He had no British accent at all.

SHERLOCK
You were at the top of your class at the police academy? The indentation on your wedding band finger suggests that you were married three times and divorced once, but had no children? You bet the ponies with the money that should go into your IRA? You're looking for a kidney for your dying mother?

The actors look shocked by Sherlock's poor performance.

MARLY
It was just like you in Performance arts school.

REKHA
Poor thing.

Temple turns away, sad and embarrassed for Sherlock.

POLICEWOMAN

I'm sorry, Sherlock. You were wrong on all counts. I was near the bottom of my academy class, but my uncle is the Police Chief. I've never been married. I'm engaged but the rock is so big I'm worried that bad people may hurt me to steal it. I never bet on anything and my mother is healthier than I am!

Marly pulls the Policeman over to Sherlock.

MARLY

Huh, do him, Sherlock. You can do it.

Sherlock is just as nervous as before. His performance is worse. His observations sound like questions.

SHERLOCK

You've failed the Detective's exam three times? You've been happily married for over ten years? You're allergic to peanut butter so you carry an Epi-Pen in your front pocket? You read comic books for adventure and encyclopedias for fun?

POLICEMAN

Nope, on all counts. How did you miss the gray cat hair on the legs of my pants or muddy shoes from traveling, or the bags under my eyes from crying every night, and the peanut butter cookies on my plate? You got me all wrong.

(sadly)

That's not an EpiPen in my pocket. It's me!

The actors stare at the Policeman's crotch before looking sadly at Sherlock.

MARLY

Arresting Sherlock made him lose his gift!

PRESTON

Powers of deduction gone?

GILLIAN

Poor boy.

REKHA

They are going to eat you up in prison!

MARLY

Maybe everything will be better by morning?

TEMPLE

Sherlock, let's get you some rest on that comfortable couch in the family room.

Sherlock trudges off to the family room with Temple.

POLICEWOMAN

We'd better get back to guarding the exits.

The Policeman and Policewoman exit.

LATER

Oscar, Marly, Rekha, Gillian, and Preston sit at the kitchen table.

REKHA

I hate to say, but maybe Anthony did kill Bret out of jealousy.

MARLY

Let's face it, everyone was jealous of Bret.

REKHA

(defensive)
Not enough to kill him!

The others stare at Rekha.

REKHA (CONT'D)

Bret was everything Anthony wasn't.

MARLY

They fought in the locker room.

PRESTON

Anthony got kicked out of school.

GILLIAN

He looked so fragile tonight. Robin Williams fragile.

(beat)

(MORE)

GILLIAN (CONT'D)

They do have the same last names,
ya know!

MARLY

(sad)

Temple is probably on suicide
watch.

The others nod in agreement.

REKHA

And the Detective thinks one or
more of us tampered with the crime
scene, hid evidence and were
accomplices.

(angry)

I'm not going to prison! I had
nothing to do with this!

OSCAR

I like Anthony, mates, but I think
he's a little... unstable.

Preston drops his head and fights back tears.

PRESTON

It so sad.

They all drop their heads.

INT. MANSION, DEN/FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Temple consoles Sherlock as he sits by her side on a leather
couch. His head is hung low as he stares at his handcuffs.

Temple grabs a piece of paper and a pencil from a small desk.

She draws an outline of the house, the patio, the pool, and
the sea.

She adds parked cars in the front of the house, and one car
out on the road labeled, "Russians, 11 PM."

Sherlock sneaks glances at her drawing.

She draws a floating dead body in the pool.

Sherlock looks away.

She stares at the drawing with a sad face.

She looks at her phone to get the time. It reads, "5:04 AM."

She Googles "Time for Low Tide today."

Her face lights up.

TEMPLE

Sherlock, the game is afoot!

(beat)

You're going to do exactly as I
say.

She whispers as she points her pencil at several spots on her drawing.

INT. MANSION, KITCHEN - DAWN

Boxes of donuts and "boxes" of coffee cover the kitchen island.

Oscar, Marly, Rekha, Gillian, and Preston are freshly showered and dressed in the clothes they arrived in, except Marly, who wears a stylish new outfit.

Temple enters with Sherlock in tow.

Everyone stares at Sherlock who looks confident and proud. He speaks in a strong British voice (which still is comically bad) as he puts his cuffed wrists over Temple's head.

SHERLOCK

Make no mistake, my friends, the
game is afoot, and by the end of
the morning, Holmes and Watson will
have that mean detective eating out
of our hands.

