

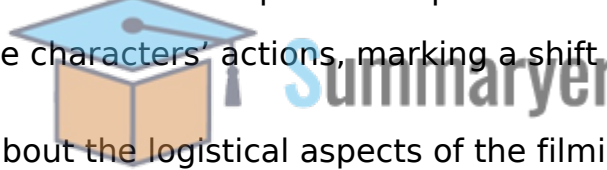
Chapter 88

Chapter 88 of *We Solve Murders* begins with Max Highfield striking a dramatic pose on a sheepskin rug, his chest adorned with diamonds. A photographer directs him through various expressions, from stern and mean to flirtatiously sexy, capturing the essence of his role. Meanwhile, Rosie sits on a yoga ball, adding a laid-back vibe to the atmosphere as she smokes a joint and assists with the creative process. Max, preparing for his role as Blake Scott, seeks Rosie's input on his character, asking for name suggestions and how Blake should be portrayed. Rosie suggests that Blake should resemble Max, leading them to discuss potential features like a mustache to enhance the character's persona. The collaborative spirit in the room continues to grow, as both Rosie and Max brainstorm ways to bring the character to life, furthering the creative tension between their personal and professional exchanges.

As Max prepares for the next scene, he and Abby, his bodyguard, discuss the artistic aspects of the project, as well as Max's passion for writing. Max expresses his disdain for traditional literature, instead favoring stream-of-consciousness poetry, which reflects his unique approach to creative expression. Despite his usual rejection of conventional storytelling, Max is intrigued by the plot of Blake Scott's story, although he remains hesitant about portraying a villain. Rosie pitches the concept: a syndicate that pays influencers to smuggle money, with Blake Scott positioned as the mastermind behind the operation. Max reacts with skepticism, questioning the legality of such actions, prompting light-hearted banter between him, Rosie, and the producer, Steve. Their playful exchange highlights the blend of professional tension and casual humor as they prepare for the unfolding scenes, while also revealing the underlying complexities of the project.

The dynamics shift unexpectedly when Abby surprises Max by providing live footage of his dogs at a residential facility, evoking a deep emotional reaction from him. This

moment of vulnerability contrasts sharply with Max's otherwise composed demeanor, offering a glimpse into his personal side. As the conversation drifts back to the plot of the movie, it is revealed that the influencers involved in the syndicate's operations begin to meet deadly fates. Max shares a story about a friend who experienced something similar, tying the fictional events to his own life in a poignant way. This connection between his personal experiences and the narrative adds an emotional layer to the unfolding drama, blurring the lines between Max's real and fictional lives. The casual, almost detached atmosphere is replaced with a deeper reflection on the consequences of the characters' actions, marking a shift in the tone of the discussion.



Max's excitement about the logistical aspects of the filming process leads him to confirm his participation in the project, but with one condition: his character must retain a heroic aspect. He insists that Blake Scott cannot be purely a villain, suggesting that another character be assigned that role. In a moment of enthusiasm, Max proposes involving his friend, Timothée Chalamet, in the project, further adding to the sense of collaboration. As he heads to the stage, Rosie and Steve exchange thoughts on Max's true level of involvement in the plot, speculating on how much he is actually invested in the project beyond his role as an actor. The chapter ends with an air of ambiguity surrounding the moral compass of the characters, particularly as they listen to Max deliver his speech, leaving the reader eager to explore how the moral complexities of the characters will play out in future chapters. The intricate mix of personal motivations and professional ambitions creates a layered narrative, one that continues to challenge the characters' integrity and sets the stage for the next dramatic developments.