

THE SEMBAWANG STRANGLER

Written by

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1 EXT. HDB CORRIDOR - NIGHT

NOSY NEIGHBOUR, woman, late 20s, pajamas, points at another door down the corridor.

NOSY NEIGHBOUR
It's that house right there. That's where I heard the scream, then called the police. It happened about 20 minutes ago.

The man talking to her is DETECTIVE SLING, 30-years-old, long trench coat over an unkepmt suit, eyebags, patchy facial hair. He checks his watch, '10:00PM'.

DETECTIVE SLING
I'll take it from here Ma'am.
Thanks for the information.

He starts to leave.

NOSY NEIGHBOUR
Wait!

Sling stops.

NOSY NEIGHBOUR (CONT'D)
Before you go... one question.
Where's the rest of the police, why are you alone?

Sling chuckles.

DETECTIVE SLING
I'm sure the rest of them will arrive soon but... I'm Detective Sling. Singapore's number one detective and...

He walks towards the neighbour's door and puts his hand on the door knob.

DETECTIVE SLING (CONT'D)
...I'm always first to solve a mystery.

He opens the door.

CUT TO TITLE, 'THE SEMBAWANG STRANGLER'.

2 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is decorated with some party decorations. On one side of the couch is a dead man, sitting upright.

His neck is bruised and foam is coming out of his mouth. The dead man is VICIOUS/VICKNESH, 25-years-old, male, denim jacket, 80s retro vibe. On the other side of the couch is DICKRICKER/RICK, 27-years-old, male, cargo pants and button up short-sleeve. Rick has his hand on his forehead, sullen. The sound of a door and opening is heard. Rick looks up to see Detective Sling, who flashes his police badge.

DICKRICKER/RICK
The police! Thank God.

Sling glances at the dead body. He observes the room.

DETECTIVE SLING
Having fun, are we?

DICKRICKER/RICK
Housewarming party. This is my new house- Oh- I'm DickRicker.

DETECTIVE SLING
What?

DICKRICKER/RICK
Rick! Sorry, I meant Rick.
DickRicker is my IGN. You can still call me that if-

DETECTIVE SLING
(points at the dead body)
So, Rick. Who's this party pooper?

DICKRICKER/RICK
...Vicious. I mean Vicknesh. I discovered him like this 10 minutes ago and called the police.
(beat, sullen)
This was just supposed to be a fun discord meet-up...

DETECTIVE SLING
Who else is in the house?

DICKRICKER/RICK
4 other people.

DETECTIVE SLING
And did anyone enter or exit?

DICKRICKER/RICK
The doors werent't locked but, no, not that I know of.

The sound of a door opening and closing is heard. OFFICER POH, late 20s, white shirt, blue jeans with holster, police badge worn as a lanyard. She salutes Detective Sling.

OFFICER POH

Detective Sling! It's an honour to work for you. I'm Officer Poh. This is my first case but I will do my best to help you with this-

She glances at the dead body.

OFFICER POH

-Case. Oh My God.

DETECTIVE SLING

Gruesome, isn't it? Nice to meet you Officer Poh. It's a shame your first case has to be the work of the Sembawang Strangler.

OFFICER POH

The Sembawang Strangler?!

DICKRICKER/RICK

The Sembawang Strangler?!

DICKRICKER/RICK

The famous serial killer?!

DETECTIVE SLING

That's right. The MO matches. Murdered late at night in the middle of Sembawang. Look at the victim. Bruised neck, strangulated. The Blood under his fingernails suggests he resisted. Just how that fucker likes it.

DICKRICKER/RICK

But why us? Why kill Vicious?

DETECTIVE SLING

7 confirmed victims and we still don't know their motive. Master of disguise too, every witness reporting something different. One thing's for sure. My hunch is telling me that the Sembawang Strangler is someone in this house.

DICKRICKER/RICK

What?!

DETECTIVE SLING

Officer Poh, lock the door and gather everyone in the house.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE SLING (CONT'D)
 We'll interrogate them one by one.
 By my estimations, the time of
 death is from 9.20 to 9.30PM.
 That's what we'll look out for.