Temple unhook's Sherlock's arm and steps away.

TEMPLE

You got this, Sherlock.

Sherlock gazes at Temple, smiles, shrugs, and winks at her.

Sherlock's handcuffs clang as he clumsily puts his Sherlock Holmes pipe in his mouth.

SHERLOCK

(nervous)

Aye, I've got this, mates.

The Detective stomps into the kitchen with the two Police Officers right behind him.

The Detective moves to the opposite side of the island,

The Officers sneak coffee and donuts while the Detective sounds overly confident and arrogant.

DETECTIVE

I've received the reports from the Deputy Coroner who determined the time of death to be between 10 PM and 11:30 PM last evening.

SHERLOCK

The bloke was fished out of the pool at 11 PM.

Sherlock looks around to see the actors getting video on their phones. He winks into Marly's phone.

The Detective ignores Sherlock.

DETECTIVE

I'd like each to tell me exactly where you were between 9 PM and...
(glares at Sherlock)
11:30 PM.

Marly raises her hand.

MARLY

I was in my bubble bath from 9 until 11 PM when Temple screamed.

Marly is animated and dramatic and she moves her body seductively as she speaks.

MARLY (CONT'D)

I leaped from the tub and grabbed a small ultra-plush towel.

She uses her hands to show the towel was only 2 ft x 3 ft.

The men's eyes, except the policeman, open wide, as she seductively towels off.

DETECTIVE

Move it along, Ms. Mason.

She simulates putting on body lotion.

MARLY

I used a silky after-bath body lotion to protect my skin.

DETECTIVE

That's quite enough, Ms. Mason!

MARLY

Fine! I brushed my hair and raced right down to the pool to the shit show, as you called it, Detective.

DETECTIVE

Ms. Li?

Gillian walks in a sultry way to "center stage" in the room as if she was auditioning in her Kimono. She sees Oscar's phone has the best angle for filming.

GILLIAN

In my room the entire time practicing lines and moves.

Gillian puts on a demonstration of Karate kicks, and defense and attack moves. It's clear that she lacks underwear.

DETECTIVE

(angry)

That's enough, Ms. Li.

She bows in a respectful way to the Detective and Police Officers. The Officers are sneaking bites of donuts and enjoying the show.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Ms. Mittal?

REKHA

I was in the room next to the Karate Kid. I could hear her jumping around the entire time, so I kept yelling my lines for "Hamilton."

GILLIAN

She was so loud! The entire time.

REKHA

(auditioning for Hamilton)
Alexander Hamilton. My name is Alexander Hamilton. And there's a million things I haven't done, but just you wait, just you wait...

DETECTIVE

That's enough, Ms. Li!

Gillian steps forward.

GILLIAN

She rehearsed with so much power!

DETECTIVE
Uninteresting!

Rekha steps forward, smiles at Gillian, and rehearses for the Detective.

REKHA
"I may not live to see our glory.
But I will gladly join the fight.
And when our children tell our
story, they'll tell the story of
tonight." – Alexander Hamilton.

Rekha bows and the actors cheer while taking videos.

The Detective shakes his head in disgust.

Sherlock steps toward the Detective with a Sherlock Holmes-style scarf around his neck and the Sherlock Holmes-style pipe in his mouth.

SHERLOCK
It sounds like they're each other's
alibis, old man.

The Detective is angry.

DETECTIVE
When I want your opinion, I'll ask
for it!
(beat)
Mr. Schmidt, where exactly were you
between 9:45 and 11 PM?

PRESTON
Please call me by my stage name
because of live-streaming, Ja!

Preston points to his fellow actors who are filming with smartphones.

The Detective is angrier.

DETECTIVE
Put those damn things away.

The actors ignore the Detective as Preston shows the Detective his "outbox" of emails from the night before.

INSERT video of Preston scrolling through his outbox.

PRESTON
I have list of 200 agents. I send
same email to all of them, Ja?
(MORE)

PRESTON (CONT'D)

But I be smart and say something nice about each of them before I hit send.

Temple is looking over Preston's shoulder.

TEMPLE

So it took you about five minutes to edit and send each email, and you must have 30 or more emails sent out over that time with no break.

PRESTON

I slow but steady typist. I hunt and pecker.

OSCAR

We're live streaming, Preston. Keep it clean, mate.

The actors chuckle.

