

LIGHTS DOWN

PLAY TAKE MY TRUE LOVE

FADE UP ON DETECTIVE LIGHTS AT 00.11

DETECTIVE

This is the story of a murder. My name is Detective Linda Quartermain and I may not be a good wife and I sure as hell am not a good mother, but goddamnit: I'm a *great* detective.

That last sentence was misleading cause I'm not a wife, nor a mother. Never have been never will be, in fact most people assume I'm asexual upon meeting me though that couldn't be further from the truth cause God help me if I'm not turned on by a nice mystery and a good set of clues.

I cut my teeth as a detective in the big city, Santa Barbara California. I got my first assignment Downtown and while there was plenty of crime to go around, I never saw any action. I spent my days processing other detectives paper work and organizing team building activities. I was a "desk monkey" detective. The boys at the station used to call me the "paper bitch." They were funny guys, they used to steal the tampons out of my desk and draw little faces on them, then they would tape them to the ceiling fan so when someone turned on the ceiling fan, the tampons would fly off like tiny, suicidal sky divers. Then they would say those were my boyfriends because anyone who would dated me would want to kill themselves (laughs) like I said, they were funny guys.

And then two years ago I got transferred, to the tiny town of Los Alamos, a tiny vacation town right in the middle of California wine country, population 1800. And they made me head detective, that's right a *lady* head detective, me: *the paper bitch*. Now everyone said that there wouldn't be any action in a little rich, white, homemade-honey town like Los Alamos. But they were wrong, DEAD wrong. Pun. Cause in the last two years Los Alamos has be home to not one, not two, not three Not four, not five, not six, not seven, not eight, not nine, not ten, NO went to too far, NINE murders. Los Alamos was home to nine murders. Now I don't need to tell you, that's a lot of murders. Especially for a picture-perfect postcard town like Los Alamos. Which is which the press has nicknamed the town, MURDER TOWN ... Murder Town.

And it wasn't just the frequency of the murders that was alarming, it was the type of murders. These weren't your run of the mill gang-shootings and drug motivated robberies of the big city. No. These were interesting case, curious ones. They seemed like they had been ripped from the likes of Columbo or Murder She Wrote. There were so many cases, I had to give them all nicknames to keep track.

There was the Quilted Killer Caper, The Cheese Monger's Secret, The Never Ending Newspaper, Doomshay, The Scary-Go-Round, The Armenian Flower The Never Died and than Did and one so gruesome, I could think of words to describe it so I just refer to it as "Euughhh." And I solved each and every one of those cases on my own, each in record time, me, the paper bitch. I solved each of them except for one, the one that would be my last, the case that would end my career, the case I'm going to tell you about tonight. The case of the *Dead Apple Blossom*.

My story begins on a Friday night on the first day of the three-day annual Los Alamos Fall Festival. Meredith Lund, head of the festival planning committee and the Sensible Lady Society and hell, every committee in town was giving her annual opening night speech at Town Hall. Little did she know that the death of a loved one was right around the corner...

TOWN HALL LIGHTS

MEREDITH LUND

Good evening and welcome to the 40th annual, Los Alamos Fall Festival! (Claps) Yes! Yes, it's here! I, of course am Meredith Lund and I have been chosen once again to give this opening night speech, "You like me! You really like me!" Sally Field.

Myself and the festival planning committee have put together a wonderful program this year, full of performances and activities that celebrate the rich culture and history of Los Alamos, this tiny town we call home, which will culminate of course in everyone's favorite event, The Miss Apple Blossom Pageant! Yes!

Of the course the pageant isn't until Sunday, but we have some excellent programming tonight, including music by the High School Jazz Quartet, they are insisting on being called, "The Stanky Boyz" and we also have our annual pie tasting tonight!

I do regret to inform you, however that Marjorie Turnersmith's famous apple pie will *not* be making an appearance this year due of course to her sister, Julie Turnersmith's passing a few months back when Julie was murdered in the cheese shop. I can't imagine what it must be like to lose a sister, let alone in such a tragic way in a place that I believe should be safe, I am of course very vigilant and I can't imagine something like that happening to me, but of course it could happen to anyone and I'm going to go ahead and say what we're all thinking: Marjorie, get *back* in the kitchen and start baking again! It's what Julie would have wanted!

All right, before we get started with tonight's festivities, I would like to thank a few people who have made this weekend possible. First of all let's hear it for our Knight in a Geneva robe, Pastor Phil Brown. Pastor Phil has gotten us out of quite the pickle.

