

SYNCHRONUT JUSTICE

Written by
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TEASER

EXT. BETSY'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Talking on her bluetooth, BETSY KLINE (47), stringy brown hair and average in every way, slams her way inside. Furious as hell, she throws her wet swim bag down on the \$10,000 leather couch.

Expensive furniture, including a white baby grand piano, clutters the room making most of it unusable.

BETSY

Three years, I've been on this stupid team and I only ever get to be the alternate. I'm not rich like the rest of them. I can't afford to keep paying if they won't let me swim.

She stomps into the...

INT. BETSY'S CONDO - KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's a five star chef's dream. The latest in appliances and gadgets are everywhere. Unused.

Betsy yanks open the door on the fancy refrigerator. The finest of organic vegetables rot next to messy take out containers. She grabs a bottle of designer water.

BETSY

How do they expect me to learn the choreography if they won't teach it to me?

She leans on the counter and carelessly spins her unprotected iPhone on the marble surface. Sips at the water.

BETSY (CONT'D)

They're just so mean, Hazel. You know how they are.

She sniffs as the tears start falling.

BETSY (CONT'D)

The way they always gang up on me. It's not fair!

She's outright sobbing now. She nods even though Hazel can't see her and tries to get herself together.

BETSY (CONT'D)

I'll see you when you get home.

Betsy hangs up and wipes her nose on her arm. She takes another sip of the water. Finished, she tosses the whole thing in the trash.

A sound elsewhere in the condo catches her attention. She's spooked. Leaving the iPhone behind, she investigates.

INT. BETSY'S CONDO - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Betsy creeps down the hallway. Stops short when she hears a NOISE coming from... somewhere. She's not alone.

INT. BETSY'S CONDO - BEDROOM - NIGHT

On a mission, Betsy races in and closes the door behind her. She pushes the desk aside and pulls up a floorboard. Drops a burner phone in the hiding spot.

The door BANGS open, startling her. She doesn't wait around.

EXT. BETSY'S CONDO - BALCONY - NIGHT

Betsy scrambles out the sliding door, narrowly escaping the HOODED FIGURE who lunges for her. Drops to the manicured lawn below.

EXT. CONDO GROUNDS - NIGHT

Betsy runs through the complex. Several neighbors appear to be home. She doesn't stop or call for help.

Footsteps POUND behind her.

She darts behind the clubhouse. Uses her key card to open the gate to the pool.

EXT. CONDO POOL DECK - NIGHT

Convinced she's safe, Betsy faces the HOODED FIGURE outside the gate. Terror takes over when the person hops the fence. Lands on the deck with her. She's trapped.

EXT. CONDO GROUNDS - NIGHT

Powerful lights turn the night into day around the crime scene. Several police cars, lights flashing, surround the area stopping traffic while UNIFORMED COPS cordon off the appropriate section.

The coroner's van is parked next to an ambulance.

Curious NEIGHBORS, most over 50, crane their necks to get a good look at the happenings.

DETECTIVE MICAH CROIX (35), sexy serious, clean cut and regulation everything, pushes his way through the crowd. He's polite, but firm and unapologetic.

His partner, DETECTIVE SAMUEL NELSON (49), rugged and no nonsense, unsuccessfully hiding his saggy middle under loose fitting clothing, isn't quite as efficient.

SAMUEL

Pardon. So sorry. Excuse us.

EXT. CONDO POOL DECK

A UNIFORMED COP opens the gate for the detectives to enter.

Micah scans the entire scene, seeing everything. Samuel readies his ever present notebook.

The CORONER examines Betsy's body on the deck while a PARAMEDIC packs his gear.

MICAH

Who discovered her?

The cop nods to an ELDERLY WOMAN being checked by a PARAMEDIC. The job is difficult because the raccoon the woman has on a leash keeps hissing and snapping at the man.

COP

Mrs. Geraldine Daniels. She was out "walking her cat."

Samuel frowns. Looks for the woman.