Sherlock speaks from across the room (still with the scarf and pipe).

SHERLOCK

The perfect alibi, my friend.

Preston smiles at Sherlock.

The Detective turns to Oscar.

DETECTIVE

Mr. Oscar Goolagong where were you...

OSCAR

I know, mate, between 9:45 and 11 PM. That's the problem. It's confidential.

DETECTIVE

In your initial interview, you told me...

(reads from his notebook)

"I had a grog or three with my mate, Bret, about 9 in the kitchen 'til I went upstairs about 10. Snapped out of it when I heard Temple scream bloody murder." Do you have something to add?

Oscar glances back at Marly who looks away.

OSCAR

At 10 PM, I got harder than a priest in an orphanage, if ya know what I mean.

The smartphones turn to Marly who opens her arms to Oscar.

The actors stare (and film) Oscar and Marly gazing into each other's eyes.

The actors gasp.

MARLY

I was in my bubble bath, thinking about Bret, when Oscar sent me a text with a photo of a huge joint!

The actors GASP but keep filming as Oscar leaps to passionately kiss Marly. He doesn't stop.

DETECTIVE

What are you saying?

SHERLOCK

Elementary, old boy. Oscar ran up to Marly's room, stripped naked, hopped in the bubble bath and smoked a joint! Hence the two sets of wet footprints, old boy.

The actors cheer as Marly and Oscar, hold hands and take a bow.

DETECTIVE

How do we know you were together the entire time?

OSCAR

Lots of dick-picks on my phone.

TEMPLE

He means, selfies. I'm sure they're all time-stamped if he needs an alibi!

MARLY

(laughs)

He better not post them or I'll put his little shrimp on the Barbie!

The actors chuckle but the Detective remains angry.

DETECTIVE
That leaves Ms. Jackson and Mr.
Williams. Ms. Jackson?

TEMPLE
No alibi, I guess. Anthony and I...

Sherlock looks disappointed at Temple.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)
I was outside in front of the house
listening to my elocution programs
and dreaming about being rich and
famous.

REKHA
We all do that, all the time.

TEMPLE
I got tired and thought I'd walk
along the beach, but I passed the
pool, saw Bret, and screamed.

SHERLOCK
(proudly to the Detective)
I was alone in the family room on
the comfy leather couch until I
heard Temple scream. I guess Temple
and I are your only suspects
without alibis, old boy!

The Detective smiles.

DETECTIVE
If we can all move out to the
patio...

The Police Officers refill on coffee and donuts before
following the Detective. The actors follow.

INT. MANSION, PATIO - CONTINUOUS

The actors are shocked when they see a floating dummy in the
pool.

DETECTIVE
I thought that might sober you up!

The actors stare at the dummy and hang their heads.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Your real friend, your best friend
is dead.

The Detective glares at the actors.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Let me tell you what we know. Each of you claimed Mr. Bret Cooper was your best friend at Performance arts school three years ago.

The actors glance at each other and nod 'Yes,' solemnly.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

But none of you stayed in touch with him since that time.

The actors glance at each other and nod 'Yes,' solemnly.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I've never met a group so self-absorbed that...

Marly's phone RINGS loudly.

MARLY

Sorry, Detective, I've got to take this. It's my agent.

Marly turns and listens.

The Detective throws his arms into the air in disgust.

MARLY (CONT'D)

(turns to the group)

I gotta call back! A producer saw the livestream. She wants me to read for the Meryl Streep role in "The Devil Wears Prada 3."

The actors cheer and continue life-streaming.

MARLY (CONT'D)

(sadly)

I'll have to gray my hair and get a whole new wardrobe.

The group cheers again as Marly smiles.

Oscar tips her over with a "dip" kiss and everyone cheers.

DETECTIVE

(yells, angry)

Your attention, please!

(points to the dummy)

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

We've placed the dummy in the approximate location of the pool according to Ms. Jackson's statement.

TEMPLE

That's creepy. Why are you doing this to us?

DETECTIVE

I need to find out exactly what happened!

TEMPLE

(angry)

Fine! I finished my walk outside and thought I'd check out the beach. Not something I get to do every day.

Temple races to the edge of the pool and SCREAMS.

PRESTON

I run to scream immediately.

Preston strips down to his tight undies as the actors film him.

OSCAR

I left Marly's room a few seconds later than my mate, Preston. I saw his head at the bottom of the stairs heading toward the patio. So I followed him like a dingo to a gimpy joey.