The Town Hall basement flooded this morning, leaving us with no place to hold our annual Homemade Scarecrow Contest tomorrow, but Pastor Phil is letting us use the Church Sanctuary, so thank you so much Pastor Phil, I promise we will have all the Scarecrows out by Sunday Morning! God will never know they were there... But of course he will know because he knows all things and he's all and he is inside.

Let's also hear it for Karen, from Fireside wines, where are you Karen? There you are! Karen has provided the free libations for tonight and all weekend long. Of course, not all of us need to drink... some of us are able to rely on our own personal histories and social skills to have a conversation, but no judgement for anyone who needs to drink this weekend... I do need to remind everyone, however of what happened at the Summer BBQ when one of us had a few too many glasses of free wine and ended up sleeping on a park bench. My eyes are on you... Marjorie Turnersmith and again, so sorry for your loss.

Moving on, we must also thank the Sensible Lady Society, of which of course I am chair. The Sensible Ladies' Society of course did all of the decoration this year in Town Hall, you should know I had *nothing* to do with it this year, I would have maybe chosen *Fall* colors for the Fall Festival, but this is... challenging.

Speaking of the Sensible Lady Society, if you are over the age of 18 years old and a biological female from birth and are interesting in upholding the values and traditions of *honorable* womanhood: applications for the Sensible Lady Society can be found in the back of the room... they are where the Chocolate Fountain *usually* is. We unfortunately have no chocolate fountain this year because that job was of course assigned to Julie Turnersmith and she is... dead. Now I know what you're thinking, *why wouldn't Marjorie Turnersmith pick up the slack and take over the job for her sister?* Well, people suffering is real and grief is valid and if I hear anyone say that Marjorie Turnersmith is using the death of her sister to get out of community obligations I will...

And lastly, this isn't really a thank you, it's actually a bit of town gossip and if you know me, I do not like to gossip, so this must be good. You may have seen a tall, slender, angular woman around town the last several weeks? She's very striking looking and she has an English accent? That is actually, Oscar Award winning actress, Tilda Swinton! Yes, Tilda Swinton. She's apparently bought McSweeney's winery which has been abandoned for years and is turning it into a summer home. And have you also seen those ceramic eyes around Mainstreet? Hanging off of power lines and traffic lights and such? She put those up apparently and last week she took a nap in an empty fish tank at Joe's Coffee Shop and I've been told that both of those things are art and *that's* exciting.

This town has been through so tragedy in the last two years with the tragic murders of 8 of our finest, but things can't be so bad if Oscar-award winning actresses are buying property here, right? Soon we'll be rid of that awful nickname, "Murder Town" and we'll be known as... "Celebrity Vacation Village" or something like that, I don't know, we'll have a contest.

Marjorie Turnersmith, will you organize that, you're not doing anything.

Well that's enough of me going on and on and on. I would like to bring to the stage, my niece, whom everyone's knows better as the reigning Miss Apple Blossom 2016. She is here for just a few more days to host Sunday's pageant and to pass on her crown before she leaves us for the big city, Santa Barbara where she will begin her Oncology Residency, which means she's going to be a Cancer Doctor if you didn't know. She's too good for us here, doesn't want to be a boring ole, wife and mother like me, but no, I'm very happy for her, let's bring her to the stage, my beautiful niece and the reigning miss Apple Blossom.... Blythe Lund! (Pause) Blythe Lund! Has anyone seen Blythe? You know she's probably studying somewhere... Oh! I bet she's in the parking lot outside, right next to the MacDonalds, there's better cell reception there. I'm just going to run out and grab here and you can all discuss amongst yourselves the *lovely* anachronistic decor and how it affects this experience for you.

Meredith runs offstage. There is a long pause followed by an off-stage scream. She re-enters, shaken.

MEREDITH LUND

SHE'S DEAD!

FADE TO DETECTIVE LIGHTS

DETECTIVE

That's right, beautiful, ambitious, future cancer doctor Blythe Lund had been murdered. She was only 21 years old. Blythe was found tied to a chair, with a massive head wound, next to a smashed, swan-shaped pinata, in the McDonald's parking lot. Upon examining the wound, I found what looked like diamonds lodged deep into her brain. From that moment on, I was on the case of the Dead Apple Blossom.

Blythe Lund was by all accounts, "perfect." She was a beauty queen at the top of her class, but not only was she pretty and smart: she was good. She was kind. When she was a teenager, her parents were killed in a freak accident at a Cancer Charity Run when a pink bandstand, shaped like a ribbon, collapsed with them inside, killing them instantly. And so, she made it her life's mission to cure cancer, and few doubted she could do it. Can you imagine? A beauty queen curing cancer? Needless to say, this was most tragic murder, MurderTown had ever seen.

