***Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.***

Beeep! The aroma of freshly microwaved pastry diffused across the kitchen. I felt my stomach growling with hunger, begging to be fed. I had only two scones from the day before, both of which I’d heated and placed on the dining table. I left them unattended while I searched for eating utensils and jam.

Upon returning to the table, I was stunned to see one of my scones half eaten. How could it be? There was no person in sight, and only one scone remaining. I was enraged.

I knew it was not my parents, nor my sister, as I would have heard their distinct footsteps. I turned towards the three cats surrounding the table, all appearing equally as guilty: Lynx, Cleopatra, and Hazelnut. They had a history of repeated offenses of drinking water in mugs, taking bites of fallen crackers on the floor, or sniffing human meals on the table.

Luckily, I had all the time in the world. Left with no food and too much boredom, I decided to investigate.

I supposed the most obvious approach was to examine traces of scone crumbs, a seemingly fool-proof method for suspects who were unlikely to cover their tracks.

I began with Lynx. Despite being a gray tabby, his entire chest is white. The more I stared, the more it resembled an apron, as if it were a sign from the universe telling me he *was* the perpetrator. Though, with light strokes across his dense fur, there was nothing.

I moved on with Cleopatra. I realized crumbs could easily camouflage under her ginger coat. Knowing her eating habits of using her paws, I thoroughly brushed over it. Again, nothing.

The same thing occurred with Hazelnut, even though I had a harder time due to her inability to sit still.

I figured however, I could not clear any of their names so easily.

The clock now showed minutes past 11. Strangely, I ignored it. I knew I would not sleep well that night until I found whoever ate my scone.

I carefully observed their every move. In an attempt to lure them, I shook the food container—a surely familiar sound. Lynx began to reach for the food bowl. “Interesting, he is hungry!,” I thought. Meanwhile, Cleopatra and Hazelnut’s lack of interest in Lynx’s meal tells me that their stomachs had just been filled.

As an elimination method, I decided to use my sense of smell. I expected a hint of pastry-like scent from either of them. Instead, they were both a combination of mint and fish from their perfume and kibble.

I sat back down on the chair, consuming a then-cold, untouched piece of scone. Its texture was perfectly soft. The butter taste was quite prominent and blended nicely with the jam filling.

A minute or two of silence passed before I heard gagging from across the table. It was Cleopatra, who had vomited the contents of her stomach. What a way to ruin my appetite.

I took a last bite, nonetheless, which unexpectedly became my point of realization. I said out loud, “THE SCONE HAS DAIRY!”. Between my experience working with a nutritionist, and extensive research in lactose digestion, I understood the absence of lactase in her system meant she had to expel the food, leaving a mess on my recently mopped floors.

At last, mystery solved.

For certain, I myself am always on a quest. My curiosity, often more overwhelming than I can handle, drives me beyond my limits, and into various pursuits that exceed my comfort zone. Whether it is being constantly surprised with the results of my film photography, beating the odds of being too old to learn a new sport by taking on tennis, exploring various musical genres through my mastery of piano and guitar, or, finding the scone thief, I am a student who enjoys solving the mystery: What else am I really capable of doing?