Preston runs to the side of the pool and surprises everyone by flexing his muscles into the cameras before jumping in gracefully.

The actors gasp.

Not to be outdone, Oscar races to the side of the pool and dives in equally gracefully.

Preston and Oscar tread water near the dummy and wink at each other before they dive down and swim underwater to the shallow end of the pool.

The actors gasp.

We see Oscar and Preston perform and impromptu synchronized swimming display doing handstands, spreading their legs, bringing them back together, and wiggling their feet in perfect unison.

The actors cheer and the Detective yells as Oscar and Preston poke their heads up.

DETECTIVE

Rescue the victim, goddamnit!

Oscar exits the pool and runs to the side of the pool.

Preston swims to the dummy and pulls it to the side of the pool where Oscar helps him place the dummy on the patio.

Marly hands them towels.

Rekha's phone RINGS loudly.

REKHA

Sorry, Detective, it's a theater producer. I need to take this.

Rekha turns to take the call.

The two Police Officers smile and move in to listen to her call.

The Detective points at the beach.

DETECTIVE

You two. It's low tide. Check out the beach for the vic's clothes, wallet, and phone! Leave no stone unturned!

The Police Officers RACE off to the beach. The Policeman leaps for joy as he races off, which everyone but Rekha sees.

REKHA

(loudly)

An all-female "Hamilton?" You saw my livestream audition?

The actors cheer and gather around Rekha.

REKHA (CONT'D)

Off-off-off-off Broadway. Yes, I understand!

The actors cheer.

DETECTIVE
 (angry)
 Can we please...

Gillian's phone RINGS loudly.

GILLIAN
 O-M-G, it's my agent from L.A.
 Sorry Detective, I have to take
 this.

Gillian turns and walks away a little. The actors follow
 while filming.

DETECTIVE
 Stop this right now!

The actors ignore the Detective who paces angrily.

GILLIAN
 Two-sequels plus merch. Are you
 kidding me? Yes, Yes! I'll fly home
 A.S.A.P.!

The actors cheer.

Preston's phone RINGS loudly.

DETECTIVE
 (to Gillian)
 You're not going anywhere!

PRESTON
 The agent I almost fired.

DETECTIVE
 This is ridiculous.

The actors gather around Preston.

PRESTON
 (yells into the phone)
 Change name back to Guenter
 Schmidt? Nein!
 (pauses)
 Schwarzenegger biopic.
 (in German)
 Wunderbar!

The actors cheer.

PRESTON (CONT'D)
 I don't read for parts so good.

Preston laughs, pauses, and turns to the actors.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

Needer did Arnold when he start
out!

The actors laugh and pat Preston on his back

The two Police Officers return from the beach. The
Policewoman holds up a small evidence bag with a cigarette in
it.

DETECTIVE

What did you find?

POLICEMAN

No clothes, wallet, or phone.

POLICEWOMAN

But we turned over a few rocks,
like you said, and found this.

She holds up the evidence bag.

POLICEWOMAN (CONT'D)

A Black Russian Sobranie cigarette
butt.

SHERLOCK

Ah-ha! As suspected. And finding it
under the rock means someone was
trying to hide it. Not simple
littering. Good work you too!

The Detective goes ballistic.

DETECTIVE

It proves nothing! I'll tell you
what happened here last night! Take
a seat and shut up!

SHERLOCK

Oh, I get it. This is the part
where the Detective gathers all the
suspects around the pool for his
big reveal!

The Detective gets in Sherlock's face.

DETECTIVE

Not one more word out of you or I'll also arrest you and your friends for impeding my investigation. Put those phones away now!

The actors' eyes open wide as the Detective paces. They put their phones in their back pockets immediately.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

We did a little background check on each of you.

The actors look worried. The Detective points to the actors as he call them out.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Ms. Marly Mason was arrested once and has been detained many times at several high-end stores for shoplifting.

The actors giggle and shrug.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Oh, I see. You all...

MARLY

I was never charged.

DETECTIVE

Famous parents. But that's not the case for Ms. Temple Jackson. Drug possession and use as a ten-year-old! We gave her a summer vacation at a juvenile facility.

The actors look at Temple with pity.

TEMPLE

(angry)
I did my time.

DETECTIVE

Mr. Guenter Schmidt. Possession and use of steroids and growth hormones in middle school.

PRESTON

Ja, but Preston Hart would never do dat today.