OFFICER POH
 Y-yes Sir!

3 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Detective Sling sits on end of a dining table, while Rick sits on the other. Officer Poh stands adjacent to Detective Sling.

DETECTIVE SLING
 From the start.

Rick nods.

DICKRICKER/RICK
 I bought this house recently, so I
 threw a housewarming party and
 invited my discord friends-

Sling puts out his hand to stop Rick from talking.

DETECTIVE SLING
 What's discord?

DICKRICKER/RICK
 Oh, Uh.

Officer Poh whispers into Detective Sling's ears.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Ah. Okay, continue.

DICKRICKER/RICK
 ...Okay. The people here are
 members of a discord group called
 GamezRoomxD. Me and Vicious created
 it, but I'm the owner. Some of us
 know each other IRL but this is the
 first time all of us have met. I
 opened up the house around 8, and
 Vicious came around 8.30. Kitten
 and Wolf came 8.40, physically
 stuck together as usual. Gene and
 Steph came at 8.50.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Okay, how long have you known
 Vicknesh?

DICKRICKER/RICK

Oh, so long- maybe 6 years? I can't believe he's dead... Just a little bit ago I was talking to him in this room.

(beat)

You know, he was part of the reason I bought this house. He lives in Sembawang too. If I knew this would happen, I never would have-

Rick tears up. Officer Poh hands him some tissues and he wipes his eyes. She walks back to beside Sling.

DICKRICKER/RICK

Thanks. Anything else you want to know?

DETECTIVE SLING

What were you doing from 9.20 to 9.30PM?

CUT TO:

4 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Rick is in the kitchen eating snacks.

DICKRICKER/RICK (V.O.)

I think... I was in the kitchen eating.

CUT TO:

5 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

DETECTIVE SLING

Were you with anyone else?

DICKRICKER/RICK

...No.

DETECTIVE SLING

Okay. Did anyone here have anything against Vicknesh?

DICKRICKER/RICK

No! Everyone liked him.

(beat)

But... Maybe Kitten. They used to date but... he cheated on her.

CUT TO:

KITTEN/KATE, e-girl, 22-year old woman, sits across from Detective Sling. Her eyes are bloodshot.

OFFICER POH

Kitten, real name Kate. 22 and college student.

DETECTIVE SLING

Nice to meet you, Kate.

(beat)

I'll cut to the chase. You and Vicknesh used to date?

KITTEN/KATE

Yeah. He used to be my discord daddy.

DETECTIVE SLING

And he cheated on you?

KITTEN/KATE

Yes, he did- I didn't kill him, if that's what you're suggesting! We were friends long after that happened.

DETECTIVE SLING

I see, and what were you doing between 9.20 and 9.30PM?

CUT TO:

6 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Kitten and WOLF/WILLIAM, 30-year-old man, e-boy, sit at opposite ends of the bed facing away from each other. They are on their phones.

KITTEN/KATE (V.O.)

Oh, uh, this is a little embarrassing but, me and my boyfriend Wolf were having IRL E-sex. Until like, 9.40.

CUT TO:

7 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Officer Poh whispers into Detective Sling's ears.

DETECTIVE SLING

Ew. Were you alone with Vicknesh at any point this evening?

KITTEN/KATE
 (slight stammer)
 ...No. I spent most of my time with
 Wolf and Steph. You should talk to
 Gene, he was hanging out with
 Vicious the most.

CUT TO:

GENEIOUS/GENE, 25-year-old male, hoodie, shorts, sits across
 Detective Sling at the dining table.

OFFICER POH
 Geneious, real name Gene. 25-years-
 old and a software engineer at
 Ghostsphere Interactive. The same
 company as the victim.

GENEIOUS/GENE
 Yeah. We're coworkers. That's how
 he introduced me to the discord
 server.

DETECTIVE SLING
 I see. Did you spend a lot of time
 with Vicknesh today?

GENEIOUS/GENE
 A little bit. We played some Tekken
 for, like, 20 minutes.