SO, “*Who would want to kill Blythe Lund?*” Well, at Detective School we had a saying, “It’s always the boyfriend.” So, of course, my investigation started early Saturday morning with Blythe’s High School sweetheart, Sterling Mince. A handsome, but simple kid who also happened to work at the McDonald’s where Blythe’s body was found the night before. I brought him into the station for questioning.

FADE TO INTERROGATION LIGHTS

STERLING

Whoa like, I’m telling you everything I know. I don’t know like anything about Blythe’s murder. I was asleep. I’m swearing to you right now, like on everything.

Fuuugh, I can’t she’s dead, she was so alive yesterday. She came into Mickey Dees during my shift, ordered a five piece chicken nugget meal like she always does. I don’t know how you just eat five pieces but she always did you know. It was one of the cool things about her.

When I got off work she said needed to talk. And I was like great, I love talking. I not good at it like she was good at it, but like when you think about it, it’s kind of awesome how, like you know we as human animals have ideas inside? You hear words inside and then you can actually say some of them or like all of them outside. But you decide what people hear because we don’t actually have the technology to hear thoughts, but that’s on the way.

Sorry, I transgress.

Blythe wanted to talk because she wanted to break up with me. Which I did not see coming.

She said she didn’t want me to come with her to Santa Barbara, cause she was going to go cancer college and she didn’t want me in the way, which doesn’t make any sense cause I work at McDonalds so I transfer anywhere. McDonald’s are all around the world. But she said she didn’t love me anymore and that we grew apart and she just needed space and that I didn’t plans or goals, which is not true cause I have lots of plans and she didn’t even care about em. She didn’t even want to hear about em.

I had it all planned out, Blythe was going to be my wife and we were going to get married while were wind-sailing cause no one has ever done that and it would go viral and she could pop out some little Sterlings and she could keep working at the coffee shop cause she’s really good at it and I could be the manager at McDonald’s and she ruined everything. Just made me so angry. I thought we were going to be together forever like the Simpsons cause they’ll never die.

So, she said we were done and said she had to get ready for the Fall festival thing and I was bummed out so I had a few brew dogs at Rick's Bar down the street which is my perogatives. And I guess I got a little wasted or whatever, and I went back to Mickeydeez and I got two Big Macs and a Sundae which is the Sterling Special, ask anyone. And then I went home and I went to sleep. I didn't even know she was dead till this morning.

Detective Linda, for your personal introspection, I want you to know, I loved Blythe, I wanted to be with her all the time. If I could shrink her and make her into a key-chain I would, cause you always have your keys on you and you always know where your keys are. Or If I could freeze her like Han Solo in Carbonite and keep in her in my car or something, just something so she could never leave you know? Something where she could just look at me all nice and pretty and just not talk so she could never say goodbye, ever. I wish I could press pause on her so she'd never get any older and never leave. No one will ever love her as much as me, Sterling Mince. EVER.

But it doesn't matter now, cause she's gone. Isn't she?

FADE TO DETECTIVE LIGHTS

DETECTIVE

It was crystal clear that Sterling had nothing to do with killing Blythe. He was free to go. I didn't know where to turn next, but then I remembered something we used to say in detective school: Bartenders serve more than drinks but they keep the secrets and seeing as there was only one bar in town, I paid a visit to Rose's Sports Bar, favorite haunt of the wicked and the lost. Slings drinks was none other than Rose herself. She was wearing a Red Sox jersey and her trademark red lipstick.

FADE TO BAR LIGHTS

ROSE

Oh, well well well! Look who it is! Detective Linda Quartermain, gracing us with her presence. Everyone stop ya drug deals, the tea-totaling detective is here to ask me, "Queen of the Lowlifes" some questions. That right Detective?

Come on detective, I'm just ruffling ye feathers. So ye here cause I think I know something about Princess Blythe getting the bambino to head? You want me to talk detective, ya gonna have to do a shot with me. Come on. I don't trust people who don't drink. This aint the Boston Tea party (gives her a shot) Come on...shot, shot shot...Don't call fire brigade on me I know over capacity, but it's always crowded in here after someone dies.

Don't make that face, detective it's Booze, not bees.

You know ya sitting Blythe's chair?