SAMUEL

Cats don't need... Oh. Does she know...?

The cop shakes his head. Indicates his scratched hand. It's unclear if the woman or the raccoon was responsible.

COP

I don't advise telling her, either.

MICAH

She our only witness?

The cop shrugs. Happy to turn the mess over to them.

COP

Bright side? You don't have to wait for an ID. That's the vic's roommate right over there.

He points Micah and Samuel in the direction of HAZEL EARL (62). Her dry, damaged hair indicates many hours in a pool, while her wide hips do not. She chews on her nails and watches the coroner work on Betsy. Her hand shakes.

Micah and Samuel approach her.

SAMUEL
I'm Detective Nelson. My partner,
Detective Croix. We understand you
know the victim?

HAZEL
She's a swimmer. She didn't just
drown. I don't care what they say.

Micah and Samuel exchange looks. Samuel steps in Hazel's eye
line so she has to focus on him.

SAMUEL
Who is they?

Hazel shrugs and tries to look around him. He doesn't let
her.

HAZEL
You know. Your guys over there.
They keep saying she fell in. Hit
her head.

MICAH
You don't believe this was an
accident?

Hazel cuts her eyes at him. Enunciates. Slowly.

HAZEL
She's a swimmer.

SAMUEL
You believe someone hated her
enough to kill her?

HAZEL
Not just someone. Someones. The
Synchronuts have had it out for
Betsy since day one. For no
reason. I just don't understand.
She's been nothing, but kind to
every last one of them. And this
is how they repay her. Why I have--

Samuel interrupts Hazel's rant with a calm hand on her arm.

SAMUEL
I'm sorry. What is a synchronut?

HAZEL
Only the most vile, abusive and
evil group of women you will ever
have the misfortune to meet.

Samuel and Micah exchange looks. Nothing like a murder that
clears itself.

Hazel moves so she can watch the coroner zip Betsy up in a body bag. She bursts into tears.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
This is all my fault! If I hadn't
filed that lawsuit against them.

Off her devastated face.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

SUPER: Two Months Ago

EXT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - 50 METER POOL - DAY

Sunlight glints off the calm, sparkling blue pool.

Suddenly, two pair of long, gorgeous legs shoot out from under the water to strike precise positions above the surface. Their movements keep time with the music playing on the sound system with its underwater speakers.

In perfect sync, the legs close at height, then spin until their toes are submerged to end the impressive hybrid.

In unison, the owners of the legs, JULIE (41), and MAYRA (52), surface in a side flutter. They swim on revealing--

--THE SYNCHRONUTS, a ragtag group of new synchronized swimmers, watching the duet in awe.

VANESSA MILLARD (56), no nonsense and hard working, uses the side of the pool to stretch her slender, athletic body. She half listens while CALICO ZIMMERMAN (48), chubby, but strong chats with WANDA PATTON (64), waif who is easy to overlook.

CALICO

She expected me to talk with her
about her child right that minute.
I'm in the shower and I'm naked.
That's not the time for a
parent/teacher conference.

LACEY RODGERS (32), buxom and cursed with what's called "successful author ass", tries to imitate the duet's hybrid. She falls over halfway through. Surfaces with a giggle.

JUSTINE DALTON (43), a pixie of a woman, puts on her goggles and pushes off the wall.

JUSTINE

Let me try.

She attempts the same hybrid with some success, but her short legs don't do it justice.

LACEY

That was good. I can't believe you
caught the whole thing.

AYAME TAKASHI (38), face covered in a thick layer of zinc, works her swim gloves on so they're tucked under the sleeves of her rash guard.

AYAME

You almost had it.

UNDERWATER

Lacey gives the hybrid another go. She gets halfway through when ELEANOR "MISS ELLIE" JACOBS (69), proper southern belle in her one piece swimskirt, accidentally nails Lacey in the gut with her eggbeater kick.

EXT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - 50 METER POOL - DAY

Lacey surfaces with a sputter. Miss Ellie pounds her back.