DETECTIVE SLING
 And what were you doing from 9.20
 to 9.30PM?

GENEIOUS/GENE
 ...Do you seriously think I killed
 Vicious? What the fuck.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Answer the question.

CUT TO:

8 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Gene and MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH, 28-year-old male, stained
 tshirt, shorts, sit in front of a TV holding controllers.

GENEIOUS/GENE (V.O.)
 ...Gaming, Steph was in the room.

CUT TO:

9 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Gene walks down the hallway, stops at toilet door. He plays a mobile game while walking.

GENEIOUS/GENE (V.O.)
I went to the toilet at 9.25.

CUT TO:

10 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

GENEIOUS/GENE
But it wasn't me. I literally work with him everyday. Why would I choose to kill him here? We're friends. If anyone you should be looking at...

DETECTIVE SLING
Who?

GENEIOUS/GENE
...Steph. Vicious hated the fucker.

CUT TO:

Steph sits across the dining table from Detective Sling.

OFFICER POH
MyNameSteph, His name is Steph. 28-years-old and unemployed.

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH
I'm inbetween jobs! Anyways, Detective. I think I've solved the mystery for you. I know who the killer is. All my years of reading reddit posts and playing ace attorney have paid off! Now, nobody will-

DETECTIVE SLING
Cut to it.

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH
Sorry. The killer is... Wolf!

DETECTIVE SLING
Your basis?

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH
Well, earlier...

CUT TO:

11 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Vicious and Kitten make out in the bathroom. The door is slightly ajar, steph sees them make out.

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH (V.O.)
 ... I saw Vicious and Kitten make
 out in the toilet!

CUT TO:

12 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Steph and Wolf are on the couch.

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH (V.O.)
 As a good friend would, I told Wolf
 immediately.

CUT TO:

13 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH
 Oh... My poor friend. He must have
 lost himself in his rage.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Thank you for the information.
 Others have suggested that Vicious
 may have disliked you, is that
 true?

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH
 Me? Why would he not like me?

DETECTIVE SLING
 I can think of a few reasons but,
 no matter, what were you doing
 between 9.20 and 9.30PM.

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH
 I was gaming with Gene.

CUT TO:

14 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Steph playing games in the room alone.

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH (V.O.)
 He went to the toilet for a bit
 too.

CUT TO:

15 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

DETECTIVE SLING
 Thank you.

CUT TO:

Wolf sits across the dining table from Detective Sling.

OFFICER POH
 Wolf, real name William. 30-years-
 old and a marketer.

DETECTIVE SLING
 I'll cut to the chase. Were you
 aware that your girlfriend Kate
 made out with Vicknesh?

WOLF/WILLIAM
 ...Yeah. Steph told me.

OFFICER POH
 So you killed him?!

WOLF/WILLIAM
 What? No!
 (beat)
 Look, I'm an Alpha but Vicious was
 was a Sigma.

Officer Poh whispers into Detective Sling's ears.

DETECTIVE SLING
 ...Okay.

WOLF/WILLIAM
 What I mean is that- everyone
 respected him as a leader. So much
 that when I heard about Kitten, I
 was only upset with myself. That's
 why, later, I initiated some E-sex.

CUT TO:

16 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wolf and Kitten sit on opposite sides of the bed using their
 phones. Wolf lets out a long scream-like moan.

WOLF/WILLIAM (V.O.)
And it was good too.

CUT TO:

17 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

DETECTIVE SLING
Around what time was that?

WOLF/WILLIAM
Uh, I think we started around
9.20.. And we went for 20 minutes.

DETECTIVE SLING
Checks out. You said Vicknesh was
seen as a leader?

Wolf nods.

DETECTIVE SLING
How did Rick feel about that? He's
the group leader, right?

WOLF/WILLIAM
Oh. Hmm... I remember a while ago,
Vicious wanted to take over as
owner. He didn't try in the end,
but, I'm pretty sure we all would
have voted for him lol. Not sure
why he didn't try.

Detective Sling and Officer Poh look at each other. They
nod.

CUT TO:

Rick sits across Detective Sling.