She used to come in here, order a soda water with lime and just sit there and read some medical book like she was smart shit and then she would leave more than she owed me on the bar, like she was better than me. Well I tell you what, my head doesn't have any holes, so who's better now? Ah, come on detective, bit a gallows humor.

I know she didn't deserve it. No one deserves it, but no one deserves anything. It's all luck of the draw, your number's gotta come up some time and hers came up last night in the McDonald's parking lot. Bless her.

You know I been in town about 10 years? Bought this bar from cousin and whim and here I am. There's ups and downs, I was gonna pack it all in a few years ago, go back to Boston. The bar was hemorrhaging dough faster than a pinata at 4 year old's birthday party. No one want to drink in a dingy sports bar. None of these rich people had eva happened to them. The only booze they wanted was was wine tasting.

But then, things changed, the murders started and people started drinking hard booze and frankly Officer, my life aint so bad anymore.

Sure, it's sad 9 people have been murdered in the last two years, but back in Boston, 9 people are murdered every 2 minutes. They'd kill for just 9 murders in 2 years. Hahaha...pun. Ya, know serial killers love puns? I love those shows about serial killers, I always think about how I would do it.

Ha, as I was saying, back in Boston things were hard. People here don't know what tragedy is. You wanna know tragedy, try walking down Harvard Park in Southie on a Sunday afternoon, you're all happy cause there's a little weekend left and you're gonna spend it watching ya favorite show, Frasier. That show about the gay brothers and the dog, SO you're walking down the road, and you see at the end a Jack in the box toy and you're excited cause ya family can't afford toys due to yer fathers gambling and ya mothers drinking so you run down to the jack in the box and it's beautiful, it's all colorful and there's a clown painted on top. And ya tern the crank and the song plays and box pops open....but there's no jack in the box. Someone has torn the lil clown out of the jack in the box and left the box, alls that left are a few broken springs at the bottom. And then ya look to the left and there's a dead body in the gutter.

So yeah, I came here for a betta life but after a few years here I got sick of these rich people and their "problems."

They would come in here and complain about the stupidest things, their vegan donut shop was keeping unpredictable hours, they were worried about whether or not Bikram Yoga is problematic, and sometimes they would complain that there's too much TV.

Like they didn't have enough time to watch all the good TV that's being made so they had to choose the programs that most suited their interests, this is an actual, rich people complaint. But now that some people have been murdered, the rich people aren't as annoying and they drink more.

I can tell you're different from the people here. You're not from here. You got a roughness to ya, I like that. You know I can tell you're pretty even though you're trying to hide it with that greasy pony tail and those baggy clothes.

But ugh, what I do I know about Blythe getting killed. I know that someone would have to have a lot anger to kill someone like that. I bet you heard that her boyfriend was in here last night. I wasn't working, I was home watching the Wire for the fourth time, but Johnny was here and he said Sterling came in all upset, crying into his beer and then after a while he got some sort a text that made him all happy, wouldn't say what it was to anyone. He was all giddy and excited and then he got up all drunk and practically ran out a here singing.

But that's all I know Detective, so order a drink or get out of my bar.

FADE TO DETECTIVE LIGHTS

DETECTIVE

I quickly exited the bar and spat out the shot of alcohol I had been holding in my mouth for the last several minutes. I'm a professional Detective and I never drink on the job and yes I am *always* "on the job." Seeing as I had no leads whatsoever, I didn't know where to turn next, but then I remembered something I learned in Detective School: the killer always goes to the victims' funerals to revel in the devastation of their deeds. And it just so happened, that Blythe's memorial service was being held at North Star Community Church

FADE TO CHURCH LIGHTS

PASTOR PHIL

And I pray that Blythe is looking down at us, right now, seated next to our heavenly father, finally at home and at peace, wishing us all to love each other and perpetuate the goodness that she brought to our lives and in our hearts and actions and just carry on in God's love and when he closes a door he opens a window and it's all his plan. As the deer pants for the water. Jonah and the whale...

You know what?

I'm just gonna go off-book here for a second, this is the 9th murder we have had in this town in the last two years and I have done each and every one of these memorial services and I've said all these same things to all you same people and it's left me thinkin'...

What is the point??

I am standing before you at this pulpit in the house of a God who has watched 9 young women die. Blythe was an ambitious, alive young woman and now she is a dead young woman and for what? We continue on as we have done after ever murder, pretending this is normal. Pretending it is just bad luck that so many young women have died. Melanie, Silvia, Denise, Ashley B. and Ashley H and honestly I don't remember all of their names, do you? I doubt it. Is this God's plan? Did he intend for all these young women to die? Is God sitting up there with a dart board in the shape of our town? Is he drunk?