MISS ELLIE
Where did you come from?

While Lacey is still coughing up water, KIERA LYNN MANNERS (71), short, but the strongest and most muscular of the group, swims toward them to finish her warm up.

KIERA LYNN
Hey you guys. Didn't we say we were going to try those partner lifts before the coaches got around to us?

WANDA
I believe you're right.

All eyes swing to Lacey who is almost finished coughing.

LACEY
C'mon, Calico. You're my partner.

CALICO
I think I'd rather watch first.

But she swims out anyway.

LACEY
Do an inverted tuck. When you feel me push, straighten your legs. You can totally do this.

Lacey sinks underwater to set up. Calico curls up into a ball with her feet and behind pointing toward the sky.

Lacey grabs Calico's shoulders and lifts her out of the water. As planned, Calico straightens her legs so she's really high above the surface. She loses the pose and crashes down to the side. The women scramble out of the way.

Lacey and Calico surface.

VANESSA
You got out above your waist.

CALICO
It wasn't as hard as I thought.

BETSY (O.S.)
I'm here! You're not starting
without me, are you?

EXT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - POOL DECK - DAY

Betsy hurries toward the water. She hops on one foot trying to get out of her shorts. A flowered cap is half on her head, half off. Stringy strands of hair hang out of the half off side.

EXT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - 50 METER POOL - DAY

The Synchronuts exchange glances. All of the fun has just been sucked out of practice.

Betsy drops her shorts and shirt on the deck then works on getting the cap all the way on.

BETSY
I'm such a ditz today. I got less
than a mile from here when I
realized I'd forgotten my suit. I
had to drive all the way back home
to get it.

MISS ELLIE
You didn't want to get a cap while
you were there?

Miss Ellie's question is totally sincere, but Lacey and Ayame snicker before slipping underwater to hide.

Betsy's eyes roll up as if she can see the cap on her head.

BETSY
Isn't it fun? I got it on eBay.

She dives in the water then doggy paddles back to the wall. Calico plucks at one of the flowers.

CALICO
These feel like they're going to
catch a lot of water.

VANESSA
That's probably why we only use
them for watershows.

Betsy shrugs.

BETSY
I thought it was cute.

JAMIE (O.S.)
Synchronuts! Come on down.

The group swims closer to the sound system where COACH JAMIE (24), waits on the deck.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
I'm so excited to work with you
guys! Let's start with your free
routine. See how far we get.

*

The team swims to their starting pattern.

BETSY
Where do you want me?

KIERA LYNN
Just swim to the side.

Betsy's frown is brief, but she complies.

EXT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - POOL DECK - DAY

Jamie puts in the CD and picks up the mic.

JAMIE
It's on.

EXT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - 50 METER POOL - DAY

The James Bond theme plays. The team moves down the pool in unison. The opening strokes aren't bad. Synchronized.

First cymbal crash. Only Calico and Lacey try the lift. Calico still falls, but she falls the correct direction.

The rest of the team picks up with the strokes after the lift. Not knowing the choreography, Betsy cranes her neck to see what the people behind her are doing.

She turns the wrong way so she ends up facing Ayame instead of away. Ayame gives her head a tiny shake. Betsy scrambles to turn the other way which now puts her behind the counts.

UNDERWATER

Betsy struggles with the movement. She bats her hands around trying to stay at the surface like everyone else. All that does is send her flying into Ayame.

EXT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - POOL DECK - DAY

Jamie cringes at the legs flapping all over the place. She stops the music. Puts on a happy smile when they surface.

BETSY
I'll get it the next time.

JAMIE
It wasn't just you.
(to team)
Let's talk about that last hybrid.
Is it supposed to be a sequence?

VANESSA
Not exactly.

JAMIE
Okay. Who knows the counts?

All eyes swing to Lacey again. She land drills it for Jamie.