DETECTIVE SLING
You and Vicious started the group,
right?

DICKRICKER/RICK
Yeah.

DETECTIVE SLING
And how was it decided that you
would be the owner?

DICKRICKER/RICK
Vicious wasn't interested in it,
and I like that kind of work.

DETECTIVE SLING
But were you really the best fit?

DICKRICKER/RICK
...What are you trying to say?

DETECTIVE SLING
It seems like some of the members
would have preferred if Vicious was
the leader.

DICKRICKER/RICK
Ugh, It's always like that! They
all think being the owner is so
easy, not at all. Moderation,
updating bots, making sure no one
posts memes in general! It's not
just getting along with everyone,
even Vicious thought that when he-

Rick quickly puts his hands over his mouth, to stop himself
from talking.

DETECTIVE SLING
Continue.

DICKRICKER/RICK
...When he tried to become the
owner.

DETECTIVE SLING
What happened?

DICKRICKER/RICK
Well, we argued over it. We-

CUT TO:

18 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Rick and Vicious arguing in the kitchen. Rick slams the
table.

DICKRICKER/RICK (V.O.)
We still argued about it.

CUT TO:

19 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

DICKRICKER/RICK
He just doesn't-
(looks away)
Didn't get it.

DETECTIVE SLING
 You were alone when Vicious died,
 correct?

DICKRICKER/RICK
 Yes... But I didn't do it, I swear!
 If you want motive...
 (beat)
 There's... Gene! Vicious recently
 outranked Gene at his favourite
 game! It must be him!

Detective Sling sighs.

CUT TO:

Gene sits across Detective Sling.

GENEIOUS/GENE
 You seriously think I killed my
 friend because he upranked in
 league?

DETECTIVE SLING
 I wouldn't rule anything out.

GENEIOUS/GENE
 Well, I didn't. Happy?

OFFICER POH
 What now, Detective? Almost
 everyone doesn't have an alibi.
 Only Wolf and Kitten were having
 IRL hanky panky during the
 timeframe.

GENEIOUS/GENE
 Kitten? I saw her, though.

CUT TO:

20 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Gene at toilet door. Gene plays a game on his phone. The
 door opens and Kitten leaves.

GENEIOUS/GENE (V.O.)
 She was in the toilet before me at
 9.25PM. I remember because my
 dailies were about to reset.

CUT TO:

21 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Detective Sling and Officer Poh look at each other.

DETECTIVE SLING
You may go, Gene.

Gene leaves the kitchen, Officer Poh takes a seat.

OFFICER POH
If Kate was in the bathroom it means Wolf could have done it too.

DETECTIVE SLING
That's right. No one has an alibi.

OFFICER POH
Maybe we looked at it the wrong way... Maybe the body discovery? What was everyone doing at 9.40?

DETECTIVE SLING
Wait! That's it. I've solved it.

OFFICER POH
Really?!

DETECTIVE SLING
Yes, Officer Poh gather everyone in the living room. It's time to take down the strangler.

22 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rick, Steph, Gene, Wolf and Kitten are in the living room. Some of them are sitting on the couch, while the others are standing adjacent to it. Vicious' dead body is in the same spot. Detective Sling and Officer Poh are across them in the room, standing.

DETECTIVE SLING
All of you are suspicious.
(beat)
Rick. Vicknesh wanted to be the leader of the group, but you didn't like that. Alone in the kitchen during the murder.

Rick looks down.

DETECTIVE SLING (CONT'D)
Steph. All around annoying and I get the feeling no one likes you.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE SLING (CONT'D)
 Alone in the office during the
 murder.

MYNAMESTEPH/STEPH
 No one likes me? Guys?

The others look away from Steph.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Gene. Outranked in that video game.
 Went to the bathroom during the
 murder.

Gene rolls his eyes.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Wolf. Vicknesh made out with his
 girlfriend. Alone in the bedroom
 during the murder.

KITTEN/KATE
 You knew?!

Wolf nods.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Kate. Vicknesh's ex. Lied about not
 meeting him today. In the bathroom
 during the murder.