DETECTIVE

Mr. Oscar Goolagong assaulted a police officer.

OSCAR

(angry)

The gronk called me an "abo," a very offensive term for First Peoples.

DETECTIVE

And what does gronk mean?

Oscar looks away.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

The only ones without arrest records were Ms. Li and Ms. Mittal.

Gillian and Rekha fist-bump and laugh.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(angry threat)

You won't get off so easy today.

SHERLOCK

What about Bret?

DETECTIVE

His parents called me from Spain and Rio. They said he was unemployed and homeless like you losers, and probably a drug addict.

The actors drop their chins in sadness.

TEMPLE

(sadly)

I saw his tuxedo was a rental but didn't say nothin.' We all know what this means.

SHERLOCK

(sad, without an accent)

We better find that Tux or someone will be charged double.

MARLY

Temple means it was suicide and that Bret was playing us all for fools.

The Detective hops around happily.

DETECTIVE
No, it was murder!

The actor's eyes open wide in disbelief. They stand in defiance.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I'm not buying all that high-tide, low-tide business. This was an inside job from the start. You all had a motive to reduce the competition for acting roles, and you all tried in vain to be each other's alibi at the time of the murder. I think you were in this together!

Sherlock sticks the pipe in his mouth and speaks with a better British accent.

SHERLOCK
What's your improbable theory, Detective?

DETECTIVE
(sarcastic)
I'm glad you asked, Mr. Williams.

SHERLOCK
Sherlock, my dear boy!

DETECTIVE
It's Tony Williams, the drama school dropout is all you'll ever be.

Temple shoots the Detective a glare that no one else sees.

The Detective points at the pool. His tone is accusatory and angry.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Mr. Bret Cooper was found dead by an apparent suicide at 11 PM by Ms. Jackson who screamed rather than taking the victim's pulse!

TEMPLE
I don't swim.

Sherlock shoots Temple a glance.

DETECTIVE
Luckily, the victim's phone
videotaped his demise but the phone
mysteriously vanished!

PRESTON
(smiles)
Such a drama queen!

OSCAR
(scoffs)
Even for a short film.

DETECTIVE
A clear sign of evidence tampering
by one or more of you. The
disappearing phone. I'll get back
to that later.

The Detective points to Preston and Oscar, who immediately
stop smiling.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
When the first two idiots arrive on
the scene and drag his body out of
the pool contaminating my crime
scene!

MARLY
They couldn't leave him in the
pool. You know what chlorine does
to the skin!

The Detective glares at Marly and all the actors.

DETECTIVE
Again, your background checks came
in handy last night. Mr. Guenter
Schmidt and Oscar Goolagong
happened to be the strongest men
and swimmers in your twisted little
group and are my lead suspects for
drowning the victim in the sea and
carrying him to the pool!

Preston's eyes and Oscar's eyes open widely.

SHERLOCK
(mumbles)
Preposterous, old man!

DETECTIVE

But based on their grades and rap sheets, neither of them are candidates to be the mastermind of this charade!

The Detective turns to Marly.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

One person invited you all here, including the special invitation for Mr. Andrew Williams whose sole purpose was to disrupt my investigation.

He points to Sherlock who now holds the pipe and wears the wool scarf.

SHERLOCK

Poppycock, dear man!

The Detective glares at Sherlock.

DETECTIVE

The victim's smartphone video of his demise clearly shows the effects of muscle paralysis induced by the Russian poison, Novichok, before dying, helpless in the sea or the pool. That poison was confirmed by the Tox report from the Deputy Coroner.

TEMPLE

(innocently)

Did you find out how the poison was administered, Detective?

The Detective paces confidently.

DETECTIVE

Not just yet. We suspect a syringe was used and stolen with the victim's phone. But I'll be arresting you all on conspiracy to commit murder. We'll learn everything we need to know in the interrogation rooms. You'll all turn on each other like rats on a sinking ship...

Sherlock now wears his "Sherlock Holmes Costume Cape" as he interrupts.

SHERLOCK

Balderdash, Detective! There is no sound evidence to suggest that rats turn against each other on a sinking ship. They merely drown!

The actors frown at Sherlock.

DETECTIVE

Who among you wants to spend your life in prison for murder or 20 years as an accomplice to murder?

The actors look at each other suspiciously.

The Detective smiles devilishly as the two Police Officers show up with handcuffs.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Book 'em, Officers!