LACEY
Tip back on 1, hold 2,3,4, switch,
switch 5,6, right bent knee 7,
hold 8. Down 1, hold 2,3--

JAMIE
Let's just do the first 8. Ready?

The ladies lay on their backs to begin. Betsy is already drifting toward Ayame.

Jamie counts on the mic so they can hear her underwater.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
5-6-7-8. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8.

The ladies are synchronized with the slower tempo.

Betsy drifts into Ayame by the time her leg goes up. The collision is hard enough that it topples her over. Ayame falls into Vanessa who was just tucking out to surface.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Okay. That can use some work.

AYAME
(to Betsy)
Can you scoot out of the pattern a
little bit?

Betsy inches away and looks expectantly at Jamie. She's still way too close.

Annoyed, Ayame shoots a look at Vanessa. Understanding, Vanessa moves over a couple feet the other direction. It shifts the whole team so they can keep their pattern.

Jamie frowns at the move.

JAMIE
First eight again. 5-6-7-8. 1-2-3-
4-5-6-7-8.

While she's giving the prep counts, Betsy notices that she's no longer near the team. She closes the gap again. But now she's late on counts She flails to keep up. This time, she takes out Ayame and Lacey.

Lacey surfaces and takes off her goggles.

LACEY
Betsy. You don't have to swim this close to us.

BETSY
Isn't the pattern supposed to be tight?

VANESSA
Yes, but you do not have a spot in the pattern.

JAMIE
Is there a problem?

Everybody turns to look at Jamie, but nobody speaks up.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
I'm waiting on an answer.

There's another uncomfortable moment of silence.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Somebody talk.

They all look at each other.

LACEY
We'd just like Betsy to swim a little further away from the pattern since she doesn't have a spot in it.

Jamie frowns and jams her hands on her hips.

JAMIE
Why doesn't she have a spot? Who's idea was that?

More looks are exchanged.

LACEY
The coaching staff. Betsy's just our alternate.

Jamie loses her temper.

JAMIE
That's it. Everybody out of the pool. We need to talk about this.

Stunned, the team all looks at each other, but dutifully climbs out of the water.

INT. SPLASH! AQUATIC CENTER - TEAM ROOM - DAY

Now dressed, Ayame, Wanda, Kiera Lynn, Calico, Miss Ellie, Vanessa, Justine, Lacey and Betsy sit in a sullen circle with Jamie.

JAMIE

I've been noticing some tension on this team for a while. Now that I'm coaching you, We're going to resolve it once and for all.

The ladies all exchange puzzled looks.

VANESSA

We're not sure what you mean.

JAMIE

We don't call people out like that
It's not nice.

Jamie levels a harsh look at Lacey who squirms in her seat since she's the one forced into the calling out.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

To solve this, we're going to go around the circle and air everything that is bothering us. We will not use names. Just state your grievance. We'll discuss it.

Dead silence in the room since no one wants to go first. Finally--

VANESSA

I get annoyed when people are late to practice. When they do show up, they aren't prepared. I enjoy working with those who are dedicated.

BETSY

Why should I be dedicated? I've never even been given a spot on the team.

KIERA LYNN

None of us were given spots. We earned them by showing up and working hard.

BETSY

Well, when I do show up, people yell at me. I'm doing my best.

MISS ELLIE
Who yelled at you?

BETSY
Ayame. Just now. She yelled at me
to get away from her.

LACEY
Ayame doesn't yell.

Ayame, who was only half listening, perks up at her name.

AYAME
I just asked you to swim a little
bit away so you wouldn't keep
crashing into me.

BETSY
I wouldn't crash into you if you
guys would just teach me the
choreography.

JUSTINE
We learn the choreography in land
drill which is always one hour
before we get in the water. Even
today, you were an hour and a half
late. When were we supposed to
teach you the routine?

BETSY
I told you why I was late. You
never yell at Vanessa? She misses
practices, too.

VANESSA
I travel for work occasionally.

WANDA
Yes, and Vanessa tends to let us
know in advance when she's being
sent to the Pentagon.