Or maybe there is no God?

Maybe I'm God. Maybe you're God too and people are dying because we have a elbow sitting on the "kill innocent young women switch" but we don't realize it because we don't know we're God.

I tell you each time this happens that we need to keep believing and God is love but I am at a point where that feels crazier than a porcupine with a summer home. But I don't know what to do or say because this is my job and I don't know how to do anything else. Also I am a homosexual and you all know that and yet you let me carry on living in a cage of lies that we all built together as a community because you are all more comfortable with that, than me actually pursuing my own happiness in a loving relationship with someone of the same sex.

So I'll just keep preaching, but please know that I am waiting for the nothingness and the darkness to consume me. Hell is defined in the new testament as an existence without God, and I'll be plumbed if this isn't it.

Let us pray. Dear heavenly father, please comfort the loved ones of the deceased until the next inevitable death when the focus is shifted. Amen.

And now to say a few words about Blythe, I'd like to call her best friend, Emory Dell.

EMORY

Thank you, Pastor Phil. I hope you're OK.

Blythe was my best friend in the whole world.

We were born just a few days apart from each other and we grew up next door to each other so we were always so close, in proximity.

And of course, like everyone says, Blythe was perfect. She had perfect grades and perfect skin and she always placed first in every competition she entered, even some she didn't enter. She was just one those girls who always got everything she wanted.

Even when her parents died in that freak accident when we were 16, Oprah sent her a car, like a really nice car and promised to pay for Medical School. I was so happy for her.

And last year, we both competed in the Miss Apple Blossom Beauty Pageant, something that I've been dreaming of winning my entire life and something that Blythe didn't even care about until I cared about it. And of course Blythe won and I placed second, but it was OK because Blythe was my best friend and if I had to come second to anyone, I'm glad it was her.

Anyway, I know everyone can see the pink elephant in the room, so I'm just gonna say it: I know there were rumors going around that the Apple Blossom Beauty Pageant would be cancelled tomorrow out of respect for Blythe...

But I am so happy to announce, that the Miss Apple Blossom Beauty Pageant is back on! And, I will be taking over Blythe's hosting duties. Also, and not that this matters, but technically because Blythe can no longer serve as Miss Apple Blossom due to her passing, until tomorrow night, I am actually the reigning Miss Apple Blossom 2016.

EMORY

Oh my god...did someone leave their phone on?? That is SO inappropriate!

FADE TO DETECTIVE LIGHTS

DETECTIVE

Someone's phone *was* ringing, it was mine. And although it was embarrassing, it was a good thing I left the ringer on because on the other line was Oscar Award winning actress and new Los Alamos resident, Tilda Swinton. She said she had information on the case and that I should meet her immediately at her home. I non-verbally apologized to everyone at the church for the interruption and made my way to Tilda Swinton's winery.

Tilda Swinton's estate was on the far side of town. At the entrance there was a rusty gate, waiting there for me was donkey wearing a crown of fern.

The donkey looked at me like he recognized me and led me down a long windy path. I started to see species of flowers I had never seen before. Mongolian Throat Music wafted through the air.

PLAY MONGOLIAN THROAT MUSIC

At the end of the path there was a glass bungalow. The donkey left me at the entrance and nodded, I nodded back not sure if that was the appropriate thing to do and the door to the bungalow opened as if on it's own. I crossed the threshold and there in the bungalow was Tilda Swinton. She looked like a praying mantis made out of moonlight. She was completely nude, except for a necklace of what looked like glass buttons. She was painting.

FADE TO TILDA LIGHTS

TILDA

Detective Linda Quartermain, you are most welcome, I assume my donkey led you to me with me with no quarrel. Donkeys of course make the best butlers but they can be unpredictable can't they. (laughs) I would offer you some tea but I don't allow hot liquids into my sacred space. I believe in letting liquids be the temperate they wish to be, you understand detective. You seem quite like a pensive liquid, Detective Quartermain. Please do relax. I hope you aren't uncomfortable with my body.

It is breathtaking, isn't it?

I must say it is so pleasing to have another soul in this room with me, one of many souls in this room course. (laughs) Don't you agree there's no denying that we are surrounded by multitudes of spirits at all times, I can feel them swimming around me, brushing my skin as they pass.

Oooh, there's one now.

