



# Average Reservers

*Author: William Hu*



**I**n the kitchen, you can hardly keep up with Xavier's flurry of questioning.

"Where were you at this time?"

"What is your role in the kitchen?"

"What do you know about the count?"

"What was Detective Waverly doing here?"

He's going about this business with an enthusiasm you've only ever seen him show to movies. For half a second you wish you had something you were that passionate about. You don't really have any hobbies, do you? Any unusual interests, any past-times. Any aspirations. It suddenly hits you that you're the most plain person you could think of.

"Hey!" Xav snaps you out of it. "I think I've got it."

"Got...?" He drags you by the arm back into the hall.

He spreads his arms like a performer, and yells, louder than you've ever heard him before, "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!" Once again, a silence falls. "You may know that earlier tonight, the Count was found dead with his eyes gouged out. I am here to tell you that, with my powers of deduction, and my gifts of reasoning, I know that the killer is..." He's good enough to be an actor, you reckon.

Xavier lifts a finger, and points it to a stocky woman with a notepad. "...YOU, Detective Waverly!"

She laughs - but for a moment you think you see a flash of fear in her eyes. "That's preposterous!" She proclaims. "Why on earth would I do such a thing?"

Xavier walks over to her. "That's what I still don't know yet. Why you'd do it. But I know exactly how you did it!" The crowd is mesmerised. "The Count didn't invite you here to investigate his servants. He had no worries of the sort. He invited you here as a friend, because you solved the last murder at his mansion." There's a murmur of consensus between the guests. There was something before this, you wonder?

"And in fact, it was you who the servants saw stealing silverware. More specifically, a spoon."

Looks of disgust start appearing on the guests' faces as they realise the implications of Xavier's claim.

"Turn out your pockets, Detective."

She growls as she unbuttons her coat pockets, and takes out the items inside it one by one. She holds a stained spoon in one hand. And then, in the other hand, a glistening eye. You see Ori and Leisl cover their mouths in shock, and even Josh gulps visibly.

"Why did you do it, Detective?" Xavier asks gently.



“You... you wouldn’t understand.” She’s backing away towards the corridor. “You’re not from here... you wouldn’t know what it’s like.” The crowd is parting, repulsed by her approach. “Murder mysteries are the only thing that keeps me feeling alive... And I thought I’d finally have a mystery that’d last forever.” She shakes her head. “I won’t let you make it happen like this.” Suddenly, she turns and dashes away into the corridor.

You, Xav, Josh and Ori dash after the detective in pursuit. But you all soon realise there’s no point - there’s nowhere for her to run. Cornered next to the aquarium, the detective is shaking in fright.

“It’s okay.” Josh approaches slowly. “We’re not going to hurt you.”

She screams and flails her limbs violently, digging into Josh’s arm with the spoon. He yelps as the sheer speed and force of her attack lets the edge of the spoon cut into his flesh, and he pushes her backwards into the wall with a heavy thump. Xavier and Ori rush into the chaos, and you can hardly tell what’s happening until you see the aquarium, pushed in the middle of the fight, slowly begin to topple forwards... “LOOK OUT!” you yell.

They all part to the sides of the corridor, except for the detective, her eyes transfixed with terror at the falling object -

It sounds as though the entire sky is shattering on her body.

A blue, yellow and black fish flops helplessly on her lifeless face.

Silence.

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The guests are completely still.

“We’re getting out of here.” Says Josh. Everyone nods quietly.

He picks up a nearby table, and carries it towards one of the towering glass openings into the pitch black outside.

“One...” he mutters, preparing himself to fling the table.

“Two...”

“...Three!” The glass breaks, and immediately there is a whistling sound from outside, and a clamour of shouts as everyone - the guests, you, Leisl, Xav, Josh, and Ori, reaching for your hand - are sucked out of the mansion, flung into the darkness. You grasp fruitlessly at Oriana’s outstretched fingers, and then everyone fades out of sight and you are falling through nothingness.



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ABE IN THE SHED PARTY, 2014

THE CHAIR, 1998

THE CLOTH OF ALLURE, 1993

CRICETINÆ LEVÉE, 1985

EXISTENCE OF PASTRY, 1997

FINAL FRONTIERS, 1992

HOLIDAY IN KYOTO DISTRICT, 1967

THE ICY BEASTS, 1974

KILLS PONY, 1973

A LITTLE OBJECT TO RETURN STRUCTURE, 1961

PODIUM POISE, 1990

PROGRESS, 1970

SPOTTED FRENCH TOWN, 1975

STUPID CAT, 1972

THESE COMPLETELY ABSENT, 2002