BETSY
I cannot believe how anti-Semitic
you guys are. I only miss for
Jewish holidays. My religion is
really important to me and I'm
sick of being penalized for it.

Stunned and confused looks all around. All eyes swing to
Calico, the other Jewish member of the team.

CALICO
What Jewish holidays are you
talking about? We're not usually
swimming on any of them.

*

Betsy blinks back tears. Shoots an accusing glare around the circle.

BETSY

I've been living in my van for almost a year. None of you even knew that because you don't care enough to ask. I have a place now, but my son was so mad at me for being homeless. It's all so stressful. I'm here to have fun.

LACEY

Maybe the team isn't a good fit for you right now. Perhaps you should quit until you get things together.

BETSY

See? That's what I'm talking about. How dare you judge me like that. You don't know my life.

JAMIE

Okay, look. No more ganging up on Betsy. Since you don't want to give her a chance on your own, I'm going to settle this.

(to Betsy)

At Nationals, you will have a spot in both routines. It's yours to lose.

(to everyone else)

The rest of you will compete for the remaining seven spots. One of you will have to sit out each routine. I'll announce the final roster in two months.

Betsy is ecstatic.

Off the team's stunned and pissed faces.

INT. MISS ELLIE'S CONDO - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Miss Ellie comes home with a variety of liquor bottles. She lines them up on her counter.

Husband, EDGAR (73), comes in. He's shocked by the sudden abundance of alcohol in their home.

EDGAR

What's going on, Ellie?

MISS ELLIE

I didn't know which one I'd like so I got a variety.

EDGAR

What was that drink you had? At Missy's wedding? You liked that.

She thinks about it for a moment. Shakes her head.

MISS ELLIE

That was in 1978. I can't remember what it was now.

He gets a couple glasses from the cabinet and sets them next to the bottles. He pours the first drink.

EDGAR

Point taken. You know I'm always up for a good experiment.

MISS ELLIE

Our coach gave us quite the ultimatum today.

INT. AYAME'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ayame tosses and turns in bed. Gets up and starts playing a haunting violin.

MISS ELLIE (V.O.)

Lacey, Ayame, Justine and Vanessa will be just fine.

EXT. CALICO'S HOUSE - PATIO - NIGHT

Calico hands fly a mile a minute while she talks. Husband, BRIAN (51), listens while grilling their dinner.

MISS ELLIE (V.O.)

I'm the one on the chopping block along with Kiera Lynn, Calico and Wanda.

INT. JUSTINE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Justine tells husband, VIC (45) what happened while feeding her dogs.

MISS ELLIE (V.O.)

It's too late in the season for this kind of surprise.

INT. KIERA LYNN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kiera Lynn rants to husband, DANIEL (71), about Betsy while she paints on a canvas with bold, angry strokes.

MISS ELLIE (V.O.)
Kiera Lynn loves us, but she's not
going to stick out awaiting her
fate. She'll quit.

INT. LACEY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Framed posters of Lacey's book covers hang on every
available wall. She lays sprawled across her bed trying to
write in a journal. Ends up crying instead.

MISS ELLIE (V.O.)
Betsy had the same two months to
learn the routines that the rest
of us did.

INT. WANDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

WANDA (67), slams a wok on the stove. Husband, MATT (64)
listens intently.

MISS ELLIE (V.O.)
I just want to swim and have fun
with my friends. Is that too much
to ask?

INT. VANESSA'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Husband, JOSH (61), brings Vanessa a scotch neat. Daughter,
JOANNE (26), works on her homework in a recliner.

MISS ELLIE (V.O.)
Sure, our group is tight. Justine
and Vanessa weren't originals and
they fit in just fine.

INT. BETSY'S CONDO - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Betsy sleeps like a baby.

EDGAR (V.O.)
So what are you going to do?

INT. MISS ELLIE'S CONDO - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Miserable, Miss Ellie shrugs and tosses back her drink.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

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