You see people mistake me for an actress, but I'm not an actress at all, I am a vessel, I am clay: this painting is painting me. I am lighting rod for spirits and souls and I must say it has been impossibly tragic trying to read the energies in this town since I have arrived. There is a profound sadness here that is unlike any sadness I have ever felt.

I bought this winery because I wanted to feel the immense shadowy sticky sadness of a town that has inexplicably lost so many young women.

And Blythe the lovely, frail dove. We had milk once, room temperature of course. I recall there was a cloud of melancholy, buzzing around her. I invited her to sit with me here in this studio and we did not speak, we did not need to.

And then I killed her.

Detective, please stay calm, (laughs) of course I mean I went through the emotional experience of killing Blythe. My god, keep your wits about you, Detective. I put myself in the mind map of someone who would do such an unspeakable act. Who would possess the malice to smash in beautiful Blythe's head and in a fast-food car park no less. All afternoon I have been meditating and painting and mediating and singing and writing and being and, I am so pleased to say, Detective, I have painted the person I believe has taken Blythe's life.

(presents painting) You see? No, of course you don't. This is not a painting you aren't meant to take in with your eyes, Detective. Feel it detective. Touch it. I know it's wet. Touch it. Touch the painting. Good, Detective. The identity of the killer should come to you any moment now.

Also, this morning I was doing my usual sunrise walk and I came across this. It is a bloody pageant scepter. It was half buried in the dirt and I mostly just want it out of the house. I know it's not as useful as the painting, but perhaps it means something.

FADE TO DETECTIVE LIGHTS

QUARTERMAIN

Just when I thought the actress was bat-shit bananas for making me touch a gobbledygook painting, she gave me the key to the puzzle, the murder weapon.

Tilda had found a bloody pageant scepter, the very scepter Blythe won in the Miss Apple Bottom Pageant.

At detective school they taught us that the murder weapon tells you everything you need to know about the mindset of the killer.

Was it Blythe's aunt, Meredith Lund who thought Blythe took her Los Alamos upbringing for granted and was abandoning her for the big city?

Was it the chicken nuggets for brains boyfriend who thought he was losing Blythe and if he couldn't have her, no one could?

Could it be, the newly nihilistic preacher, Pastor Phil?

Oscar Award winning actress Tilda Swinton perhaps?

No no, all signs pointed to Blythe's childhood best friend and runner up in the Miss Apple Blossom pageant, jilted beauty queen and yes, this IS why I'm a detective, Emory Dell. Emory Dell who hated always coming second to Blythe.

Now, most detectives would bring in their top suspect right away, but I've got a flare for drama so I waited till Sunday evening, on the 3rd and final day of the Los Alamos Fall festival for the Miss Apple Blossom Pageant which was being hosted by Emory Dell herself. I knew that by this time she probably thought she'd gotten away with murder and was more likely to make a mistake. I arrived at Town Hall just in time for the third and final round of the pageant, the *talent* round.

FADE TO PAGEANT LIGHTS

EMORY

Wow everyone, this has been such a magical and PERFECT evening. Honestly, it's been the best night of my life, I like literally would not change a thing, except of course for Blythe being dead. But I know that she's up there right now, smiling down on us, because I think she always knew that it was really *my* calling to be Miss Apple Blossom. And now I am. I'm not saying that I'm glad Blythe died, of course, I'm just happy she's gone...to a better place.

OK, enough sad stuff, we are so close to crowning Miss Apple Blossom 2017! We began the evening with 10 gorgeous ladies, but we are now down to our 3 finalists who will compete in everyone's favorite round of the pageant, the Talent Round!

Ladies, I know you're nervous, but I know exactly how you're feeling. When I was in the final round last year, I was so nervous, I think I nearly dropped my baton, like a thousand times during my routine, but I didn't. **I didn't.**

Up first, in no particular order, is the beautiful 20 year-old, Jill Alexander who will be performing her talent of being a Magician's Assistant.

PLAY MAGICIAN_ASSISTANT_PAGEANT

EMORY

Thank you, Jill! It's no trick that you have a bright future ahead of you. Up next is the gorgeous, Zabeth Russel, who is going to wow us with *her* talent, sound effects!

ZABETH

(quietly) Hi everyone. I'm going to be doing a few of my best sound effects. Waaahhhh!
 Waaaaahhhh! (Pause) Newborn Baby. Riunnngghhhhdugaghh Riuunnnggghhduggah!
 (Pause) Lawn Mower. Heeaaackkkk! Heeaaaackkkkk! (Pause) My uncle Rick's laugh and
 this is the last one. Fiiifth fiffth, swap, sleeeeee, flipt. Scraaaape scrappe, fullp, heee heee
 heeeee, diiiedeediioodoooodiii, fiffth fiffth fiffth. (Pause) That was a beautiful butterfly that
 flies into a glass sliding door and falls to the crown and then a lady picks it up with a
 shovel and puts it in a trash can, but then a witch finds the butterfly and does magic and the
 butterfly comes back to life and flies away. Thank you.