KITTEN/KATE
 Oh yea, I forgot about that.

DETECTIVE SLING
 Eveyone is without alibi, but,
 there's only one Sembawang
 Strangler in this room.

Sling raises his arm to the roof, pointing,

DETECTIVE SLING (CONT'D)
 The strangler is... You!

Sling points at Officer Poh.

OFFICER POH
 What? Me? Is this a joke,
 Detective?

DETECTIVE SLING
 Au Contraire, Poh. You said it
 yourself, just now. When did you
 say the body was discovered?

OFFICER POH

...9.40?

DETECTIVE SLING

Rick?

DICKRICKER/RICK

I discovered the body at 9.50, and called the police.

DETECTIVE SLING

That's right. The only thing that happened at 9.40 was a neighbour reporting a scream. A scream that must've been Kitten during their... e-sex.

WOLF/WILLIAM

Oh, that was me, actually.

DETECTIVE SLING

Ok. Explain, Poh. Why would a police officer not know when a dead body was reported? Unless... you're not a police officer at all. Unless you're actually the neighbour that heard the scream. You must've thought that's when the body was discovered, huh?

OFFICER POH

No! I did know the report, I swear. I just forgot.

DETECTIVE SLING

Hmph. Let me explain how you did it then.

CUT TO:

23 INT. NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The Nosy Neighbour peers through the windows.

DETECTIVE SLING (V.O.)

You were curious what your new neighbour was up to, so you watched.

CUT TO:

24 EXT. HDB CORRIDOR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Vicious greets Rick and enters the house.

DETECTIVE SLING (V.O.)
You saw Vicknesh and decided he was
your target.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. HDB CORRIDOR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Kitten and Wolf greet Rick. They are touchy with each other,
and enter the house.

DETECTIVE SLING (V.O.)
You must have seen how touchy Kate
and William were and hatched a
plan.

CUT TO:

26 INT. NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Nosy Neighbour disguises herself as Kitten.

DETECTIVE SLING
You disguised yourself as Kitten
because you knew they would lock
themselves up in a room.

CUT TO:

27 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Nosy Neighbour disguised as Kitten sneaks up behind Vicious.
Strangles him to death.

DETECTIVE SLING (V.O.)
You snuck in and found Vicknesh
alone in the living room, and
killed him right there and left.

CUT TO:

28 INT. NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Nosy Neighbour disguising herself as Officer Poh.

DETECTIVE SLING (V.O.)
After talking to me, you disguised
yourself as an officer and joined
the investigation.

CUT TO:

29

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DETECTIVE SLING

If you're still not convinced. We can check outside where you must have strangled the *actual* police officers meant to join this investigation.

Officer Poh looks down and giggles. Officer Poh and Nosy Neighbour are revealed to be the same person, SEMBAWANG STRANGLER.

SEMBAWANG STRANGLER

Wonderful, Detective! Just wonderful!

DETECTIVE SLING

Tch. You monster.

SEMBAWANG STRANGLER

But you were wrong about one thing. I'm not the Sembawang Strangler. I'm the Sembawang Saviour!

(beat)

All those people I killed. They were menaces to the neighbourhood. The 7-year-old boy? Always screaming in the playground. The 40-year-old Ah Ma? She used to spit from her window.

(pointing at Vicious' dead body)

And this Vicknesh? His late night gaming sessions drove his neighbours up the wall! He deserved to die.

Police sirens are heard. Detective Sling handcuffs Sembawang Strangler.

SEMBAWANG STRANGLER

You can't arrest me! I'm saving this neighbourhood. It would be nothing without me!

DETECTIVE SLING

Shut up, scum.

Sling faces the others, they're more huddled than before. Some of them are crying.

DETECTIVE SLING

It's not much but, I hope this
arrest gives you some peace.

Sling grabs Strangler by the handcuffs and brings her to the door. He opens the door, leaves, and closes the door.

CUT TO TITLE 'THE SEMBAWANG STRANGLER'. A STAMP TITLE
'SOLVED' IS SUPERIMPOSED ON IT.

THE END.