Sherlock steps up, now with his official-looking Sherlock Holmes double-billed tweed hat on. He speaks loudly and confidently.

SHERLOCK

Detective, officers, wouldn't you like to know the truth?!

Everyone freezes.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

First, there's the matter of the Detective's survey of the footprints in the sand at high tide.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The Detective stares at the sea and the footprints leading to and from it from the pool and estate.

He walks slowly on the outer side of the footprints shining his flashlight on the middle of the path as he walks toward the pool.

SHERLOCK (V.O.)

I'm sure the great Detective walked on the outside of the path while examining the center of the path.

(beat)

(MORE)

SHERLOCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He saw no evidence of a body being dragged so he assumed it was carried, requiring two strong people -- but any pair of us could have carried the body.

END FLASHBACK

DETECTIVE

(scoffs)

That's why you're all being arrested, you moron!

The actors look puzzled.

He glances at Temple quickly and then smiles at the Detective.

SHERLOCK

Then how do you explain the Russian cigarette butt that the nice policewoman found, old boy?

The Policewoman smiles at Sherlock.

DETECTIVE

(calmly)

Uninteresting! Some people smoke and litter. Not exactly news.

The Detective begins to walk away. Sherlock speaks louder but calmly.

SHERLOCK

A Russian cigarette. On the part off the beach that was covered at high tide while you examined it, Detective. Sloppy work, old boy.

TEMPLE

(to Sherlock)

Under a rock, right?

SHERLOCK

Elementary! Purposely hidden so it wouldn't be seen at low tide, the T.O.D., as we say.

DETECTIVE

(angry)

Time of death. I know! The littered cigarette is uninteresting. I see no connection.

He turns to walk away.

TEMPLE

Detective, I did mention in my preliminary statement that I heard two Russian voices as they drove by the front of the house last night.

SHERLOCK

T.O.D., old man?

The Detective turns in anger.

DETECTIVE

Coincidence! Uninteresting! We'll sort it out at the station.

SHERLOCK

Did you ask your officers to search the front of the house and road for similar Russian cigarette butts proving that the victim was being spied on by Russian operatives?

DETECTIVE

That's what we call a red herring. A pointless dead end in any investigation. Officers, go search for cigarette butts in the front of the house and along the road! Now!

The officers race away.

SHERLOCK

Isn't it true, Detective, that Bret Cooper's parents are spies for the CIA?

The Detective glares at Sherlock.

DETECTIVE

How did you know that?

Sherlock smiles at Temple briefly then paces for dramatic effect.

SHERLOCK

Secrets are something you tell one person at a time, old boy.

DETECTIVE

I'm not at liberty to discuss the occupations of the victim's parents.

SHERLOCK

Liberty is a rare commodity, old boy. However, it will come out in court. But if they are spies, and a Russian poison was used to kill their son, and you failed to bring this to your Police Chief's attention, how will it look?

The Detective is angry and unsure of himself. He paces and thinks.

The Policewoman returns holding an evidence bag with two cigarette butts.

The Detective drops his chin to his chest.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

I suggest we get those butts to a DNA lab right away. I further suggest that you set our butts free and report Bret Cooper's death as a suicide. I suspect the CIA has already contacted your Police Chief and the Deputy Coroner to confirm the Cause of Death. They, and you, don't want to make an international incident out of this, because you'll never catch those Russian spies, will you, Detective? You don't want another unsolved murder on your record, old boy! Let the CIA take it from here.

The actors cheer and pat Sherlock's back.

DETECTIVE

(to the officers)

Let 'em go. Let's get out of here!

(he stomps away)

I never want to meet another actor as long as I live!

The crown cheers and pulls out their phones.

The Police are gone.

MARLY

None of that was on video! But you were great, Sherlock!

Sherlock takes a small hearing device out of his right ear and shows it to Marly.

SHERLOCK

Here, Marly. I promised you an electronic device to help your acting career. It was Temple's and she gave it to me because she didn't need it anymore, and I'm giving it to you because I don't need it anymore. You can get Oscar to feed you your lines with his phone.

The actors gather around with puzzled expressions.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

I was being fed lines the entire night by the real mastermind of our Performance arts school, Temple, our valedictorian and the smartest person I know.

Everyone stares at Temple as Marly examines the device.

TEMPLE

Anthony not only always wanted to play Sherlock Holmes, he wanted to be Sherlock Holmes.