EMORY

Thank you Zabeth, that was so creative and random. Finally, our last competitor is extra
 special because she proves that this pageant is not just a beauty contest. We welcome all
 kinds, and I think I speak for everyone when I say that the nontraditional looks and style of
 this next contestant is exactly what makes me so proud to be a part of the Miss Apple
 Blossom Pageant. Also, her mom is the mayor and a judge this year and I'm not saying that
 has anything to do with her getting this far in the competition this evening, but I just
 wanted to point that out. Please give a warm welcome for our final contestant, Julia
 Wackenheim, who will performing an original song from her in-progress musical (squints)
Sheeple.

PLAY SHEEEPLE SONG

JULIA WACKENHEIM

Don't think too much, do what you're told
 Conform like the rest, fit into their mold
 Everything hurts, where is your shame
 Just go away, just play the game

You're living in Murder Town
 Where everything is upside down
 You're living in Murder Town
 What the fuck is going on??

And when you're living in Murder Town-

(Record scratch)

EMORY

THANK YOU, Julia, please exit the stage.

I am so sorry everyone, we did not know the lyrics ahead of time and clearly that was a stunt and we all know Julia Wackenheim is a weirdo and not cute and I was suspicious of her entry from the start and I am so sorry.

Obviously this pageant is very proud of this town called *LOS ALAMOS* and I as the current reigning Miss Apple Blossom do not endorse that disgusting nickname. So Julia of course will not be considered for the crown (Pause) Wait, sorry, the judges are telling me that Julia is not actually eliminated, which I respect, thank you. (Pause) Sorry? Yes, the judges are telling me that there is actually a last minute contestant added, which is really unusual and not how things are ever done, ever. Uh, huh, I see. OK. Oh wow. Ok this is exciting, our final contestant will actually be, Oscar Award winning actress and new Los Alamos resident, Tilda Swinton!!!

She will be performing her talent of (Pause) I'm sorry, what is her talent? Yes. "Seeing everything for the first time."

Tilda comes to stage and "sees" everything for the first time.

Tilda sees the audience and gestures to raise house lights

RAISE HOUSE LIGHTS

She notices someone in the front row, stops suddenly and points off stage right

TILDA

I see who did it, You! It was you, I can see guilt and sadness on your face, you young man, YOU killed Blythe Lund.

HOUSE LIGHTS DIM

DETECTIVE LIGHTS

QUARTERMAIN

(Smoking) Tilda Swinton was pointing straight at Blythe's boyfriend, Sterling Mince. He stood up and faced the crowd.

PAGEANT LIGHTS

STERLING

I, I didn't mean to. It was an accident! I swear! When Blythe broke up with me, I went to Ricks to have some Brew Dogs and got lit and then I got a text from an unknown number.

It said that there was a piñata filled with candy in the McDonald's parking lot and I just thought, "It's my lucky day!" I love candy and I was depressed and I thought maybe someone was trying to cheer me up.

So went to the parking lot and there it was, this giant pinata, shaped like a swan. It was gigantic. I thought, "this has gotta have so much candy in it." And there was a scepter, like a sparkly king stick on the ground next to it so I started hitting the swan to get the candy out. I was bashing it really hard and it sounded like the swan was screaming or crying or something but I thought it was a sound effect inside the pinata, so I just kept hitting it. And then, the sound stopped and I saw blood, lots of blood. It started soaking through the top and that's when I knew something wasn't right. I broke open the giant swan and there was no candy inside, just Blythe, tied to a chair. And her head, it was bleeding so much. I didn't know what to do, I got scared so I got the Sterling special, two Big Macs and a sundae and I went home and cried myself to sleep. I just hoped it was dream... but it wasn't a dream... Was it?

DETECTIVE LIGHTS

QUARTERMAIN

(smoking) I had solved YET another case, so I came to the stage to arrest Sterling and receive my congratulations.

PAGEANT LIGHTS

QUARTERMAIN

Freeze! It's me, the Detective! Well, people of Los Alamos, the case solved! Sterling Mince, you are under arrest for the murder of Blythe Lund. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say, can and will be used against you in a court of law--

TILDA

Halt! Stop right there, Detective. It is I, TILDA SWINTON. I never left the stage, I never do. Did you not just hear what this young man said? This was clearly an accident. He received a text from an unknown number... Someone had to send that text and someone had to put Blythe in that pinata! There is a puppet master here.

QUARTERMAIN

Oh, ok, Tilda Swinton. If you're so smart, who's the "puppet master" then?

TILDA

Don't play coy Detective. The puppet master is YOU, It's always been you, you orchestrated Blythe's murder as well as every murder that's taken place in this town over the last two years. (To audience) Did you not all notice that the murders all took place only after Detective Linda Quartermain moved here??

Also that the Detective handled all of the forensic evidence herself? Speaking of forensic evidence, I know you orchestrated Blythe's murder because your finger prints are all over the pinata, And I know they're yours because they match the finger prints on the painting I had you touch.

QUARTERMAIN

Ha, OK. Everyone, calm down. This doesn't make sense, I am the detective and you are just an actress!

TILDA

I am not an actress.

I just find myself in films, I never intend to be there, I am the material to be shaped by artists' I respect, *but* I am also an agent for the CIA and you have been under investigation for months.

Did you think I was really sleeping in that empty fish tank in the coffee shop? No, that was surveillance. The glass sculptures I've been hanging around town? Cameras. Those things weren't art, not THIS time. We have recordings of phone calls, pictures, all of it, enough evidence to put you behind bars for several lifetimes. You're a terrible detective but you're an even worse criminal.

QUARTERMAIN

Ok. You got me, Fine, "Agent Swinton" I suppose. The jig is up. It was me (to audience) it was all me. I orchestrated Blythe's murder and I orchestrated every murder that's happened in this town in the last two years. I just wanted people to know I was a good homicide detective and things got out of hand.

SLOW FADE TO PRISON LIGHTS

QUARTERMAIN

(smoking) And at that moment, 30 federal agents dropped down from the ceiling and apprehended me. I was found guilty of all 9 of the Murder Town murders, the innocent people I had sent to prison with planted evidence were released. I was given 4 lifetime sentences in maximum security prison and that's why I'm here now, on the wrong side of the bars, that's why I your new cell mate.

INMATE

Great. I know you're new here, but just a heads up the next time someone asks you, "What are you in here for?" they're asking for like a one sentence answer, like "murder" That was a very long answer and it was very misleading for most of it.

QUARTERMAIN

(Smoking) Apologies. I suppose I'm just used to telling stories that way, mostly to myself I suppose.

INMATE

Also, and I'm no legal-eagle, but I don't think you should be allowed to share a cell with anyone if you killed that many people. And for what? You killed 9 women so people would think you're a good detective? I don't know if I want to understand, but I don't understand.

QUARTERMAIN

Ever since I was a little girl I wanted to be a great detective. I loved Columbo and NYPD Blue and I just wanted to be like one of those guys. When I was out of Detective School and got my first assignment in the big city, I was so excited. I was gonna fight crime and solve cases like my heroes. But the boys downtown, they never took me seriously and why would they? Could a lady really be a good detective? They said I was too distracting, so I fixed that. But then they said I was too emotional so I fixed that too, trained myself to not feel any emotions, I even got to a point where I wasn't feeling anything at all. But they still couldn't give me any cases. I just did their paperwork.

And then they laughed at me when I got transferred to Los Alamos. (laughs) On my last day, they ugh, put a picture of my face on a blow up doll and they all dry humped it til it popped. Like I said, they were funny guys.

When I got to Los Alamos, I decided I'd orchestrate just one interesting murder case to put me on the map. I framed the town drunk for killing the president of the quilting club with knitting needles. The Quilted Killer Caper. I solved the case, (because I planned it) and I was a hero. I was real detective and I guess I just got carried away.

INMATE

One last thing, if you want me to get you actual cigarettes in here, I can get you actual cigarettes. The cigarette mime, is very off-putting and it's gonna get ya killed.

QUARTERMAIN

Apologies. (mimes putting out cigarette)

INMATE

I'm gonna hit the hay, it's lights out soon, hope you get some rest on your first night and, uh, please don't kill me in my sleep or anything.

QUARTERMAIN

(Smoking) Good night.

LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK

Cause you're living in Murder Town
Where everything is upside down

Yeah we're living in murder town
What the hell is going on...

INMATE

Oh, I'm DEFINITELY going to be murdered tonight

PLAY APPLE BLOSSOM