MARLY

So, what really happened here last night?

TEMPLE

Ah, the truth!
(gazes at Sherlock)
There were only two people at the Performance arts school who were born to play only one role, Anthony and Bret. Anthony was poorer than me! Bret had everything given to him. Bret took me to his folks' apartment on the Upper East Side, the cleanest place in the world. He told me his parents were in international sales.

OSCAR

Code word for spooks.

TEMPLE

Exactly. That's when I knew why his parents sent him to acting classes. They had to act every day.

REKHA

Makeup.

GILLIAN

Disguises.

PRESTON

Voices.

TEMPLE

Confidence.

(beat)

He told me that he needed confidence most of all. He never said it to me, but I knew he was going to be a spy.

MARLY

That's where he's been the past three years.

TEMPLE

I think he needed us to help him "disappear" and give the Russians credit.

SHERLOCK

Explain the misdirection, Temple. What you told me last night.

TEMPLE

Follow me.

(laughs)

This is called 'misdirection,' one of the most important elements of any good mystery.

Temple leads everyone to the sea.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

TEMPLE

I think Bret had this night planned for months. He asked Marly to throw the reunion with the loudest actors in our class.

MARLY

He meant that as a compliment.

TEMPLE

Our unassigned task was to disrupt and confuse the Detective's investigation.

GILLIAN

He knew we would post the party on social media.

TEMPLE

And he knew the Russians would see everything. I'm sure he knew they'd be watching him here.

REKHA

The cigarette butts out here and out front.

SHERLOCK

Elementary.

Everyone laughs.

TEMPLE

My guess is that Bret filled up a water bottle with seawater last night before he went to the pool.
(turns back to the pool)
Now, back to the pool.

They all follow Temple.

EXT. MANSION, POOL - CONTINUOUS

TEMPLE

When I raced out to the pool and saw Bret's body, I screamed.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

Help! Call 9-1-1.

She focuses on Bret's bare butt.

Temple's hands shake as she tries to call 9-1-1.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

It's Bret! He drowned. Marly, call an ambulance!

While Preston and Oscar retrieve Bret from the pool, Temple surveys the pool area.

END FLASHBACK

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

Remember? There was no sign of
Bret's clothes, his phone, a towel,
a martini glass, or a suicide note.
But later that night, Sherlock and
I came out to the patio for a vape,
and the Policewoman kindly walked
down to the beach.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. MANSION, PATIO - NIGHT

The uniformed Policewoman puts her hand on her pistol.

TEMPLE

We need a smoke.

SHERLOCK

We'd call them fags if they were
cigarettes, but we have those
electronic...

Temple and Sherlock show the officer their e-cigarette.

SHERLOCK (CONT'D)

E-fags? That doesn't sound right,
Eh, mate?

The officer rolls her eyes and walks off toward the beach.

Temple whispers to Sherlock in a British accent.

TEMPLE

Sherlock, I'm in urgent need of
your assistance, but it must remain
strictly confidential.

Sherlock's eyes open wide.

We see them from a distance and cannot hear them, but Temple
does all the talking, pointing, and explaining.

TEMPLE (V.O.)

But before we went back into the
house I had to check one more
thing.

Suddenly, Temple stands, strips naked, and dives into the
pool.

Sherlock's eyes open wide. He grabs a towel hanging on a patio chair and races to the side of the pool.

Temple exits via the pool and steps into the towel held by Sherlock. She holds a small, turquoise breathing apparatus.

END FLASHBACK

Temple pulls out the breathing apparatus from her back pocket.

The actors GASP.

TEMPLE

Bret spit out the breathing apparatus right before Preston and Oscar retrieved his body.

OSCAR

But we took his pulse!

TEMPLE

It's harder to do than most people think.

MARLY

He's alive?!

OSCAR

The bloke planned the whole thing!

TEMPLE

But he could tell no one. Not even us.

GILLIAN

But four people checked his pulse.

TEMPLE

Poorly, and Bret had help.

Temple looks around. So does everyone else.

She runs into the kitchen and returns with yellow rubber dishwashing gloves on.

Temple focuses on the tallest tree nearest the pool.

She walks confidently to the tree and looks up.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

Sherlock, give me a boost.

With help, Temple climbs the tree and finds a nylon bag tethered to the tree trunk with a retractable cord (like a long, thin but strong, clothesline).

She tugs on the nylon bag and climbs down the tree with it.

She walks confidently to the edge of the pool with the bag on the retractable line.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

I'm guessing we'll find a water bottle and a burner phone and a few other items of interest.

Everyone gathers around Temple as she slowly reveals the contents of the bag.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. MANSION, POOL - NIGHT

Bret is naked and stands at the edge of the pool with his burner phone recording a video. He holds the nylon bag and a quart-sized plastic water bottle out of the camera's view.

He turns from the camera and acts like he is being paralyzed by poison.

He falls forward, face down in the pool.

He secretly puts the turquoise breathing apparatus into his mouth and floats to the darker, deeper side of the pool for a few minutes.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. MANSION, POOL - DAY

The actors gather around Temple hanging on her every word.

TEMPLE

He swam back to the camera, cropped the video so it ended with him doing the dead man's float, and posted it on several social media platforms. He would have taken care to strip the EXIF data from the video first so it couldn't be traced to an IP address.

REKHA

How did the seawater get in his lungs?

Temple pulls out the quart-sized water bottle that contains the burner phone, a syringe, and a doctor's wooden tongue depressor.

TEMPLE

Brilliant!

(beat)

He filled the quart bottle with seawater and while at the edge of the pool, he used the tongue depressor to make sure some of the seawater got in his lungs.

GILLIAN

That must have tasted awful!

TEMPLE

Not as bad as giving himself a tiny dose of Novichok along with something to lower his blood pressure.

PRESTON

That's why we no find pulse?

TEMPLE

I speculate that the well-disguised Deputy Coroner worked for the CIA. I further speculate that he picked up Bret's tuxedo and shoes from a prearranged location inside the house during the chaotic shit show while we were all on the patio.

SHERLOCK

Bret gets a new identity, or stage name, and his new clothes and disguise are waiting for him in the Deputy Coroner's van.

CUT TO:

INT. CORONER'S VAN - NIGHT

Bret finishes dressing in the back of the moving vehicle. He wears stylish jeans, a T-shirt that reads, "SAG Actors on Strike," a baseball cap, and turtle-shell eyeglasses (exactly like Temple's).

He fist-bumps the Deputy Coroner.

BACK TO:

EXT. MANSION, POOL - DAY

Temple wipes off the items before returning them to the plastic bottle.

TEMPLE

We mustn't leave fingerprints.

Temple puts the items back in the water bottle.

She wipes off the breathing apparatus with her shirttail and sticks it in the bottle.

SHERLOCK

So the police will blame the Russians?

TEMPLE

No, so that the Russians could tell their bosses that their mission was successful.

The actors GASP.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

The video would have gone viral. All of our streaming videos went viral in many countries, including Russia. The Russian operatives could take credit for a successful hit, and Bret could fake his own death to become the spy he and his parents wanted.

Bret's last act in the pool was to hide the evidence.

Temple lets go of the nylon bag and it bounces along the ground toward the tree and disappears in the canopy.

MARLY

Great detective work, Temple.

Marly hugs Temple as she stares at the tree.

TEMPLE

I imagine he'll come back some night to retrieve the evidence, but no one will see him.

Temple gazes into Sherlock's eyes.

TEMPLE (CONT'D)

I owe it all to Sherlock Holmes. He is a generous actor who let me solve the case and feed him lines.

She kisses him softly and sweetly.

The actors cheer for Temple and Sherlock.

Sherlock puts his arms around the actors.

SHERLOCK

We couldn't have done it without all of us providing the misdirection, confusion, and sometimes obnoxious behavior.

They begin walking back to the house.

MARLY

Did we overplay the fake calls from our agents, Temple?

REKHA

(laughs)
Maybe just a bit. The lead role in Hamilton?

GILLIAN

(laughs)
A three-picture deal with Merch!

PRESTON

(laughs)
I think our synchronized swimming for the reenactment was stunning!

OSCAR

(fist-bumps Preston)
The best, mate. Arnold would be proud.

TEMPLE

You were all magnificent!

SHERLOCK

Temple and I are awaiting a call to do a new TV series, "Almost Sherlock." The show's theme will be:

ALL

Not everyone knows when you're
faking it!

Everyone laughs!

TEMPLE

Wait! Who gets to play Sherlock?

SHERLOCK

The smart one always plays Holmes.
My name's, Watson. Doctor John
Watson.

Temple stops Sherlock to passionately kiss him again.

They laugh and hug as they disappear into the house.

FADE OUT.

THE END